

Center Stage

The Center for Great Expectations

Volume 19

19B Dellwood Lane • Somerset, NJ 08873 • Tel: 732-247-7003 • 1-855-HOPELIVES

Winter II 2011

Claire's HOLIDAY STORY

The doorbell of House B rang one afternoon, just before Christmas Eve. When the door opened, there was little Claire and her family smiling expectantly at us. They had traveled to New Jersey to spend Christmas with her grandparents, but first Claire had a special task to complete – a mission given to her by Santa Claus himself! When Santa answered Claire's Christmas letter he wrote that he would be delighted to bring her that beautiful doll she had asked for this year, but first, he asked her to find the true meaning of Christmas. "Look for a special place", he wrote, "where needy mommies and their little girls live". Claire and her parents found The Center for Great Expectations. Little Claire, who is four years old, wanted to make sure that other children would also be smiling on Christmas morning. And so sweet Claire stood holding a festively wrapped box, topped with a bright red bow, that jingled when she moved – a present filled with her piggy bank money. One of our little residents, Marita, and her mommy, happily accepted on behalf of the Center. Claire asked us to make sure that each and every child at the Center would be smiling big on Christmas morning, just like she would be. Indeed, joy did come to the Center on Christmas morning, thanks to Claire, and to all of you with such generous hearts that made this a season of giving.



Christmas 2010



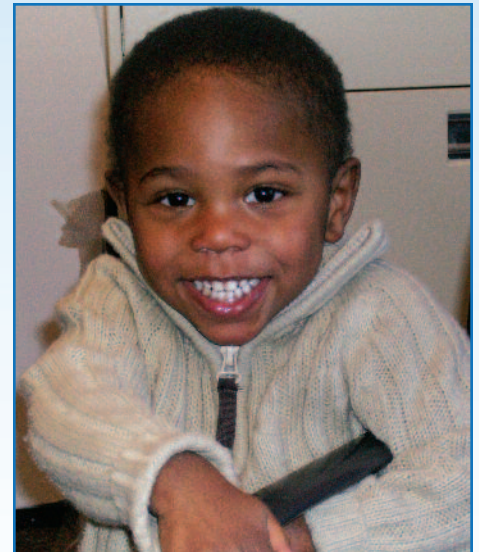
Every mother and child at the Center had a merry, merry Christmas thanks to the generosity of our supporters. There was so much laughter, love and fun for the little ones this year that everyone, staff and residents alike, were deeply touched and very grateful. As the Center has grown, so has the support and kindness of our donors. Each year we have been able to supply more for our residents and children because there are people out there that care about them and their opportunity to change their lives.

This year, our children received warm socks, shoes, boots, pants, shirts, sweaters, mittens, slippers, robes and a warm winter coat. Our little girls received a pretty dress and shiny new shoes, and for those of you who are wondering if Jasmine received her little kitchen, she certainly did. She has been cooking the most amazing things ever since including her version of gourmet, a hot dog with marshmallows and pickles (pretend of course!).

Our good friend Santa paid a visit and each child received a modest but much desired set of toys. One of our children, Kevin, who is 2 ½, was so excited he didn't know what to do to express his joy so he got down on the floor and rolled over and over and over. He rolled right out of the room and down the hall! Everyone laughed and felt his joy.

Our mothers were not overlooked. Each received warm coats, pants, tops, pajamas, robes, slippers, personal care items, and one special gift that they especially hoped Santa would bring. One resident was hoping that Santa would bring her a journal so she could write down her thoughts every day as she journeyed through our program. Another

resident wished for an inexpensive camera so she could take pictures of her children, something she had never been



One of our children, Kevin, 2 ½, flashing his million dollar smile.

able to do. Thanks to our generous donors, we were able to provide all our residents with their special wish and a few items that were wonderful surprises.

It is difficult to adequately thank those of you who provided support to the Center over the holidays. The special dinners, the making of gifts and cards for each other, the cookie day when flour was everywhere including in the hair! There were excursions to a church concert, to see Santa, and to church on Christmas Eve, all due to the caring people who remember us at Christmas, and all year through. We are sending you our deepest thanks and our wish to you for a happy, healthy year filled with joy and prosperity. May God bless you all.

