



St. Mary's
HOME FOR CHILDREN

Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

The Doorway

Volume Eighteen – Issue One

A Letter From The Executive Director



Photo courtesy of
YWCA Rhode Island

Dear Friends:

Thinking about the variety of programs and services we offer, the initiatives that we are pushing forward, the dedication of our staff, the generosity of our donors and making a decision about what to highlight can be difficult. In this letter, we will see how they all merge to better the lives of those we serve.

Many agencies in the nonprofit human service industry depend on Foundations, grant funding and donors to carry out our respective missions and support innovation. St. Mary's is in the midst of residential transformation using the Building Bridges Initiative framework. Two of our strategic goals include a strong emphasis on Family-Driven Care and Youth Voice and Choice. The CharterCare Foundation has been instrumental in supporting our Family-Engagement Initiative and supports services for families post discharge, resulting in positive outcomes and permanency for the youth and families we serve.

Our Youth Voice and Choice initiative, supported by the Rhode Island Foundation, allows us to partner with Foster Forward to provide a Youth Mentor to assist both youth and staff in understanding the importance of young people having a voice in their treatment and learning to advocate for themselves and others. Our focus on Youth Voice and Choice has resulted in members of our Youth Council reviewing and revising agency policies and procedures related to their care, helping to train our staff and Board of Directors and interviewing potential candidates for positions in our residential programs. We are strengthened by our youth's involvement and participation in our operations.

These initiatives have been fully realized because of the generosity of both the CharterCare and Rhode Island Foundations and, of course, the amazing talents and dedication of our team members who are bringing these initiatives to fruition. We are eager to see how our transformation will continue to improve outcomes for the youth and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Carlene Casciano-McCann

Executive Director

Holidays Were Made Happier

The holidays at St. Mary's Home for Children can be an unhappy time for many children. It may be the first or even second holiday they are away from family. While we do everything possible to make the time of year full of special memories for the children, we could not do it without the help of the community. Each child has a wish list for Santa full of gifts they would



Lt. Michel Scaramuzzo, Lt. John Anzivino and Capt. Michael Paiva of the North Providence Police Department serve lunch to the children during the holidays every year.

like and many "elves" fulfill their requests. It is due to the generosity of those donors that the children will always remember the magic of the holiday season.



The North Providence Fire Department and Santa celebrated the holiday season with the children by sponsoring a pizza party and gifts.

For the past eight years, Mayor Charles Lombardi has been raising money through a large community charity gala attended by over 1,000 people. St. Mary's is honored to be one of the beneficiaries of this wonderful event.

Children's Friendship Award



The Shiners' of RI Charities Trust

In recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we annually hold an event to recognize an individual or company that

has displayed unending dedication to the well being of children and has demonstrated kind acts of philanthropy and volunteerism to honor the mission of St. Mary's.

Being honored this year are Shriners of RI Charities Trust and The DAMES, a group of women who have volunteered with the teens in the Hills House for several years. Alison Bologna will be our emcee for the evening. For tickets, sponsorship opportunities or to donate an auction item, please contact Susan DeRita at 353-3900 x262 or sderita@smhfc.org

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT THE FIRST STAR I SEE TONIGHT I WISH I PLAY, I WISH I MIGHT HAVE THE WISH I WASH TONIGHT

 **St. Mary's**
HOME FOR CHILDREN
Residing Lives, Restoring Hopes - Since 1877

★ CHILDREN'S FRIENDSHIP AWARD ★

Make a child's wish come true...

April 26 Thursday

CAFÉ NUOVO ROTUNDA PROVIDENCE, RI

from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

JOIN US FOR A FESTIVE EVENING
INCLUDING MUSIC, COCKTAILS*
AND HORS D'OEUVRES

\$90.00 PER PERSON
*cash bar

Cannot attend?
Purchase a luminary
to light the way for a child.

