



Our Stories are Your Stories

A Children's Village
Anthology



Keeping children safe and families together

With your support, The Children's Village helps more than 10,000 children and families every year in programs offered throughout the New York metropolitan area. In 2016, we merged with Inwood House, an organization with 187 years' experience providing pregnancy prevention education and support for pregnant and parenting teens.

Together, we:

Prevent problems before they occur. We support parents who are stressed and at risk of having their children removed into foster care, educate New York City high school students about pregnancy prevention and making responsible choices, and provide opportunities for teens to prepare for the workforce.

Provide a temporary safe place if staying at home is not an option. We have more than 300 loving foster homes, a short-term residential campus in Dobbs Ferry, runaway and homeless shelters, supportive housing for homeless teens, and two homes in Queens for parenting teens.

Help young adults make a successful transition back home. Returning home is not always easy. Our staff support teens through the inevitable hurdles. They provide guidance to help them complete their education and stay on track to achieve a life of independence.

Your support is critically important to our work. **Thank you.**



“Chef Cami motivated me to go to college.”

I worked with Chef Cami in the Hawks Nest Café for about a year. She taught me how to measure ingredients, how to dice, how to cut up a chicken, that sort of thing.

I'd never really cooked anything before, but through working with her I realized that I liked cooking and that I had a passion for it. Chef Cami motivated me to go to college for Culinary Arts – she helped me see that cooking is my talent.

Chef Cami taught me that becoming a chef is something that requires passion, patience, and love. She taught me that, as long as you have passion for your job, you will never work a day in your life. Even through struggles and hurdles, if you dedicate yourself to your passion, anything is possible.

-- Luis H.

Luis worked in the Hawks Nest Café as part of our WAY Program, which provides teens with an opportunity to learn valuable work-readiness skills.



We are Bravehearts

-- Angel P.

We came a long way
The things we face are real
And this right here is my positive way to deal
I belong right here doing what I love most
In my treatment I've always felt like I've
never had a choice
I be screaming in the inside and no one can
hear me on the outside
So I've never had a voice

We came a long way
We had our doubters but look at us today
And let me tell you this much it's been a
team effort since day one
We are a group of young leaders
We are a success story
We are pioneers
We are lions
We are brave
We are courageous
We are Bravehearts!!!!

Bravehearts is a youth movement founded in Westchester County by young adults who have been in foster care or involved with the juvenile justice system. They work with government and private agencies on policies and procedures in the hope of providing a better experience for young men and women in these systems.

“I’d love to be the one to help guide Uwan toward something he loves...”

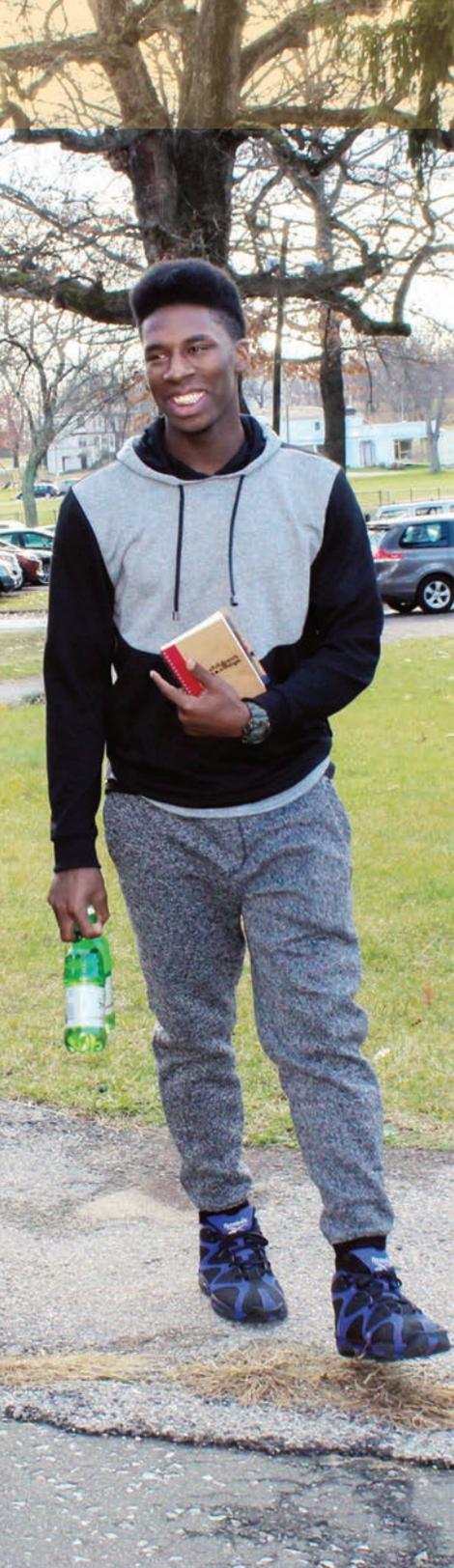
I was matched with Uwan, and honestly, I was nervous before our first meeting. I wasn't sure what we'd have to talk about, and I wasn't sure I had the skill set to guide him. As it turned out, we hit it off immediately, and one hour was not long enough.

