

Summer 2022



Meet Gertie, the newest therapy dog at CV and the goodest of dogs. Read more about her on page 7.

Developing Local Leaders to Support Children and Families in Iraq

All children, everywhere, deserve every opportunity for a safe and prosperous future.

In April, CV's Chief Program Officer David Collins spent a week in Iraq with the Iraqi Children Foundation.

Our partnership with the Iraqi Children Foundation began in 2009, when we provided training to NGOs responding to the needs of orphans, widows, and victims of conflict. Since then, the partnership has grown to support exemplary Iraqi NGOs helping kids and families in Baghdad, Mosul, and across Iraq.

On this visit, David visited the wonderful team at Justice Gate Organization, who run "Hope Buses" which provide on-street legal services, and an anti-trafficking program in Baghdad. The Hope Buses are always a highlight! Circumstances in Iraq can be very difficult for children, but the Hope Buses provide safe spaces along with education, meals, PPE, and hygiene supplies. Social workers meet with families at their homes

nearby. The Hope Buses also work to transition kids into local schools, and has recently added after school programs that include transportation. Just last week, they opened the [3rd Hope Bus!](#)



Our Amazing Foster Parents Recognized with Golden Heart Awards

"They are my own children and they know that. We never called them foster kids."

In June, CV held the 12th annual Golden Heart Awards Ceremony to highlight the amazing work of our foster parents and caregiver families. During the pandemic, an overwhelmed court system meant that many of our current foster parents selflessly took in more children, and new foster parents stepped up to serve during a very uncertain time. They were a source of safety and unconditional love, so to them we say **thank you!**

The Aileen Loran Outstanding Foster Parent of the Year Award went to two caregivers: Brenda Cagle and Ramona Williams. This award was named after Aileen Loran, one of our foster parents who passed away this year. Aileen founded the "blended family cookout", where she brought birth and caregiver families together in support of their children. Ms. Cagle and Ms. Williams received this award because they "created an environment for the children to thrive, ensuring constant communication and access to the birth family, and unconditional love and support." Their children's birth mother says that she feels so comfortable knowing that her children are in the homes of such caring people."



The Kinship Foster Parent of the Year Award went to Stephanie Smith. The social worker who partners with Ms. Smith calls her "an amazing mother, woman and grandmother. She has a beautiful supportive relationship with her daughter, who's children have come to live with her. She pours love and kindness into everyone around her! Her grandchildren adore her and have adjusted tremendously well."

The Families Support Teens (FaST) Foster Parent of the Year Award went to Alfredo Johnson. FaST serves older teens who are nearing the age of transition out of foster care and need support. Mr. Johnson is well known at CV for his big heart. He strives to ensure youth in his home feel loved, taken care of, and safe. This year he focused on and embraced shared-parenting, and worked diligently towards reunifications with birth families. Mr. Johnson says that after losing his mother in 2011, a friend introduced him to foster parenting, and it gave him a new purpose in life. There is an overwhelming number of older teens in the foster care system, and we need more people like Mr. Johnson to be there for them.



An Increasingly Digital World Provides More Opportunities for Young People

Over the past year, one of the most popular places on CV's Dobbs Ferry campus is the Technology Hub. From coding classes to virtual museum tours to gaming tournaments, everyone wants to be in the tech hub for something!



The Garden of Dreams foundation provided the initial funding for this amazing space. When Donovan Mitchell of the Utah Jazz heard about it, he wanted to get involved through his foundation, Spidacares. His late grandmother Blossom Wright, who lived and worked at CV, inspired him, his mother Nicole, and his sister Jordan to give back to those in need through education. They donated a mural for the room, and custom gaming chairs, controllers, and jerseys. They also introduced CV to Microsoft, who has provided computers and tablets, software, and learning courses.

In June, Donovan came to see the tech hub in action! The kids did an exciting workshop with Microsoft where they coded a wrist-worn basketball shot counter to help with their shooting speed, and then got to play pickup with Donovan. Microsoft spoke with our young people about the field of data analytics within sports and the opportunities that many don't know about. The highlight of the day was Donovan doing a Q+A with the kids and answering all of their questions. Watching their eyes light up as he talked about what motivated him and how he stays hungry was so much fun. His openness made a major impact and our young people are still talking about the day! These kinds of connections – finding real opportunity through learning and passion – are what the tech hub is all about.



SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Young people NEED the right school supplies to be successful!

You can support their learning by shopping on our Amazon Registry, making a financial donation, or shopping at your favorite store and delivering the items to CV.

Deadline to donate is August 20, 2022.

[CLICK HERE](#) to shop our Amazon Wish List or make a donation to the program.

Golden Heart Awards cont.



Evelyn Skeeters was awarded the TFFC Foster Parent of the Year Award. TFFC Foster Care addresses the needs of some young people who face significant behavioral challenges that they are working to resolve. Ms. Skeeters is always willing to accept a child into her home, and she provides a nurturing, structured environment conducive to their wellbeing. She also exhibits great patience, even when faced with challenging behaviors. She perseveres to give our youth their best chance at success.

Marcia Solomon received our Rookie Parent of the Year Award. In less than a year at CV, she has made an incredible impression. She hasn't missed one training, and is committed to be there for any child in need. Her passion is giving back and inspiring young people to follow their dreams.



Thousands of children remain in the foster care system each year awaiting placement – especially older teens and larger sibling groups. We need more families in New York City and Westchester County to provide the unconditional love and belonging that all children deserve. To learn more, [visit our website.](#)

THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE
Golf & Tennis Classic
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

Ardsley Country Club
100 North Mountain Drive
Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY 10503

You are cordially invited to join us at the Ardsley Country Club for a day on the links and courts to make a difference in the life of young people throughout New York City and Westchester County.

