

News From The Village

the children's
village

Spring 2013



“CV put a roof over my head and gave me a space of my own.”

Ijayna has been in foster care or living on the streets since she was 11 years old. Now she's in college, has her own apartment, and is a talented artist. “Things have been hard, but I feel great that I've made it this far. I am going to keep on going and never give up.”

“I'll Never Give Up.”

Ijayna considers herself fortunate. When one hears what she has been through, her optimism is not only surprising, it's inspiring.

Ijayna came to CV's Supportive Housing Program after years of bouncing from foster home to foster home, sleeping on friends' couches, and getting into trouble.

Both of Ijayna's parents struggled with devastating addictions, so when she was very young Ijayna went to live with her grandmother. “She was my heart. She gave me a sense of right and wrong and taught me discipline, hard work, and responsibility.” They were very close until her grandmother died of cancer when Ijayna was just 11 years old.



Ijayna is a talented artist who has won local youth awards and had a beautiful piece included in a book authored by the principal of her school.

Ijayna then began a tumultuous time. She and her sisters, all of whom became teen mothers, were put into foster care, and several family members died from drug related deaths. While she cared about school and was even on the honor roll for a time, with no direction or family, she was angry and felt like she didn't have a chance.

Then a friend told her about CV's program for homeless teens. “CV put a roof over my head and gave me a space of my own,” Ijayna said. Perhaps more importantly, she found a human connection. “Dr. Richard was the first person to actually care about me in a long time. She helped me calm down and to figure out what I need and how to help myself.”

Ijayna earned her GED, got a job, and was able to save money for her own apartment, where she has lived for the past two years. She is attending Westchester Community College and has almost finished an Associate's degree. She is also exploring her artistic side, not only painting, but also making and selling jewelry.

“After all she's been through, Ijayna always finds the good in everyone and every situation,” said CV Psychologist Dr. Beverly Richard.

Casey Recognizes CV for Leadership and Innovation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has selected CV as one of four agencies to be part of its new Institute for Children and Families. This initiative will provide peer to peer technical assistance to agencies seeking to grow their community programs and serve as a forum for providers to share best practices.

“CV has come to our attention because of its leadership and record of innovation,” said Teresa Markowitz, VP, Center for Effective Family Services and Systems.

As part of this recognition, CV has been awarded \$100,000 to cover the costs of involvement with the Institute.



Chris Behan of Annie E. Casey helps CV develop a technical assistance module to help residential providers transform practice and approach.

Keeping Children Safe and Families Together

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About The Village

Founded in 1851, The Children's Village works in partnership with families to help society's most vulnerable children so that they become educationally proficient, economically productive, and socially responsible members of their communities.

From the President

Dear Friends,

You will see many stories in this newsletter of people whose lives have been made better through our work. But one thing that runs through each story is a passion and a will to strive for a better life. No matter how hard we want to help our children and families, we are never more than half the equation.

For too long, human services focused on the "service". We fully agree that the safety net and the "service" must be available, especially for those who have been historically disadvantaged and disenfranchised. Providing this service is a non-negotiable commitment we make in this great democracy of ours, to be there for those who need us, when they need us!

But it takes more than a "service" to create success. For most of us, success is an outcome of access to services, access to opportunity, plus a personal drive to fight for a better day. The system has provided basic services and,

in some cases, also provided the opportunities, but we have not always succeeded in encouraging and supporting the personal attitudes and tenacity required to succeed.

At The Children's Village, we are not just providing the service and exposing children and families to opportunity, we are working with them to develop their self-concepts and their very identities. We are guiding and encouraging them to learn and adopt an attitude of the mind and a longing of the heart to be successful. In raising their own expectations and sense of self worth, many are finding a path to a more successful life.

Thank you for being our partner in this work.

Jeremy



CV Celebrates Legacy Society Members



On January 11, CV held its first Legacy Society event to dedicate the Legacy Wall that has been installed in the lobby of Wetmore Hall on the Dobbs Ferry campus.

Paul Jenkel, Children's Village Board Chair, spoke passionately about the importance of CV's Endowment to the organization's future and the challenges that the Agency has faced in protecting and growing it over the past 20 years. In support of this position, several years ago, the Board passed a resolution that, unless otherwise specified by the donor, all legacy gifts go into the Endowment. Further, this past year, the annual distribution rate that supports ongoing operations was reduced a full percentage point.

"But the most significant way we can increase this critical fund is through the generosity of our friends," said Mr. Jenkel. "The Legacy Society is one small way we recognize those who believe in our future. Thank you."