2010 Gift of Hope Gala

The 2010 Gala took place at the Palace on November 12th. Two hundred and fifty people gathered to congratulate the Honoree Dale Florio of Princeton Public Affairs Group, feted as Humanitarian of the Year, and Sister Sheila Murray, Director of Outreach at the Center for Great Expectations, as she received the Outstanding Service Award. Both were selected for their outstanding contribution to the Center and its mission. Host for the evening was Steve Kalafer, 3-time Academy Award nominee, and principal partner in Flemington Car and Truck Country, Flemington, NJ. Following the award ceremony, a resident from the Center spoke to the attendees about her journey through the Center and how her life was changed because of it. An elegant dinner, followed by dancing to the fabulous Greaseband, made the evening an outstanding success.



Volunteer of the Year, Tom Didario, and his wife, Elaine.



The Center's new Giving Tree and Little House.



Two happy guests enjoying the Gala.



Proud dad, Joseph Florio, with his son, Honoree, Dale Florio, and his wife, Leslie. Congratulating the group is Peg Wright, President of the Center.



Board Members and Center supporters.



2010 Outstanding Service Award winner, Sister Sheila Murray, SSJ.



Our resident tells her success story to attendees.



Steve Kalafer, Honorary Chairman of the Gala.



Dr. Mary Christian, Chairman of the Gala.



Steve Kalafer, praising Sister Sheila and Dale Florio, Honorees at this year's Gala. Peg Wright, President, lends her support.

Specialized Treatment for Special Women: A New Look at Co-Occurring Disorders

This article was written for us by Loran Vocaturo, EdD, ABPP (Rp). Dr. Vocaturo is the Director of Neuropsychology at Kessler Institute in West Orange, NJ. She has been affiliated with the Center since 1998.

Although 65 % of clients with substance use disorders have another diagnosable mental health disorder, less than 10% receive treatment for both. Although many have heard the terms co-occurring disorders, dually diagnosed or MICA (mentally ill chemically addicted), they have historically been set aside for clients with severe and chronic mental illness (i.e., schizophrenic or bipolar disorders). The truth is that the most common psychiatric disorders with substance abuse are mood (depression) and anxiety disorders (posttraumatic stress). Clearly, these types of clients require specialized treatment; however, traditional programs designed to treat co-occurring disorders focus largely on the chronically, mentally ill. The mental health needs of the more common dually diagnosed clients are not being met. It is not surprising that many of these clients have been unsuccessful in staying clean in traditional recovery programs. The Center for Great Expectations has responded to this need by developing a specialized residential and intensive outpatient program for women; many of whom have survived histories of abuse,

neglect, trauma and years of emotional pain resulting in chemical addiction along with a number of mental health issues. While the Center has always been committed to providing quality care, the caliber of staff has increased in order to provide comprehensive, state-of-the-art treatment and improve client outcomes. All of the clinical staff at the Center for Great Expectations are masters-level, licensed mental health clinicians who provide treatment along with traditional, certified drug and alcohol counselors. The programs are overseen and supervised by a licensed, doctoral-level psychologist who specializes in addiction treatment and an ASAM certified psychiatrist. This level of care provides comprehensive treatment for both the addiction and mental health needs of our clients as well as the opportunity for psychopharmacological intervention—allowing us to help break the cycle of addiction and improve recovery outcomes. In fact, 90% of the clients at the Center for Great Expectations remain clean and are successfully discharged from our program.

Sometimes *No Medication* is the *Best Medicine*

Serving women who are dually diagnosed with addiction and psychiatric disorders is challenging. We understand the importance of successfully treating an underlying psychiatric disorder in this population: *70% of addicted women have a psychiatric disorder other than addiction and untreated depression and anxiety disorders are the leading trigger for relapse according to the National Institute of Drug Addiction.* This said, there are several barriers to success.

Experience has shown us that homeless, pregnant women with addiction are a diverse group despite their unique similarity. Our residents come from a wide range of backgrounds and family settings, differing in education, family support, and legal circumstance. Many women have never been diagnosed before and making such a diagnosis is particularly challenging when in the setting of drug use or early drug recovery. Some women have been improperly diagnosed and pressured to take medications that did more harm than good. Since our residents enter the program pregnant or breast

feeding, pharmaceutical treatment strategies come with significantly more risk to the health of these women and their babies. Therefore simply prescribing the right medications to a particular diagnosis is never simple.

The spirit of our approach is community impact driven, longitudinal, with a goal to not only offer therapeutic results in the short term but rather instill a healthier approach to maternal and pediatric health throughout the lives of our residents.

Consider severely depressed women with a newborn: We strongly urge and insist on her taking medications despite her hesitancy (*she may be someone who like many "does not believe in medications"*). And her condition improves all the while she finds herself coerced and railroaded, made to feel dependent on the medications and on the clinicians prescribing them: Analogous to her addiction to drugs and drug dealers. Reminded of childhood trauma that too may have coercion of another kind. She may seem better in the short term and deemed a great success but commonly after discharge will

stop medications because they represent negative emotions and memories rather than seeing them as needed agents in her recovery.

