

Empowering Children, Supporting Families, Transforming Communities since 1851



Celebrating the Class of 2026

This graduation season, The Children's Village is proud to celebrate more than 75 young people who earned their high school diplomas and are preparing for the next chapter of their lives.

These remarkable graduates have demonstrated extraordinary perseverance, determination, and resilience. They come from our on-Campus public school, Greenburgh 11 and schools across New York City, including Brooklyn Academy, Brooklyn Technical High School, Fashion Industries

High School, the High School for Law, Advocacy and Community Justice, Robert H. Goddard High School, and Bronx Latin.

For many of these young people, the journey to graduation was far from easy. They overcame significant personal challenges with determination, perseverance, and resilience, never losing sight of their goals or their hopes for a brighter future.

Continues on p. 3

Bringing Help Home for 25 Years

Twenty-five years ago, The Children's Village made a simple but bold commitment: instead of asking how we could build better institutions, we asked how we could help more children succeed at home.

That commitment led us to Multisystemic Therapy (MST), an innovative approach that brings intensive, evidence-based support directly to young people and their families, wherever they live. What began in 2001 as a small pilot program in the Bronx has grown into one of the nation's leading MST programs, serving thousands of children and families across New York.

Over the past quarter century, MST has demonstrated what we have long believed: even young people facing the greatest challenges can thrive when we strengthen families rather than separate them. Our leadership has extended well beyond New York. The Children's Village became an MST Network Partner, helping organizations across the United States and internationally implement the model with fidelity. We also helped develop and test new adaptations of MST, ensuring the approach continues to meet the evolving needs of children and families.

Perhaps our greatest accomplishment, however, is the people. Many of the professionals who helped launch MST at The Children's Village remain leaders in the field today, while countless others have carried what they learned here into child welfare, behavioral health, and public service agencies across the country.

"For 25 years, Multisystemic Therapy has demonstrated the power of meeting young people and families where they are and helping them build on their strengths," said Daphne Torres-Douglas, Vice President for Behavioral Health Services at The Children's Village. "MST is more than a therapeutic model—it is a commitment to keeping families together, preventing unnecessary out-of-home placements, and helping young people succeed in their homes, schools, and communities. Every day, we see the difference that strong family connections, individualized support, and evidence-based interventions can make in a young person's life. This milestone reflects the dedication of our staff, the resilience of the families we serve, and our unwavering belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive."

Zoco, my eldest, was hurting. . . My local Police Athletic League referred me to the Multisystemic Therapy Program at The Children's Village, where we could get services in our home, and right away ***I felt like an equal partner and team member to the CV staff.***

They made me feel comfortable and helped with some communication tools I could use to improve our family dynamic. Zoco was resistant at first, but once he got to know our social worker Ms. Ashley, he really started to open up and change.



- Ms. Hart, 2023 MST Parent

Celebrate Grads cont.

Several graduates achieved exceptional academic honors, including valedictorian and salutatorian distinctions, while many others will continue their education at colleges and universities throughout the country.

Among this year's standouts are youth heading to prestigious institutions such as New York University, Barnard College, the University of California, Berkeley, Spelman College, Pennsylvania State University, Lehigh University, and American University. One graduate earned a full scholarship to Morrisville State

College, another received a Division II volleyball scholarship, and a remarkable student was awarded a full U.S. Marines scholarship to attend UC Berkeley.

Most impressive, one student received the highly competitive Dream US National Scholarship, covering four years of college tuition.

Other graduates will pursue career and technical education programs, trade schools, and workforce opportunities that will help them build successful and independent futures.

These accomplishments are a testament not only to the hard work of the graduates, but also to the unwavering support provided by their dedicated teams. Their commitment to helping young people navigate challenges, stay engaged in school, and achieve their goals has made a lasting impact on the lives of countless youth.



**Congratulations to the entire Class of 2026.
Their strength, perseverance, and remarkable
progress inspire us all, and we are excited to see
the paths they forge, the dreams they pursue, and
the bright futures they create.**

SAVE THE DATE!

THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Golf Classic

September 29, 2026

Ardasley Country Club

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

For more information contact RoseAnn Magdaleno
at 332-373-4549 or rmagdaleno@childrensvillage.org



Jahnyla's Journey to a Place Called Home

For Jahnyla, June 6 was much more than a home makeover. It was the realization of a dream she has carried with her since childhood.

