

# Opening Doors

A Newsletter from The Children's Hope Chest



Spring 2008

## Mission

The Children's Hope Chest is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children and families in need or crisis. It is comprised of concerned individuals who wish to promote volunteerism and goodwill in an effort to help lift despair. By creating programs and encouraging the participation of children, we will offer hope to those in need by linking established organizations with families to create social change.

## Board of Directors

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Terry Mendrala

Nicole Parent

Lyne Samad

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## Providing hope through...

### Food for Hope



In 4 hours, **Food for Hope** volunteers collected over \$12,000 worth of food items, gift cards and cash from shoppers at the White Plains Stop & Shop. All proceeds went to The Carver Center, Neighbor to Neighbor and Harrison Food pantries.

Join us on June 14, 2008 (9am-1pm) at the White Plains Stop & Shop to participate in the 3rd annual event!

### Backpack Buddies

In 2007, the **Backpack Buddies** program delivered over 550 new backpacks filled with all that children need to start the school year right!

### Now is the Time:

Volunteer for our 2008 programs.  
Complete enclosed commitment envelope  
or register online at  
[www.childrenshopechest.com](http://www.childrenshopechest.com)  
A child is waiting on you!



### Hope for the Summer



Each year hundreds of children attend summer camp on scholarships provided by the YMCA. Many of these children live in foster homes or institutional foster care and arrive at camp with only a few clothing items for their 2 week stay. **Hope for the Summer** provides children with the essential supplies for a successful camp experience: sleeping bags, towels, rain ponchos and toiletries.

# Children Helping Children

## **French-American School, Larchmont, NY**

"My name is Caroline and I am 13 years old. I learned about Children's Hope Chest by my French teacher and I am very thankful because since then I want to help the unfortunate children in Westchester. This association is one that I trust greatly because we know exactly what is done with the money we raised and donated. So, with my class, for two weeks, we did a bake sale. Every day, three people would cook and three people would sell. My French teacher and I helped organize the bake sale and the whole class participated. We raised a total of \$450 to help the poor children in our community and we had a lot of fun."

"The next year I decided to organize my birthday party where instead of my classmates buying me a present, I asked them to pay \$10 or more. I raised a total of \$501. Of course, I donated this money to The Children's Hope Chest."

## **Youth for Hope launched at Harrison High**



Lana Samad, of Harrison High School helped collect over 60 pairs of hats & gloves for children this past holiday season. Additionally, she designed the posters for a *Breakfast Buddies* drive organized by Youth Volunteers of Harrison. Their efforts led to the collection of 118 boxes of cereal that were donated to Carver Center.

## **Little Sparrows Nursery School, Armonk, NY**

During November 2007, all of their classes collected Thanksgiving Day food items for the Carver Center and Neighbor to Neighbor food pantries. And, for *Hope for the Holidays*, the classes collected toys for preschool aged children at the Carver Center.

## **The INTERACT Club, Byram Hills High**

Student members organized a *PJ Pals/Breakfast Buddies* drive during February 2008 and collected 21 pairs of new pajamas and many books for children from infancy to 14 years old. In addition, many breakfast items were also collected including cereal, boxed milk, and breakfast bars. All were delivered to Neighbor to Neighbor in Greenwich.

## **Get involved and join in the fun!**

If your child is interested in launching a *Youth for Hope* program at their school, the CHC will help with ideas and execution. Call (914) 696-1176 or email at [info@childrenshopechest.com](mailto:info@childrenshopechest.com) for more information.

## Sign Up Now!

Now is the time to register for CHC's upcoming programs!

- Online registration is best because it saves CHC time and money: [www.childrenshopechest.com](http://www.childrenshopechest.com)
- Use enclosed commitment envelope.

*A child is waiting on you!*

## Thank You!

The generous hearts at the following companies provided in-kind contributions to CHC to help more children:

Axis, Inc.

Coash Video Productions, Inc.

Columbus Delivery & Logistics

Cysner Financial Services

Lynne McTague Photography

Macy's Inc.

Morano Landscaping, Inc.

Neurogen Corporation

O'Melveny & Myers

ProBono Partnership

ProGraphics 3, Inc.

Ralph Lauren Home

Selznick & Company, LLP

Stonewall Solutions, LLC

Stop & Shop

The Pepsi Bottling Group Foundation

UBS

Wiggin and Dana, LLP

## CHC Recognized

**Bronx YMCA** - Volunteer of the year for Outstanding and Dedicated Service, presented to the CHC Board.

**YMCA Camping Services Branch** - Volunteer of the Year award, presented to CHC Board member, Jini Sachse, for her work with *Hope for the Summer*.

