



St. Mary's HOME FOR CHILDREN

Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

SUMMER 2020

The Doorway
A publication of St. Mary's Home for Children

Children's Friendship Award Virtual Event

The stars didn't align this past April for us to host our annual fundraiser due to COVID-19. But, the virus hasn't dimmed the importance of our mission to serve our kids and families who have been victims of trauma.

Don't miss our Virtual Event!
Thursday, September 17
6:30-7pm

Come shine starlight on our mission and listen to client and partner testimonials, hear from donors, staff and volunteers, and even hear musical performances from our youth. We even have a surprise appearance from a Grammy-nominated singer!

Register NOW at
www.smhfc.org



CLIENT STORY

Specialized aftercare program helps clients succeed

For Shanice*, aftercare services made all the difference for her family.

St. Mary's Home for Children serves hundreds of children every year but families need more to succeed when their child graduates from our residential services. To ensure success, we offer a wrap-around aftercare program for the entire family which often makes the difference in how well a child does when they leave St. Mary's.

Children living in our psychiatric treatment residential program receive a 6-month course of aftercare when they leave. This team approach includes a family therapist, a parent partner who works with the parent(s), and family liaisons who work with the child.

"They taught me so much," Shanice said. "There are a lot of things I didn't know. How to analyze myself. Knowing that if I feel a certain way, my kids can feel a certain way. It brought me to realize that dealing with my own trauma is something I need to do."

Rachel Desrosiers, family therapist, explained why it can be so difficult for parents when their child experiences a trauma:

"Mom didn't have the tools to respond in a trauma-informed way. Her [child] didn't have the tools to respond," Rachel said. "But Mom was able to implement the advice we gave, both for herself and her child, which led to a great outcome."

St. Mary's aftercare services follow the principles of a national program called the Building Bridges Initiative. This initiative is a whole-family approach designed to help families and youth who receive residential intervention to realize positive outcomes after discharge, which include: outcomes such as decreased readmission to congregate care, improved family relationships, home stability, and successfully living in the community.

Describing St. Mary's as a "safety net" – a place her child felt safest after experiencing trauma, Shanice appreciated St. Mary's extensive aftercare program.

"Each of us had our own [staff] person and a [staff] person together for the whole family," Shanice said. "I worked with them to come up with strategies to use with my kids. Communication was a plus. We always communicated."



BACK TO SCHOOL FUND

COVID-19 has influenced how our school must function and at this point we are unsure how school will look in the Fall though we have plans for both on-site and distance learning. To support our kids with required school supplies, please check the "Back to School Fund" box on the response envelope.

See inside for how St. Mary's campus is changing ...



Dreaming ... about the Future of St. Mary's

St. Mary's Home for Children has been around for 143 years. Over that time, it has changed dramatically to become the modern mental health agency it is today. But what does the future hold? What does St. Mary's need to do to ensure that our work continues to meet the human needs of our community?

Our Strategic Plan guides us in terms of future services and programs but there is another aspect of St. Mary's that has been left behind – our physical structure – our facilities and infrastructure. The fact is, our facilities are still stuck back in the time when St. Mary's was an orphanage. And that's not who St. Mary's is today.

Our vision is to have a campus that reflects who we are now and beyond so that it works towards our mission as hard as our programs and services do. If we are to continue to do great work for our community, our campus needs to offer flexible, innovative space that benefits the children and families we serve today and tomorrow.

This is why we are embarking on an exciting new opportunity – building a Master Plan - which will be a roadmap to St. Mary's future. It will shed light on questions such as what do we have now, where do we want to go, what are our priorities, and how do we want to implement St. Mary's future infrastructure.

Our Board of Directors has taken on the challenge to fund this \$65,000 Master Plan. This will be a chance for all of us to explore this dream together – to dream up the future structure of St. Mary's. Our kids, families, and employees deserve a home they can be proud to call their own – stay tuned for more details as we embark on this exciting journey.

Ensuring technology is aligned with our mission

The current pandemic and future needs of technology create a conundrum for many non-profits. Without a lot of extra money to spend, agencies like St. Mary's often rely on grants and donations to meet technology needs.

For instance, 38 chromebooks made distance learning a reality for our school and a giant touchscreen will mean new kinds of learning will happen in the future for our young residents. These investments were made possible by the generous support of the Nordson Corporation Foundation and Ocean State Charities Trust for the

chromebooks and The Savage and Luther Family Fund for our newly renovated library of which the touchscreen is part.

The person in charge of all this technology is Eric McDuffee, who holds a new position of Director of Information Technology. Eric is charged with modernizing the agency's technology for both the current pandemic and the future. When he first came on board in 2019, Eric created an assessment of the agency's technology.

"We instituted an asset management system which makes it easy to get a snapshot of the age of equipment and see where there might

be some gaps so we can better align the technology with our mission," Eric said.

When Covid-19 hit, Eric found himself rolling out policies and technology faster than planned in order to meet the new needs. Work at home and bring your own device policies needed to be written and the agency had to quadruple the number of VPN licenses so more people could work from home.

A new system to allow IT staff to remotely control people's computers to fix issues had to be rolled out and Eric instituted other changes such as the development of a new IT helpdesk system which better tracks and monitors IT problems. Outpatient therapy, which was conducted online through Google Meet, had to be set up and issues resolved. This also brought many new policies that had to be written for areas such as client privacy.