Register online! childrensvillage.org/golfandtennis

Congratulations, Graduates!

"If you can't say goodbye to your past, then you just can't say hello to your future."

Graduation is an important milestone for many of our young people. We celebrate the amazing graduates across CV programs and congratulate them for achieving their goals.

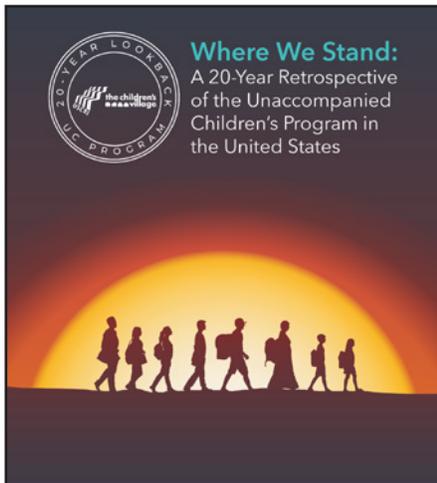
This year's graduating class at Greenburg Eleven was more than ready to break out of their caps and gowns to tackle their next journey, proudly waving and smiling to family and friends in the audience as they collected their diplomas on stage. Former WAY Program member and entrepreneur Demetrius Napolitano gave the commencement address and lead the audience through group meditation. He encouraged listeners to visualize the future success of our graduates and called on loved ones to visualize a happy future for our graduates. Sharing a few words with the budding graduates as well, CV President and CEO Dr. Jeremy Kohomban said, "Prove them wrong, you are so much greater than the labels people give you".

Graduate Charles Brown (pictured right) had the support of his whole family (and CV family!). He was so happy to graduate but even happier for his next chapter. He chose a perfect Senior quote for the occasion: "If you can't say goodbye to your past, then you just can't say hello to your future."



High School Graduate Maria Tziquin-Jorge of the Inwood House Bayside Program is proving she is much greater than the labels some people place on her. Maria has overcome many challenges, including becoming a young mother, to get where she is today. Attending school daily and staying up late completing homework while spending quality time with her daughter was incredibly challenging. But Maria worked tirelessly to graduate high school with excellent grades, which ultimately led her to be accepted to 5 New York City Colleges!

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Where We Stand: A 20-Year Retrospective of the Unaccompanied Children's Program in the U.S.

In partnership with the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), CV has begun a one-year project looking back at the Unaccompanied Children's Program from the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 until today. We will dive into how the care of unaccompanied children has changed, where we are today, and what lies ahead.

Read Chapter Two: The Flores Saga [here](#).

CV in Iraq cont.

David also visited our colleagues at the Iraq Health Access Organization, a critical provider of healthcare and social services throughout Iraq. "It was surreal to drive from Erbil and see the devastation and the efforts to rebuild, and then walk in and see The Children's Village logo on a door of a busy clinic!" said David. Their programs include primary care, reproductive health, gender-based violence, disability services, and more. Today, CV partners with two clinics in Mosul, which provide disability care as part of a larger integrated health center. Doctors told us they see a mix of disabilities here: war injuries, physical, developmental, intellectual, and more.



In addition to physical care, IHAO provides psychosocial support groups for patients and families, and even has a focus on arts and crafts as a form of therapy. One mother displayed some lovely drawings made by her daughter, who is deaf and in need of a hearing aid. Another was selling crafts to help support her family – a common occurrence everywhere the team visited.



While there is so much devastation throughout Iraq due to occupation and conflict, the work being done provides hope and inspiration. At IHAO, for example, the staff reflects the diversity of Mosul and the region – Sunni, Shiite, Christian, Arab, and Kurd – all of whom survived the ISIS occupation and committed to sticking around and rebuilding. This is a beautiful thing to see.

As CV continues to grow its partnerships in Iraq, we look forward to many more visits and making many more friends in this incredible country. All children, everywhere, deserve every opportunity for a safe and prosperous future.

CV Welcomes New Therapy Dog, Gertie!

CV is excited to welcome Gertie to the Animal Assisted Therapy Team! Animal Assisted Therapy is incredibly effective in individual and group sessions. Animals have the power to disarm emotions, invoke empathy, and be a friend to lean on. The most recent addition to our AAT team is Gertie, who was trained at Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities (ECAD), and joined us this summer.

Gertie has had quite the journey. She was initially trained to work with a person with autism who also suffered from chronic fainting. Gertie was trained to assist by licking the person's face and staying by their side until they woke up.



By the way, she still does this when Dr. Richard does her yoga routine on the floor!



Gertie with one of her handlers, Anna Riolo, LMHC, who works on our Dobbs Ferry campus.

When it was discovered that Gertie was afraid of buses and vans, she was not able to continue as a service dog, but made a wonderful therapy dog!

Graduation cont.



Inwood House Victory House Program member Ernaida Oliveira received the "Above and Beyond Intern Award" for all her hard work in the Learning to Work Program. Ernaida wanted nothing less than to be a model student this year and after applying herself in her internship and in the classroom, she will be attending Hostos Community College this fall, proving to herself and young people like her that hard work does pay off.

Our Westchester Therapeutic foster homes program graduated two cohorts of potential foster parents. Both classes have completed our 10-week foster parent training. Congratulations to our future parents!

We are so proud of all our graduates. They deserve tremendous credit for what they have accomplished, and we cannot wait to see the bright futures that lay ahead for them!



Save the Date! Join us October 29, 2022 for the Masquerade Gala!