



# The Doorway

Volume Thirteen Issue Two

## A Letter From The Executive Director



Dear Friends:

Over the last several years, the word “grit,” as it relates to success, has gained popularity. Recent research suggests that grit is the key to success. It is an understanding that failure is not permanent; it is

part of the journey. It is steadfast perseverance despite obstacles and staying on task towards a goal and not being derailed. It is understanding that adversity can lead to opportunity. Grit is what makes St. Mary’s such a special organization.

Our staff exhibit grit every day as they try to reach a child who has given up or seems unreachable. They come to work day after day because they have a passion and desire to help the children and families they serve, thrive.

And they persevere when youth respond with anger and aggression because they know that anger is borne out of fear and if they hang in there, the youth will begin to trust and heal because of the relationships we develop with them. Our staff members respond with kindness, understanding, respect and compassion because allowing a child to push us away is not an option. The emotional health and well-being of our clients is too important to give up. I’m certain that our staff members do not view themselves as heroes or as special in any way, but that’s how I see them.

Our perseverance has paid off. Our Shepherd Program leadership brought long-awaited initiatives to fruition after years of advocacy. Our Child & Family Trauma team, which has been grant funded for many years, now has the opportunity to expand as we have

secured an additional funding source. We have strengthened our influence in the community by expanding capacity in our Enhanced Out-patient Services program and we have recently contracted with two health insurers to provide Enhanced Outpatient Services to adults.

We continue to strengthen our school and residential programs by providing greater opportunities for our kids and families, which include a variety of educational field trips, a greater offering of psycho-educational groups, skills building through work with Occupational Therapy interns, regularly scheduled family nights and student and kids’ councils – which give our kids a strong voice in their treatment and educational and recreational endeavors. Both our EOS and residential programs are beginning to utilize Equine Assisted Psychotherapy with our clients, with wonderful results.

We have a strong desire to improve and we recognize how important Performance and Quality Improvement is in enhancing the quality of our work in all areas of the organization. It is the thread that is woven through all facets of our operations and helps us maintain our focus on our strategic plan goals and objectives when our attention could have easily gone elsewhere. Operationally, this focus has resulted in the agency achieving its strategic plan goals and eagerly anticipating the opportunity to set our new strategic direction.

We know we can’t do it alone. It takes a community to support the work that we do and we are grateful to our Board of Directors, volunteers and donors, because while grit is an internal resource that drives us, this external support provides the fuel that strengthens our resolve. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carlene Casciano-McCann, LMHC  
Executive Director

## That most wonderful time of year

Some of our past resident’s fondest memories are those spent at St. Mary’s during the holiday season. It is difficult to imagine that a child may be apart from his or her family during a season when the focus is on the gathering of family and friends. It is through your support that each child who is with our family at St. Mary’s during the holidays has an array of gifts to open on Christmas morning and joyful memories to share when they recall their stay at St. Mary’s. There are many ways you can help the children. Instead of purchasing small gifts for friends or co-workers, consider a donation to St. Mary’s. We will notify them of your generous gift! Age appropriate toys, craft supplies, games, gift cards, cash donations, new clothing and tickets to local attractions are just a few suggested gifts for the children. Detailed wish lists and additional suggestions may be found on our website at [www.smhfc.org](http://www.smhfc.org) or you may contact [sderita@smhfc.org](mailto:sderita@smhfc.org), 353-3900 x262 for information.



## Heal and Hope Walk 2013

Our annual Heal and Hope Walk in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention month was a great success. Over \$15,100 was raised to support programs at St. Mary's. This year, Representatives from the North Providence Fire Department and 50' Closer to a Cure worked together to pull a fire engine. We want to thank our major sponsors, Res/Title and Weybosset Research & Management.



*Regina Braga, Jim Paolino, and Lori Butler of Res/Title present a donation to Carlene Casciano-McCann, Executive Director.*



*North Providence Fire Department, 50' Closer to a Cure*

## Equine Therapy Introduced to Mauran Program

Initially embraced and utilized by our Enhanced Outpatient Services team, Equine Assisted Psychotherapy has now been adopted by our residential program as an effective and meaningful therapeutic intervention. The Mauran residential unit is composed of boys ranging in age from 8-13. To deal with anger and rage behaviors of the boys in that program, we are working with Equine Empowerment Solutions, a program certified through the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA). Equine Assisted Mental Health utilizing an EAGALA approach is structured with two specialists: a mental health professional and an equine specialist. The pair work together to create an experiential environment for growth and positive change. Aside from the co-facilitators, the horse, or “equine partner”, plays a huge role in facilitating in vivo (in real life / real time) learning opportunities. Horses have been called “mirrors” in the EAMH field, because they are so in tune with non-verbal cues, and what is going on internally for individuals. This insight in to the internal world of the individual helps foster opportunities for insight and understanding for individuals, which are not always developed through traditional “talk-therapy” alone. The focus of this group has been anger management. The equine partner presents a unique way for the boys to practice a variety of skills such as: non-verbal communication, understanding the difference between passive/assertive/aggressive, creative thinking and problem solving, leadership, commitment, accountability, teamwork and peer relationships, confidence and a positive attitude. These are all essential skills in working to build frustration tolerance, and improve anger management. This program was funded through an appropriation from the RI General Assembly.



*Cute as a Bug and D'Artagnan*

## Rain or Shine

A torrential downpour at Agawam Hunt did not prevent players at the 17th Annual Heal and Hope Golf Classic from enjoying a day of golf. This year, we partnered with Providence Fullcourt Boardroom, a group of former Providence College basketball players. Dickey Simpkins and Sean Holley are founders of the group and invited Otis Thorpe, Marvin Sadler, Rob Phelps and Tony Turner to play in the tournament. Ken Hopkins of CCRI also participated. We raised \$14,200 to support clinical programs that directly serve the children in our care. We are thankful to LaSalle Bakery for supplying breakfast for the players, McLaughlin and Moran, Pepsi and Swing Juice who supplied beverages, Teecil for their player gift and Navigant Credit Union and Res/Title for sponsoring the event.