Meanwhile, other improvements, such as moving to a new Google email system, had to take longer as St. Mary's three-person technology staff worked around the clock to get everyone set up and solve all issues so that client services would be minimally interrupted by the pandemic.



Support St. Mary's by donating your stocks!

Four Reasons You Should Give Stock Donation a Try

1. You can give more

By donating stock that has appreciated for more than a year, you are actually giving 20% more than if you sold the stock and then made a cash donation. The reason is simple: avoiding capital gains taxes. Plus, you are still eligible to deduct the full fair-market value of the asset you donated from your income taxes, up to the overall amount allowed by the IRS.

2. You can potentially reduce future capital gains

Many investors have stocks that they love and want to hold for the long term. Any appreciation of that stock's value confirms your belief in it, but it can also set the stage for substantial gains when you sell. So consider donating some of your appreciated shares and then buying new shares to reset your cost basis at the current, higher price.

3. You can give your portfolio a health check

If a review of your investments' gains and losses shows that it's time to rebalance your portfolio to maximize its performance and optimize for risk, donating stock can give your portfolio the health check it needs. Talk to your advisor about which assets to put to a better use.

4. You can donate stocks without headaches

St. Mary's has recently partnered with the firm Northeast Investment Group based in Providence to accept and sell gifts of stock on our behalf. To make a gift of appreciated stock, you, your broker or bank should notify the Development Office; please see sidebar for instructions.

Instructions for making a Charitable Gift with Stock

Due to security regulations, there are no individual names associated with a broker account on a stock gift, therefore it is essential that you notify us of your gift intention so we may properly thank and credit you for your generous donation.

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for Children

Federal Tax ID#: 05-0213340
St. Mary's Acct.#: F9C-003582
St. Mary's DTC#: 0226

St. Mary's does not provide legal or tax advice. Donors are guided to consult their financial advisors to properly determine the tax consequences of making a charitable gift.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Our annual Corporation meeting held in September will NOT take place this year. This is in accordance with following Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo's guidance to protect our community against the transmission on COVID-19. No changes will transpire to the Board of Directors composition.

Thank you for Summer Camp!

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to send the youth we serve to summer camp at Faith Hill Farms in East Greenwich. All of the children had everything they needed – including lunches and proper clothes – because you responded when we asked for help in supporting our kids going to summer camp!

Thank you for your generous support!





St. Mary's shows its LGBTQ PRIDE

Did you know that St. Mary's is a LGBTQ Safe Zone as designated by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island in 2019? When you see the Safe Zone logo, this identifies a healthcare practice that provides safe, affirming, and inclusive care to the LGBTQ community.

Adam Cable, LICSW, Clinical Supervisor for the Shepherd Program, added, "St. Mary's designation as an LGBTQ+ Safe Zone is a testament to the work the agency does to consistently make us a more welcoming and inclusive place. It's an invitation to our clients that they are allowed to be their authentic and true selves when they work with us."



OUR MISSION

Partnering with youth, adults, and families, St. Mary's Home for Children fosters resilience and potential through a continuum of innovative residential, community-based, education, and prevention services.

Produced by the Development Office
Vangy Auclair, Development Officer
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For questions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Vangy Auclair, Development Officer at 401-353-3900 x262 or eaclair@smhfc.org.

401-353-3900 | smhfc.org

**Names and details in articles have been changed to protect the privacy of clients.*

A Letter from the Executive Director



Carlene Casciano-McCann
Executive Director

Times like these test the character and strength of an organization. I am proud to say that the St. Mary's team rose to the occasion!

During these challenging times, our teams have worked diligently to ensure that those we serve continue to receive the support they need and deserve. Interdepartmental efforts, at times, appeared herculean as we transitioned to a different way of doing business. The resilience, persistence, and "can do" spirit of our staff sustained the agency during a time of upheaval. What we are experiencing is unprecedented.

We were quite fortunate to have strong support and guidance from DCYF and RIDOH when we encountered our first case of COVID-19. This partnership enabled us to prevent a widespread outbreak, initially containing it to three residents and four staff, all of whom are now recovered.

Additional concerns about assisting our clients were allayed when The Rhode Island Foundation, United Way of Rhode Island, the Champlin Foundation, and many individual donors provided much needed funding to ensure that we can meet the human needs of those we serve. We are so grateful to everyone who stepped up to help us meet our mission during this difficult time.

We will be contending with the impact of this pandemic for the foreseeable future. I am confident that our staff will continue to rise to the occasion and that our community partners will support us so that we can focus on healing lives and restoring hope.
Stay safe.

Remembering A Champion of Children

As we were finalizing this newsletter, we learned of Judge Howard I. Lipsey's passing on July 25, 2020. He was a champion of children and an advocate for St. Mary's mission in his roles as a Board of Director member and Honorary Vice President. Howard was legendary in the field of law, serving as an Associate Justice of the RI Family Court until his retirement. Our sympathies go to Paulla and his family. *We will miss his wise counsel, compassion and wonderful sense of humor.*



To cope with the isolation of the pandemic, youth in our residential programs turned to artwork. Here are some of their fantastic results.



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