I admitted to him that we'd have to learn from each other, and that's exactly what has happened. I have also realized that there is no skill set necessary. The best thing I do for Uwan is just to show up consistently and give him a platform to talk about everyday things as well as looking toward his future.

Uwan's a great kid with a big personality. I see myself as a big brother/friend/parental figure that he can relate to and lean on for support. I'd love to be the one to help guide Uwan toward something he loves, and help him navigate the next steps to autonomy and adulthood. It's definitely a give and get deal – I learn as much from him as he does from me.

-- John Natale, Mentor





“I feel so lucky to have been matched with John.”

A friend of mine on campus has a mentor, and he said working with her was really cool – kind of like having a big sister or an aunt to talk to – so I asked if I could get a mentor, too.

I feel so lucky to have been matched with John. He’s like a family member I never had. He’s there for me. He makes me feel safe. I feel like I can talk to him about anything without him judging me.

I like spending time with John. We have a lot in common – we like the same type of music, and he likes to write, like me. We’re both storytellers. He’s teaching me a lot, but I think more than anything, we’ll learn from each other.

-- Uwan E.

John and Uwan are part of CV’s Connections Program, which provides one-on-one, long-term mentoring to our young men.

To learn more, visit childrevillage.org/connections.



“Being a mom feels wonderful...”

My mom raised a good child. She was really loving, taught us manners, and to be respectful. She didn't have to adopt me, but she did.

When I had my daughter, Zariah, everything about how I was raised came back to me. Now it's my turn to be the mom. I want to get my GED, get a job, and get my own apartment. I'm thinking about a nursing program.

I'm not going to make the choices my birth mother made. I would never disappear on my child.

I want Zariah to be smart, go to college, and be a good kid. No boyfriends! They just cause trouble. Being a mom feels wonderful. I'm doing a really good job, and that makes me feel good.

-- Pauline M.

Pauline and Zariah live in one of our community homes for young mothers in the foster care system. The home is part of Inwood House at The Children's Village.

“I’m proud to be independent.”

I never really had an advocate until I starting working with Ms. Perez. She helped me achieve my goals – move out of my foster parent’s place and into my own apartment, get a job, and enroll in college classes. I practically raised my siblings by myself so I knew how to take care of my daughter, but I needed help with the other things. She really listened to what I wanted and helped me get where I am.

