Mariano Rivera Creates Happy Memories for CHP Kids

On a chilly but bright March day, history was made at the Children’s Home. Famous retired NY Yankee Mariano Rivera came for the first of two visits with his family, friends from his church, Refugio de Esperanza, NY Yankee Chef Felix and his team, and food for the children. They entertained, played softball with the residents, hosted a delicious barbecue, talked with the children and generally shared some of their goodness with the Home’s residents, reinforcing a message of inner strength, faith and positive futures. Both visits were filled with love and care, and the Children's Home staff and residents are very grateful to one of baseball’s greatest, best-loved and most humble players.

“Many Hands Make Light Work”

Every once in a while you have to just sit back and marvel at the true beauty of philanthropy. It’s truly awe-inspiring to see good deeds first-hand. Over the last few months, the Children’s Home has seen “many hands make light work”, as numerous volunteer groups descended on the campus to tackle many, many projects. From gardening, to staining, to shed building, to tree planting, to story-telling, to arts and crafts and Easter egg hunts, to silly putty and slime and all kinds of wonderful things, volunteers have worked hard to enrich our children, our campus and our programs.

We enjoyed visits from several groups and truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of each one of our volunteers. Without the help of many, we couldn’t possibly provide the level of care that we do. Thank you!

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Erin Cafarelli, Development Associate at ecafarelli@childrenshome.us or 845-452-1420, ext. 177.
Executive Director’s Letter

First, a resounding “THANK YOU” for your support of the Children’s Home and the work that we do. The spirit of philanthropy and of community responsibility, expressed in the many groups and individuals who have donated, come to the campus to do a project, or provided entertainment and support for the children here, is truly striking and wonderful. We can’t thank you all enough.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this summer’s newsletter. We try to keep our supporters posted on the significant events and news about the Children’s Home. This has been a particularly busy year for us with program development, administrative changes, and significant board work having been accomplished.

Something is happening in New York State and probably across the country affecting the number of children in foster care. After many years of declining placements, agencies are experiencing an increase in the number of children being removed from their families and placed in foster homes and emergency programs. Many more young children and infants are coming into care. The primary driver of this increase in removals and placements by social service districts appears to be documented parental substance abuse. Since January, the Ulster County Department of Social Services has removed 58 children from parental care – more than the total new foster care placements made by the agency during all of 2013. At the Children’s Home we’ve also seen a substantial increase in the number of placements in our Group Emergency Foster Care program since November 2013. A large number of young children, including many infants, have been placed with us, and they are coming from more counties in the region.

We recently opened a new cottage for our Young Mothers Program. Last summer we had an opportunity to purchase a small ranch house directly across from our main campus. In late May of this year we placed two young mothers and their two toddlers in this program. The aim of the program is to provide as realistic an experience as possible for these young women that will better prepare them for the challenges they will face when they are discharged from care. All aspects of the program are designed to foster the development of independent living skills with significant attention to the reality of finances. There are fewer staff in the program and they are taking a much more hands-off approach when working with the girls. We are hoping that this intensified training will help these young women to be successful when they leave care.

We have also reached out to a new group of at-risk children – young women who are fleeing violence and unrest in Central America. The Children’s Home has received a federal grant to provide 16 beds for girls, including those who are pregnant and parenting. This program opened in May with the arrival of eight girls between the ages of 13 and 17. We are excited and pleased to be able to offer refuge, hope and healing to these vulnerable youth. For many of them this is the first safe and secure environment they have ever experienced.

On a happier note, our children recently produced their annual Kids Who Care Talent Show, highlighting the many gifts of music, poetry, acting and other talents our youth share. They do this to raise funds to help others in the community, as they know so many give to the Home to make their lives better.

From all of us, we hope your summer is healthy and happy.
Alyssa Bowers has been a Senior Financial Analyst at PepsiCo since 1998. She previously worked as an accountant for Pangia and Company and Newburgh Auto Auction. She regularly volunteers with John Flowers’ holiday celebrations and has a long history with the Children’s Home. Her grandmother was a cook at the Home and her mother worked as a dental hygienist who helped provide dental care for the children. Although she’s busy with her two teen children and their activities, she’s made time to give back to her community. She looks forward to using her special skills in finance, leadership, fundraising and public relations to benefit the Home.

Alicia Dean is a Senior Engineer at IBM East Fishkill. She’s been involved in Healthy Harvest, the Soup-A-Bowl fundraiser, and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. She has a strong commitment to providing children with positive experiences at an early age. She believes that is the way to build a strong foundation for future success. With two children heading to college, she is hoping to put her strong organizational, finance and other talents to use in advancing the Home’s mission.
Many Gifts Add Up to Big Impact

The Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie has been the grateful recipient of several grants this fiscal year. Stewart’s Shops Foundation awarded $1,250 in donation-matched funding to help provide services to youth under 18 years old in Dutchess County. Payless Gives™ donated $1,000 in shoe coupons which help the agency provide shoes to young growing residents. Especially in the Group Emergency Foster Care program, the children arrive at the Home with whatever they have and nearly always need additional clothing, shoes and supplies. The Darden Foundation recently awarded a $1,000 grant to help provide food to needy families, helping make it possible to send food boxes home with those children whose families need extra help, especially for holiday meals when the children are on home visits. The generous employees of the Goodrich Danbury (now UTC) Helping Hand Fund donated $2,200 toward the Home’s mission.