In early June, volunteers from A Sense of Home (ASOH), alongside The Children's Village, transformed Jahnyla's Bronx apartment into a warm, welcoming space she could truly call her own. The special occasion marked another milestone in Jahnyla's remarkable journey from foster care to independent living.

Jahnyla entered foster care when she was just two years old. Now, at 26 and preparing to celebrate her 27th birthday later this year, she reflects on her experiences with resilience, determination, and hope.

"My journey in the foster system wasn't that great, but I made the most of it," she said. "No matter what happens in life, as long as you rise above it, you can be the greatest in the world." That positive outlook has guided Jahnyla through challenges and helped shape the life she is building today. As volunteers worked to bring her vision for her apartment to life, she shared her excitement about finally seeing a dream become reality.

"I've had this vision in my head since I was a little girl," she said. "To actually see it coming to life is everything to me."

Jahnyla remains connected to The Children's Village through the WAY program, where she receives support from housing, employment, and educational specialists. The program has helped provide resources and guidance as she continues building a stable and successful future.

Laura Russo, Assistant Director of WAY Specialists and Jahnyla's mentor at The Children's Village, has witnessed her growth firsthand.

"Jahnyla was someone who always responded, always showed up, and always took advantage of every opportunity that was brought her way," said Russo. "She has always been a great advocate for herself, and she's insanely kind."



Jahnyla is HOME! Thanks to CV and A Sense of Home, her apartment is a welcoming space.

Her accomplishments extend far beyond securing a home. Jahnyla graduated from John Jay College with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, a testament to her determination, perseverance, and commitment to creating opportunities for herself.

The Home Creation makeover was made possible through [A Sense of Home](#), a leading nonprofit dedicated to preventing homelessness by creating first-ever homes and a community for youth aging out of foster care. Recently expanding its services from Los Angeles to New York and the broader Tri-State area, A Sense of Home is bringing its transformative model to more young adults as they transition into independent living.

The partnership between The Children's Village and A Sense of Home reflects a shared vision, one where housing is not simply about providing access to an apartment, but about creating environments where young people can heal, grow, and thrive. Together, both organizations recognize that a safe, beautiful, and personalized home can be a powerful foundation for stability, well-being, and future success.

Today, Jahnyla is thriving. She owns and operates Nyla's Pups, a pet care business that offers pet sitting, boarding, walking, training, and specialty pet food. Inspired by the needs of her own dogs, she developed customized pet food recipes to help animals with allergies and other health concerns. She is also preparing to begin veterinary school, taking another step toward a career dedicated to caring for animals.

Her apartment is shared with her partner and their beloved pets, including Bandit, Midnight, and Royal, who each have a special place in her heart. Together, they have created a family and a future filled with possibility.

As she looks ahead, Jahnyla hopes her story inspires others facing difficult circumstances. "I just want people to know that no matter what situation you're in, you can always rise above it," she said. "No matter how hard life can get, always push through it because at the end of the day, there is a light at the end."

For Jahnyla, the apartment transformation represented more than new furniture and décor. It symbolized stability, independence, and the opportunity to build the future she has always envisioned. Thanks to the support of A Sense of

Home, The Children's Village, and a community of dedicated volunteers, that vision is now becoming a reality, one room, one dream, and one bright new chapter at a time.

[Watch her full story here.](#)



Save the Date

MASQUERADE
GALA

Saturday, October 24, 2026

Everyday Ishmael Builds a Strong Body and Mind

At just 12 years old, Ishmael is already learning important lessons about growth, perseverance, and preparing for the future.

Since arriving at The Children's Village's residential treatment center in Dobbs Ferry, Ishmael has embraced opportunities to explore new interests, build relationships, and develop skills that will help him succeed. An energetic pre-teen who describes himself as "hyperactive," he stays active through a wide range of sports, including basketball, soccer, baseball, handball, pickleball, and boxing. Whether practicing on the court with friends who encourage him to improve or learning footwork and discipline in the boxing ring, Ishmael has found healthy outlets for his energy and determination.