 **PDM BUSINESS EXCELLENCE**
ANALYSIS

HONORING SHRINERS OF RI CHARITIES TRUST
& THE DAMES
IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

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Our Dedicated Staff

Jessica Clark has been at St. Mary's for the past seven years serving in various positions at the agency beginning as a Social Worker in the Enhanced Outpatient Services (EOS) program, then as the clinician for both the Hills House and our classroom in the Woonsocket Public Schools. She was then promoted to the EOS Program Coordinator and currently serves as the Assistant Director of the Shepherd program. A lifelong resident of Rhode Island, she received her BS and MSW degrees at Rhode Island College. She has additional certifications through the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) and in the My Life, My Choice program. In her position, Jessica oversees all community based programs, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding and state contract management for outpatient services. With a staff of 35, Jessica juggles many roles including being a Mom to her daughter and four sons.

Jessica serves on the RI Human Trafficking Taskforce and is Chairperson of the provider sub-committee. She has presented locally and nationally and conducted trainings on the topic of human trafficking. Jessica has



Jessica Clark

been instrumental in the continued success of the STAAR (Supporting Teens and Adults at Risk) program. Started three years ago, The STAAR Project serves male and female survivors of sexual exploitation and human trafficking, up to age 25, and their families. This is a state-wide community/home based program. The overriding goal of the STAAR Project is to keep clients safe in their homes and communities and reduce the risk of

re-victimization. The STAAR treatment team provides therapeutic, educational and social support to the survivor, psycho-education and clinical support to the parent or caregiver and works within a team model based on a multidisciplinary approach. Families receive both clinical and case management services. The program currently serves 24 clients. This population has unmet needs pertaining to adequate housing, appropriate clothing and nutritional meals. Additional funding would close the gap on some of these unmet needs.

Jessica would like the community to know that we don't only work with children, but also with adults and offer an array of outpatient services. St. Mary's Home for Children is a wonderful agency and develops many innovative programs. The clients are amazing to work with, are extremely resilient and are not defined by their traumatic experiences.

George N. Hunt Campus School

Our campus school is a clinically based special education program for our children in residence and day students referred by school districts statewide. The Campus School also offers an extended school year and a 45-day Assessment Program designed for students with behavioral issues who are unable to assimilate in mainstream school settings. A reading teacher, speech and language specialist, occupational therapy consultant, clinician and consulting psychologist work with our teachers to tailor academics to each child's individual strengths and challenges. Student's efforts are reinforced through Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports.

Last year the staff at our campus school worked on developing a more positive learning environment that recognizes student success with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and

Support (PBIS) initiative. We had a great deal of success with PBIS and plan to continue to utilize the basic principles of teaching expectations and recognizing when students make good choices regarding Safety, Responsibility and Respect.

We are very excited this school year to be adding to our PBIS program by including an emphasis on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The RI Department of Education (RIDE) has endorsed anchor and learning standards for SEL for the state and we will be right in line with this state wide initiative.

Social-emotional learning is the educational process that focuses on development of social-emotional competencies. Social-emotional competencies are the skills, behaviors, and attitudes students and adults need to

effectively manage their affective, cognitive, and social behavior. Safe and supportive learning environments are the conditions that foster safety; a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.

Students participate in a weekly group lead by a clinician to teach and talk about a concept like "SELF AWARENESS". Teachers incorporate activities throughout the week to support and encourage SEL learning and the practical application of the concepts.

The RI Social Emotional Standards: Competencies for School and Life Success are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making.

