



OUR STORIES ARE YOUR STORIES

A CHILDREN'S VILLAGE ANTHOLOGY



“I GOT IN A LOT OF TROUBLE IN SCHOOL, BUT I’D ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING A PILOT. SOMETHING CLICKED WHEN I WAS IN 10TH GRADE – AFTER THAT I PUSHED MYSELF, AND NOW I’VE JUST EARNED MY PILOT’S LICENSE.”

- DARIAN, WAY PARTICIPANT

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

With your support, The Children's Village helps more than 10,000 children and families every year. Together, we:

- **Help lonely kids become part of a family.** Some of the children who come to us have no one – literally, not one person – in their lives. We work to find a family member or a committed individual who is willing to be there for each child.
- **Educate students to make wise choices.** Teens gain confidence, try their hand at leadership, and learn to plan for their futures through our pregnancy prevention, mentoring, and after-school programs in more than 25 New York City schools.
- **Give kids who are in trouble a reason to dream.** A wrong turn, often fueled by circumstances out of their control, can lead teens to feel they have no future. Education, a relationship with a caring adult, and job readiness training can give kids a second chance.
- **Keep children safe.** For more than 150 years, our core mission was in residential care. While today most of our work is in the community, we continue to offer therapeutic residential care for teens who are homeless, in foster care, undocumented, or in the justice system.

This special collection of stories provides a glimpse of the impact your support has on so many lives. The work is difficult, but as you'll read in the following pages, the results are life-changing.

You made these stories happen. **Thank you.**

“EVERYONE CALLS ME GRANDMA”

I've fostered 30 kids over the years. I've kept in touch with most of them – they call me and tell me how they're doing. I tell my friends, if you have the room and love in your heart – become a foster parent. Lots of kids need good homes.

I have a soft spot for the siblings because they often get split up. My mother passed when I was 7, and my father when I was 17, so I know how important it is to have siblings to lean on. Families should stay together.

One of my adopted daughters, Noel, went from foster home to foster home. I tell you, she's a difficult one! But she's doing well now.

From the second they walk in the door, I treat all of the kids like they're my family. And everyone calls me “Grandma.”

My home is their home. It's a balance – I want them to feel comfortable, but I know they want to go home.

Seeing their smiling faces – that's the best part.

Gail Brassell is one of the more than 400 foster parents CV works with who take children into their homes, providing love and support.

Do you know someone who has room at his or her table for one more? Learn more about our foster parent program at childrensvillage.org/take-action/.



“IT’S ONLY TEMPORARY”

My brother and I are living at the teen homeless shelter, but it's only temporary. Our mom died when I was young, and we've had a rough time with our dad and had to leave. It's not terrible here, but it's not great, either – there are a lot of rules. And I have to get up really early to do my chores before I go to school.

Art is my passion. I'm in my fourth year in the cosmetology program at my high school -- I LOVE doing hair and nails! My aunt and godmother worked in salons when I was growing up, and I always felt at home there. I'm getting close to graduating from high school, and I'll take my licensing exam in June.

Cosmetology involves a lot of things that I like: math, science, chemistry, skin, health, life skills, psychology. And I'm learning professional skills: to be mindful of the way you speak and present yourself, keep your space clean, act like a professional stylist even though you're only 17.

Doing hair helps me put aside whatever else is happening in my life... helps me stop thinking about things that stress me out. Every day is different, and I get to try something new. I feel lucky that I get to do something that I love to do. It fills up my heart. I'm really proud.

The author and her brother came to CV's Sanctuary shelter in Westchester when they had no place to go. Teens can stay at the Sanctuary or at Maya's Place in the Bronx for up to a month while we work with their parents or find a safe place for them to stay.



DREAM



“NO LIMITATIONS TO WHERE YOU CAN GO. . .”

In just a few days, I will depart from John F. Kennedy Airport. After a 16-hour flight I will arrive in the biggest city in Ghana: Accra.

I never could have imagined God would open the door not only for my entry into a predominately white institution such as New York University, but that He would mold my path so that I could venture to the capital of Ghana for exactly four months to study.

I was practically born into the system due to my parents' substance abuse and subsequent neglect (both would hesitantly place their addiction over their children).