Beyond athletics, Ishmael enjoys drawing, painting, and exploring his creativity through art. Earlier this year, he proudly showcased his work at the Studio Museum in Harlem as one of several Children's Village youth selected to participate in a special arts program. Through the experience, he experimented with natural dyes, watercolor painting, and printmaking while using art to express his thoughts and emotions. The exhibition gave Ishmael the opportunity to share his creativity with others and celebrate his accomplishments. Ishmael has also enjoyed hands-on learning experiences through culinary activities, helping prepare everything from fish tacos to homemade ice cream. He says each project offers something new and gives him the chance to learn alongside friends.



With the strong support of Recreation Coordinator Justin Baker, Ishmael is becoming a strong person, physically and emotionally.

Perhaps most impressive is Ishmael's growing self-awareness. He openly talks about the importance of learning to manage his emotions and developing the skills that will help him succeed in school, work, and life. Looking ahead, he dreams of becoming an architect, combining his passion for art and design to create buildings that inspire others.

Through his time at The Children's Village, Ishmael has gained far more than academic and creative opportunities. With the guidance and support of the residential treatment team, he is learning resilience, responsibility, healthy decision-making, and the confidence to shape his own future. Those lessons are helping him build the foundation for a positive life and giving him the tools to pursue his goals with purpose and optimism.

The Holidays are coming fast!

The Children's Village is getting ready for the Holidays and we need your help to bring cheer to the Village. **The Feeding Families Fundraiser** kicks off this October and **The Make A Child Smile Gift Drive** begins in December!

Want to to volunteer or host a holiday drive?

Contact Lihana Colon Acosta at (914) 693-0600 Ext. 4669 or lacosta@childredivillage.org



Honoring Lou Codella's Commitment to Young People

For nearly five decades, Louis "Lou" Codella has been a steady and trusted presence in the lives of young people at The Children's Village. Recently recognized for his extraordinary volunteer service, Lou's impact is measured not only by the countless hours he has given, but by the relationships he has built and the promises he has kept.

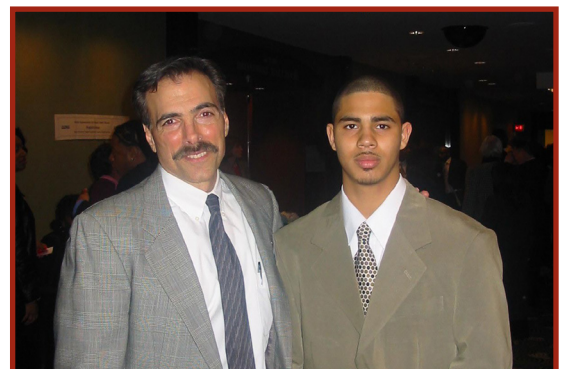
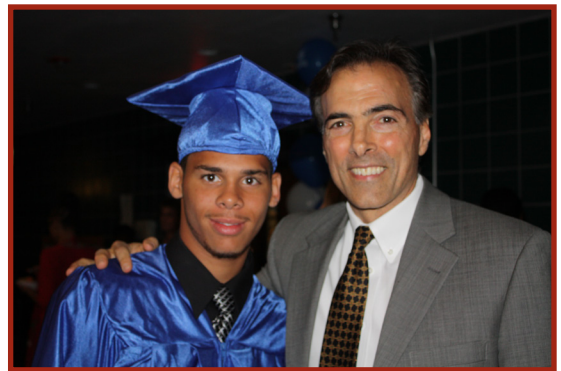
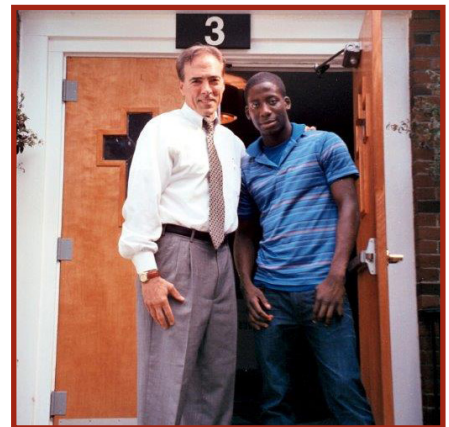
Lou's journey with The Children's Village began in 1977 when, at just 26 years old, he arrived on campus with a simple question: "Can I help the children?" What started as a volunteer effort quickly became a lifelong commitment.

