TWO CHS OF NJ OUTSTANDING TRENTON YOUTH VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE 2013 AVIS “SPIRIT AWARD”

Congratulations to Kaileigh Brown and Shyler Smith, two of our CHS of NJ Trenton youth volunteers, who were honored as recipients of the 2013 Avis “Spirit Award” at a special ceremony held last spring at Yankee Stadium. Sponsored by Avis Budget Group and The New York Yankees, the award recognizes “outstanding service to the community and a commitment to helping others.” At the time of the presentation, Kaileigh and Shyler were both honor roll students at the Grace Dunn Middle School in Trenton and peerleaders from our Kids Intervention with Kids in School (KIKS) program at their school.

“I became involved in KIKS in 6th grade and liked the classes and wanted to be involved,”
TRENTON AUXILIARY TURNS “50” AS NEW OFFICERS ARE INSTALLED!

The annual installation dinner of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey’s Trenton Auxiliary was very special this year because it marked the beginning of the Auxiliary’s 50th year of service on behalf of the agency’s Infant Foster Care program. Among those on hand for the swearing in were two of its founding members, Ruth Bartasawitz and Marilyn Carroll, who are still active in the organization today and providing insight to new, younger members.

CHS of NJ Board Chair Kati Chupa thanked the dedicated CHS of NJ Trenton Auxiliary board members, and CHS of NJ President and CEO Donna Pressma installed each officer by a candle lighting ceremony. Installed were: Megan Hayman, President; Erika Hartig, Vice President; Joy Ann Lowery, Recording Secretary; Barbara Kelly, Corresponding Secretary; Kate McGrath, Treasurer; and Marilyn Carroll, Parliamentarian.

The Trenton Auxiliary, founded in 1963, hosts fundraisers during the year to support CHS of NJ’s foster parents and the babies in their loving care. Fifty years ago, the Auxiliary’s very first event raised about $500. Last year the auxiliary raised more than $30,000 through its annual “Brunch with Santa” and “Designer Handbag Bingo” events and with member participation in Red Rose Day.

Tickets for the Trenton Auxiliary’s “Designer Handbag Bingo” sold out in just two weeks this year, with more than 200 ladies anxious to win one of the stunning bags from Coach, Kate Spade, and Dooney & Bourke that were awarded as prizes for each game. Once Bingo numbers started to be called, the entire room became silent as everyone focused on a common goal — going home with a fabulous new purse and insuring CHS of NJ’s foster babies will continue to thrive.

Installation ceremony of the Trenton Auxiliary as the ladies begin their 50th year.

CHS OF NJ FATHER IS HONORED WITH 2013 “PLATINUM DAD” AWARD

Edwin Simon, a participant at our South Ward Family Success Center, was honored as a 2013 “Platinum Dad” by UIH Family Partners at their 8th Annual Platinum Dads Award Ceremony this past June!

UIH Family Partners promotes the importance of responsible fatherhood by recognizing 10 Mercer County fathers or father figures who have been positive and consistent forces in the lives of children.

Mr. Simon, the father of three, was nominated by CHS staff member Ashley Gonzalez for his dedication to his family, his church and the South Ward Family Success Center where he is active on the Parent Advisory Committee and serves as a positive role model for all parents and care givers.

“Along with Edwin’s contagious positive energy, he is a great motivational speaker,” says Gonzalez. “He always knows the right words to keep our families coming back to the center, and he always provides encouragement for them.”

We extend our best wishes to Edwin – and to all our great fathers who are present and active in their children’s lives!
Representatives from over 25 Mercer County agencies came together in June at The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey’s Early Head Start Third Annual Early Childhood Disabilities and Health Fair to share information about their services with local community parents and grandparents. Sponsored by the CHS of NJ Early Head Start Home-Based program (EHSHB) this was an opportunity for parents of children with disabilities or suspected disabilities to connect with local resources that could help them better meet their special needs. More than 160 parents and children attended this fair, the only one of its kind in Mercer County.

