

# HomeFront Happenings

Spring/Summer 2025

## Summer Sun Can Also Mean Summer Stress *Together, We Can Build Hope Amid Uncertainty*

For families experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or poverty, summer doesn't always mean carefree fun—but rather stress and crisis. Without childcare, parents can't work or are forced to reduce their hours. With children out of school, the family food budget must expand—or more children face hunger. Without educational enrichment, many children risk falling further behind.

But our families and the HomeFront community have never been resigned to just accepting uncertainty or despair. Working together, we still find joy every summer.

Our eight-week Camp Mercer is in full swing, providing children the chance to try new activities and build self-confidence. Mornings are devoted to academics and the afternoons to fun and enrichment. You can visit [bit.ly/campmercer25](http://bit.ly/campmercer25) to help provide a child with a summer to remember.

Visits to our Choice Market Food Pantry usually spike in the summer months, with families losing the benefit of daily school meals. But summer in the Choice Market also means more in-season fresh produce from local farms and recipe opportunities with our partner, Rolling Harvest Food Rescue.

Rolling Harvest has also been active in the Teaching Kitchen at our Family Campus, offering interactive workshops on gardening, cooking, and the nutrition of New Jersey fruits and veggies for adults and children.

Last, but not least, we celebrate the adults who recently graduated from Hire Expectations, receiving their hard-earned GEDs or job training certificates, surrounded by the support of their families, volunteer tutors, and HomeFront staff.

Thank you for believing that all families deserve safety, dignity, and hope—all year round.



### MAKING THIS A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

From the joy of summer camp to the celebration of high school equivalency and job training graduates, we walk alongside families and children as they achieve the future they want to see.





## Our Wish List

### Camp Mercer supplies

See more: [bit.ly/campsupplies25](https://bit.ly/campsupplies25)

- Children's sunscreen (spray preferred)
- Children's bug spray (DEET-free preferred)
- Small cooling microfiber towels
- Oversized beach towels

### New or gently used:

- Window AC units (5,000-8,000 BTUs) and fans
- Towel sets
- Shower curtain sets with rings
- Twin and queen bedding sets
- Period supplies (pads, tampons)
- Unisex shampoo (20oz or less)
- Deodorant
- Laundry detergent
- Cars in working order

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



Questions? Contact us at (609) 989-9417 x112, or [getinvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org](mailto:getinvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org)



### On the Cover

Our newsletters feature work by artists in ArtSpace. This issue's painting is by Megan S.

*Note that we change the names of clients to protect their privacy.*

## From Sarah's Desk

As we begin summer, our cover story reminds us that this time of fun and sun can actually be a difficult one for HomeFront families. Without the school-based programming and supports on which many of our families rely, summer means they must try to do more with even fewer resources.

This summer poses additional challenges, for our families and for HomeFront. Every day, we read another headline about government decisions and funding cuts that impact the most vulnerable members of our community. These are the individuals and families who come to HomeFront for shelter, food, and other transformative assistance.

But I take heart, knowing the support we receive from caring community members like you. We saw this in action at our 2025 Women's Initiative Spring Luncheon in early May. It was an inspiring, uplifting gathering, one that supported our families and particularly our children's programming.

The energy and feeling of connection in the room at the Spring Luncheon was palpable. While we do not know what the future holds for social safety net programs, I do know that this community will continue its dedication and caring toward our most vulnerable. And for that—the hope it brings to all the families we serve at HomeFront—I thank you.

*Sarah Steward*

Sarah Steward,  
HomeFront CEO



Sarah and Crystal Feliciano, Councilwoman At Large for the City of Trenton, at our Women's Initiative Spring Luncheon.

## YOUR IMPACT: *In Numbers, Stories, and Community Support*

### 2023-24 Annual Impact Report Available

- View online at [bit.ly/hfreport2024](https://bit.ly/hfreport2024), or for a hard copy of the report, contact us at (609) 989-9417 x107.

