



St. Mary's
HOME FOR CHILDREN

Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

The Doorway

Volume Seventeen Issue Two

A Letter From The Executive Director



Photo courtesy of
YWCA Rhode Island

Dear Friends:

When you experience bitterness, put your faith in all those who still work for good: in their humility lies the seed of a new world. ~Pope Francis

With so many distractions and vitriol in today's world, Pope Francis' words have great meaning and reinforce importance of the work that we do at St. Mary's. During meetings with our staff, I hear their passion for the work, their compassion for our clients and their desire to improve. We are not flawless; we make mistakes. We learn from those mistakes. When we do not serve a youth well, we try to figure out how to do it better. We celebrate our successes; big and small.

Many have commented that St. Mary's does not do a good job of promoting itself. We quietly go about the business of serving our clients. As human service agencies go, we tend to keep a low profile even though we consistently develop innovative programming to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. We have created many impactful, unique programs and services to fill gaps in service in the state.

Despite our low profile, we are being recognized on both a local and national level. Locally, we will be receiving Providence Business News' "Excellence at a Social Service Agency" award in November 2017. On a national level, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's (SAMSHA) supported Building Bridges Initiative highlighted St. Mary's as one of twelve agencies throughout the country that is transforming residential care in its latest publication "Implementing Effective Short-Term Residential Interventions." In addition, we were the recipients of an "Exemplary" Workplace Health award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island and The Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce for the efforts we are making to promote staff wellness at our agency.

We are proud of the recent awards and kudos, but grateful for the privilege of working "for good" and for having the opportunity to touch the lives of youth, adults and families who have great potential. We hope that the seeds that we plant provide healing for those we serve as well as provide them with hope for a brighter future.

Sincerely,

Carlene Casciano-McCann
Executive Director

❧ In Memory ❧

We recognize the passing of the following individuals who designated St. Mary's as the recipient of memorial funds or were friends of the agency:

*Mrs. Marie Cote
Mr. David DiIorio
Mrs. Angela Paolino
Mrs. Regina Parenteau*

All of us at St. Mary's also mourn the loss of our good friend and colleague, Mrs. Rita Higgins. Rita joined the agency in 1985 as a social worker and was promoted to the position of Intake Coordinator. Rita was the first staff member that parents would meet with when their child was admitted to St. Mary's and provided support to them during this difficult transition. We will all greatly miss Rita.



Jennie Johnson

At the 139th Annual Meeting of the Corporation of St. Mary's Home for Children, Jennie Johnson, Executive Director of City Year addressed the audience as guest speaker. City Year is an education-focused, nonprofit organization founded in 1988 that partners with public schools to help keep students in school and on track to graduate. Mrs. Johnson's words were inspiring. She expressed the importance of serving vulnerable and underprivileged youth so that they can have a bright future. We

welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors, Mayors Scott Avedisian and Charles Lombardi.

For 27 years, Mayor Avedisian has supported St. Mary's Home for Children through his participation on the Board of Directors, most recently serving as an Honorary Board Member and through his acts of philanthropy. As a long-time ambassador for St. Mary's, he has introduced the agency to many in the community resulting in large scale fundraising efforts. A graduate of Providence College, Roger Williams University and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Mayor Avedisian previously served five terms as a member of the Warwick City Council and was elected Mayor in 2000. Mayor Avedisian serves on the Board of many local human service organizations.

Mayor Lombardi has served the Town of North Providence since being elected in 2007 after serving on the Town Council for two terms. A member of the RI Resource Recovery, RI League of Cities and Towns and Hope Academy boards, Mayor Lombardi also served the community as a volunteer firefighter for 21 years. The Mayor has been instrumental in the purchase of Camp Meehan a recreational space located in Governor Notte Park. Mayor Lombardi has been a great friend to St. Mary's. The father of two, he and his wife Carol are proud grandparents of six grandchildren.

Wellness at St. Mary's



Wellness Committee

On June 8th, we were recognized by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of RI and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce for having a successful workplace wellness program and awarded the highest designation of "Exemplary". We offer our staff ergonomic evaluations, yoga, weight loss assistance, chair massages, a wellness fair, self-care items, walking club and mindfulness activities. Our wellness committee meets regularly to discuss the needs of our staff and how we can better support them.

**THANK
YOU**

Thank you to our funding partners, **Ida Ballou Littlefield Memorial Trust** for providing funding for clinicians in the STAAR (Supporting Teens and Adults at Risk) program to have the opportunity to attend the JuST conference, the nation's leading conference on juvenile sex trafficking. We also thank the **Rhode Island Foundation** for supporting our collaboration with Foster Forward to provide a Youth Engagement Specialist who will bring our Youth Voice and Choice initiative to fruition. A new passenger van and an additional smaller vehicle are being purchased due to the generosity of the **Horace A. Kimball Foundation**.



