



HOMEFRONT Happenings

OUR SHARED VISION: *A Community Without Homelessness*

When Carla called HomeFront’s housing hotline last summer, she was not homeless...yet. But she was frightened that she and her children would soon lose their home. Carla had recently lost her job and fallen behind on her rent. While she had another job lined up, her start date was three weeks away, so her first paycheck was over a month out. If only she could get caught up, Carla and her family could stay in their apartment, in the same school district her children had always attended.

HomeFront staff are experienced and well-trained in addressing our clients’ “if only” moments:

- **If only** the family had a stable place to stay until their new apartment becomes available
- **If only** auto repairs could be covered, so the family breadwinner can get to work

Last year, an average 450 unique calls were made each month into HomeFront’s housing hotline by families facing an imminent housing crisis. Every day, HomeFront case managers and other staff are helping families weave together plans to chart their own paths away from homelessness and toward stability.

While our mission has the audacious goal to end homelessness in our community, HomeFront CEO Sarah Steward explains, “We cannot end homelessness only by responding once it has happened. Instead, we must ensure families never experience the pain of homelessness in the first place.” Helping families avoid homelessness and its trauma is not a new direction for HomeFront, but to fully realize our mission, we must do even more.

Under Steward’s guidance, HomeFront is embarking on a multi-year effort, guided by our newly adopted three-year Strategic Plan, to become even more “upstream” in preventing homelessness. We plan to increase our formal homelessness prevention work, and also expand this focus to all HomeFront programs and staff.

For Carla, her call to the hotline led to meetings with a HomeFront case manager, who addressed the family’s housing issues through emergency funding, plus a payment plan negotiated with the landlord. But our help during Carla’s time of need did not stop here: she was connected to our Resource Network for food and other necessities and her children participated in our Back-to-School drive, all part of helping her become—and remain—stable and thriving.

“We cannot end homelessness only by responding once it has happened. Instead, we must ensure families never experience the pain of homelessness in the first place.”

— HomeFront CEO Sarah Steward



HomeFront case managers play a key role in helping families move from instability to secure, independent futures.

From Sarah's Desk:

Recently, I was thrilled to give Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson a tour of our Lawrenceville Campus. Thanks to her advocacy, HomeFront can now expand our Diaper Resource Center (see below). Even though we gave out nearly one million diapers last year, that does not meet the current and growing need. With this funding, we will be able to do even more.

During our tour, I showed the Assemblywoman our Resource Network — our Choice Market food pantry, Furnish the Future, and the station where volunteers prepare diapers for distribution.

What do diapers and these other resources have to do with homelessness? At HomeFront, we are committed to preventing homelessness before it happens. Access to these necessities creates critical space in the monthly budget for a family living paycheck to paycheck. It is that space that allows them to make ends meet, to save, to thrive — and make progress on their path to stability.

Sarah Steward

Sarah Steward, HomeFront CEO



Wrapped in Love from the Community

Heartfelt thanks to the quilters of the Concordia Chapter of Brandeis in Monroe Township for their generous gifts of time and talent, creating this beautiful baby quilt for one of our families staying at the HomeFront Family Campus.



This is a dream come true to be able to start here at HomeFront to do this expansion.

— Assemblywoman
Verlina Reynolds-Jackson



HomeFront Receives Funding for Diaper Resource Center Expansion

Thanks to the efforts and assistance of Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, HomeFront has received funding from the State of New Jersey to underwrite a major expansion of our Diaper Resource Center. Pictured are the Assemblywoman with HomeFront CEO Sarah Steward receiving a presentation check.

For parents impacted by economic crisis, always having a clean diaper for their child can often seem like a luxury. But they are a basic need for every baby, every toddler and their families. Last year, HomeFront provided nearly one million diapers, free of charge to families who needed them. Thanks to this financial support, we will be able to help even more families.

During her visit, Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson explained, "I do a lot of work around maternal health and the need for diapers always come up...This project has been in the works for over two years now. This is a dream come true to be able to start here at HomeFront to do this expansion."

