

Empowering Children, Supporting Families, Transforming Communities since 1851



*“The energy of the day reflected what Black History Month is truly about: honoring the past, celebrating the present, and investing in the future.”*

Attendees of the Black History Month Celebration enjoyed a performance from Cocoa Sarai.

## Supporting the CV Parent Council to Raising their Voices



Members of The Children's Village Parent Council

At The Children's Village, we believe that parents and family are key to each child's success.

This month, members of our Parent Council traveled to the New York State Capitol to participate in the annual Lobby Day hosted by The Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA).

Conversations focused on ensuring access to needed

mental health and clinical services and expanding higher education career pathways for youth and staff. These policy priorities are essential to maintaining strong, community-based services for children and families.

In every meeting our Parent Council shared their experience and spoke about the real-life impact of funding decisions.

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## Black in the Day: Honoring History & Celebrating Community

Black history is American history, a truth recognized and honored by The Children's Village. Black and Brown families are disproportionately impacted by the foster care and juvenile justice systems — systems we work every day to transform through care, opportunity, and community support. Black in the Day was created as an event to honor the legacy, resilience, innovation, and cultural contributions of Black leaders, families, and changemakers — past and present.

This year, more than 400 youth, families, staff, and community partners gathered for an agency-wide celebration filled with culture and connection. Guests explored a curated Black History Month book display and interactive scavenger hunt, enjoyed live performances, and shared meals together throughout the afternoon.

Interactive experiences were woven throughout the event. Youth and families took home greenhouse kits in recognition of generational growth and legacy, created custom hair oils celebrating culture and self-expression, and contributed individual squares to a collaborative Black History Quilt that will serve as a lasting symbol of unity. A community barbershop space offered haircuts, music, and conversation — honoring the barbershop's historic role as a cultural gathering place.

The energy of the day reflected what Black History Month is truly about: honoring the past, celebrating the present, and investing in the future.



Giving inspiration through song.



Nickels Pickels are always in demand.



Bartendaz and Giant Thinking perform.



## The Children's Village Circle of Friends *Dinner & After Party*

Celebrating 175 years of Keeping Children Safe and Families Together

Save the Date!

Thursday, May 7, 2026

RSVP online

[childrensvillage.org/dinner](https://childrensvillage.org/dinner)



Collage created by staff and youth.



Black History Quilt making.

Thank you to the partners and vendors who helped make this celebration possible: DJ Spazo of Hot 97, Live Wire Studios LLC, Bartendaz and Giant Thinking, Black Seed Watermelon (Rell), singer Cocoa Sarai, Abo African Products, Off the Hook of Yonkers Restaurant, Cravin Jamaican Cuisine, CorWon Solutions LLC, and Nickels Pickles. Your partnership helped create an unforgettable experience for our community.

## A Community of Care: Thank You for Making It Possible

As we reflect on the Community Engagement initiatives from last year at The Children's Village, we do so with deep gratitude for every person who donated, volunteered, and advocated on behalf of the children and families we serve. Through the support of our community, our four annual drives once again became powerful moments of care and connection.

With your help, in 2025 we helped young people walk into school prepared and confident by distributing more than **2,117 backpacks** and school supplies through our Back-to-School Drive. We also supported important milestones,



providing **100 prom outfits** and accessories through our Prom Perfect Drive so teens could celebrate a memorable rite of passage with pride.

Families gathered around the table thanks to **1,517 holiday meals** shared through the Feeding Our Families Thanksgiving Drive, while the Make-A-Child-Smile Holiday Drive brought joy to the season with **5,517 toys and gifts** for children and youth.

These numbers represent far more than items distributed. They represent children who felt ready for the classroom, teens who walked into prom with confidence, families who shared warm meals together, and young people who experienced the simple but powerful feeling of being seen and have a sense of belonging.

Each drive reminds us that when a community comes together with purpose and compassion, real needs can be met in meaningful ways. We appreciate the continued support and look forward to building on this work together in the year ahead.



Host Ely De La Cruz engages guests during a podcast about teens.

## From The Village — Season Two Begins

In celebration of its 175th anniversary, The Children’s Village is proud to launch Season Two of the podcast *From The Village*—a space for reflection, honest conversation, and forward-thinking ideas shaped by generations of working with children and families. This season invites listeners to look both backward and forward: What have we learned over time? What would we change if we were starting today? And which values have proven timeless?

The season opened in February with the premiere episode, [If We Were Starting Today, What Would We Do Differently?](#) In a conversation featuring David Collins, Chief Program Officer, Warren Kent, Senior Vice President for Community Based Services, and Laura Turcio Assistant Director of WAY Specialists Education/Housing/Employment, these leaders focused on how our understanding of prevention, housing, and family support has evolved. While systems and strategies continue to shift, the discussion reinforced that some principles remain unchanged, relationships, consistency, and dignity continue to sit at the center of meaningful care.