The Legacy Society is open to friends who have included CV in their wills or made a planned gift such as a charitable gift annuity or a remainder trust. For information on how to make a planned gift or be included in the Legacy Society, contact Linda Stutz, VP for Advancement at 914-648-3319 or Lstutz@childrensvillage.org. Or visit www.childrensvillage.org and click on "donate now/planned giving".

Social Impact - Keeping Teens Out of Foster Care

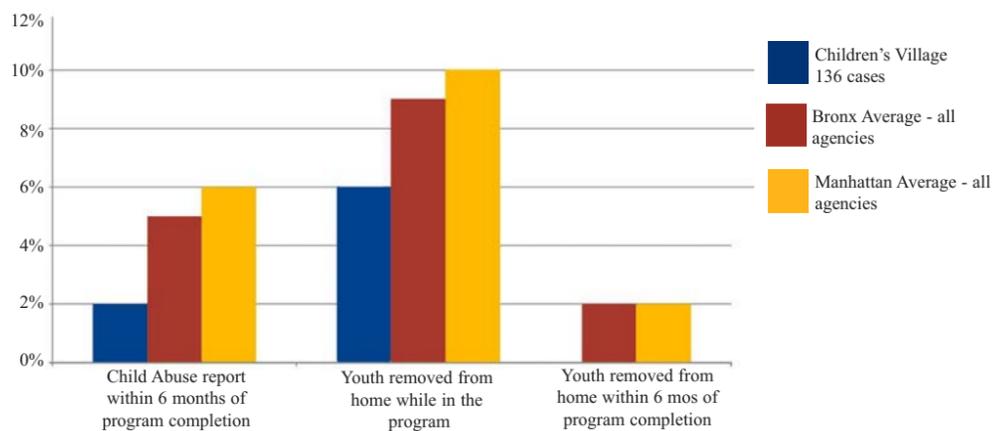
The goal of CV's Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST) is to keep children safe and families together. This evidence-based program, which works intensively with families, is proven to reduce the number of children removed from their homes and put into foster care.

removed. The chart below shows results for CV's program (136 cases) compared to all families receiving MST in the Bronx and Manhattan.

Families are selected to receive MST only when they are deemed to be at serious risk of having their children

We are particularly proud that, last year, not a single young person in our Manhattan program was removed from home six months after MST completed work with the families.

FEWER TEENS REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES AND ENTER FOSTER CARE



CV Taught Me How to Trust

Jorge Herandez has a high school diploma, people who care about him, a good job, and a plan for the future. But things weren't always so good for him. As a teenager, he had a temper and was always getting into fights. His mother placed him and his siblings in foster care and Jorge came to Children's Village.

"CV taught me to trust people," said Jorge. "The staff cared about me. In all the time I lived here I was really happy." Jorge said. "My other siblings that didn't have CV didn't even graduate high school. I'm a lot better off because I did."

Jorge is currently a Stockroom Manager at a Dr. J's retail store, although he dreams of attending culinary school. "I love to cook just about anything. It's a job that makes me feel good."



"Because of CV I stayed out of jail, stayed off the streets, and graduated high school."

Morgan Stanley - A Good Corporate Partner

Volunteers from Morgan Stanley really know how to have fun. Last month, they brought cameras to their adopted cottage and had an impromptu photo shoot with the boys. This month, they topped that by bringing DJ equipment and together they rocked the cottage walls!



Partnership is Saving a Neighborhood

Hopeless? Unsalvageable? Lost?

Words like these are often used to describe Highbridge, a neighborhood in the South Bronx that has historically had some of the highest rates of crime, unemployment, child abuse, and foster care. In 2003, a group of community leaders and funders joined together to create Bridge Builders Community Partnership with the idea that if you bring the community together, you can enact real change.

Over the years, Bridge Builders created that change with innovations like its own part in family court for families who had their children removed and



an innovative resource map of the neighborhood that pinpoints needs, eliminates duplication, and gives families easy access to help. The organi-

zation has a walk-in storefront that has become a neighborhood hub, a partnership with local schools that is identifying kids in trouble before abuse occurs; and a host of family-driven peer support programs that help the community to heal itself.

Children's Village was part of the original partnership and has been working in this community for many years. Today, we are proud to announce an even stronger tie through a strategic alliance with Bridge Builders. While Bridge Builders will remain an independent partnership, CV will manage the operations and bring its expertise to further enhance the impact this initiative can have on Highbridge families.

"Bridge Builder's core belief that a network of customized neighborhood services is the first and best line of defense is directly in line with the mission of The Children's Village," said CV President and CEO Jeremy Kohomban. "Empowering struggling families to advocate for themselves is key to their success."

