

HomeFront Matters

SUMMER/FALL 2017

Building a Culture of Health and Wellness



Dr. Phil Bonaparte and nurse practitioner Pam Ford keep a watchful eye on HomeFront families and ensure that routine medical needs are met.

After years of stable employment, Raymond H. became disabled, lost his job and ended-up at HomeFront's family shelter with his five children. When he came to our on-site medical practitioners, Raymond's blood sugar was dangerously high. We took him to the hospital where he was diagnosed with diabetes. After a two week stay in the ICU, we helped stabilize him and began educating him and his family on healthier food and lifestyle choices.

Raymond's story is symptomatic of the healthcare gap affecting the homeless and working poor. Too many living in poverty have limited access to preventative medical care and lack the knowledge to make healthier lifestyle choices. Too many are still using the emergency room as their sole source of treatment. The most vulnerable are children who require regular immunizations and developmental well-visits to ensure they are on track toward a healthy future.

Because the need for healthcare is so urgent, we have responded, in partnership with caring volun-

teer medical professionals and world-class hospitals, by permeating our state-of-the-art Family Campus with a culture of health and wellness. Our Family Campus, which encompasses our family shelter, education and job training, childcare, and so much more, all in one place, now includes a well-equipped Health Clinic, where through the generosity of our volunteer doctors and nurses, high quality medical services are provided, free of charge.

Importantly, along with offering immediate care to people like Raymond, we emphasize healthy living. Volunteers teach exercise, yoga, nutrition and healthy cooking-on-a-budget. Health education, including seminars presented by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, are a critical part of our holistic approach to family well-being.

Our Family Campus, which encompasses our family shelter, education and job training and childcare...now includes a well-equipped Health Clinic

Inside this issue

- ❖ KidZone
- ❖ Upcoming Events
- ❖ Family Campus
- ❖ Our Community





Notes From Connie's Desk

A Vision Realized

I rarely single out HomeFront staff for special praise because they are all extraordinary and go above and beyond every day. That said, I am going to make an exception in the case of Ilsa Lord, who, through her vision and leadership and sheer determination has created a vibrant culture of health and wellness at our Family Campus that has been a revelation to those we serve.

Ilsa, who has been involved with HomeFront since the motel days, realized early on that those who struggled to lift themselves out of poverty often waged that daily battle while really not feeling very well! Good nutrition, proper education, exercise and medical care were viewed as luxuries and chronic illness a fact of life. For those of us, like Ilsa, who fight for social justice and a level playing field for all, this was unacceptable and, at our campus, the right to a healthy body and mind was made a top priority.

Over the last two years, Ilsa and her remarkable band of volunteer health and wellness professionals have changed the

profile, and maybe the future, of the HomeFront client. We now have an onsite clinic with a doctor and a pediatrician and three RNs and Teaching Kitchen with dietary counseling. Zumba, exercise and yoga classes are part of the curriculum for our residents and a host of health education classes are regularly offered. And it's working. The positive outlook and new level of energy and vigor is palpable in the hallways. Parents and kids alike are glowing and I could not be more moved and proud.

So I want to use this moment to recognize Ilsa and her health and wellness team — Dr. Philip Bonaparte, Dr. Stanley Haberman, Carol Nicholas, Pam Ford, Mandy Holanda, Linda Sichel, Dr. Melissa Bennett, Ann Wong, and Melissa Johnson — for working to give our clients the most precious gift of all, the gift of health.

Connie Mercer
HomeFront Founder and CEO

WISHLIST:

- Feminine hygiene products
- Low sugar cereal and canned proteins
- Used vehicles in good working order
- Diapers (size 4+) and baby wipes
- 2 transport wheelchairs for the Family Campus
- Healthy snacks for our tutoring programs
- New underwear, socks and sneakers
- Twin size linens

To donate items or get more information, contact us: MeghanC@homefrontnj.org or 609-989-9417 ext. 133.



On the Cover

Each issue of *HomeFront Matters* features work created by an artist in ArtSpace. This issue's flowers were painted by Kathy Bird.