Building on that reflection, the next episode turns outward to challenge common misconceptions about adolescents. [What Most People Get Wrong About Helping Teens](#) offers a myth-busting conversation that feels relevant beyond our field. With insight from Jennifer Madera, Division Director of Safe Harbor Services, the episode reframes how communities can better understand young people and why connection, rather than control, drives positive outcomes.

The season also explores one of the most complex and frequently misunderstood areas of child welfare: family reunification. [Why Family Reunification Is Hard — and Why It Still Matters](#) examines what it actually takes for families to heal and remain together long term. The episode features Andrea DaCosta, Senior Director of TFBH & Emerging Adult Services and Jennifer Black, Family Foster Care Social Work Supervisor.

Looking ahead, the season will continue with a broader conversation about stability itself. [What Actually Creates Stability: Investing in Communities Before Crisis](#) will focus on a lesson drawn from decades of frontline experience, stability does not begin once families enter systems; it begins long before. Guests, Dr. Traci Gardner, Chief Medical Officer, Jamila Baucom-Rosal, Vice President for Advancement, and Daphne Torres-Douglas, Vice President for Behavioral Health Services discuss the importance of sustained care.

Through prevention, advocacy, and community investment, fewer families need residential care at all. The episode reflects The Children’s Village’s commitment to sharing knowledge beyond our organization so communities can strengthen families before crisis occurs. Check out all of our episodes on [Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#).

*The Children’s Village*

# Pickleball Tournament

*Save the Date! May 20, 2026*



CV Hawks Coach Felix on the court.



CV Hawks Captain Makye showcasing his skills.

## Building Leaders on and off the Court

For more than 30 years, David Felix has coached basketball, but at The Children's Village, he will tell you that basketball is only a small part of the work.

As head coach of the CV Hawks team, Coach Felix understands what the young people in his care carry onto the court. Many face instability at home, struggles with trust, mental health challenges, and exposure to violence or other hardships. "Coaching a team from The Children's Village is different than coaching a regular team," he explains. "We're dealing with so many intangibles, that's why they're here."

For Coach Felix, the goal isn't simply winning games. It's building stability. It's teaching respect. It's helping young people learn how to manage frustration, resolve conflict, and show good sportsmanship — even in the face of defeat.

"Our job is to show the kids stability," he says. "Our job is to give them the knowledge and the skills they need to be productive citizens." Whether a young person dreams of becoming an artist, a chef, or a star athlete, Coach Felix and his fellow coaches use

basketball as a forum to build leadership, accountability, and trust. A team, he reminds them, is not about one individual, it's about several young people working together toward a common goal.

That message is resonating.

Makye, captain of the Hawks team, is a powerful example. Having faced significant challenges in his own life, Makye has grown into a steady, positive leader for his teammates. Coach Felix calls him one of the most coachable players he has ever worked with. "He came from the bottom all the way up to the top," he says with pride.

When asked what lesson he has learned, Makye's answer reflects the heart of the program: "to be a good player, you have to care about your team, show leadership, and practice good sportsmanship."

Through every practice, every game, and every conversation, Coach Felix is doing far more than teaching basketball. He is helping young people see that there is a better way forward, and giving them the tools, confidence, and belief to pursue it.

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## Parent Council cont.

We are proud to stand alongside our Parent Council partners as they help ensure that the voices of families remain front and center in policy discussions.

The Children's Village Parent Council and staff visiting New York State Representatives.



## Housing, Community, and Recognition

Beyond programs and services, the commitment of The Children's Village to children and families lives in the neighborhoods where families grow, learn, and build stability. Through thoughtfully designed mixed use spaces with beautiful homes and vibrant communities, we strive to bring together homes, education, and shared cultural spaces in ways that strengthen opportunity and connection.

We're proud to share that [The Eliza](#), our recently completed development in Inwood, Manhattan, has been recognized in [Architectural Record NYC's 2026 Design Awards](#), earning an Architecture Honor alongside the New York Public Library's Inwood Branch and was also recognized in the [2026 AIA Design](#). These recognition highlights not only design excellence, but the broader vision behind the project: housing that respects residents, enhances neighborhoods, and supports long-term family wellbeing.

Additionally, our President & CEO, Jeremy Kohomban, recently authored an opinion piece



[The Eliza](#)



41 North Division Street, Peekskill, NY



in *City Limits* titled [When It Comes to Housing, Let's Put Families First](#), calling attention to the urgent need for housing policies that prioritize family stability and community strength. His message reinforces what our work has long demonstrated — safe, affordable housing is foundational to young people's success in education and opportunity.

The Children's Village was also featured in the Peekskill Herald on February 13, 2026, in an article titled [Turning a New Page: Construction Expected to Begin This Summer on New Field Library](#) as well as in Affordable Housing Finance on February 24, [Affordable Housing Meets the Public Library](#). The coverage highlights the continued growth of community-centered spaces that bring resources directly to neighborhoods and families.

These milestones reflect a shared idea: when housing, learning, and community spaces are intentionally built together, families have the stability they need to thrive.