

News from the Village

the children's
village

Winter 2022



In its first volunteer event for CV, the KULU Foundation provided over 420 turkeys for the families we serve in Harlem. Community member Christine Knox said “It means a lot because people are struggling right now. No matter what we’re going through in life, Thanksgiving is a time for family, and getting this blessing helps us all sit down and be together.”

Read more about the Holidays at the Village on page 3

Freedom 60: Passing the Torch to Today's Youth

In August, CV students and staff joined the Freedom Riders 60th Anniversary Celebration! Former Freedom Riders organized a series of events to commemorate this historical anniversary and “pass the torch” from the riders to today’s youth. Our young people traveled along the original route from Georgia through Mississippi to engage in immersive cultural tours and workshops. They were accompanied by former Freedom Rider Carol Ruth Silver and other civil rights activists, and were mentored throughout the process by former Freedom Rider Lew Zuckman. It was a life-changing experience for many of our youth and staff. Some major highlights from the trip were visiting Kelly Ingram Park, the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, the historic greyhound bus terminal, and a tour of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the area.

A few short months later CV hosted a panel discussion with young people and staff from the trip, who detailed why this experience was so meaningful:

“I learned a lot from Ms. Silver, we spoke often about making incremental change. Her words had me thinking internally about the problems that are in my community today and what I can do about those things. I took a lot away from her.”

Joel, CV Youth



“I took away that I want to be able to uplift my peers around me and surround myself with people who can uplift me. Since the trip, I’m trying to stay around people who will challenge my mind and point of view to help me grow.”

Ben, CV Youth



“Since we’ve returned to campus, I’ve noticed more kinship between our community residents and the residents that live on campus. They support each other and push each other, and this trip has really built a stronger community.”

Mr. Giles
Assistant Manager on
CV’s Dobbs Ferry Campus



Staff Profile: Ronald Dorsett

Changing the Stigma of Foster Care: It Can be an Incredible Positive



Ronald Dorsett, one of our Therapeutic Foster Care Recruiters, has a special connection to his work due to his own lived experience. At a very young age, he entered the foster care system along with his sister. Like many parents, theirs needed time to get to a better place in their lives before they could take care of Ronald and his sister, but family reunification proved difficult.

After a couple of years in the system, Ronald and his sister were adopted by an older woman who they called “grandmother”, who’s daughter became their “big sister”. Grandmother passed away soon after, and the children ended up back in the system, but luckily their “big sister” stepped up and adopted them.

“There was a lot of growing and adjusting, but I fell in love with the idea of someone else being your parent when you don’t have a biological parent at that time. It led me to appreciate having two families and learning that you don’t have to be blood to be family.”

Ronald’s father was still nearby and always remained in contact. They had opportunities to bond, but unfortunately he passed away just as Ronald headed off to College. When Ronald graduated, he knew he wanted to give back to kids who are in similar situations, helping them through foster care, adoption, grief, and growing up in a poor neighborhood. So, he focused on his education, got a degree in Child and Family Studies, and joined the Village! Today, he is a Therapeutic Home Finder and Recruiter and pours his soul into his work.

In training future foster parents, Ronald’s favorite exercise is “turning your losses into gains”. He talks about how the notion of foster care can be negative, that people can often pity children due to them losing their biological family. But Ronald views it differently and wants to change the stigma surrounding foster care. “I love that I get to handpick foster parents and make sure people are the right fit. Being a foster parent is so life changing – for both

“There was a lot of growing and adjusting, but I fell in love with the idea of someone else being your parent when you don’t have a biological parent at that time.”

the parents and the children - and I don’t take that lightly. It can be an incredible positive.”

Josiah Impresses at Westchester’s Battle of the Books Tournament

Josiah is setting an incredible example for his peers. You may have read about Josiah recently as we’ve shared about his achievements in our Technology Hub, how he attends Dobbs Ferry High School thanks to his mom advocating on his behalf, or how he can solve a Rubik’s Cube in 15 seconds (yes, 15 seconds). In addition to all of that, he recently led the Dobbs Ferry Team to the semifinals of Westchester’s Battle of the Books Tournament!