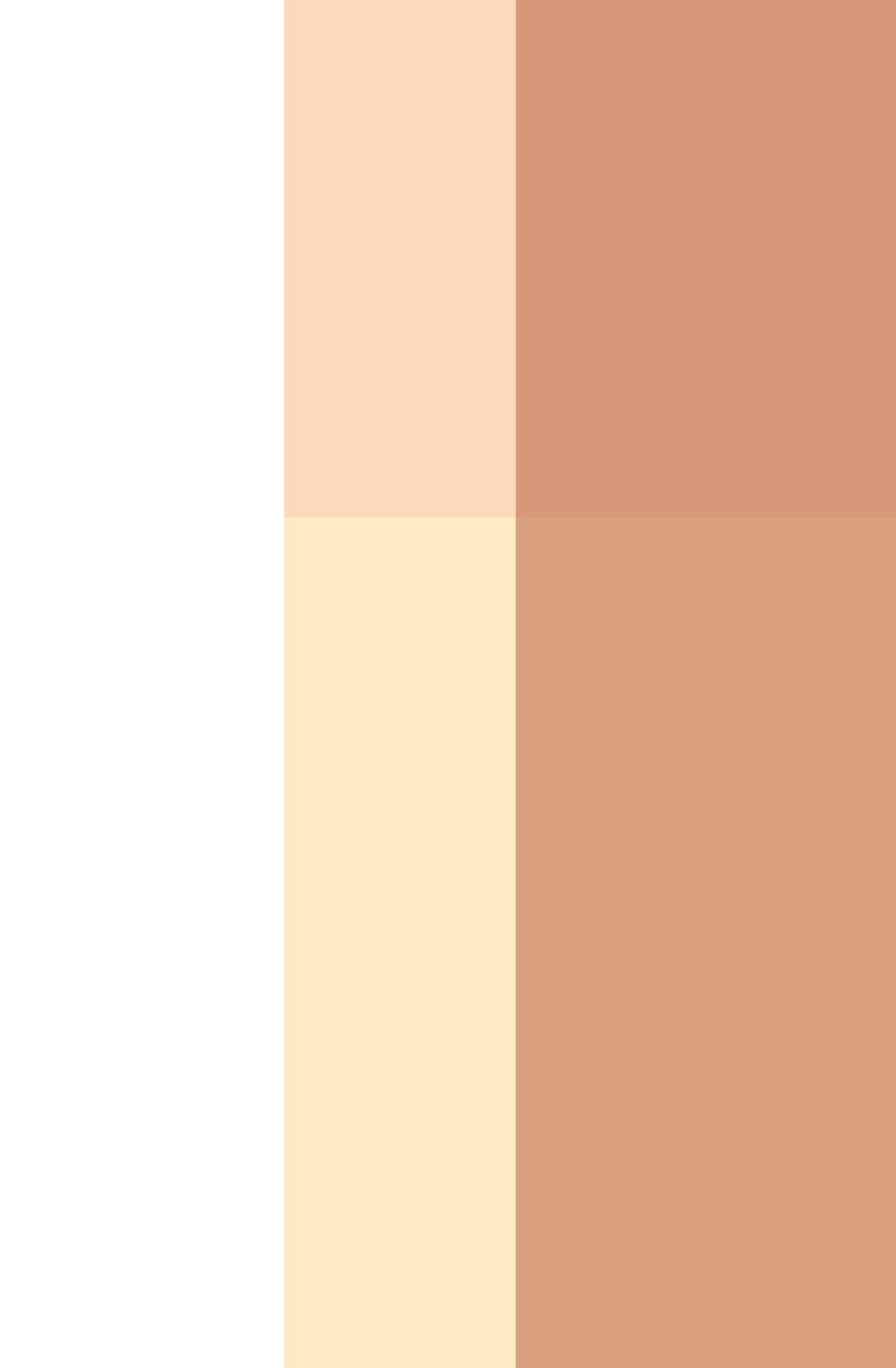
I’m very focused on my future and my daughter’s future. I’m studying criminal justice. When I was younger I wanted to be a lawyer, but now I’m really interested in forensic science. I definitely want to do work that helps people. No one else I know has accomplished as much as I have at my age. I’m proud to be independent.

-- Rebecca A.

Rebecca participated in our Families Supporting Teens (FaST) program, which is specially designed to address the needs of teens in foster care.

FaST is funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.







Our mission is to work 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. The Children's Village is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and the Better Business Bureau, and was the gold prize winner of the New York Nonprofit Excellence Award.