Back to School & Ready to Learn

"The thrill of having something new for the first day of school—notebooks, clothing or school supplies—is universal," says Meghan Cubano, HomeFront's community engagement manager. "That's why HomeFront organizes a Back-to-School drive every year. We want to set-up our children for success in the academic year—and beyond." Over 2,000 homeless and at-risk kids will go back to school ready to succeed in the classroom, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our community! Each child will receive a backpack filled with age appropriate school supplies and a new uniform or outfit for their first day of school.



HomeFront kids are delighted with activities that nourish their lives and give them a vision of a brighter future.



Camp Kids Wait for a Fast Trip Down the Water Slide

Campers spent eight weeks of fun-filled days with academic support and rich learning experiences. Corporate sponsors made **Wonderful Wednesdays** and **Terrific Thursdays** even more special with water games, petting zoo visits, face-painting, crafts and much more!

Babies Sleep More Safely in Baby Boxes

“This box will keep my baby safe,” explains Stephan, a new father and HomeFront client. “But it’s not just a box, we had to take a class and learn about baby safety to get it.” Baby boxes are essentially “new baby-care starter kits” that include a sturdy 26”x16” cardboard bassinet with a firm mattress, diapers and information about safe infant sleep practices.



To receive a Baby Box, parents must complete an on-line course discouraging the unsafe practice of sharing their bed with their newborn. Recipients learn that bed-sharing is linked to sleep-related deaths including SIDS and accidental suffocation.

“The boxes are a big hit with clients,” says Janine Greene, HomeFront children’s champion director, “The safe-sleep lesson is presented in

a clear way that really makes sense. The clients like how easy it is to provide a perfect and safe sleeping space for their baby.”

So far, HomeFront has given out over 40 baby boxes to delighted new parents. The Baby Boxes initiative originated in Finland—a country that now has one of the world’s lowest infant mortality rates—credited in part to the distribution of “baby boxes” and related public health education efforts.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Holiday Open House
December 9, 2017**



**Thursday, March 22, 2018
SAVE THE DATE**

For details visit our website,
www.HomeFrontNJ.org

HomeFront Families Celebrate Father’s Day

—as we help men become the best possible dads!



Our Community Cares

ArtJam ArtShow Huge Success



Ruthann Traylor, HomeFront's ArtSpace director and her team of volunteers did it again! Our 7th annual fun and funky pop-up art gallery, Art-

Jam, featured over 130 national and local artists, many of them HomeFront clients. Thanks to the entire Princeton community for visiting and supporting ArtSpace—and to Palmer Square for graciously donating their space. The funds raised through ArtJam will allow us to continue to maintain and expand the therapeutic arts program offered at HomeFront.

WI Luncheon: A Great Way to Spend Mother's Day

HomeFront's Women's Initiative Luncheon was once again a resounding success with over 250 guests in attendance.



Luncheon attendees hear a former HomeFront client tell of her journey from homelessness to self sufficiency.

Thanks go to emcee Lauren Wanko, guest speaker Tina Kelley and the Women's Initiative Advisory Board for their

important contributions to this special event. Proceeds from the luncheon benefit HomeFront's Atkinson Child Development Center. Pat Hartpence, HomeFront board member, remarks, "For the last several years, my mother and I have made it an annual tradition to attend HomeFront's Women's Initiative Luncheon. We both are truly inspired by the many remarkable stories of hope and resilience bravely shared by HomeFront clients and special guests."



Garden to Table — Kids Plant, Harvest, Cook, Eat!

Our dream of building a beautiful garden at the Family Campus has become a reality, thanks to our amazing friends at the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, led by Barbara Andersen.

At the start of the summer, they sent a terrific volunteer team to build a vegetable garden for our families to care for, learn from and enjoy. The volunteers from RWJF worked hard constructing raised beds and fencing, and preparing the soil.

Then, our clients, children and adults, got involved planting seeds and watering, and soon enough, weeding as well, of course. A special shout out to Fredy Estrada for all of his help. Now, late into the summertime, the garden is producing impressive amounts of vegetables which are being harvested by eager, excited children.

The clients visit the garden before Teaching Kitchen cooking classes to gather herbs or vegetables that are ready. The kids, preschoolers and school-aged, are learning about how things grow, as well as tasting and cooking items they have not tried before. Many of our clients have expressed interest in growing fresh herbs and vegetables at their own homes. The kids love to track the growth of the melons, cucumbers, cabbage and zucchini.