Josiah, elected team Captain by his Dobbs Ferry teammates, helped them win the first day of the tournament by providing 8 of his team’s 11 correct responses. His confidence and calm were there for all to see. The second day of the tournament brought more pressure, but Josiah led his peers to another victory, providing 15 of Dobbs Ferry’s 17 correct responses! It was an amazing display of a young man who is composed, humble, and wise in his decisions to choose his answers carefully. He seems to enjoy this process and experience no matter how high the pressure is turned up. And on Day 3, it was no surprise that Josiah led his team to victory again, providing 12 of Dobbs Ferry’s 16 correct responses.

Unfortunately, Dobbs Ferry was not able to progress past the semifinal round. That may have been because Josiah was attending another great opportunity, the Freedom 60 trip.

Josiah’s literacy mentor Ms. H describes him as “a beautiful human being – the kid that makes you proud. He is smart, studies hard, works hard, takes all his tasks seriously and does his best to give a hand to others when needed. He is gentle with his peers, intelligent and has social charms that accommodate everyone around him in a peaceful and gracious manner.”

Even though he did his best, but had less help from the team than anticipated, he never dwelled on judgement but tried to encourage his team members to better organize for the next battle. He was proud to lift them up and enjoy the experience.

In a recent letter to our President & CEO, Josiah’s mother had this to say: “The patience from The Children’s Village team working with not just Josiah, but also providing me the skills (through workshops, home visits, and support) to help find effective ways of communication to assist my family better when Josiah comes home has truly been life changing.”

We cannot wait to see what this amazing young man does next!



Community Partners Step Up to Help CV Families in Need

Thanks to our incredible circle of friends, this year The Children’s Village was able to provide close to 1,000 Thanksgiving meals to children and families in CV programs across the NY metro area. With our highest need for meals yet and grocery prices going up each week, we would never have been able to fill the need without our dedicated community partners, donors, and volunteers. Thank you!



Volunteers from Ambac helped pack hundreds of boxes for our families in need.



Our longstanding supporters from Morgan Stanley helped receive and sort donations yet again this year.



In addition to providing 420 turkeys for our Drew Hamilton Community Center, the KULU Foundation braved the cold for hours to distribute them to our families.



High school students from Temple Beth Shalom in Hastings added a personal touch to their Thanksgiving boxes for families this year!



You can organize a **gift drive** with friends and family. You can **send gifts to our Gifts for Giving drive** so that our youth have something to bring home and give to their families on Holidays or Birthdays. And you can **shop our Amazon Registry** to provide wrapped gifts from children’s wish lists. To learn more about our volunteer and giving opportunities, contact our Director of Community Engagement, Amy DelliPaoli, at adellipaoli@childrensvillage.org.

Thanks to all our generous donors and volunteers, there are plenty of smiles to go around – and you can still make a difference this holiday season!

If you would like to add CV to your holiday tradition, fill out and return the form below with the enclosed envelope.



I want to give holiday cheer to children and families in need!

Make your donation go twice as far. Please check to see if your company offers a matching gift program.

Donate securely online at: childrensvillage.org/donate

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

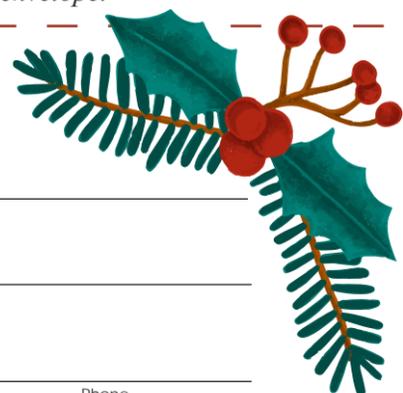
Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: The Children’s Village
Credit card: AmEx Visa MasterCard Discover