*(L -R) Tony Turner, Rob Phelps, Sean Holley, Marvin Sadler, Dickey Simpkins, and Otis Thorpe*





## Chirping Chicks

Things were chirping in the Hunt Campus School this past spring. For the second year the school was involved with the Chick Program from Casey Farm in North Kingstown. Students went on a field trip to the farm and spent the day seeing how a working farm runs. They spent time with the chickens and hens learning about the different varieties being raised on the farm. Classrooms were then set up with an incubator and about 2 dozen fertilized chick eggs. The eggs had to stay in the incubator for about 21 days which remained at a constant warm temperature to ensure their continued growth. During that time the children were allowed to “candle the eggs”. This is where we would take the egg and hold a candle to it so that the children were able to see the shadow of the chick. The students were able to do this at two different times within the 21 day period. When the children came back to school after the weekend we could hear chirping. The chicks still had to stay in the incubator under the warm light to dry out their feathers until they become soft and fluffy. Once dry, the chicks were able to be put in their new home, a giant cardboard box with wood shavings, a heat lamp, food and water. The chicks were kept in the school for about one week before they were brought back to the farm. Classes went to visit the Casey Farm and the students were able to hold the chicks. The children could see them grow in just one week. Next spring we look forward to participating in the program once again.

## Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI Employees Give Back

During the holiday season, the employees of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI generously donate many items that the children have requested. Their kindness does not stop there. Through the years, we have been the recipient of employee donated funds through their Coins for a Cause program. When children enter the waiting room of our main building, they will now be greeted by beautiful murals covering the walls, all done by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI employees during their company’s Statewide Community Day of Service. A great deal of landscaping was also done and the children were treated to healthy snacks and nutrition information in Well Kids Kits.



*Susan DeRita, Development Officer, receives a \$1,000 donation from Blue Cross & Blue Shield employee*



*Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI employees on campus during the company’s day of service*



## In Memory

We recognize the passing of the following individuals who designated St. Mary’s as the recipient of memorial funds or were friends of agency:

*Francesca Coates Bianco*

*Thomas Cotter*

*Paul Buckley*

*Marlene Dureault*

*Alfred Lamy*

*Robert Lavigne*

*Elizabeth O’Neill*

*Elizabeth Viveiros*



## Annual Meeting of the Corporation

Annually, the members of the Corporation meet to review actions of the Board of Directors, elect officers and acknowledge the work of many dedicated staff members. At the recent meeting, John Hazen White, Jr. was our guest speaker and discussed the evolution of his company and participated in a question and answer session with annual Meeting attendees. Carlene Casciano-McCann spoke about how “grit” relates to success and perseverance (see her letter on the front page). We welcomed new board members Jennifer Mann and Raymond Steele. After serving on the Board in other capacities since 2008, John Lombardi became President of the Board of Directors. Dinner with the children followed the business meeting. The following staff members were recognized:



*John Hazen White, Jr.*

# 2013

### **OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

*Benvinda Alves  
Sarah Memoli  
Keisha Sanders*

### **CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR**

*Sharon Roberts*

### **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

*Brian Gannon*

Awards for  
**YEARS OF SERVICE**  
at St. Mary's Home for Children

### **5 YEARS OF SERVICE**

*Marie Campbell  
Tom Gladding  
Cynthia McElroy  
Monique Poirier*

### **10 YEARS OF SERVICE**

*Anthony Maglione  
Mara Olink  
Nicole Ortiz  
Kim Rappa-Leonard  
Noel Rodriguez  
Korie Sanchez  
Donna Shurko*



*Employees of the Year: Benvinda Alves and Keisha Sanders with Volunteer of the Year, Brian Gannon*



## A Special Visit

Jeffrey Osborne is a Providence native widely known for his singing talents. Not only is Jeffrey an accomplished artist, but also a philanthropist who gives back to his community. Through the annual Jeffrey Osborne Celebrity Classic, funds are raised to support many worthy organizations. A list of participants in a weekend of activities included such noted celebrities as Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Smokey Robinson, The O’Jays, Sugar Ray Leonard, Sinbad and others. Jeffrey spent several hours interacting with the children and staff at St. Mary’s. We were treated to the singing of a few songs and even a duet with one of the children! Jeffrey presented St. Mary’s with a generous donation and our agency will be one of the agencies that benefits from the tournament in future years. We will be honoring Jeffrey for his kindness as our Partner in Philanthropy during National Philanthropy Day sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals in November.

# Board of Directors • 2013-2014

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*Honorary VP, ex-officio*

## MEMBERS

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Mrs. Jennifer Mann  
Mrs. Rosalind Newton  
Mr. Raymond Steele

THE BOARD



**ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN**

420 FRUIT HILL AVENUE  
NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02911

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*A Beautiful Campus*

It is quite difficult to maintain a seven-acre campus. Through the years, many beautiful perennial flowers have been planted in the gardens. A focus to provide natural shade for the children has been accomplished with the placement of many trees throughout the campus. However, landscaping needs to be cared for to be safe for the children and to provide an enjoyable environment. With the assistance this year of many volunteers from the Accounting Club at Providence College and their mentors from PricewaterhouseCoopers, our campus was made a happier place for all.



*Volunteers from PricewaterhouseCoopers and Providence College*



*(L-R) Laura Blume, Joseph Kotula, Benjamin Howarth, and Donna Ricci donate 19 new bicycles for the children on behalf of The Foundation for Life.*