Together with staff and volunteers from our Teaching Kitchen, children and their parents have been involved in preparing delicious and nutritious meals using all the vegetables they have helped grow. Everyone seems much more excited about eating their vegetables these days.

Run for Hope

A HUGE thank you to everyone who participated in the Run/Walk for Hope at ETS in Princeton. Together we raised more funds than ever for our *Joy, Hopes & Dreams* summer fun program. Heather Lyon, volunteer extraordinaire, brilliantly champions this event, but we couldn't have done it without all of our amazing volunteers!



HomeFront Family Campus Happenings

Please come visit the HomeFront Family Campus! Contact Liza Peck at LizaP@homefrontnj.org to schedule a tour.

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Never Too Young For Yoga



HomeFront keeps all ages healthy and active. Volunteer yoga instructors teach our family members this ancient art. Our preschoolers learn exercises that are good for mind, body and spirit.

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Rolling on the River



Clients working toward their high school equivalency diplomas took learning to the Delaware River, a trip made possible by a generous donation from The Steamboat Classroom. The group, along with four staff members, spent one morning aboard the old steam powered stern paddle wheeler, "This latest trip was the fifth year that *Hire Expectations* has enjoyed being on the water and learning about the wildlife and history of the river," explains host Richard Moody. "We are always thrilled to have such enthusiastic students!"



Promoting Literacy

Literacy is such an important part of our academic support programs. Our Summer Reading Program at the Family Campus makes it fun and rewarding for both parent and child. During the month of July, our kids read over 330 books. The all star reader was six year old Felix who read 39 books!

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Art Classes Inspire Young Artists

Our young artists keep very busy in art class.



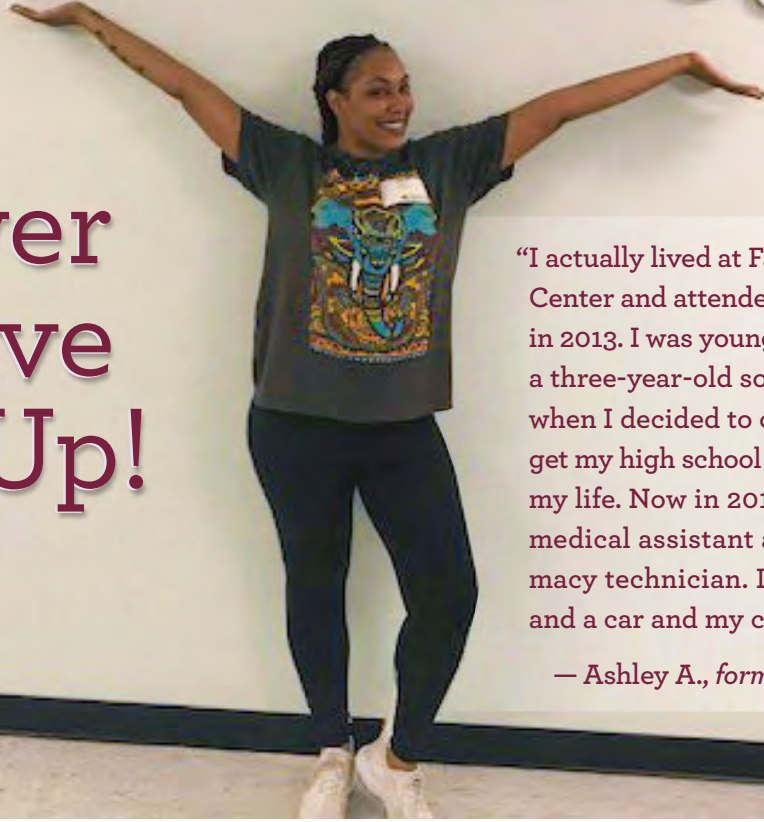
Puppet Show Captivates Children And Parents

Mr. Dolson from Wings of Magic and his interactive puppet show visit the Family Campus for a fun-filled night.



Hofmann Career Center

Never Give Up!



“I actually lived at Family Preservation Center and attended the GED program in 2013. I was young and homeless with a three-year-old son. I made a change when I decided to come here – not just to get my high school diploma, but to change my life. Now in 2017, I am a certified medical assistant and a certified pharmacy technician. I have my own place and a car and my children are happy.”

— Ashley A., former HomeFront client

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



Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.
— Helen Keller

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