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**- Danny O'Gallagher  
Adoptive Father**

Brandon and Danny O'Gallagher on Adoption Day. After the judge banged the gavel finalizing the adoption, court officials were amazed to see the judge come off the bench and join in a celebration with family, friends, and staff.

## CV Launches Junior Board

by Co-Chair Noah Simon

The Children's Village Junior Board was formed to serve as a fundraising and volunteer group that will make significant contributions to the children and families of CV. We have already attracted a diverse group of successful young professionals from companies such as Goldman Sachs, Alliance Bernstein, Bloomberg, the New Jersey Nets, NBC, MasterCard and Morgan Stanley, among others.

The Junior Board launched its first fundraiser, raising money for a back-to-school drive for CV's Polo Grounds Community Center in Harlem. After learning that a key sponsor of the event withdrew its commitment to provide backpacks, our Fundraising Committee stepped up and planned an event at Metro 53 in Midtown Manhattan. The money helped purchase 100 backpacks for children in the Polo Grounds.

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## A New Family Begins

Danny O'Gallagher knew that he wanted to adopt a child. Brandon, who has been alone for most of his life, always wanted a family. They both got what they wanted and so much more.

On June 24, Brandon and Danny O'Gallagher appeared in Manhattan Family Court to finalize Brandon's adoption. By the time families get to this point, adoption is usually a simple procedure, and the new families leave after a few minutes. But, much to the amazement of the court officials, the judge stepped down off the bench and joined in an unprecedented celebration right there in the court.

“Brandon is an incredibly likable guy who has bounced around the system for a long time,” said Psychologist Dr. Adam Brown. “Most people want to adopt a young child. When we see a teenager going home with someone as wonderful as Danny, it makes our work worthwhile.”

Everyone needs to belong to someone, and finding that “someone” for all children is the

most important thing we do. In the past two years, 15 teens, boys once considered too old for adoption and all of whom had given up on being part of a family, have been adopted.

For Brandon and Danny, it was love at first sight. “At the first meeting, Brandon had a list of questions for me,” said Mr. O'Gallagher. “Then we played chess and other games. We clicked right away, and I told our caseworker I didn't want to meet anyone else. Brandon was the one.”

“It's been a big life change, but a good one. He makes me happy, and I can see how happy Brandon is with his new aunts, uncles and cousins. He's a big part of our family. He is family. He gets that.”

After a pause, Mr. O'Gallagher continued, “I don't want to minimize my life before Brandon, but I can't imagine life without him. It's like he's always been there, been a part of my family. It's a joy.”

# Happening Now

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## Dear Friends . . .

I hope you enjoyed reading the story on page one about Brandon and his new father. Brandon's and Danny's story illustrates the core of our mission, creating permanent families for children.

Adopting a teenager is never an easy decision for the family or the teen. Yet every year, individuals and families step up to make this life-altering commitment. Danny O'Gallagher made this commitment to Brandon and, in doing so, has dramatically altered the trajectory of Brandon's life.

Without a permanent family and a place of belonging, Brandon was drawing closer to being a statistic – another child who grew up in foster care and aged

into adulthood alone and at risk for terrible outcomes. You've heard those stories, and I don't need to describe them here.

To Danny and the many individuals and families who become adoptive parents, thank you. Your commitment changes lives, and we cannot do this work without you.

Sincerely,

*Jeremy*

Jeremy C. Kohomban, Ph.D.  
President and CEO



## With Great Sadness . . .

We lost a good friend when Amy Chase, Director of CV's Shelter Services, passed away unexpectedly in August. Amy was a dedicated employee who was passionate about helping young people and setting them on a path to a better life. She will be missed by all whose lives she touched. A tree was planted at the Sanctuary in her memory, donated by Leadership Westchester and dedicated by Rev. Norman Fulton (pictured right).



## New Trustee joins CV

Heidi Davidson, Senior Vice President of Franchise Development for MasterCard Worldwide, is CV's newest Board member. She is already enthusiastically supporting CV both personally and professionally as a member of the Masquerade Committee and an important liaison to MasterCard, which was honored at CV's Circle of Friends Dinner. Ms. Davidson brings her extensive business experience and a passion for children to her work on the Board.



## Golf & Tennis Outing On a Perfect Day!

Golfers, tennis players, and friends came out to enjoy CV's seventh annual Golf and Tennis Classic at St. Andrews Golf Club on September 14. The event raised \$60,000 to support programs for at-risk children and families. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event successful, including

Corporate Synergies Group, Inc., Credit Suisse, DeMatteo & Monness, LLC, JVKelly Group, Inc., John & Becky Halleron, Kleen Sweep Container Service Inc., Rick Morton, Mt. Carmel Pharmacy, O'Conner Davies Munn & Dobbins, LLP, Somerset Capital Advisors LLP, Siemens IT Solutions, Sodexo, Staples, and T.D. Insurance.



The foursome from Mt. Carmel Pharmacy came ready to have fun! L to R: Sal Inguanti, Armand Paganelli of Mt. Carmel Pharmacy, Tony Keogh and CV Trustee Jim Timko of Keogh, Timko and Moses.



The foursome from JVKelly Group, Inc. were the winners of the Classic with the low gross score of 56. L to R: James Rocco, John Armas, Brian Savarese, and Frank Law.

