



**“The pursuit of the arts hasn’t always been easy for me.”**

## “I’m Through Accepting Limits”

At our Circle of Friends dinner this year, guests were treated to a heart-stopping rendition of “Defying Gravity” (from the Broadway Play *Wicked*) by a young woman who has fought hard to follow her dreams.

Neal U. is from a Filipino immigrant family working to succeed in America. They don’t understand singing and acting as serious activities. Neal is a respectful young lady who tries to do everything she should, so for many years, she stayed away from opportunities to test her talent.

“Because of my family, the pursuit of the arts has not always been easy for me,” said Neal. “I’ve always wanted to perform, but never had the confidence to do anything about it.”

Neal certainly didn’t seem timid as she belted out the haunting lyrics:

“I’m through accepting limits  
‘Cuz someone says they’re so  
Some things I cannot change  
But till I try, I’ll never know!”

Neal credits her participation in CV’s **Teen Choice** program as giving her the confidence to not only pursue her dream of performing, but also of learning to be a leader. Teen Choice, which is in 26 schools

in New York City, teaches students the skills to identify goals and to set a plan to achieve them. In Neal’s case, that meant respecting her family’s feelings but speaking up for her own as well.

“I’ve gained the confidence and comfortability to share my imagination with my practical family,” says Neal. “They may not always get it, but they’ve grown to accept that it’s what makes me happy.”

While Teen Choice is about teaching leadership, its roots are in pregnancy prevention, helping teens make good choices. The goal is to teach students to dismiss myths about sex and focus on facts. Through workshops, group discussion, and an open attitude that respects everyone’s questions, Teen Choice gives students the knowledge they need to keep them safe and control their own future.

Neal also has plans to attend her first performance of *Wicked* on Broadway, thanks to a generous guest of the dinner who couldn’t believe that this talented singer had never heard “Defying Gravity” sung professionally.

## Jeremy Kohomban, CEO, Moderates Child Welfare Panel at the National Governor’s Conference



Jeremy Kohomban, President & CEO of CV, moderated the “Our Children, Our Future: Rethinking Child Welfare” panel at the 111th National Governor’s Conference. The panel included Director and Co-Writer of “Instant Family” Sean Anders, Governor of Kentucky Matt Bevin, and First Lady of Louisiana Donna Edwards. A range of topics were covered including the Family First Prevention Services Act, prioritizing family-based care, and celebrating foster parents.

*“We must begin treating these amazing families who step up to be foster parents as valued partners. The key to healing is the love and belonging of family.”*

- Jeremy Kohomban

**Teen Choice . . . teaches students the skills to identify goals and to set a plan to achieve them. In Neal’s case, that meant respecting her family’s feelings but speaking up for her own as well.**

## Honoring CV's Junior Board

We believe it takes just one committed adult to change a child's life. Imagine what **24 committed young professionals** can do.

At our annual dinner in April, we acknowledged the work of our Leadership Council (affectionately called the LC) and the difference the members have made to so many children's lives. When kids in

their adopted cottage couldn't go home for the holidays, LC members showed up with gifts and stayed to have fun together. When a young boy didn't want to admit he was afraid to go to the top of the climbing wall, an LC member shared her fear and they climbed it together. And then there are the countless Saturdays when they came to play softball, eat pizza, and bond with the boys.

The LC was founded as CV's junior board in 2008 with two simple goals. First, raise money for the boys who call our Dobbs Ferry campus home. And second, get to know the kids by adopting a cottage and sharing experiences with them that they wouldn't otherwise have. They've far exceeded their goals – and our expectations.

“We have a saying: It's your presence that matters most,” said co-chair Noah Simon. “The best part about it is connecting with the kids, because when they're having fun, we're having fun.”

*The Circle of Friends dinner raised \$507,000, including \$100,000 in donations to help young people leaving foster care. Thank you to our Dinner Committee, our honorees, and everyone who came and experienced the comradery of friends new and old. We hope you'll join us for next year's dinner on April 23, 2020.*



## Sharing CV's mission and impact

Board member David Schwartz is an extraordinarily active member of the Rivertowns community where CV's headquarters is located. As such, he is often asked by neighbors to explain CV's work and describe the children who call our campus home.

An educator for more than 40 years, Schwartz decided to formalize his answer in an article for the Hudson Independent. We've gotten a lot of positive comments about the article and decided to share it with all our supporters. It begins:

**“To many Rivertowns residents The Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry is a mystery. They tend to hear about it only when there are problems. But the organization, with a 180-acre campus at the top of Walgrove Avenue, has been in the community since 1901, and is a nationally recognized provider of services to those who have been denied almost everything a child has a right to expect. These are children who respond to their circumstances with awe-inspiring determination, courage, resilience, and kindness. CV's mission is to keep them safe, to offer them education, and to help them become successful and responsible members of their communities.”**

Continue reading by visiting [thehudsonindependent.com](http://thehudsonindependent.com) and searching for “David Schwartz.”