Some of the grants received included a generous $4,500 grant from the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley’s Irving and Gloria Schlossberg Family Fund to underwrite the costs of a highly successful one-day conference in April on the use of Courthouse Facility Dogs. The Foundation also awarded $1,665 from the Florence and Theodora Budnik Fund toward general support. The Home is receiving a major grant from NY State to address storm-related flooding issues in the Main House on campus.

In addition to providing a day of volunteer services addressing many maintenance needs, IBM awarded $3,000 toward outdoor improvements to the playgrounds and garden areas for the Home’s children.

“These grants are an important help in our ability to provide high quality services to victims of abuse and neglect,” stated the Home’s Executive Director Walter Joseph. “We are very grateful to these foundations and to all our donors for wanting to brighten people’s lives,” he added.
GEFC Program—A Refuge for Children

The Group Emergency Foster Care Program cottage was a scene of controlled chaos with toddlers running around playing, older youth playing games, and five babies in the nursery. It was a typical day. This program continues to attract attention from counties outside of Dutchess and has operated at or near capacity for several months. Of course, we know the population can easily drop to a handful of children at any time. But the staff are always ready for another child or sibling group that needs help.

Why are these kids here? Children placed in this program are coming from homes that have been deemed unsafe for them. They are victims of abuse either against them or as witnesses to it. It’s a traumatic and toxic environment for a child, or something as basic as the home is deemed inadequate and the children must be removed while the parent/s takes steps to move or fix the issues making the home unsafe.

What kind of help do the children receive? At the Children’s Home, we provide 24/7 awake coverage, lots of nurturing care for each child, oversight of all medical, dental and other health needs, and work with the parent/s and Child Protective Services to help get the children back home, or placed in foster care. We buy them clothes, shoes and anything else they need, since they usually come with only what they are wearing at the time of removal.

What happens to them? The primary goal of the Family Court and everyone involved is return to family if feasible. If that isn’t possible, a relative or foster family is sought. If the best placement is deemed to be residential treatment, the child may be placed in the Campus Residential program at CHP or with another agency offering more specialized services.

These youngsters receive loving care by an experienced and nurturing staff: childcare workers, caseworkers, social workers and nurses provide daily care. Children receive intensive trauma focused therapy working with a psychologist and the Home’s Facility Service Dog, Ace. Children receive nutritious meals, daily transportation to their current school and participate in activities both on the campus and in the community.

Daisy Troop 10333 brought flowers, painted rocks and stepping stones to beautify the front of Hackett House cottage for the residents.
Collaboration Leads to Successful Conference

On April 30, the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie led efforts to co-sponsor a conference on the training and use of dogs in court to help calm vulnerable witnesses. Rosie made international news as the highly trained service dog loaned to the Children’s Home to comfort a young girl as she testified against her abuser in court in 2011. The groundbreaking decision to allow a service dog in the witness box during trial led to more interest in allowing the use of specially trained dogs to help calm any vulnerable witness—a child, an adult, an elder—in the witness box.


Ace’s Magic

I arrived at CHP early, picked up my mail, and heard a child crying in the hallway in the main building. A skilled and experienced child care worker was talking with her and I overheard that the little girl, 5 years of age, was refusing to go to school. After the conversation had gone on for awhile, I saw the little girl was sitting down and not budging an inch. So I joined the conversation and sat down by the little girl. I asked her if something happened at school that upset her and she shook her head indicating “No.” I asked her if she usually likes school. She nodded that she did. I asked her was there anyone picking on her at school. She said, in a nearly inaudible tone, “No”. At that point I was pretty sure it was not a school problem but just a moment of despair that children experience when they are removed from their homes on an emergency basis. I then asked her, “Do you like dogs?” For the first time she lifted up her head, made eye contact, and smiled and said, that she did. I asked her if she had a dog at home? She said, “No.” I said, “Did you know that we have a dog for the children here and his name is Ace?” Her eyes lit up, her mood and face brightened and a big smile revealed a dramatically different little girl than the one in despair only minutes before. I told her that Ace doesn’t work on Wednesdays, but he will be here tomorrow. I inquired, “How would you like to spend some time with him tomorrow after school.” She replied with an emphatic “Yes”. At that point the Child Care Assistant Supervisor Carey said, “Are you ready to go to school now?” With a big smile on her face, she stood up, took Carey’s hand and went out of the building to go to school. The next day after school, I went over to the Cottage with Ace and asked for the little girl. She came out and she, Ace and I sat in the gazebo while she petted Ace, snuggled him and played with him until she was ready to go back to her group with that big smile on her face when she said goodbye to us. The ability of Ace to transform the emotional states of children is such a joy to witness.