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2017-2018

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St. Mary's embarked upon the Strategic Planning process in 2014. With many agencies, the plan is a formality and not utilized or updated. We continually review the plan and have updated and refined the document to reflect attainable goals. Through an accountable process, we continually report to our employees and Board of Directors the progress we have made. Proudly, the following examples are cited as just a few of the initiatives we have developed in response to the goals of the plan:

Youth Involvement

- Youth review policy and procedures that directly affect them
- Youth are involved in the interview process of new direct care staff
- Youth are involved in advocacy efforts regarding care

Residential Care

- Building Bridges Initiative – increased involvement of families/guardians

Education

- Social Emotional Learning-children learn how to manage their emotions, positively resolve conflicts and make responsible decisions

Outpatient

- STAAR (Supporting Teens and Adults at Risk) – addresses human trafficking and sexual exploitation
- SAFFE (Supporting Adoptive and Foster Families Everywhere) – preserves foster and adoptive placements for children exhibiting sexual abuse or sexualized behaviors
- FISA (Families Impacted by Sexual Abuse) – non-offending parent education and support

We will be starting the process for our 2019-2021 strategic planning process in the near future and welcome community input.

Strategic Planning

“Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. It is a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful.”

The Shepherd Program Trainings

The Shepherd Program is our specialized outpatient counseling center at St. Mary's providing assessment services, individual, family and group therapy for children and adolescents who are victims of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or are experiencing other trauma related concerns. Trainings are being offered to address many of the issues children and families face today. Registration is \$65 per training and \$75 if you are in need of 3 continuing education units (CEU). To register, please contact Yasmin Heras, 353-3900 x214 or visit our website for a registration form. Topics and dates are:

April 17th from 1:30-4:45 pm

Human Trafficking: Implications for Clinical Staff

Presented by Jessica Clark, LICSW (3 CEU). This course will provide a general overview of the scope of the problem of Human Trafficking with a focus on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). Both national and local data will be reviewed. Exploiter tactics, signs & symptoms of exploitation, and front line response will be covered. We will discuss the broad range of clinical symptoms that can be expected when working with this population and best practices for treatment options.

May 16th from 9-12:15 pm

The Use of Digital Technology in Children's & Family Services

Ethical & Risk-management Challenges, presented by Frederic Reamer, Ph.D. (3 CEU). This workshop will explore cutting-edge ethical issues arising out of child welfare professionals' growing use of digital technology, electronic interventions and communications, and social media. The training will examine complex ethical issues related to use of email, text messages, social networking sites, online search engines, electronic records, and other forms of technology. Dr. Reamer will summarize recently adopted national standards explore risk-management implications, and provide opportunity for audience participation.

June 28th from 1-4:15 pm

Supporting Foster Children & Adoptees Affected by Sexual Abuse

Presented by Melissa Santoro, LICSW (3 CEU). This workshop will focus on how sexual abuse affects families formed through adoption and foster care & ways service providers can provide support & education to assist these families with their needs. Training participants will leave with knowledge regarding "red flags" of sexual abuse as well as practical strategies to use with children & families in therapy.

July 12th from 9-12:15 pm

Essentials for doing Family Therapy

Presented by Robert Cohen, LICSW (3 CEU). A simple framework for doing family therapy will be presented in this workshop. Fundamental features from a strength based perspective will be reviewed that are essential for practitioners in practice. Participants will have the opportunity to apply the framework presented relative to their toughest family challenges.

August 22nd from 9-12:15 pm

Toxic Masculinity and Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Presented by Adam Cable, LICSW (3CEU). This workshop will look at the impacts of toxic masculinity on boys and men and how it impacts their healing from trauma. The training will examine the role of media and society, as well as families and communities, in indoctrinating boys to behave, think, and feel in unhealthy and unproductive ways. Concrete tools and activities will be presented to help providers counteract these messages and help their male clients engage fully in emotional work and relationships.

ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN
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NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02911

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Hallam ICS presented St. Mary's with a check and plaque as winners of the 2017 Award for Community Service in recognition of our efforts to improve lives in the community.



St. Mary's Leadership team attended the Providence Business News 2017 Business Excellence Award dinner where we were recognized for Excellence at a Social Service Agency.



Jeffrey Osborne presented the agency with a \$10,000 gift that supports our school based music program and other recreational activities for the children.