Alternatively, consider if those same women, rather than pressured into taking medications, were encouraged to identify their behaviors as possible clinical symptoms of a known syndrome of depression that has effective treatments. She may be guided to recognize the impact these symptoms have on her health now, and in all likelihood have had historically. We encourage her to take responsibility for the outcome of previous choices she made when feeling similar things, and empower her to realize she can make different choices now.

The latter approach is not simple or straight forward. It takes longer, involves more support from all clinical and non clinical staff, and challenges all the other residents to unite and support a women in need. The outcome however is usually a woman who cooperatively and collaboratively works with us as she struggles for sobriety and fights for her rights to independently parent her child.

The clinical team at the Center

is blessed with the opportunity of working with these women over several months. Working closely with our house manager and her team of caring residential associates, we maintain a therapeutic connection to our clients at all times allowing us to refrain from short cuts and interventions that have only short term gains. We are challenged to approach each woman's clinical case with creativity and sensitivity, to think big, expect more, and never settle for less for the women we serve.



Dr. Edward Ratush, the Center's psychiatrist.



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Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
New Brunswick, NJ
Permit No. 956

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Residential treatment for homeless, pregnant adolescents, and their children; and homeless pregnant women with substance use disorders, and their children.

INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

For pregnant and post-partum women with substance use and co-occurring disorders.

ZIP NOTES

Please remember the Center in your estate planning. Wondering how?
Please call us.

Our number is 732-247-7003 Ext. 33

Does your company have a matching gift program?

If so, you may be able to double your gift to the Center. Your Human Resource Department can tell you. We do all the work - you just send us the form with your gift.

Have an old car?

We will pick it up at your home or business regardless if it runs or not! You pick the time and we'll be there. It is a turn-key operation. Call us at 732-247-7003 Ext 33 to speak to Cathy.

Want to have a wish list drive for the Center?

Wonderful! But please check with Sister Sheila at 732-247-7003 Ext. 25 to hear about the items we currently need the most. Thank you for caring about our women and children.

Visit the Center on Facebook.com

CALENDAR of EVENTS

April 15

Board of Directors Retreat

July 14

Ken Daneyko Golf Classic

NEEDS LIST

Updated as of December 2010

We are often asked what we need for residents, babies, and children. Currently, the list below represents items that are completely off our shelves. We appreciate any donation, and sincerely thank you for your kind support.

GIFT CARDS

Restaurants, Movies, CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Applebees, Ruby Tuesdays and Chucky Cheese

DIAPERS

All Sizes and Wipes

HUMIDIFIERS

For Cool Moisture, Not Medication

BOPPY PILLOW

SNUGLI

ONESIES

Long Sleeve;

All Sizes, Boy and Girls

SLEEP AND PLAYS

Long Sleeves and Long Legs;

Boys, All Sizes Up to 3T

CAR SEAT AND

STROLLER TRAVEL SET - New

BABY BOTTLES

Approved, BPA-Free, Large and Small

BABY MONITORS

Safety 1st Brand

BABY MEDICAL KITS

FIRST AID SUPPLIES

VASELINE, BABY OIL, BABY

BATH SHAMPOO, CONDITIONER

AND OTHER PRODUCTS FOR

WOMEN OF COLOR (Hemp etc.)

BABY BRUSH AND COMB SET

BABY TOWELS

BABY BATHROBES

All Sizes up to 2T

CHILDREN'S TIE SHOES

Boys and Girls, Toddlers Sizes

MESH HAMPERS OR

MESH LAUNDRY BAGS

CLOTHES TREE

WOMEN PANTIES

Size 5, 6, 7, 8

BATH MATS

Only Towel Type, No Rugs

UNDER-BED STORAGE CONTAINERS

PILLOW PROTECTORS

Adult Pillows

SMALL TRASH CANS

with Covers for Bedrooms

NURSING PADS

BATTERIES

C and 9 Volt

KITCHEN TOWELS AND

POT HOLDERS

Blue, Brown or Tan

MICROWAVE OVEN

Electric or Manual

ZIP LOCK BAGS

Regular Gallon Size

(not freezer style)

SHOWER AND BIRTHDAY

PARTY DECORATIONS

Including Plates, Forks, Napkins

Contact Sister Sheila at (732) 247-7003, Ext 25, for more information.