



The Center for Great Expectations

Embracing change. Empowering futures.

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Center News

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Conor Cares!

At just 2 years old, Conor knew what it meant to feel warm and cozy on a cold winter day. At the time his mom, Sandra, explained to him how some kids are cold because they don't have hats and mittens. Together they decorated a donation box for a 2013 mitten and hat drive at Conor's preschool, New Brunswick's Kiddie Academy. That year Sandra found Great Expectations and met Noreen, our Outreach Manager, who quickly became Conor's cheerleader in his quest to help "the babies" of CGE.

In 2014, Conor and Sandra worked on a newsletter to engage families in a second drive. Now 3 years old, Conor would meet other parents at drop off and pick up and ask them to "help out". Again, another wonderful donation was made thanks to the generosity of the preschool families, led by Conor and Sandra.



The 2015 school had just started when Conor began asking his mom when they could start! With the support of the preschool director, they sent a newsletter and emails to Academy families, and expanded the drive to include toys. Conor would tell his classmates, "it's good to help, some babies don't have anything."

This December, when they brought the donations to the Center, 4 year old Conor was BEAMING with pride. "EVERYONE at the Center made Conor feel as if he was King of the world for helping make a difference," Sandra shared. "Noreen and the staff have helped me to show him just how important he is, and how special it is to give back to others."

In addition to preschool and his budding philanthropy, Conor enjoys swimming, baseball, playing and making crafts. All who have met him can confirm that his smile is contagious – we think you'll agree!

"This is one of the most rewarding things we've done together," Sandra said. When Conor was asked what he liked best, his initial giggles had us all laughing too, and then he shared, "I like that babies can have something special at Christmas - just like me!"

"Hi, I'm home!"

Think of the number of times you've called that out, or heard a loved one shout it as they've entered your front door...

Just imagine that feeling for the CGE families who now have a HOME in our Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program. **For the first time in their lives, they can joyfully say "I'm home!"**



2015 Successes!

Residential Programs:

- 26 Mothers served
- 13 Healthy births!
- 8 Mother/child Reunifications
- 3 Received HS diploma/GED
- 3 Adolescent mothers working part-time
- 2 Adolescent mothers attending college!

Outpatient Program:

85 Clients Served

PSH Program:

26 mothers & 38 children have a home

Most likely they never had a stable place to live their entire lives - and wherever they did live, it was often a traumatic environment where they did their best not to be noticed, to avoid abuse. Many of our young mothers have 'grown up' in the child welfare system, involved in multiple placements with constant change of school systems.

In addition to our 16 original homes of PSH at AvalonSomerset, this year CGE has added 12 more homes in the WISH Program (Women's Intensive Supportive Housing). Although the goal was to have a similar central location, the lack of available and appropriate sites, along with challenges like poor credit history, led to our apartments being at separate locations.

continued on page 2

Building Bright Futures

It's what you help us do each day at Great Expectations, and it was also the theme of our November Gift of Hope Gala!

This year we honored an amazing team of people who collaborated to overcome all challenges in the completion of the Expansion of "House A" - our Adolescent Program and Katy's Place.

Jeromie Lange of Maser Consulting was presented with CGE's Humanitarian of the Year Award, and the Outstanding Service Award was awarded to Antonette Mitterando of Lockatong Engineering; Matt Kisver

of All Phase Consulting; Peter Lanfrit, Kathryn Kopp and Erin E. Santora of The Law Offices of Peter U. Lanfrit; and Julia Talarick and James Wyse of Coughlin Duffy LLP. Ted Wernock, who had managed the original construction of our Somerset homes, received our Volunteer of the Year Award for jumping in again to manage this challenging project.

This expansion is changing lives, assisting us in the delivery of a more intense, individualized level of care to even more adolescent mothers and their children. Thank you to all who made our annual Gala a fundraising success. Please considering joining us on Friday afternoon, April 8th, for the Expansion Grand Opening Ceremony - call Allison at (732) 247-7003 x33 for more details!



Critical Needs – Each month (or sometimes more often if we are 'desperate for diapers' and other items), Noreen emails a list of these critical needs. To stay informed, please share your email with info@cge-nj.org, and you choose when you can help.