The Shepherd Program hosted a very successful open house for service providers and staff to showcase the programs they offer to children and families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018

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Save The Dates! Please join us for the following events:

*Thursday Evening, November 16, 2017
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.*

*Spain Restaurant
1073 Reservoir Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island*

*Appetizers, Buffet and Raffle Included – Cash Bar
\$40.00 Per Person*

Sponsored by



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www.eventbrite.com/e/photos-for-charity-tickets-38129612698

TRIVIA CONTEST

Hosted by Ryan McNamara

**December 19, 2017
11:30 a.m. – 10.00 p.m.**

**Federal Hill Pizza
1039 Chalkstone Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island**

**Have a drink
and join in the fun!**

**Bartenders will be
donating their tips to
St. Mary's!**

Congratulations

Congratulations to our staff who received awards at
our 139th Annual Meeting

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Valerie Mullins
Jennifer Prendergast
Selena Ramos

CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR

Tracene Boisvert



Left to right: Jennifer Prendergast,
Selena Ramos, Tracene Boisvert

5 Years of Service

Lyubov Boguk
Michael Burgess
Stella Gentile
Denise Moore
John Petrella
Allison Zabala

10 Years of Service

Laura Boucher Potter
Bernai Manna
Robert Picerelli

25 Years of Service

Carlene Casciano-McCann

15 Years of Service

Susan DeRita
Keisha Sanders

30 Years of Service

Joyce Asti

All I Want for Christmas is . . .

Some of our past resident's fondest memories are those spent at St. Mary's during the holiday season. It is difficult to imagine that a child may be apart from his or her family during a season when the focus is on the gathering of family and friends. It is through your support that each child who is with our family at St. Mary's during the holidays has an array of gifts to open on Christmas morning and joyful memories to share when they recall their stay at St. Mary's. There are many ways you can help the children. Instead of purchasing small gifts for friends or co-workers, consider a donation to St. Mary's. We will notify them of your generous gift! Age appropriate toys, craft supplies, games, gift cards, cash donations and tickets to local attractions are just a few suggested gifts for the children. Detailed wish lists and additional suggestions may be found on our website at www.smhfc.org or you may contact sderita@smhfc.org, 353-3900 x262 for information.

Serving our Community



For the past 22 years, Susan DeRita, Development Officer has been working with the Providence Police Department and the City of Providence to make Elmhurst and the surrounding communities a safe place to live and play. She organized the effort to create a child friendly, community built playground known as Fargnoli Park on Smith Street and was involved in the recent redesign of the playground. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fruit Hill Neighborhood Association. Susan began the Elmhurst Neighborhood Crime Watch which proudly has a membership of 1700 residents which includes some in the bordering North Providence area, and is a member of the Providence Police Advisory Committee. She was recently awarded a Community Appreciation award by the Providence Police Department in recognition of her outstanding community service.

Our Therapy Crew



Over the past year, we have kept you informed about Rango, the first therapy dog at the agency. We have seen remarkable interactions between Rango and the children. With that success, we have three additional staff pets on campus. The littlest dog Layla is a mini Schnauzer and Havernese mix, Rango is a Golden Retriever, Bailey is a Yellow Labrador and Golden Retriever mix and Puma is a combination of Pit Bull, Labrador and Beagle. All of the dogs are very gentle and have been an asset to clinicians in their work with the children in all our programs.



The 8th grade class at St. Kevin School in Warwick collected 1,180 books through their "Titles for Tots to Teens" book drive.

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**
2017 AWARD *winner*

We are honored to be recognized by the Providence Business News for an Excellence at a Social Service Agency award for the second time.

Generosity Lives On

We are fortunate to be the recipients of a special gift from a special family. Eunice Luther married Albert Savage and were residents of Pawtucket, RI. Mrs. Savage was an avid gardener who enjoyed raising African Violets, traveling and animals – especially cats. Her niece recalls her being an excellent baker who was known for her delicious cookies, homemade bread, jams and jellies. Although she had no children of her



own, she enjoyed being in the company of young people sharing her cooking secrets, family recipes and teaching them card games. After her passing in 2000, a fund was established at the Rhode Island Foundation as the Savage and Luther Family Fund. Her niece Susan Bergstrand, a retired teacher and reading recovery specialist and her husband Robert a retired Army officer and business owner, parents of a son and two grandchildren thought of the children at St. Mary's when deciding about how best to distribute funds according to the wishes of their aunt. They heard about our agency and visited for a campus tour to learn more about St. Mary's which resulted in a generous donation that enabled us to provide for emergency maintenance repairs, birthday gifts and party supplies and library books which included our newly formed LGBTQ selection of book titles chosen by the children. Also funded was the renovation of the third floor area of the main building that will serve as transitional residential/meeting space and training of a clinician in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).

ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN

420 FRUIT HILL AVENUE
NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02911

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Pictured above are Pawtucket Athletic Club Tournament Committee Members: (Back Row) Brandon Palana, Skip Pettis and Jimmy Gosselin (Front Row) Bob Souza, Susan DeRita, Jeff Kennedy and Bill Shaw

The Pawtucket Athletic Club holds an annual memorial fishing tournament in memory of two departed members of the club: Jay Shaw and Everett Souza. Although Jay and Everett were several decades apart in age, they found a common bond and friendship in fishing. St. Mary's Home for Children is fortunate to be a recipient of this very successful tournament.



Marc Marandola, Jr. spent his summer organizing a fundraising effort through our "Kids Helping Kids" program. He obtained many items for the children to use.

Eagle Scout Michael Marcoccio built several picnic tables for the children at St. Mary's.