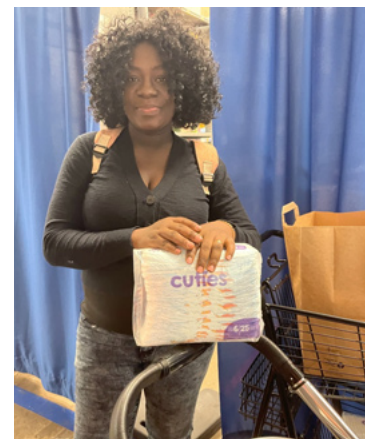
Our Wish List

- Humidifiers
- Diapers (sizes 4-6)
- Baby lotion
- Baby diaper cream - Desitin
- All-purpose spray cleaner
- Laundry detergent - fragrance free
- Bathroom cleaner
- Twin bedding set
- Soap
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Shampoo (18 oz or less)
- Deodorant
- Tampons
- Adult diapers - all sizes

See more of our most needed items by scanning the QR code:



To donate items or get more information, contact us at (609) 989-9417 x107, or getinvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org



THE NEED IS REAL

1 in 5 children under five years old in the U.S. live in poverty and public assistance (like food stamps) does not cover the cost of diapers.

MARCOS: A Ray of Light Graduates the Atkinson Childcare Center

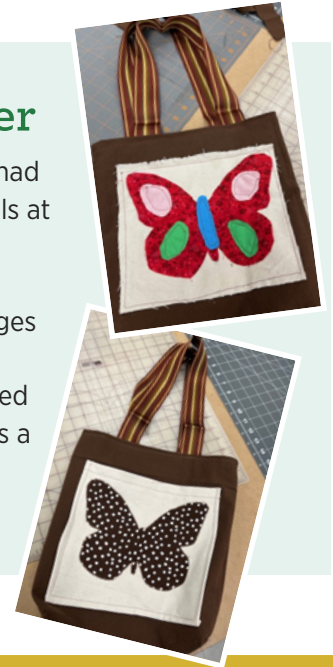
For the past 11 months, young Marcos was a constant sunbeam at the Atkinson Childcare Center: full of light and unbounded energy. When teachers noticed he was having trouble breathing, our Health and Wellness team connected his mother to a pediatrician. Marcos was subsequently diagnosed with asthma and provided with appropriate care and all he needed to flourish physically. Atkinson's caring staff members also provided educational, social and behavioral support so that Marcos will be successful from day one of this new year in his new school, now that he has graduated preschool. While we miss his daily bursts of energy, we know he's thriving in kindergarten, bringing his light to a whole new world of learning!



"Sew" Much Fun for Summer

For the third summer in a row, Camp Mercer kids had the chance to learn—or improve—their sewing skills at HomeFront's SewingSpace.

One day a week across the summer, youngsters ages ten and up created that session's special project. Starting with a sunglass case, the projects increased in difficulty to match their improving skills, such as a change purse or stuffed elephant, ending with their own tote bags.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS — For all of the specifics and the m



Fun for All! On **Sunday, October 27** HomeFront's 5K Run, 1 Mile Walk and Family Fun Day is returning for its 15th year. The Halloween event, filled with fun, fitness, and community support, will take place at the Carnegie Center in West Windsor.



Produce at our Choice Market food pantry.

Illuminating the Need; Elevating Our Voices

From **November 17-23**, HomeFront will again participate in Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, an annual, national program created to draw attention to food and housing insecurity. HomeFront will offer numerous events and volunteer opportunities, all free and open to the public.

OUR COMMUNITY CARES



Back to School with a Smile

A big “Thank you” to our Back-to-School donors who helped outfit over 1,500 local children with backpacks, school supplies and brand-new, first-day-of-school outfits.

Helping Hands Needed!

Current HomeFront volunteer opportunities:

- **Halloween 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk**
- **Food Drive:** Organize a general or Thanksgiving food drive
- **Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week,** Nov. 17-23: Mark your calendars
- **On-Site Volunteer Opportunities:** Choice Market food pantry, FreeStore, Treasure Trove and more

For more, please email getinvolved@homefrontnj.org.



A Community Thrift Store Helping Families Thrive

Treasure Trove, HomeFront’s thrift store in the heart of downtown Hopewell, features donated vintage and collectible décor, fine dinnerware, furniture, art and jewelry. A dedicated team of almost 40 volunteers transform the space into a “treasure trove.” They help procure and arrange the many donations, all while greeting customers with a warm smile. The Treasure Trove is a place to find a bargain, a pillar of support for HomeFront families, and a beacon for sharing our mission.