## Summer was Hot & Happening for Polo Grounds Kids

This summer, children from CV's Polo Grounds Community Center had the chance to take part in programs that had them trying new things, seeing new places and, most of all, having fun!

Children took tennis lessons through a program offered twice a week through Columbia University. Teens played Street Squash at courts located nearby. And four days a week, children traveled to the Dobbs Ferry campus for summer camp. Staff led them in nature walks, kayaking, zip lining, slip 'n slide, greenhouse activities, Books for Boys reading groups, basketball and, of course, swimming at the new Lanza Activities Center.



Eight-year-old Alpha hams it up on his way to his weekly swim at the Lanza Activities Center in Dobbs Ferry.



Ronald is having a ball during a field trip to a local indoor fun park, one of many activities offered by CV's Polo Grounds Community Center.

Children took a swing at tennis this summer. This was a great opportunity to try a new sport and have fun outside.

## Affordable Housing Complex Gets Facelift

On September 24, CV celebrated the completion of a major facelift to D'Assern Housing, which provides affordable housing to staff. The project involved new windows, boilers, siding, landscaping, lighting, appliances, and apartment renovations plus a playground for the toddlers. The project was funded with \$3 million grant from the NYS Federal Housing Authority and a \$50,000 grant from Westchester County. Below, Lois Amend, Trustee of CV and D'Assern Housing, cuts the ribbon, officially opening the new playground.



## "We Call This Fatherhood!"

New Yorkers are famous for taking just about anything in stride, but a group of men marching down 125th Street, pushing strollers and carrying picnic blankets this summer attracted attention.

The group consisted of dads whose children are in foster care, and they were on their way to Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem to have a picnic with their children. When a woman in the park asked, "What is this?" one of the dads said, "We call this fatherhood!"

The group is part of CV's Fathers Program, which is designed to help young men connect to their children. The group meets weekly to discuss the importance of being self sufficient, how to be a forward thinker, employment, relationship building, and much more.

Dads from CV's Fathers Program enjoy a day at the park with their children.

"Surprisingly, one of the things these men need is permission to be fathers," says Donald Somerville, Family Services Coordinator. "They often come from an experience where being a father isn't required, and we help them to understand not only why it is important for the children, but also how it can be enriching for them."



## Junior Board (cont.)

The Board's role as a volunteer organization is equally important to its fundraising, as members and friends of the Board will participate in hands-on projects. In the Summer, Junior Board members played softball with the boys and in November will serve a Thanksgiving Dinner at the Polo Grounds. Our goal is to provide a pipeline of committed individuals who are willing to get involved. Forming real connections with these children is the ultimate way to make a difference and enhance their lives.

If you know someone interested in supporting or joining the Junior Board or its events, contact Noah Simon at [nmsimon@gmail.com](mailto:nmsimon@gmail.com) or 914-584-5597.



Junior Board at the Backpack Fundraiser on August 25 at Metro 53 in New York City.

## There is Still Time to Double Your Gift!

The end of the year is fast approaching, and your gift to the Lanza Activities Center will be worth double thanks to a generous matching challenge grant. Through your support, kids get the chance to use this state-of-the-art facility to try new sports, learn new skills, and build self esteem. Make your donation online or call 914-693-0600 ext. 1224 for more information.

## 9/11 Day of Service at CV

More than 80 volunteers took part in the National Day of Service commemorating September 11 by volunteering at CV. They included individuals, families, mentors, and groups from colleges and churches. Volunteers worked side by side with CV boys refurbishing



Volunteers get directions before fanning out to refurbish gardens around CV's Dobbs Ferry campus.

gardens around the cottages, the chapel, and the Keith Haring Medical Clinic.

Throughout the day, adults could be heard talking about the value of service and hard work. One youth said to his mentor, "I'm going to check on our garden every day, because I want to make sure our cottage keeps looking this beautiful!"



Volunteers from "Now It's Your Turn", a regional organization that promotes community service, stand proudly behind their work in front of the Chapel.

Volunteers and CV boys worked side by side pulling out weeds and removing rocky soil in the garden outside Stuart Cottage.

## MasterCard Builds New Friendships *by Karen Rebholz of MasterCard*

On September 1, a small group of MasterCard employees had the wonderful opportunity to volunteer at the Children's Village for the afternoon.

Our day began with card games, a BBQ and lots of laughs. Part of our team helped the boys grill some delicious hamburgers and hot dogs as the rest of us had a crash course, given by the boys, on how to play "Spades".

Once the ice was broken and everyone was acquainted, it was time for "Gaga Ball". After a quick lesson, it was every man or woman for themselves! The laughs continued as we jumped, squatted and swatted the ball hoping to be the last one standing so we could be the one to yell "GA - GA - Ball".

After working off our lunch, it was time for some team building. During this part of the day, we worked with the boys to figure out how to move a

bucket of balls into another without touching the balls or getting stuck in the "lava". It was amazing to see how well the boys could work together and communicate. It was a fun day!

Thank you to the Children's Village for having us and thank you to the wonderful group of boys we spent the day with.



Keeping the ball out of the "lava" during team building.

## Nationwide Volunteers are on CV's Side

Nationwide Insurance volunteers removed weeds and planted bulbs at the flagpole in the center of CV's campus. This area will host the annual Veteran's Day celebration for staff and children.



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