EHSHB is a federally funded program designed to enhance the development of Trenton children from pregnancy to age three and promote school readiness. In accordance with program requirements, at least ten percent of all of the enrolled children have a diagnosed disability or delay. Families interested in learning more about the program or wanting to schedule an intake appointment should contact Ericka Williams at 609-695-6274, ext. 140.

While many newlywed couples provide small “take home gifts” to give to those attending their wedding and reception, Monique Côté and Mitchell Saunders chose a different and a far more meaningful way to thank the guests who shared their special day with them. As they left the reception, each guest received candies and a card announcing that, in lieu of a wedding favor, the couple would be honoring their guests by making a donation in their names to The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey. “The need for services is growing in these hard economic times,” the card read, stating that the donation would directly support the many essential programs the CHS of NJ staff delivers every day to save children’s lives and build healthy families. We want to thank Monique and Mitch for remembering our at-risk children on their wedding day and for enabling our children to benefit from this most joyous occasion. They teach us to how to be a caring community!
2013 PARENT LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD PRESENTED TO CHS OF NJ PARENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Agata Dziekonska, a Parent Advisory Board member of CHS of NJ’s North Ward Family Success Center, was honored at the 6th Annual Statewide Family Success Conference as the 2013 Parent Leader of the Year. Ms. Dziekonska (who is fluent in Polish and English) volunteers her time as an ESL instructor for Polish-speaking families and has been instrumental in engaging families from our Trenton community to participate in groups, events, and activities at the center.

The annual statewide Family Success Centers Conference is organized by the New Jersey Office of Family Support Services and Department of Children and Families, Division of Family and Community Partnerships. Eleven parents were nominated from across the state for their contributions to NJ Family Success Centers. Ms. Dziekonska, under the leadership of Yhermana Puello and Aniela Brzoza, was selected as the award recipient for most positively executing the vision and purpose of the community-based Family Success Center.

CHS OF NJ WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERISM

We are pleased to announce that Pamela Cipriano has joined the staff of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey as our new Director of Corporate Development and Volunteerism. Pam has over 16 years of experience working for Merrill Lynch in the Human Resources and Training departments doing recruiting and training of financial advisors and mentors.

Three years ago, she made the switch from the private to the non-profit sector as the manager of Community Connection at Princeton HealthCare System where she recruited, organized and supervised over 200 volunteers. Her primary responsibilities included soliciting individual and corporate donors, event planning and developing and managing volunteers. She also played a key role in the rebranding and reorganization of the department into Community Connection. The goal of the rebranding was to attract a new generation of volunteers to assist with the fundraising and community relations goals. Pam enjoys meeting new people and wants to be able to make a positive difference in the lives of CHS of NJ children and parents.

8TH ANNUAL LATINO PARENTING CONFERENCE

“Seeing the World Through the Eyes of a Child”

In honor of Hispanic heritage month, we will host our 8th Annual Latino Parenting Conference on Saturday, September 21 from 12pm - 4pm. Our keynote speaker will be Ana Berdecia, Senior Fellow/Director of the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children at Thomas Edison State College. Cultural entertainment will be provided by the Costa Rican folkloric dance troupe, Recordando Mi Tierra. Children’s arts and crafts will be provided by Home Depot, and we will host two educational workshops for Spanish speaking parents. The conference is free and open to the public but registration is required. Lunch is sponsored by Alicea & Roman Associates.
Kaileigh responded when asked why she had volunteered to become a peerleader. “I became a Peer Leader in the 7th grade to assist in the 6th grade classes. I really wanted to help the students learn character education, in particular the six pillars of character.”

Shyler’s responses were similar. “I became a peer leader because I wanted to try new things and my peers and family members told me lots of good things about the program – how it involves helping others, leading them in the right path, and just encouraging them. Becoming a peer leader is important to me,” he says, “because helping others is what I do best. I just love it. It makes me feel like I belong here. It’s almost like home!”

