

HomeFront Happenings

WINTER 2021

NEW HOMES & NEW BEGINNINGS

HomeFront Brings 16 Families Home for the Holidays

“I feel so blessed” says Belinda*, a U.S. postal worker, looking on as HomeFront case managers Elijah and Victoria hang a Christmas wreath on her family’s new front door. She, her husband, and their two sons recently won a literal lottery. They were one of 16 local families selected from among 230 who applied to move into the newly built Lynwood homes, located in Hamilton and managed by HomeFront.

These permanent, service-enriched rental properties provide affordable housing options for local low- and mid-income families. “Before this” says Belinda, “the four of us were squeezed in a one bedroom apartment, making do. We were sleeping on the couch or all in one bed. It was tight, very tight. Now my sons can have friends over; they have their own beds. It’s a home.”

Despite having a good job, dignified housing in a safe neighborhood was out of her family’s reach. Her husband was unable to work while he’d been awaiting a heart transplant, and her income alone was far below the \$31.96/hour it costs a family in NJ to afford a two bedroom rental home. (As calculated for the NLIHC 2021 Out of Reach Report.) But this holiday

the family not only won HomeFront’s lottery, they had an additional Christmas miracle — in September, Belinda’s husband received a new heart, and is now home, on Lynwood Avenue, recovering well from his heart surgery.

The 16 new Lynwood apartments were built by HomeFront’s nonprofit sister agency, Homes By TLC, in partnership with public and private grants.



In total, HomeFront manages 125 affordable, permanent, service-enriched units throughout Mercer county where families pay one-third of their incomes in rent.

“We are so proud of the new homes and so very grateful to all our partners



on this endeavor,” says HomeFront CFO Celia Bernstein. “DCA-HOME, Hamilton Township’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Mercer County Affordable Housing Trust Fund, our private donors and TD Bank. We also had wonderful volunteers from area businesses and organizations share in this labor of love — Lowe’s, Korean Martyrs Church, and TD Bank. And our builder — Andy Ward of PCG — could not have worked harder on our behalf during this most challenging of times. *The children who grow up here will see this as their vision of home. A powerful way to break the cycle of poverty.*”

*The U.S. Postal worker we interviewed asked that her real name not be used to maintain the family’s privacy.



Our Wish List:

- Vehicles in working order
- Rice, canned beans, pasta, peanut butter, low-sugar cereals, canned proteins
- Diapers (size 5,6, and pullups)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Winter coats and accessories
- Twin bedding sets (sheets, pillowcase, and comforter)
- New shower curtains, liners, and hooks
- Winter blankets

To donate items or get more information, contact us: at (609) 989-9417 x133, or getinvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org
Also see our Amazon wishlist: [tinyurl.com/HFCovidRelief](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=ast_spl)

In the past year, we responded to 52,439 cries for help — assisting families with shelter, food, and other life-changing assistance.



On the Cover

Each HomeFront newsletter features work created by an artist in ArtSpace. This Winter issue's scene was painted by Sharon A.

“Welcome to HomeFront. How May I Help You?”

Five days a week, people of all ages stream into HomeFront's offices in Lawrence looking for critical aid. They come in cars, on buses, on bicycles, in wheelchairs or on foot, quietly lining up way before the doors open at 9 a.m. Many come with hungry kids in tow, who we always give something to eat while their parents wait to see a case manager. The amazing front desk workers ready themselves emotionally and physically for another day at the HomeFront front desk.

“Welcome to HomeFront. How may I help you?” The answers are always varied, and always difficult to hear.

- There is the mom with three children and deep shadows under her eyes who has fled constant beatings at home. We will place her in our emergency safe haven with wraparound services.
- A couple with two kids are behind on rent because the dad lost his job when he got sick. We pay their back rent and help the dad find a new job.
- A grandma who just got custody of her grandchild needs coats and food and gets both.
- An addicted pregnant woman who



desperately wants to get clean asks about our *For My Baby and Me* program.

- A woman has finally landed a coveted job interview and needs something professional to wear. We give her a voucher for the Free Store.
- A mom comes in with a Section 8 voucher for housing that she must use in 60 days or lose. We help her locate housing and pay her security deposit.
- A former client comes to visit her case manager to let her know how well she's doing and that she's moving into a new apartment and got a promotion.

The daily line at the front desk represents those who struggle in our area and the constant challenges they face. HomeFront, with the support of its family of donors, makes sure that they get the help they need.

Smart Ways to Give — Making a Lasting Impact

We would be honored if you'd consider joining HomeFront's Legacy Society with a gift in your will. For more information, email lastingimpact@HomeFrontNJ.org and we can schedule time to discuss. Call 609-989-9417 x107 so we can help!

