



Homespace News

November 2009

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Thoughts From Our Executive Director...



With a busy summer coming to a close, I can't help but feel a sense of

pride in all that we have accomplished. Our 15 year celebration was a success with over 135 people in attendance. We were fortunate enough to have a beautiful day in which to celebrate and were thankful that the unpredictable summer weather held out for us! See page 2 for more details.

We are pleased to welcome new core staff to the program who are bringing about many positive changes and ideas through their compassion and experience. Katie McClain-

Meeder is our new Independent Living Coordinator for both sites. Her enthusiasm and creativity is infectious. Pam Davis is our new Child Care Supervisor for both sites. Pam's patience and understanding are proving to be an asset to both our employees and residents. Welcome to the Homespace family!

Between the celebrations, new residents, new staff, and fun weekend outings with our young mothers and their children, I am happy that we are able to keep our mission at the forefront. We strive everyday to ensure a safe environment for our families, as well as an environment that is conducive to self reflection, healing, learning, and skills development. Our young ladies have more responsibilities than we can imagine and more things

to be proud of than they ever admit. It is our responsibility as a community to ensure that they have what they need to forge ahead with a happy, healthy and successful future in sight.

Thank you for all of the support that you continuously provide to our families. I sincerely hope that the autumn brings you rest, peace and rejuvenation.

Best,
Kim Morris
Executive Director

Kids and Family Day

On August 19th everyone gathered together for Homespace's 2nd Annual Kids and Family Day celebration! United Way Day of Caring volunteers worked with Homespace staff to set up and decorate for the event. Their help was very much appreciated since we had 35 youth and children participate in the fun day of activities!

Back by popular demand were a Character Artist, Balloonist, and Bounce House that kept the children smiling the entire afternoon. Mothers and their children were lined up to have

their portraits drawn and talked excitedly about what nice keepsakes they would make. The toddlers loved wearing the funky balloon hats that the artist made and the Bounce House was shaking all around as children jumped around with one another!

With the gracious help of our volunteers, we prepared a BBQ lunch and played fun games, including a spirited balloon toss contest. Our residents and toddlers especially liked this game since it ended with a competitive balloon war afterwards-there were many laughs (and wet clothes!). The event ended with an exciting

auction of home furnishings and appliances for all of our residents.

It was another successful Kids and Family Day that allowed everyone to spend time in the great outdoors, build friendships, reconnect with previous residents, and have quality bonding time for families. A special thank you to all of our United Way volunteers for all of their help in making our event so special.

15th Anniversary Celebration

For the past 15 years Homespace Corporation has been successfully helping young, single parents (age 14 – 21 years old) forge a better life for themselves and their children. Homespace provides a safe, nurturing environment where these young parents can learn the skills to enhance themselves and their families, break the cycle of public welfare dependency, and end generational issues related to child protection services. Residents receive training in job-readiness, budgeting, household management, nutrition, parenting, as well as comprehensive clinical services. Homespace is proud to be celebrating 15 years of assisting these wonderful young families two generations at a time throughout 2009.

On Wednesday, August 5th, 2009,

Homespace celebrated our 15th Anniversary at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval Park with over 135 guests in attendance. The event was catered by Pearl Street Grill and Brewery. The night was beautiful with fabulous weather that was so needed in Buffalo this summer. Music by Barbara Levy Daniels was enjoyed by all as well as a silent auction with over 50 donated baskets and items. Homespace was happy to add a raffle of a 42" flat screen TV as well as a Netbook Computer to this year's event.

The event could not be called a success without our generous sponsors: GMR of WNY, Rich Products, The PCA Group, Buffalo Postal Community Credit Union, New Era, First Niagara, SEFCU, F&T Snowplowing, DWC Mechanical, and Coca

Cola Bottling Company of Buffalo.

We are most thankful to those founders who were able to attend, and for those who attended in the name of our founders. Homespace is also thankful to the assistance of several of our young ladies who graciously told their stories to the guests and assisted in the evening.

We thank each and every company and guest that helped make this event a special night for Homespace to celebrate 15 years of service to our community.

Erie Community College Awards

Several of our residents were recognized at the annual Imagine Me Award Ceremony sponsored by ECC and Independence Bound. Independence Bound works with youth ages 14 and older who are in the foster care system or who have recently aged out of foster care. This program works with the youth on their educational and vocational goals and each year awards youth in the community who have shown to have overcome the obstacles in their lives. The following are the awards that our residents were presented with:

Darshayla – Most Improved Intern. Darshayla was given this award due to her improvement in attitude and motivation. She had recently taken the Job Readiness Training for the second time and the instructors noted that this time

noted that this time instead of being a distraction to the other youth in the class she was positive and kept everyone on track.