Getting His Freedom Back

Tayshawn is described by CV staff as "an all-around American kid who loves to do things for himself." But for Tayshawn, doing things for himself is an everyday challenge: he has Cerebral Palsy and is confined to a wheelchair.

His ability to be independent came to a halt in August when his electric wheelchair was crushed in an auto accident. He has very limited use of his arms and legs, making a manual chair nearly impossible to use. Despite this, Medicaid wouldn't approve an electric wheelchair, which costs about \$20,000.

"I couldn't believe it. He never complained once, even though I know how hard it was for him to use the manual chair," said staff member Peter Diaz who works with Tayshawn and his family. "He is a very brave kid."

In February, Tayshawn received a brand new electric wheelchair through the efforts of CV friend Pat Lanza and Wheelchair Charities. Ms. Lanza and her son Anthony met Tayshawn

at the Lanza Center as Tayshawn tried out the controls and went zipping around the Center.

"It's so cool! Thank you so much," Tayshawn said to the Lanza family. "My wheelchair is my freedom. I used to be able to do things on my own, but I lost it. This chair gave me my freedom back."



Tayshawn got his cool back with a new electric wheelchair thanks to a generous donor.

MasterCard Checkmated!

Some of the boys at Bradish Cottage are really good at Chess, as MasterCard staff member Mark Corritori found out (picture on right). Mark is one of several MC employees who volunteer monthly at the cottage, playing games and just getting to know each other. The sponsorship is part of MC's commitment to CV's mission. In the Fall, the organization held their annual golf tournament to raise funds for charities and donated \$25,000 to The Children's Village.



Save the Dates!

Volunteer Picnic - April 20 * Circle of Friends Annual Dinner - May 9 * Family Fun Day - July 23

For more information visit www.childrensvillage.org/events, contact rmagdalen@childrensvillage.org, or call 914-693-0600 ext. 1224.

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Know someone who may be interested in our work? Pass along this newsletter to spread the word!

Leadership Council Makes Foster Kids Basketball VIPs



CV's Leadership Council (shown above) treated ten boys and girls who are living in foster homes to a VIP Brooklyn Nets experience at the new Barclays Center. After an exciting game, the group went courtside to meet Nets star C.J. Watson and then through the players' tunnel to get autographs and chat with the players.

For many of the youth, this was their first experience at a professional sporting event. Walking out of the arena, one of the girls was heard saying, "That was awesome! We should come back next week!"

Kids Helping Kids

The school library is a popular place for our younger boys on Tuesday afternoons. Here they meet with local high school students who act as mentors--they read stories, do themed activities, and play games together. Suyash Bhatt from Irvington High School, who is an only child, says it's like having a little brother. "I look forward to this time every week."

Becca Joseph of Ardsley HS (pictured below) echoed the common feeling among the students, "It feels good to know that I'm making a difference in the boys' lives."



Brave Chicken Takes to the Mountain

Excerpt of a letter from CV Psychologist Dr. Christine Bartholoma about a recent snowboarding trip with CV boys.

As many of you know, snowboarding does not come naturally to me. One staff joked that I am a slow learner. Honestly, I can't get up on the darn board! What a frustrating experience for me – but what a wonderful opportunity for the boys to see someone else struggle to overcome personal shortcomings.

I know that so many of our boys look at us [staff] and think that we can never understand them because life has come so easy for us. How many times have these kids been called "slow learners" or stupid? How many times have people given up on them and they have given up on themselves?



I work in therapy with them on perseverance and self-efficacy, but

to be able to model that was probably worth at least a dozen therapy sessions. I hope they will be able to look at people who they think have it all together and realize that we are all much more alike than different.



The boys noticed that I was spending a fair amount of time just staring at the hill, so we had the opportunity to discuss how fearful I felt. I told them how I consider myself to be a "brave chicken" because so many things terrify me, but I try to not let my fears stop me. I know from my work with the boys that fear is the most difficult feeling for them to admit to, so even though none of them admitted to being fearful, I think that they appreciated my experience.

I am so grateful to have been offered the opportunity to do this. It is a fabulous reminder that even though it doesn't always feel like it, we really are making a difference in these boys' lives.

CV's Leadership Council After Party!

Immediately following The Circle of Friends Annual Dinner

May 9 at Chelsea Piers

Come join the fun or sponsor a young professional in your life or business to attend the party and/or get involved.

www.childrensvillage.org/leadershipcouncil

Want to know more about CV's Leadership Council?

We are young professionals working in the greater NYC area interested in supporting at-risk youth in the pursuit of success. While we grow and advance in our careers, we want to make a difference in the lives of children and families through our time and resources. The Leadership Council is an opportunity to expand our networks and experiences all while touching the lives of those who need it most.