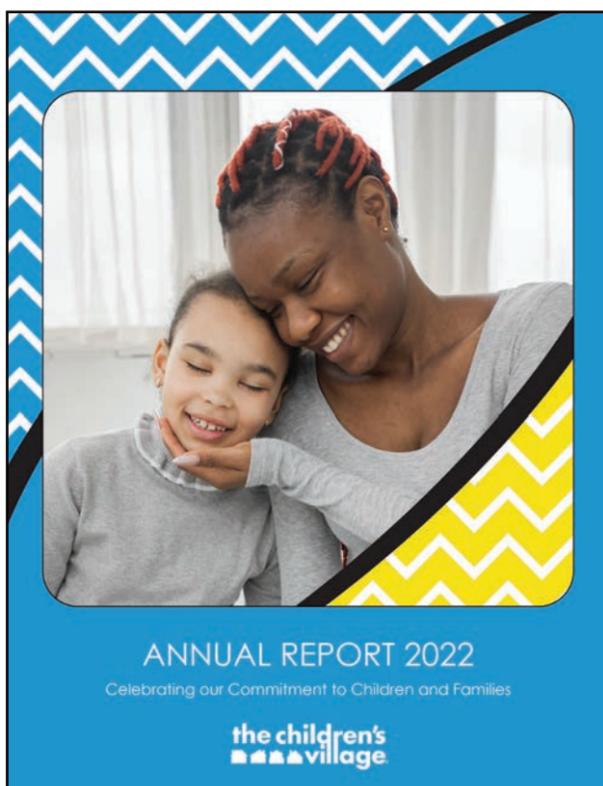
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To volunteer, donate, or get involved, visit our website at www.childrensvillage.org or follow us on social media @ChildrensVllg.



You made a difference!

Your support is critical to our work. Together we can look towards 2023 with a sense of optimism and hope. You can read the annual report online at:

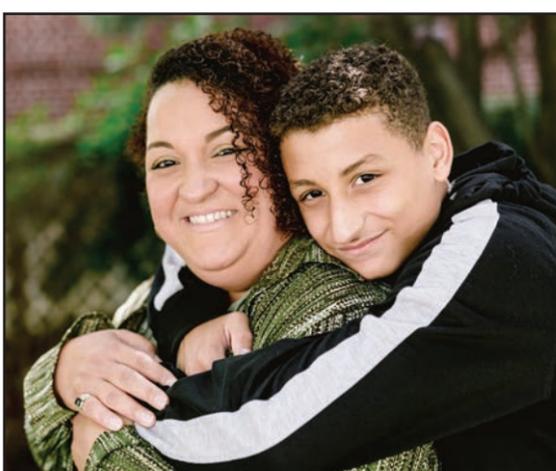
childrensvillage.org/annualreport



YOU + US = JOY

Thanks and gratitude for all you have done for us this year

Warm holiday wishes to you and yours this season from
The Children's Village



A Family Finds Joy in Radical Acceptance

for a young person. But what we know is that with support and working together as a unit, families can heal and achieve their goals.

When the family joined our STEP Aftercare program, they wanted to work on skills to help process emotions in healthy ways and communicate more effectively. One of those skills is radical acceptance: understanding that things have not been perfect, but removing blame from the equation and focusing on skill-building and future goals - and Misael has a lot of those!

One thing Misael loves is Marine Biology. He says that "there is an entire world in the oceans well below the surface of the water that few people get to see or learn about. I love the giant octopus the most, because they're usually very alienated and isolated, so they always stood out to me." Misael also

gives back to the community by lending his artistic skills - right now he is creating cutout snowmen for a photo booth at one of our Holiday events. He's also passionate about sharing his lived experience to help others, speaking at back to school events and in programs to help other young people going through similar struggles.

When you ask Misael about these topics he is full of joy and excitement - you can see the glow on his face. Not long after some very difficult circumstances, how is Misael able to achieve this? According to him it's because "my family and I are on the same page. We are all working together, learning the same skills, and I feel like we're all rowing in the same direction. It makes it easier to let things go and focus on the future."

When 9th grader Misael was growing up, his father wasn't around to help the family, and that caused a tremendous amount of stress and trauma. When his family relationship became too strained, he ended up in residential care for 2 years.

Exiting residential care to return home can be one of the most difficult transitions periods