Through faith in God, myself, and the people He has placed in my journey to guide me out of the abyss of despair, I was able to rise against the pressures, stigmas, and societal expectations for not only a foster child but also a black male. And now, I will be leaving behind the exceptionally frigid temperatures to absorb the mighty rays of the sun in Africa.

While enjoying the change of weather, I will dive into studying Twi, one of the 250 languages spoken in Ghana. I will research the politics dominating the West African country, followed by engaging in a comprehensive look at the slave trade dating back to the 1400s.

I know not what endeavors lie ahead, but as my favorite writer James Baldwin wrote, “If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go.”

Goodbye America, hello Ghana!

Demetrius lives in one of CV's studio apartments reserved for kids formerly in foster care or at risk of homelessness. Housing is the single biggest barrier to young people achieving independence. These unique apartments provide an affordable option and, thanks to private donations, we are also able to provide the residents with support to help them be successful.



“SOMETIMES I GET IN TROUBLE FOR TALKING TOO MUCH, BUT HERE I LISTEN.”

I always wanted a dog, but my family lived in apartments so I couldn't have one. I work at the kennel every Thursday, and I love it. I'm so excited that, by Monday, I'm already thinking about Thursday.

Dogs can be difficult; they outsmart us. They can read us really easy. Sometimes a dog will be in an "I don't care mood," and I have to come up with new ways to get him to do certain commands. I like the challenge.

Dogs are sensitive. You can't control a dog by force or screaming or yelling -- it will just run away. If I sound angry, the dog will assume I'm angry. You have to be playful, talk in a silly voice... and sometimes give treats.

Normally outside of this job, I talk a lot. Sometimes I get in trouble for talking too much, but here I listen. I like school, but it gets boring. The dogs are never boring.

Zi, 13, is a resident of our Dobbs Ferry campus and a participant in the Canine Rescue and Rehabilitation program. Teens help rescue dogs overcome problems like excessive jumping or fear of people and teach them basic obedience skills. The program has a 100% canine adoption rate.

BEGINNING WITH BEETHOVEN

About a year ago I was asked if I had any time to teach a young man piano at Children's Village. His name was Adonis, and he was teaching himself Beethoven by ear!

I was excited to begin this adventure, but really had no idea how it would evolve. So we began meeting for piano lessons each week. Over these few short months, Adonis has progressed in leaps and bounds. He has learned to read and plays new pieces on his own. Adonis comes to each lesson very eager to continue learning. He focuses completely and never seems to give up when he meets a new challenge.

I am very proud of Adonis and feel lucky to be able to help this young man pursue his musical talent. I am sure he will be able to use this positive experience as he is faced with life's challenges. Adonis has shown himself that focus, dedication to overcoming obstacles, and not giving up are skills he can easily call upon.

- Marcy Smith
MA, EdM

Last year, 467 individuals volunteered their time with children on our campus in Dobbs Ferry or in our community programs in New York City. If you are interested in volunteering or your corporation or group would like to get involved, contact Amy Dellipaooli at adellipaooli@childrensvillage.org.



OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The ultimate goal of all of our programs is to prepare children to be successful as adults. To that end, we track education, work experience, family reunification, housing stability, arrests, and other measures that indicate how well kids are doing. The following are some of our recent outcomes:

KEEPING CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES:



of children in our preventive programs stayed with families



of teens in our intensive family support program remained safely in their family home



of teens in our homeless shelters were discharged to a safe & stable living situation

KEEPING TEENS OUT OF TROUBLE:



of young men on probation in our community mentoring program avoided re-arrest



of teens in our intensive family support program abstained from criminal behavior



of teens involved with the justice system and part of our Harlem support program avoided re-arrest

HELPING YOUNG ADULTS BECOME INDEPENDENT:



of Westchester teens in our employment program maintained a job the whole summer -- and 80% worked extra weeks



of young adults in our supportive housing moved into their own permanent apartment



of former foster teens in our aftercare program are in school and/or working

“WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO BE A POLICE OFFICER BECAUSE I LIKE TO HELP PEOPLE. AND ALSO, I’M A FAST RUNNER SO I CAN RUN AFTER THE BAD GUYS IF THEY TRY TO RUN AWAY.”

- JAMEEL, AGE 8





CHILDRENSVILLAGE.ORG

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.

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