Ebony – Inspiring Parent. Ebony was given this award for her ability to continue with her education despite tragic events happening in her life. Ebony was placed into foster care her Senior year of high school but was still able to graduate from high school and was accepted into the University at Buffalo for nursing. She not only is an inspiration to her own son but also her sister who is also a teen parent in care.

Rebecca – Best Intern. Rebecca received this award because she has set a new standard of performance at the Family Court Daycare for interns. Due to her hard work and dedication the director of this daycare now ex-

pects all interns to perform at the level she did while placed there. In addition, they continue to ask for her even after she has moved on to a full time paid position with another company.

TB, SJ, MO, CL and RM were also recognized for completing the most recent Job Readiness Training. Most of these youth have since started working and have shown to be hard working employees. ECC and Independence Bound will continue to work with our youth both in college preparation, free tutoring and additional Job Readiness workshops.

Congratulations on the great work!!

Meet Our Staff

Pam Davis, Child Care Supervisor

In July 2009 Homespace welcomed Pam Davis as our new Child Care Supervisor. Pam came to Homespace with years of experience working in both the education and social work fields. The beginning of her career was spent working in classroom settings wearing different hats, from a Special Education Teacher to a Head Teacher in a community day care center.

In 2003 Pam began her lengthy employment with Buffalo Urban League as the Intensive Family Specialist Case Manager and then the Team Leader of Community Optional Preventive Services. While meeting the demands of the Urban League she also worked as an IRA Specialist working in a residential program for the developmentally disabled. Her compassion and dedication to the children and families that she has worked with is

admirable and just one of the qualities that Pam has brought to her position at Homespace.

In accepting this position with us, Pam has been given the opportunity to meld her experience working with young children, growing teenagers, and staff development and leadership all in one. We are excited to have Pam with us and to watch how our agency benefits from her insight and motivation.

Katie McClain-Meeder, Independent Living Coordinator

Katie McClain-Meeder accepted the position of Independent Living Coordinator in July 2009 and we could not have been more pleased! Katie's experience as a social worker has been very diverse and motivated by her desire to deliver services grounded in mutual respect and collaboration.

Katie began her career working with senior citizens as an Elder Companion and then as a Camp

Coordinator with Camp Glen Brook in New Hampshire. Katie's interest in working with children and diverse populations led her to the Refugee School Impact Program in Massachusetts as the Refugee Impact Coordinator.

When Katie decided to relocate to Buffalo her passion in working with refugees followed her as she worked for two years with Hope Refugee Services. Katie's diligent work with the program was recognized in that after one year she was made the Director of Youth Ser-

vices.

When Katie was asked how the refugees she worked with and the young mothers at Homespace/Second Chance Home were similar, she said that both seem to be looking for a sense of belonging and have a mutual desire to build meaningful connections so as to allow their family to grow and reach their goals. Katie's insight into our residents' needs was clear from the beginning and we are very excited to watch the impact she will have in our residents' lives.

Amanda Watkins, Child Care Worker

In July 2009 Amanda Watkins joined us as a full-time Child Care Worker at Second Chance Home. Amanda has been committed to working with the children and youth in the Buffalo community through her multi-faceted work at

Buffalo ReUse, Berkshire Farm Center, and Upgrade Academics. One of Amanda's desirable qualities is her dedication to mentoring youth both in the WNY Against Drugs and Alcohol and Berkshire Farms. Mentors play such a critical role in children's lives in being positive role models, consistent connections, and unwavering sup-

ports to those they work with. It is very important that our Child Care Workers possess these traits so that the families that reside in our program feel connected and build positive futures. Amanda exemplifies these qualities and we are very happy to have her working so closely with the young ladies and children at Second Chance Home.



1030 Ellicott Street
Buffalo, New York 14209

Phone: 716-881-4600
Fax: 716-881-4604
Homespacecorp.com

Upcoming Events

Holiday 2009– Wish List for our families

The holidays are quickly approaching us once again! We are in need of household and child donations to help make the season brighter for our families. Household items often requested: full sheet sets/ comforter sets, silverware, cutlery, pots and pans, bake ware, drinking glasses, and cleaning products. Baby/child items that are often requested: thermometers, playpens, educational toys and books, crib bedding, strollers, infant/toddler toys, and clothes. If interested, please call Barb or Lindsey at 716-881-4600. Thank You!

Our Mission...

Homespace provides a safe and nurturing transitional living environment with supportive services for single parent families that prepares them to achieve and maintain their independence.

Family Integrity Security Empowerment Collaboration