David A. Crenshaw, Ph.D., ABPP - Clinical Director

Editor’s note: Ace is the Facility Service Dog at the Children’s Home who comes to work with Clinical Director Dr. Crenshaw three days a week.


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Co-sponsors included Marist College, who hosted the event, The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Grace Smith House, and Family Services. A generous grant from the Irving & Gloria Schlossberg Family Fund of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley helped cover the expenses. The Founder and the Executive Director of the Seattle based Courthouse Dog Foundation, which started the courthouse dog movement, were major presenters, together with Dr. David Crenshaw, clinical director for the Children’s Home, who learned of Rosie and pursued permission to use her in court, and Lori Stella, social worker at the Home, who worked with Rosie and the young witness. Rosie’s Law is still pending in Albany.

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Think About It

Many, many gifts are needed from hundreds of donors to help close the annual budget gap between the cost of services provided and the rate received for each program at the Children’s Home. Throughout the Home’s 167 year history, support from the community has been critical to our success. Stock donations, cash, in-kind donations, projects undertaken by volunteers—all of these are critical to providing the best possible safe, attractive, clean, comfortable environment for abused and neglected children who are placed in care. The Home endeavors to give each child the best care and therapy possible to help them heal from their traumas and move toward a brighter future.

Donation Form

I am making a tax deductible gift of:

- $30
- $50
- $100
- $500
- $1000
- Other $

- Enclosed is a check made payable to the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie.
- I will transfer stock or securities. (Please contact our Fiscal Director at 845.452.1420)

- Please charge my credit card:
  - AMEX
  - MC
  - Visa
  - Discover

Card #
Expiration Date

☐ I prefer to make a monthly gift. Please use credit card information above. I authorize CHP to charge $______ per month for ________ month(s), beginning (month/year_______) and ending (month/year_______) for a total gift of $_______.

Name
Address
City
State Zip

Home Phone
Work Phone
Cell Phone
Email

☐ Please include me on the Home’s e-newsletter list.
☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous.
   Please do not print my name in the Home’s Annual Report.

☐ My gift is made in ☐ honor ☐ memory of:
   Please acknowledge the gift (but not the amount) to:

   Name
   Address

☐ My company matches gifts (please include form in envelope).
☐ I would like information about making a bequest to the Home.
The Resilience of Children

I was told that Nathaniel was quiet and somewhat shy, but the young man who sat down for this interview was anything but. His smile immediately brightened the room and he was straightforward about his past. Clearly, this teenager is looking ahead.

Removed from his mother due to her substance abuse when he was just a year old, he began a life of yo-yo-ing back and forth among foster homes, adoption, hospitalizations and agencies. Nathaniel was placed on the adoption list at age 4, and at nearly 7 he was adopted. That worked for a while, but his increasingly aggressive behavior, refusal to do regular hygiene and other issues forced the family to give him up. From there, Nathaniel experienced many foster placements but his anger issues and behavior always sabotaged his future. He was hospitalized several times for psychological and behavioral problems. Finally, his county workers had run out of local options for him and turned to the Children’s Home. At age 14, having endured so many failures in placement, Nathaniel came into the campus residential program in early 2013. This highly structured setting utilizing the sanctuary model of trauma-informed care seemed to work.

Nathaniel has gotten control of his behavior issues, and is now consistently looking forward to a brighter future. Like most children who have experienced multiple trauma and loss, he is in many ways older than his age. He is responding well to his social worker, his housemates and his school. He really likes auto mechanics and plans to pursue that as a career. He loves baseball and is in a Babe Ruth league. He is also running with a Children’s Home group and has participated in some races. Last year he was named Student of the Year at his school and more recently was Student of the Month. Recently he moved into one of the Children’s Home Group Homes off campus, where he is learning the skills he will need to be fully independent one day. He really likes the group home where he has made friends quickly.

Nathaniel describes himself as funny, active, smart and well-behaved. Of his staff he says “they take really good care of you, take you places, help you.” He knows he has adults he can trust, who want to help him succeed. And he seems determined to do just that.

Theresa D. Kerin – Director of Development & Public Relations

Mission Statement
Dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment that improves lives and empowers at-risk children and families in the Hudson Valley and surrounding communities.

Values Statement
Our core principles guide us in fulfilling our mission and operating on a daily basis. We live by these values and use them to focus our decisions:

- Integrity...We will act ethically, honorably and with commitment in all that we do.
- Stewardship...We will manage our resources responsibly to ensure ongoing sustainability.
- Respect...We will show compassion and respect for ourselves and others.
- Opportunity...We will foster resiliency and seek to create growth opportunities.