### By the Numbers: *A Year at HomeFront and the Impact on our Families*

**30,676** HomeFront provided shelter, food, and transformative assistance to 30,676 unique individuals, helping them navigate and overcome crises with dignity and hope.

**1,540** 571 families, 1,540 individuals, received critical support to remain in their homes or secure new housing to avoid the pain of homelessness.

**793** 309 families, 793 individuals, received support and lived with dignity at our Family Campus, in our FreshStart housing, or our permanent, affordable, and service-enriched housing, creating a foundation for success.

**2,130** On average, 2,130 households per month received free groceries, fresh produce, dairy, and meats from our food pantries, ensuring no family went hungry.

### Visit the Newly Designed HomeFront Website

We're excited to announce our refreshed website, with a streamlined donation form, further information for neighbors seeking services, and much more!

Check it out on desktop, tablet, or mobile at [HomeFrontNJ.org](https://HomeFrontNJ.org).

# KidZone!

*Our Children's and Family Supports programs embrace a two-generation approach with the goal of helping children grow on a path to realizing life's possibilities.*

## Sports & Swimming Galore

In celebration of National Girls & Women in Sports Day, children in our *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* program participated in clinics at Princeton and Rider Universities. They met student athletes and coaches, learned different sports, watched official basketball games, and participated in other festivities.



In addition to recreational Gym & Swim time at The Pennington School, JHD kids also participated in the Water Safety/Swim Lesson Program at The Lawrenceville School.

This 8-week class helps kids become more competent swimmers and build their confidence in the water. The class was taught by trained Lawrenceville students who infused fun and camaraderie into every session!



## A Spring Break Full of Joy

Kids and adults alike enjoyed a jam-packed spring break at the Family Campus: Arts & crafts, sports, exercise classes, outdoor activities, and more.

## HOMEFRONT EVENTS

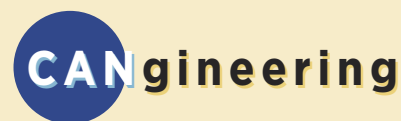
Visit **HomeFrontNJ.org** for details and up-to-date news.



**Running  
thru August**

**Sponsor a  
camper today!**

Sponsorship online: [bit.ly/campmercer25](http://bit.ly/campmercer25)



**Food Drive =  
Fun for Your Company**

Host a team building CANgineering event this summer! Teams compete by building structures using canned goods, which are then donated to our Choice Pantry. Collect donations while enjoying spirited competition with other local groups.

## Monthly Volunteer Orientations

Upcoming dates announced online.





# Our Community Cares

*Our unwavering volunteers, donors, and staff step up to ensure HomeFront families have the support they need. We are, indeed, better together. — Thank You!*



Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing has hosted dinner and tutoring for our *Joy, Hopes, and Dreams* children every week for many years.



Thanks to all who contributed to our Diaper Challenge! Especially Asha Jyothi Youth Volunteers (above), Mercer County Education Association, St. David the King Parish, Hamilton Elks, and Mom's Club of Robbinsville who each made large in-kind donations.



Bank of America Merrill Lynch of Pennington participated in CANgineering, building cool structures out of nonperishable food that was then donated to us – fighting summer food insecurity. Bank of America also provided three jam-packed days of free financial workshops for clients at our Lawrenceville Campus.



HomeFront's Treasure Trove is a place to find unique bargains and vintage finds while giving back. Proceeds from all sales benefit our programs.

Donate or shop for vintage and collectible décor, art, crystal, furniture, silver, jewelry, china and more! Donated items are fully tax-deductible. Shop and drop off small items during our hours of operation at 31 West Broad Street in Hopewell: Wed.-Fri. 10 am–5 pm, Sat. 10 am–4 pm, and Sun. 12 pm–4 pm. *Please note the Treasure Trove will be closed from 8/17-9/3 for summer break.*

Learn about donating larger items at: [homefrontnj.org/Treasure-Trove](http://homefrontnj.org/Treasure-Trove)



# Here @ HomeFront

Interested in a tour? Email [GetInvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org](mailto:GetInvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org) to learn more.



