



St. Mary's
HOME FOR CHILDREN

Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

The Doorway

Volume Eighteen – Issue Two

A Letter From The Executive Director



Photo courtesy of
YWCA Rhode Island

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” – Maya Angelou

Those of us working in the human service field have greater access to proven methods, modalities and frameworks than ever before. We have great opportunities to learn, to grow and to do better, not only as a result of research and implementation of best practices, but also from examining our own outcomes. At St. Mary's Home for Children, we consistently assess what we do well and where we need to improve. We are a work in progress, striving to learn and grow. By being better, we are our best for the youth and families that we serve. By providing an error-forgiving environment for our staff and using those mistakes to grow, our staff become more self-aware, more open to feedback and more effective with our clients.

Although we keep current with industry trends, we also believe in taking the lead when we know we've got a good thing going. We build upon our own track record of success and push innovation as evidenced by the success of our two newest programs; Supporting Adoptive and Foster Families Everywhere (SAFFE) and Supporting Teens and Adults at Risk (STAAR). We consciously think about transforming services and filling service gaps so we can better serve our community.

We are proud of being a part of a strong community that provides opportunities for vulnerable and at-risk populations – to raise up and help heal those who have not had the comforts, opportunities or upbringings that many of us have had. In some circles, it has become trendy to demonize the poor and vulnerable as though living in poverty is a moral failure. Our provider community believes that “a rising tide lifts all boats.” It is validating to be part of a community in RI that is working to help those in need by assisting them in working through the impact of trauma, developing skills for healthier living and showing them the pride that comes with academic success.

“Doing better” requires a commitment on the part of all of us who work at St. Mary's and it requires the support of our community, Board of Directors, volunteers and donors. We are fortunate to have a strong base of supporters who cheerlead for us and provide funding and resources that enable us to go “above and beyond.” We are grateful for their contributions and support and we are grateful for opportunities to “do better.”

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, a bequest or were friends of the agency.

Mr. Robert Forrest
Mrs. Beverly Murphy
Mrs. Brenda Tucker

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A Dedicated Space

In a past newsletter, we told you about the generous ways a planned gift from the Savage and Luther Family Fund has helped our agency. Emergency repairs, birthday gifts and party supplies for the children and the purchase of LGBTQ books are some ways in which the Fund provided for our clients. Most recently, the dedication of The Eunice L. Savage Wing was held, a transitional space that utilized a section of our main building that was not being used. It now enables clinical staff to use it as office space during the day and can quickly transform into residential space in an emergency. Please consider a planned gift in the form of a bequest, life insurance or trust to provide for the children at St. Mary's. Contact your financial planner or attorney about the best way for you to leave a legacy.



Did you not receive our 2018 Annual Report? If you would like to read about our accomplishments over the past year, please contact knatareno@smhfc.org or by phone, 353-3900 x380 to request a copy. Our annual report can also be accessed on our website at www.smhfc.org.

An Energy Efficient Campus

With many options for energy efficiency these days, it was time for a conversation to determine ways in which we can learn to be more energy efficient and thoughtful about our environment. Little changes such as recycling and using energy efficient bulbs had been implemented several years ago. Larger projects such as conversion from oil to gas, replacement of heating and cooling systems, changing fluorescent lighting fixtures to LED, replacing a leaking slate roof and older large passenger vehicles with smaller ones are more recent projects. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of Mayor Charles Lombardi, Town of North Providence who supported a Community Development Block Grant, the Champlin Foundation, The Horace A. Kimball Foundation, Hallam ICS, National Grid and RISE Engineering. We continue to improve efficiency on our campus and will soon be embarking on another system replacement in our campus school and adjoining residential house.

Our Best

Each year, our staff nominate co-workers for Employees of the Year and we recognize the longevity of our staff. These are the 2018 Employees of the Year and the reasons they were chosen:

Adam Cable – Adam is a strong team member and a huge asset to the Shepherd Team! He thrives to do well with all aspects of his job, asks for feedback/suggestions and applies the ideas discussed in supervision to grow professionally. Adam is extremely committed to our clients and families, and is a great advocate for their needs, both with internal and external systems. He shows strong, clinical insight, and continues to reflect upon and incorporate trauma informed practices in his treatment approach. Adam is a reliable team member, as many of his peers vocalize their faith in him as a member of the clinical team.