Visit the shop today at 31 West Broad Street, Hopewell, open Wednesday–Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 12-4. For information, email treasuretrove@homefrontnj.org.

For most up-to-date details, visit our website, www.HomeFrontNJ.org

No Family Should Go Hungry

On Thanksgiving Day

Or Any Day...



HomeFront Thanksgiving Drive:

Starting **October 9**. Thanksgiving basket drop-offs take place Nov. 1-16: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday 9 a.m.– 12 noon. Limited pickups are also available depending on location and size of donation.

Holiday Wishes: Making Dreams Come True

Create holiday magic for children and families in our community — **Nov. 27-Dec. 9**: Donation drop-offs take place 9 a.m.– 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturdays 9 a.m.– 12 noon.

Help Us Make
the Holidays
Merry for
ALL Kids



SHOP WITH IMPACT: Holiday Markets Support Our Families

- **HomeFront Holiday Market**, 1880 Princeton Avenue; Lawrenceville; **November 23-24**, 9 am-3 pm: over 40 vendors including ArtSpace and SewingSpace, with handmade and artisan items
- **Treasure Trove Holiday Boutique**, 31 West Broad Street, Hopewell; **November 23-December 22**: one-of-a-kind holiday gifts



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT Johnny: Creator and Teacher

Johnny, a special HomeFront volunteer and crocheter extraordinaire, was pressed into service by the director of HomeFront's ArtSpace, who asked those waiting to visit our Choice Market, "Does anyone know how to crochet?" Johnny, who had been taught by his grandmother as a youth, said yes, went into the light-filled art studio, and settled in with donated supplies. Then the magic began to happen, thanks to his spirit, energy and talent. Johnny now volunteers on-site during food distribution days, teaching and inspiring others. Every person Johnny teaches to crochet leaves with a supply of yarn, a crochet hook and a newfound spark of creativity. Donations of yarn and crochet hooks for ArtSpace would be much appreciated and can be delivered to our Donations Center at 1880 Princeton Avenue, Lawrenceville, Monday-Friday 9am-3pm and Saturday, 9am-12pm.



Welcome, Emerson Fellows!

HomeFront was recently chosen as a host field site, the first in this region, for two Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows, a national program designed to train and inspire new leaders in the movement to end hunger and poverty.

We extend a warm welcome to Will Teasley, a North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University graduate, and Josh Greene, recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Will and Josh are getting hands-on experience in HomeFront's Resource Network and also undertaking research projects designed to help inform local hunger and poverty efforts.



Congratulations to Our Newest Hire Expectations Graduates

On June 13, HomeFront celebrated Hire Expectations graduates receiving their GEDs, CDLs and other important certifications! As one graduate said, "Wherever your journey leads you, know that it is possible if you work and are committed. 'We can turn our can'ts into cans and our dreams into plans.' We did it, you did it and be proud of yourself today, tomorrow and every day."



CAMP MERCER 2024: A Brighter Summer for Youngsters and Their Families

“My child had an amazing time in camp...and it made an amazing impact on him...Truly grateful we had the opportunity to become a family with Camp Mercer.”

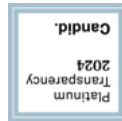


After eight weeks of Camp Mercer, a HomeFront staff member asked a youngster what he thought about his summer. His answer, “It feels like a dream.” That is our goal at HomeFront: to provide children with dreams of a better future.

**THANK YOU TO OUR
WONDERFUL
WEDNESDAYS HOSTS!**

- BlackRock
- Church & Dwight
- DiMedio & Associates
- First Bank
- NJM Insurance Group
- RBC Wealth Management
- ZS Cares

Help Us Save! If you'd like to receive HomeFront Happenings online, let us know and we'll add your name to our paperless list. Contact HomeFront@HomeFrontNJ.org



“Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”
- HARRIET TUBMAN

We share the same vision for our community; working together, we can make it a reality.

1880 Princeton Ave.,
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
(609) 989-9417
www.HomeFrontNJ.org



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 1367