## WOMEN'S INITIATIVE SPRING LUNCHEON Women Taking a Stand

The 2025 Women's Initiative Spring Luncheon, held on May 4 at the Grounds for Sculpture, embraced the theme, "Growing with HomeFront: Helping Children Flourish and Families Thrive."

Approximately 300 guests enjoyed a buffet brunch, live music, shopping at artisan vendors' tables, and an uplifting program. Inspirational speakers and two stirring videos highlighted the impact of HomeFront's two-generation approach to our Children's and Family Supports programs, helping children and their families on their path to long-term stability.

Aileen, former HomeFront client who has gone on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Aliyah and Salihah, Joy, Hopes, and Dreams alumni who remain close and whose families live in HomeFront's permanent affordable homes.



*Coming to HomeFront and Hire Expectations every day was a relief. While my daughter was at school, I was free from an abusive and negative home life and in a bright environment where there were computers, resources, and lots of encouragement from the program staff and other clients.*

*HomeFront staff and volunteers "were my biggest supporters growing up. They're why I have hope in succeeding in life," Aliyah said. Both young women are still in touch with staff and volunteers they met at HomeFront. "[My mentor] saw something in me," Aliyah said, reflecting upon the ways her tutor gave her guidance as she applied to college. Salihah echoed, "The part of the JHD program I appreciated the most was tutoring because it brought me to tutors that really had my best interest at heart. They didn't stop until I was where I needed to be and then some."*

## Smart Ways to Give: Now and for the Future

- Once you turn 72 (or 70.5 if you turned 70.5 in 2019), you are required to take a distribution from your Individual Retirement Account(s) – IRA(s).
- Those who meet the age requirement can transfer up to \$100,000 per individual, per year, directly to a qualified charitable organization — the donated amount is excluded from a person's federal taxable income.
- Reach out to your financial planner to learn more about this mutually beneficial way to make a gift.
- We would be honored if you'd consider leaving HomeFront a gift in your will. For more information, email [lastingimpact@HomeFrontNJ.org](mailto:lastingimpact@HomeFrontNJ.org) and we can schedule a time to discuss.

Explore other tax-smart gifts at: [homefrontnj.org/Planned-Giving](https://homefrontnj.org/Planned-Giving)

## Monthly Giving

Make an impact on local families every month by setting up a recurring gift.

Visit [homefrontnj.org/Donate](https://homefrontnj.org/Donate) and click on "Recurring donation" within the donation form to get started, or call (609) 989-9417 x107.



# Sponsor a Camper and Provide a Summer of Wonder!

With your help, HomeFront can ensure that every child has a summer to remember, filled with joy, laughter, and priceless experiences.

For children and families experiencing housing instability, summer can be a challenging time: lack of childcare, food insecurity, and more. Thanks to the support of our caring community, we provide a safe,

nurturing environment for children to learn, try new activities, build confidence, and make lasting friendships.

Camp Mercer, our eight-week day camp, serves children aged 5-15. Mornings are devoted to academics, and the afternoons are devoted to fun and relaxation. We can't forget about weekly field trips! Sadly, government funding for children's programming and summer camps is limited, and so we must rely on the generosity of our supporters to continue this vital work.

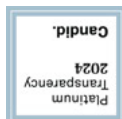


It costs \$375 to sponsor a camper for a week and \$3,000 for the full eight weeks.

Visit [bit.ly/campmercer25](https://bit.ly/campmercer25), scan the QR code, or call 609-989-9417 x107 to make a gift or learn more about Camp Mercer.



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 [HomeFrontNJ.org](mailto:HomeFrontNJ.org)



—CHINESE PROVERB—  
“The best time to  
plant a tree was 20  
years ago. The second  
-best time is now.”

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