Trustee David Schwartz not only understands the mission of CV, but he also lives it. Last year, Mr. Schwartz was part of a group of CV staff and volunteers who slept out to raise awareness of teen homelessness and of CV's programs to help.

## WAY at CV: 35 Years of Preparing Teens and Young Adults for Success

Work Appreciation for Youth (WAY) started 35 years ago at CV with the goal of preparing our teens and young adults to be successful, contributing members of their communities. Today WAY gives youth real work experience for pay, provides affordable housing options, and offers education and employment support.

*Without WAY, youth aging out of foster care are twice as likely to drop out of high school, twice as likely to be unemployed, three times as likely to experience incarceration by the age of 19, and three times as likely to become homeless. Below is a look into the lives of two young people currently enrolled in WAY and beginning new lives.*

### The WAY of Success

"I joined WAY because I was at a point in life where I was tired of just going through facility after facility and program after program. I wanted to make sure I was independent and had my own space. I was at the point of really becoming an adult, but needed some support."  
Da' Janei, Supportive Housing Resident



ext

"I'm working in the Operations department, making \$13 an hour doing something I really enjoy. Having a job means everything to me. I'm proud to be progressing in life, independent, and making money for myself."  
-Breshan, CV Resident



## "I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here"

Surrounded by friends, family, foster parents, god parents, professors, and mentors, Demetrius broke down as he spoke to the group gathered for his college graduation party.

"I wasn't supposed to be here. Where I came from, being told I would never make it, the statistics were against me."

Earlier that day he was standing with thousands of other NYU graduates in Yankee Stadium, just hours after submitting his thesis on voter fraud and suppression. But the reality of his accomplishment didn't sink in until he welcomed the most important people in his life to celebrate with him at his apartment.

Demetrius was in foster care from the time he was a toddler. He wasn't an easy child and, over the years, he was diagnosed with an alphabet soup of emotional and mental disorders. But every time a psychologist or social



worker identified a new problem, it made him angry and he vowed to prove them wrong.

Demetrius had two things going for him: his determination to overcome his problems and his ability to bond with people. Katie and John Napolitano are one example of the many people who have helped him. Foster parents for the past three years, they encouraged

Demetrius to attend NYU and beamed proudly at the graduation party they threw for him on the beautiful terrace of CV's apartment building in Harlem where Demetrius lives.

"In the Fall I'll be visiting India for 6 months to study meditation. I really want to go deep and bring as much knowledge back as I can to pass on. After that? You'll have to wait and see!"

[www.childrensvillage.org](http://www.childrensvillage.org)

To volunteer, donate, or get involved, visit our website or follow us on social media.



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



**SAVE THE DATE SEPTEMBER 18, 2019**

#### St. Andrew's Golf Club

Located in Hastings-on-Hudson, only 20 miles from NYC, St Andrew's is America's oldest golf club dating back to 1888 and the founding member of the USGA. Learn more at [www.saintandrewsgolfclub.com](http://www.saintandrewsgolfclub.com)

Register online  
[childrensvillage.org/golfandtennis](http://childrensvillage.org/golfandtennis)

For more information contact  
RoseAnn Magdaleno at 914-693-0600 ext. 1224  
[rmagdaleno@childrensvillage.org](mailto:rmagdaleno@childrensvillage.org)



Benefiting The Children's Village  
Programs for Westchester Teens

### “President's Office. How can I help you? “

If you call CV's President's office on Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursday, there's a good chance CV resident Brandon will answer.

As part of a program funded by the Pinkerton Foundation, Brandon is spending twelve weeks working in the executive office with Jeremy Kohomban and his executive assistant, Khalea Baker. As part of the internship, Brandon is learning to make Power Point presentations, set up meeting rooms, prepare mailings, answer phones, set up conference calls, and much more. But the program is not just about work skills. The goal is for the supervisors to become workplace mentors, helping the interns learn soft skills and feel comfortable in the workplace. At a recent lunch with Jeremy, Brandon talked about how he now feels more confident speaking to people and conducting himself in an office.

“It's not just good for the kids,” said Jeremy. “It gives staff, including myself, first-hand experience with the incredible potential these young men have if just given a chance.” Brandon is one of xx interns currently working in offices and programs throughout the agency. And there's xx more attending workshops to get ready to take on their new jobs. Thank you, Pinkerton Foundation, for giving us and the young men this opportunity to learn together.

*President Jeremy Kohomban and CV resident Brandon unexpectedly showed up to work dressed alike. Brandon is working in the executive office as part of our in-house mentoring program.*