L-R Adam Cable, Mara Olink (15 years), Jessica Clark (5 years), Zwannah Lee, Linda Williams (5 years), Marie Campbell (10 years), Anthony Maglione (15 years), Louis Jarrett and Sharron Costello

Zwannah Lee – Zwannah has displayed therapeutic interventions with kindness and has a full understanding of what trauma informed care is. He is an outstanding Teacher Assistant who is willing to provide support to any classroom or House in need. His dance talents have been shared with all of the school as he led and successfully instructed an entire dance class at George N. Hunt School. Zwannah's welcoming smile, calm demeanor and passion for our children exude the true meaning of what exemplary staff is. He is a wonderful asset to this entire agency!

Louis Jarrett – Mr. J is a strong leader who provides the Mauran residents with safety and security. He is completely in tune with how to structure a house while still providing daily life skills in a therapeutic manner. In his presence all feel at ease and know things will just be fine! He is highly looked upon for guidance in difficult situations, respected a great deal by others and has exceptional organizational skills. Mr. J has a positive presence that quickly reduces stress for the residents in his care is a quiet force who prefers to stay behind the scenes. He is a team player who always puts the well-being of the residents first and is truly devoted to his house.

Sharron Costello – As our Human Resources Manager, Sharron is the face of St. Mary's to all of our staff members. Much of Sharron's work is behind the scenes. She is one of the most dedicated and conscientious employees we have. If you have a question in regards to your job or a question on your benefits she is always there to listen. Just like many other staff here, she puts everyone else first. She will come in on her days off without question if there is something that needs to be done. Sharron is a valuable member of almost every committee here at St. Mary's and we all have definitely learned from her. She has brought new and fresh ideas to our committee processes. She is a staff member to be admired due to her professionalism, dedication and advocacy on behalf of our employees.

Stop and Smell the Flowers



Founded in 2017, What Cheer Flower Farm sits on 2.7 acres of former factory land in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence, RI. The Flower Farm is a nonprofit organization with two full-time farmers on staff who, with support from volunteers, grow flowers on their land organically. They give flowers away to the people who will benefit from them the most via partnerships with hospitals, food banks and other

nonprofits in Rhode Island. What Cheer Flower Farm generously donates to The Shepherd Program at St. Mary's providing the flowers to clients during counseling sessions or during a home visit.

STARLIGHT, STARBRIGHT

In recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we annually hold an event to honor 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 promote the mission of St. Mary's.

On April 11, 2019, we will be honoring Nixon Peabody LLP for the great amount of legal support they provide to our agency and Hallam ICS, an employee owned company that has assisted us with design plans that enable us to apply for funding for improvements to our campus buildings.

We want to thank the following companies and individuals who supported the last event:

SUPERNOVA

MAYOR & MRS. CHARLES A. LOMBARDI

SHRINERS OF RHODE ISLAND
CHARITIES TRUST

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ROBERT DIONNE ELECTRICAL
SENATOR FRANK CICCONE III
ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

What is Equine Assisted Psychotherapy?



To deal with the effects of trauma to children in our programs, we work with a program certified through the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA). Equine Assisted Mental Health (EAMH) utilizes an EAGALA approach structured with two specialists: a mental health professional and an equine specialist. The pair work together to create an experiential environment for growth and positive change. Aside from the co-facilitators, the horse, or "equine partner", plays a huge role in facilitating in vivo (in real life/real time) learning opportunities. Horses have been called "mirrors" in the EAMH field, because they are so in tune with non-verbal cues, and what is going on internally for individuals. The equine partner presents a unique way for the children to practice a variety of skills such as: non-verbal communication, understanding the difference between passive/assertive/aggressive behaviors, creative thinking and problem solving, leadership, commitment, accountability, teamwork and peer relationships, confidence and a positive attitude. These are all essential skills in working to build frustration tolerance, improve anger management skills and decrease the symptoms of depression, anxiety, etc. Since implementing EAP activities with the children, we have had significant breakthroughs and rapid positive results. Working with the horses has proven itself effective in providing clients with a healthy, self-initiated comprehension of overcoming obstacles and learning how to deal with emotional triggers. We recently became fortunate to partner with Faith Hill Farms to bring the horses to campus. This enables the program to be available to children in our residential and special education programs.