**My Sisters' Place** - Community Partner Award, presented to CHC for "their



steadfast support and commitment to our mission-providing hope, achieving justice, saving lives."

Valerie Sprague, accepts award from My Sisters' Place.

# New Partnerships Deliver "Duffels for Hope"

The Children's Hope Chest took on a new partner agency, JCCA, to address the needs of children who live in institutionalized foster care at the Cottages in Pleasantville. When these children visited a prospective foster family they carried their few belongings in a black garbage bag. The JCCA directors suggested that if each child had a duffel bag for their belongings, it would give them dignity and restore some level of self-esteem.

CHC asked UBS for financial underwriting and volunteer support and they generously agreed to become one of our *Corporate Partners of Hope*. Successful coordination between UBS employees and CHC volunteers resulted in 400 duffel bags filled with needed toiletries, bath towels donated by Ralph Lauren, journals and cuddly Beanie Babies. Culminating this project, Robert Wolf, CEO of UBS Americas, along with 50 CHC volunteers, hand delivered each duffel bag to the boys and girls living at the Cottages and Edenwald Schools. The children were delighted to know that someone had thought of them and their plight and cared to do something about it.



Thanks to a corporate partnership between UBS and The Children's Hope Chest, every child living at the JCCA Pleasantville Cottage School and Edenwald Center now has a new duffel bag, complete with toiletries and a bath towel, to call their own!



Robert Wolf, CEO of UBS Americas, surrounded by some of the boys who live at the Cottage School in Pleasantville. They were thrilled to each have their own duffel filled with toiletries.



The  
Cottage  
Schools

Pleasantville & Edenwald



## New Initiative...

## The Experience of Hope

The *Family Hope Grant* represents a new direction for The Children's Hope Chest, which has traditionally focused on providing material goods to children in need. The Board of Directors of CHC developed the *Family Hope Grant* recognizing that beyond satisfying children's immediate material needs, it is essential to provide them with the

experience of hope: the tools to learn, leadership skills, and confidence. All of CHC's partner agencies were invited to apply for funding in 2007 for programs which would foster hope and directly address issues critical to children and families in need. In October 2007, CHC awarded its first *Family Hope Grant*, in the amount of \$5,000, to the

Bronx YMCA for development of a program called Youth Helping Youth, an employment training and academic tutoring program for children and teens. Youth Helping Youth is aimed at supporting and sustaining the educational achievements of their school age population and creating a viable and motivated workforce amongst its teens. Through your generosity, CHC plans to annually grant funds for more experiences of hope.

# Program Spotlight...

## Hope for the Holidays

At The Carver Center and the Bronx YMCA, The Children's Hope Chest did something a little different this year. In past years, CHC donors provided wrapped gifts for children, but we felt that giving families the opportunity to select their own gifts for their children would bestow them greater dignity. On December 8th, parents and guardians were able to "shop" for their children. A holiday "store" was set up with popular age

appropriate toys, sweatshirts, hats & gloves for each child. Even stocking stuffers, gift-wrap and sweets were provided to make the day a success!

Dawn Jenkins, Dir. Carver Center's Community & Family Services remembers "...seeing the looks on our clients' faces. They were overjoyed to see the sheer volume of gifts with the autonomy to choose them for their children." She recalls, "...seeing the mom who walked in the gym and



Young volunteer "elves" prepare a table of hats and gloves for parents at The Port Chester Carver Center to choose for their children.

burst out with tears of joy, being overwhelmed with the sight of so many toys after losing everything in a recent fire."



At The Carver Center (above) and the Bronx YMCA (right) mothers "shop" from a wonderful selection of donated new toys for their children.



Harrison Association of Teachers knitted hats and mittens for **Hope for the Holidays**. Above L to R are Joann Raguso, Wendy Fowler, Jane Meyer, and Phyllis Boccardi.

### My Sisters' Place Receives Bundles of Hope



This past December, middle school students from Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, CT provided **Bundles of Hope** for two My Sisters' Place locations. Students learned about statistics of domestic abuse and were asked to imagine a home without a feeling of safety and security... of then having to leave that home to live communally with strangers. They brainstormed about things that would bring the feeling of a good home wherever travels may lead. Squishy pillows, soft socks, toys, books, art supplies and pillowcases poured in. Each pillowcase was packed full of new items targeted for a specific age group, tied with a ribbon and sent off with lots of love.