Monthly Giving – Can you share \$1 a day? Or \$10 each month? Become a monthly donor and provide our families with the gift of constancy – just return this envelope with your information or go to www.cge-nj.org and sign up for a 'Recurring Donation'.

United Way – You can direct your United Way campaign giving to benefit Great Expectations – use our Tax ID#: 22-3560158!

Matching Gifts – Your company can double, even triple, your gift! Chubb, BMS, ExxonMobil, John Hancock, IBM, J&J, Merck, Prudential, Tyco, Goldman Sachs, just to name a few.

AmazonSmile – It's so easy! Log on to smile.amazon.com, sign up and select CGE using our name or TID# 22-3560158. Your shopping experience is identical to Amazon, but for every purchase you make, AmazonSmile will make a donation to Great Expectations!

Be an Ambassador – Give your family, friends, and company the opportunity to help Great Expectations! When you receive our emails, forward them to your friends. Suggest CGE to your company's corporate outreach program, dress down days and donation drives!



I'm Home...continued



Meet Scarlet Gorton, (right) who just joined CGE this past July as our new Program Manager of Supportive Housing. Fortunately she heard of this opportunity thanks to her husband, John,

who is indispensable to the Center in his volunteer role as our facilities 'Mr. Fixit'. Scarlet received her MSW in 2012 from Rutgers (graduating on the same day with the same degree as their daughter, Jessica!).

Scarlet, and Case Managers Allison Healy (left) and Anne-Marie Okonsky, (center) the PSH team, provide our clients with the 24/7 support needed to successfully transition into a new home, job, day care, school and community, while learning to handle challenges including lack of transportation, affordable nurturing child care, multiple jobs, paying the bills, feeding their family, continuing treatment, and much more.

"I am inspired by the strength of our young mothers",

Scarlet shared. "They have spent most of their lives in 'the system', and they believe that system expects them to fail. We are here to give them hope and affirm that they can and will succeed in 'breaking the cycle.'" The team shared about a recent trip with two clients to an employment agency. "As we walked out, we noticed their demeanor had totally changed - their faces, body language, and conversation reflected an incredible new energy – it was a great boost to their self-esteem and confidence."

What are our hopes for the future? Locations where a number of apartments are together – like AvalonSomerset- making our case management more efficient, and promoting community among our clients; landlords that support their success by understanding the struggle of poor credit or background; cars for client transportation; and gift cards and assistance with food and utilities. Scarlet smiled as she said, "My job is a real blessing, as is helping each client." Today we invite you to help our families, or connect us with someone who can - email us today at info@cge-nj.org.

Upcoming Events...Join Us!

3rd Annual Run to Overcome 5K Run/Walk

April 23, 2016 – Saturday 8:30am @

Johnson Park, Piscataway, New Jersey

Register today at www.runtoovercome5k.com

Moms & Babies Luncheon

Save the Date!

May 1, 2016 – Sunday @ St. Matthias,
Somerset, New Jersey

Holiday Gift Exchange

As families and offices grow, they often opt for the pick-a-name present exchange. This year CGE had the benefit of being picked as that 'name' by both an extended family, and a generous office. Our first surprise came in a note from a friend we met through St. Mary's Stony-Hill, telling us that instead of exchanging gifts, her family chose to make holiday donations to help CGE families. It was accompanied by a thoughtful note and a promise that her family will continue to keep our clients and staff in their prayers. Another note came from the employees of a New Jersey Education Association office, who had previously toured at Great Expectations. Just these two efforts resulted in donations of over \$2,200!

Let us know your thoughts on alternative giving – CGE has been the beneficiary of monetary and inkind donations from dinner parties, birthdays, memorials and more. What a wonderful way to transform the power and joy of giving!

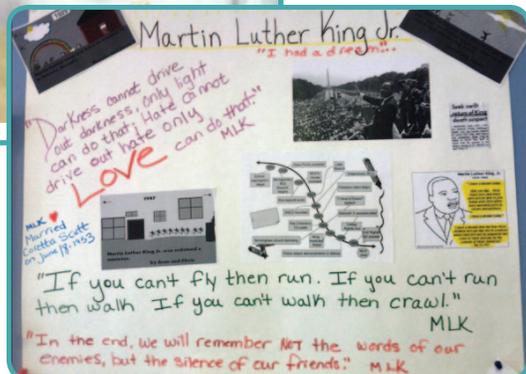
Amelia and MLK Jr.