**Children's
Friendship Award**

Join us for a festive evening including music, cocktails*
and hors d'oeuvres. \$90.00 per person *cash bar

April 11 Thursday

CAFÉ NUOVO ROTUNDA PROVIDENCE, RI
FROM 5:30-8:30P.M.

 **St. Mary's**
HOME FOR CHILDREN
Healing Lives, Restoring Hope - Since 1877

Chillin in the Chill Zone

How do you turn a storage room into a Chill Zone? You ask children what they want it to look like and you have 35 volunteers from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI turn the vision into reality. On Blue Across RI Day, Blue Cross employees participate in a project in the community. Out of 29 applications, 14 projects were chosen and we were fortunate to be one! The St. Mary's Youth Council wanted a room that would be multi-purpose, incorporate their ideas and only be used by fellow residents who are able to respect the space. They also wanted some form of art to decorate the walls. These ideas resulted in an area dedicated to movies/gaming, arts and crafts, and a meeting space for the Youth Council. Three hundred tiles were decorated by the children, staff and Blue Across RI participants to form two murals. Youth Council established the name and policies for use of the room to insure that the room remained clean and clutter free. In addition, two raised vegetable gardening beds were replaced and our expansive grounds were cleaned.



Mayor Charles Lombardi, a member of the Board of Directors and Susan DeRita, Development Officer join Jennifer Jones and Dianne O'Hayre co-captains of the project with Blue Across RI volunteers.

The Youth Council is comprised of young people in the residential program and meets weekly to suggest changes on campus and discuss agency policies that affect their care. As an agency that supports communication on all levels, this provides children in care with a voice in their treatment and care plans.

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.



Many of the children we work with have experienced some form of trauma in their young lives which is why they receive services from St. Mary's. For some, recollection of that experience causes them to have adverse behaviors. Thanks to Shri Yoga, the children will be receiving instruction for 6 weeks through the physical education program at our campus school. This training will provide them with another tool to help them with their healing. This is an extension of a program already available to staff as part of our self-care initiative.



Fire Chief John Silva and Police Chief David Tikoian and representatives from their departments were on campus for our annual appreciation lunch with the children to thank them for their service to our agency.

ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN
420 FRUIT HILL AVENUE
NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02911

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COA Innovative Practices Award



The Innovative Practices Award has recognized organizations who have found novel solutions to issues that arise throughout the human services delivery field. Our STAAR project was one of six finalists throughout the country for the Council on Accreditation's Innovative Practice Award.

St. Mary's Home for Children has been offering our Supporting Teens and Adults At-Risk (STAAR) Project to clients for the past three years. The STAAR Project serves male and female victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and human trafficking, and their families. STAAR is a state-wide community/ home-based program. The overriding goal of the STAAR Project is to keep children, teens and young adults safe in their communities and reduce the risk of re-victimization. Through this innovative and intensive service, we provide families with up to 6 months of support with up to 16 hours of intervention per week, provided by a master's level clinician, a bachelor's level case manager and a trained adult survivor-mentor. Services include: Individual, Family and Group therapy; Crisis Intervention; Case Management; Equine Assisted Psychotherapy; Parenting Support; Care Coordination; and Sexual Exploitation/Abuse Education. The STAAR Project is currently the only program in RI offering this combination of services to survivors who are living in the community or attempting to transition back to their homes after group home or residential care.



Thank you to employees from Citizens Bank and Dassault Systemes who helped us to make our campus safer and more enjoyable for our children, guests and staff by beautifying our campus.