- With a charitable gift of appreciated securities held long-term, the donation you make and the deduction you get are greater than they would be if you were to sell the shares and donate the cash proceeds instead. That is because when you donate shares, **you avoid paying the capital gains tax.**
- Once you turn 70.5 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.

Contagious Laughter and Love Abound



HomeFront's children's programs ensure that children who are homeless or living in deep poverty have a vision of a better future.

HomeFront, like everyone this past year, adapted to a new normal. Resilient and adaptable describes our year. Those words also best describe our children who inspire us every day.



Making Memories at Howell Living Farm



Our Joy, Hopes, & Dreams kids had a terrific and impactful time at Howell Living History Farm. Pete Dawson, director of Howell Living Farm, and Kim Daly, events and outreach coordinator, rolled out the red carpet and provided everyone with an amazing experience. They picked and shelled corn, made apple cider, and cared for the sheep and chickens. And for all their hard work, our kids were quietly treated to little extras throughout the trip including a private wagon ride and learning to "soul-train" the sheep from one pen to another.



Interested in a tour? Email getinvolved@HomeFrontNJ.org to learn more.

Getting Festive at the Family Campus

No one expects to have a holly jolly Christmas while living in a homeless shelter. Each year, we are committed to giving our kids and their parents a holiday season they won't soon forget. Thanks to generous supporters and volunteers, we kicked off the festivities with a visit from Nomad's pizza truck.



On Fridays, our families get cozy with popcorn and hot cocoa to watch fun holiday movies. Throughout the week, volunteer groups lead arts and crafts projects to create memorable gifts for mom and dad and sparkly treasures for the kids. Our families compete in a door decorating competition with ribbons and wreaths galore. Santa's visits are met with glee and the moms are given presents to give to their kids on Christmas morning. Tasha, a HomeFront client, has always dreaded the holiday season. "I am always anxious in December because I grew up in foster care and never had good holiday memories. I've never been able to spoil my kids with presents and didn't know about the traditions, but I'm thrilled we are here, and I hope I can always give my kids this same kind of Christmas."

COMING SOON

A WEEK OF HOPE

FEBRUARY 14-21, 2022

For the most up-to-date details follow us on Facebook and visit our website, www.HomeFrontNJ.org

No Child Should Go Hungry on Thanksgiving Day or Any Day

This year, over 1,750 Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to local families in need. True to our tradition, baskets included all the ingredients for a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal and food for the rest of the week. We also provided hot meals and groceries to over 200 families and singles living in area motels.



Fabulous Run/Walk for Hope

Our Halloween Run/Walk was an *amazing* success. Our thanks to **32 sponsors**, and **1,394 in person and virtual runners, walkers, "pumpkin dashers" and trunk-or-treaters!**



Our Community Cares

We're Better Together

Our constant unwavering volunteers, donors, and staff stepped up even higher to ensure HomeFront families had the support they needed.

We are, indeed, better together.



Women's Initiative members gather for a night out.



Preparing for our Pop-up Food Pantry at Trinity Baptist Church.



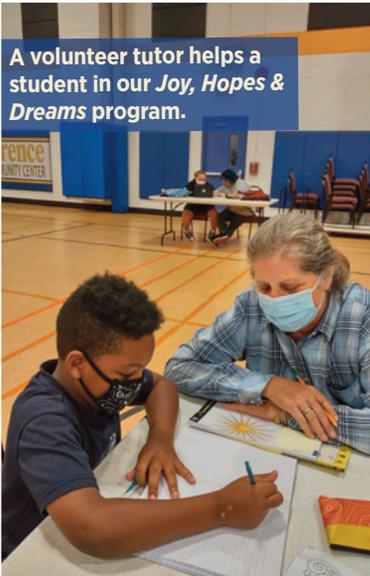
Rolling Harvest distributes fresh produce.



HomeFront's Board.



Terhune Orchards collects and donates winter coats.



A volunteer tutor helps a student in our Joy, Hopes & Dreams program.



Hun School students mentor our kids.



First Lady of NJ, Tammy Murphy, joins us to celebrate our Diaper Challenge campaign.



Littlebrook students collect diapers.

WHEN WE COUNT OUR BLESSINGS
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, WE COUNT YOU TWICE.



We wish each of you
the kind of holidays
that will delight
the child within you.

WE FEEL YOUR WARM HAND
IN OURS EVERY DAY.

— The HomeFront Team

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



“No one is useless in
this world who
lightens the
burdens of another.”
— Charles Dickens

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