Amelia, the 3 year old daughter of our client,

came home from school very excited to ask her mom if she "knew" Martin Luther King, Jr. Her mom told Amelia she knew he was a wonderful man who had done many great things before he went to heaven. As the weekend started, Amelia's continuing questions, along with her mother's curiosity, opened the door to an art project - mom and daughter decided to make posters together to honor MLK.

A supportive staff member printed out pictures and stories to help them, and provided art supplies and more. As you can see, we now have 2 beautiful, informative posters that highlight MLK's dream.

Amelia named her poster "MLK is in Heaven", and she told us the picture is of him and his friends crossing the bridge for freedom! Congrats to our nurturing mother for encouraging her daughter's love of learning, and thanks to smart little Amelia, for reminding us that his dream is our dream.



Showers of Giving!

Thanks to the parish family of St. Mary's Stony-Hill, and Fr. Brian Nolan, for once again hosting our moms and babies at their October Baby Shower to benefit CGE. Fr.

Brian welcomed CGE Trustees Mary Christian and John McDonald, and CGE President Peg Wright and Outreach Manager Noreen Whittemore, to address the parish at the weekend's masses and share the challenges experienced

by our young mothers and the impactful services provided by Great Expectations. Our gratitude to Pat Dorsi and Linda Hyland, along with the many others, including the Knights of Columbus, who made this annual event a day out to remember for our young mothers. For those that donated during this time, or became sustaining monthly donors, thank you!



RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Homeless pregnant/parenting adolescents;
Homeless pregnant/parenting women with
substance use disorders; their children

KATY'S PLACE

On-site, licensed Child Development Center

OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

Pregnant/parenting women with
substance use and/or co-occurring disorders

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

28 Apartment homes and supportive services
for successful graduates and their children



find us on facebook

If you would prefer to receive correspondences electronically,
please email us at info@cge-nj.org

How You Can Help

- *Sign up to receive our Critical Needs email blast – no obligation, maybe you can help!*
- *Be an Ambassador – introduce Great Expectations to your company, church, synagogue and friends*
- *Volunteer - Help in our InKind office, or join an event committee!*
- *Donate your car – it doesn't need to be working to help!*
- *Become a monthly donor – a small but constant gift is significant to us!*

**Call Noreen at 732-247-7003 x25 or email
nwhittemore@cge-nj.org for more information.**

2016 Calendar

- April 8 Grant Opening – Building Dedication
- April 23 Run to Overcome 5K Walk/Run,
Johnson Park, Piscataway
- May 1 Moms & Babies Luncheon, St. Matthias,
Somerset
- May 8 Mother's Day –considering helping our moms in
honor of your mother
- June 11 CGE Annual Reunion
- July Ken Daneyko Golf Classic
- Oct 21 Gift of Hope Gala

Organize an event for CGE

Call Allison with your idea (732) 247-7003 x33



Thank you to all who shared with our families during this holiday season, including:

Union Catholic High School; Blessed Sacrament/Council of Catholic Women; St Matthias/Giving Tree; Mary Mother of God; Our Lady of Lourdes; St Charles Borromeo/Seton Ministry; Janssen; Pillar College; St James Basking Ridge/Rosary Altar Society & Youth Ministry; International Playthings LLC; St Augustine of Canterbury; Our Lady of the Mount; H4B Catapult/HavasHealth; St Bernard Clairvaux/Jesse Tree; Immaculate Heart of Mary; Lauren Marchitelli; RVCC College Education Club; Ross Industries; Rutgers Against Hunger; The Sunshine Committee Garden State Quilters /Chatham; Kiddie Academy, New Brunswick; Christ the Redeemer Church - Knitting & Quilting Club; Kelsey Theatre; St. Joseph CCD Program; Abundant Life Family Worship Church; Sanofi-US; Our Lady of Mt. Virgin Church; Bridgewater BMW; Tournament Housing Services; Molly Pitcher Stitchers; Community Baptist Church; J&J Child Development Center; Falgi Carting; Raritan Self Storage; Bright Horizons at Somerset; Franklin Twnshp Parks & Rec; Somerset Presbyterian Church; Franklin Twnshp Dept of Community Resources & Svcs; Preschool of Whitehouse United Methodist Church; St Mary's Stony Hill