### Friends of Karen



CHC donors granted 100 specific holiday wishes for the children and families supported by Friends of Karen. This agency provides financial, emotional and advocacy support to families of children with life-threatening illnesses.

*"No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves."*

**Amelia Earhart**

## Program Spotlight...

# Andrus' Children get new winter coats

This past fall, Andrus Children's Center, located in Yonkers, requested us to redirect our annual holiday gift program from toys to brand-new winter coats. Although they have



loved being able to bring holiday joy to the children they serve, the need to provide them with a basic necessity was greater. Members of the Church of St. Patrick in Armonk and Congregation Emanu-el in Rye took on the *Coats for Hope* initiative with a goal of 100 coats. The response greatly exceeded expectations. These two donor groups, along with the Pepsi Bottling Group Foundation, provided 483 children with the warmth of a brand-new winter coat.

*Denise Warshauer, Emily Cohen and Lyne Samad prepare for Coats for Hope at Congregation Emanu-El in Rye.*

*A happy child has the warmth and comfort of a new coat.*



## Letter from a grateful mother: CHC mission in action

Dear Children's Hope Chest,

"This year has been a rough year for my family. In August, we lost my husband and the father of my kids in a car accident. We struggled for weeks not knowing how to make ends meet. I couldn't keep up with all of our bills and ended up evicted and in a shelter with my kids. Making sure that I gave my kids the basics at this point was hard enough. We struggled but was able to get an apartment again and that's all that I had on my mind. I finally felt as if I could breathe again. But it wasn't until that night my son turned to me and gave me his Christmas list for Santa that I started to cry because I realized I had to tell my son that there wouldn't be any Christmas gifts this year. That same week I received a letter from the Bronx YMCA telling me that I had been chosen to receive a Christmas donation from the Children's Hope Chest. When I spoke to Ann Margaret at the Y and she explained that I was going to be able to choose my kids gifts for Christmas, I was speechless.

To know that instead of tears on my kid's faces it would be smiles was great. Children's Hope Chest could not have given themselves a better name. They have provided "hope" to us all when we thought there was none left. Thank you to all involved. The impact you have had in our lives will always be in our hearts."

Sincerely,  
Jasmine Torres



*Mrs. Jasmine Torres (left), with Ann Margaret Gutierrez, School Age Director of the Bronx YMCA, is smiling thanks to CHC donors!*

## New Program... Comforters for Hope

In reviewing the specific needs of our new agency partner, JCCA Cottage School and Edenwald Center, we found that the dormitory beds were fitted with only basic sheets and blankets. These children, ages 8-18, live in institutionalized foster care and have no one to tuck them in at night. They have suffered from abuse and neglect and have been in one foster care home after another. This year CHC would like to provide the hundreds of children who live on this campus with warm, colorful comforters. It would be wonderful if when they get into bed they have an extra layer of warmth, giving them hope, and reminding them that they are not forgotten. *Every child needs a little comfort!* Sponsor one or more of these children by registering online at the CHC website or by using the enclosed commitment envelope. **Please Hold out your Hand, Open your Heart and offer Hope!**

# The Children's Hope Chest

## How can my child participate?

"How can my child participate?" is one of the most frequently asked questions we get. Here are just a few of the many wonderful ways that children helped accomplish our mission this year:

**Michael P.** - In lieu of birthday gifts, the last two years, he asked his friends to give cereal and PJs.

**Peri M.** - Through her Bat Mitzvah, asked guests to donate money to support a bereavement program at Friends of Karen.

**Ryan D.** - In lieu of birthday gifts, he asked his friends to give PJs, hats & mittens.

**Katie M.** - Set up a lemonade stand and donated her earnings to CHC.

**Kieran M.** - In lieu of birthday gifts, he asked for food gift cards.

**Maggie M.** - In lieu of birthday gifts, she asked for PJs and books.

**Sara & Mathew S.** - Organized the collection of 100s of sets of hats/gloves.

**Michael B., Mathew D. & John C.** - Set-up a lemonade stand that earned enough money to buy many new backpacks and supplies.

**Empire Swim Team** - Held a Swim-a-thon for CHC.

**Purchase School Caring Kids Club** - Collected holiday wrapping paper.

*All of these new items were donated directly to our partner agencies!*

Encourage your child to plan something that will help the children supported by our partner agencies.

**Andrus Children's Center**  
**Bronx YMCA**  
**Carver Center**  
**Friends of Karen**  
**JCCA-Cottage Schools**  
**My Sisters' Place**  
**Neighbor to Neighbor**  
**YMCA Camping Services**

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