Over the years, Lou has mentored and supported countless young people through friendship, guidance, and unwavering consistency. He has attended chapel services alongside youth, driven them to Young Life sleepaway camp, joined them in serving Thanksgiving meals at homeless shelters, and spent Christmas Day visiting campus. While the activities have varied over the decades, one thing has remained constant: Lou always shows up.

Lou's commitment to mentoring also reaches far beyond The Children's Village. A lifelong advocate for youth development, he has spent decades involved in amateur boxing as a coach, referee, and mentor. In 1983, he became a referee and judge with USA Amateur Boxing, now USA Boxing, and has officiated thousands of bouts, from local competitions to Olympic qualifying events. Along the way, he has guided and encouraged countless young athletes, many of whom have gone on to compete at the highest levels of the sport. His dedication was recently recognized with an award from USA Amateur Boxing honoring his decades of service and leadership.

Professionally, Lou serves as a senior accountant with the Westchester County Department of Public Safety, where he has also shared his boxing expertise by helping train police recruits at the Police Academy. Over the years, he has worked with nearly 3,000 recruits, earning the respect of colleagues throughout the law enforcement community.

Whether mentoring young boxers, supporting police recruits, or guiding youth at The Children's Village, Lou has devoted his life to helping others reach their full potential. His extraordinary commitment reflects the values that have guided The Children's Village for 175 years: relationships, consistency, and the belief that every young person deserves someone they can count on.



Honoring the Life of Elizabeth S. Mark



Elizabeth S. Mark, a dedicated advocate for people with disabilities, disadvantaged youth and animal welfare, and a respected civic leader in Westchester County, passed away on June 26, 2026. Her death marked the loss of a principled “truth-sayer,” as one colleague described her, whose life’s work was defined by integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to those whose voices too often went unheard.

For decades, Ms. Mark was a central figure in Westchester County’s civic and nonprofit landscape. She served for 22 years on the White Plains Youth Board, where she was known for her persistence and clarity of purpose as a steadfast champion for the youth of White Plains.

She worked to create The Children’s Village Sanctuary in the mid-1980s, and continued as an active member of the RHY Advisory Board for several years. She was recommended as a Youth Board Emeritus in 2025 for her “exceptional contributions and lasting impact” by the City of White Plains and Youth Board Chairman and Executive Director. She was respected as someone who refused to accept symbolic solutions in place of meaningful change, and during her tenure, she helped shape policies and programs that expanded opportunity and support for vulnerable young people, particularly those facing systemic disadvantage.

Her volunteer leadership was instrumental in the creation of several significant county initiatives, which continue to serve as pillars of support for children and families in need.

Equally central to her life was her advocacy on behalf of the disability community. Long before disability awareness became a widely embraced public priority, Ms. Mark was challenging institutions and public perceptions to confront inequities, demand accessibility, and recognize the dignity and potential of people with disabilities. Her notable contributions as a staunch advocate for individuals with disabilities in Westchester include her participation as an appointed member of the White Plains Mayor’s Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities, and as co-founder of the Westchester Disability Advocacy Partnership.

A self-proclaimed “wood nymph,” Ms. Mark found peace and meaning in the natural world and was an avid animal lover throughout her life. She supported numerous foundations dedicated to the protection of animals, including the Bronx Zoo and World Wildlife Fund, bringing the same diligence and ethical compass that characterized her public work. She found expression in basket weaving and as a collector of birds’ nests, which exemplified her deep sensibility and connection to nature.

Elizabeth Mark’s lifelong civic engagement as an advocate and mentor will live on in the institutions she helped build, the policies she shaped, and the vision of commitment and humanity she modeled. She was a truth-sayer who spoke plainly, challenged complacency, and worked to ensure that good intentions be matched by concrete action.

The Sanctuary is Westchester County’s only runaway and homeless shelter specifically for teens. It offers a safe place to stay, individual and group counseling, family-style meals, and coaching for youth transitioning back into their communities.



***Do you have extra room at your dinner table? Want to change a life?
There are children in foster care who are waiting for you!***

***We need more families in New York City and Westchester County to
provide the love and belonging that children deserve.***

To learn more about fostering, [visit our website.](#)