As KIKS peerleaders, Kaileigh and Shyler had undertaken leadership roles in the school's KIKS program and were highly respected by the staff, faculty and their peers for their ability to mentor and teach their classmates to make good decisions regarding conflict resolution, substance abuse, and anti-bullying techniques.

Both students also participated in the CHS of NJ Positive Impact afterschool program and have been active volunteers in community service projects such as feeding the homeless and community clean-ups.

Last April, Kaileigh and Shyler were part of a group of ten pre-teen volunteers and staff from CHS of NJ who traveled to Washington, DC in April to meet with US congressmen and senators from New Jersey to discuss issues that are of importance to America’s youth. Both students were articulate and poised as they spoke to United States congressmen about the need for school-based youth development programs like KIKS and Positive Impact. They also addressed the critical need to support Early Head Start and services for grandparents and other kin caregivers raising young family members. The confidence and leadership skills Kaileigh and Shyler demonstrated during their discussions with our legislators made a very positive impression on the congressmen with whom they met.

Both Kaileigh and Shyler are effective and dedicated volunteers who are striving to make a difference in the lives of others. Kaileigh, known for both her compassion and her “can do” attitude, plans on one day becoming a nurse and was named the KIKS Student of the Year. Although no longer a Dunn student (Kaileigh has since graduated from Dunn and will be entering high school this fall), she will be coming back to the school in the afternoons as a KIKS “Go Getter” and volunteering in the KIKS Positive Impact afterschool program.

Shyler, who is very good in math and was active in the S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Electronics and Math) program at the school, has his sights set on becoming an engineer or a teacher. According to Louise Shabazz, Administrator of the CHS of NJ School-Based Programs, “he is a very respectful, humble and focused young man who can easily adapt to different situations.” Shyler, a member of the KIKS “Legacy Group,” will be entering eighth grade at Dunn this fall and will continue as a KIKS peerleader.

The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey joins with the New York Yankees and Avis Budget Group in extending its heartiest congratulations to Kaileigh and Shyler for their many accomplishments and for being such inspirational role models for their fellow students!
Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) celebrated the end of its 24th year with five enthusiastic performances of “Here’s the Scoop,” a trip down memory lane to celebrate those who changed the face of popular music. The fifth grade students of Hedgepeth/Williams and Dunn Schools were true stars as they danced to the rhythms and lyrics of music legends under the instruction of TEDI Artistic Director, Dufftin Garcia. In addition, 60 students from TEDI SWAT (Scholarship for the Willing, Achieving and Talented) and CELEBRATION (6th – 11 grade alumni) Teams performed in specialty numbers, exhibiting their additional commitment to the program and dance.

From the colorful set of a 1950’s soda shop with a larger-than-life jukebox, more than 200 students captivated audiences with their discipline, confidence, and energetic dance moves. Garcia directed a live 4-piece band of professional musicians, and special guest vocalists Chandra Rule and Charles Vincent Burwell added their melodious voices to the mix. Music from James Brown, Elvis, Stevie Wonder and other Motown classics got audiences dancing in their seats. Trenton School Superintendent Francisco Duran, TEDI board chair Richard Bilotti and Donna Pressma, president and CEO of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey, were on hand to welcome audiences to the annual event.

Pressma concluded the evening by noting, “The children who dance in TEDI’s Event of the Year work with complete dedication through the academic year. Tonight they experienced priceless joy and pride in themselves and their accomplishments from this long year of learning and hard, repeated practice.” The resounding audience applause and standing ovation confirmed the students’ well deserved acclaim.
Louise Shabazz introduces Dunn Middle School KIKS program participants Fawaz Orkwo and Victoria Jimenez who gave the evening’s invocation.

Andy and Elaine Metropole, Penny and Ed Osvai, Carol Meta Stretch, Charles and Tara Ordini, Pam and Dodd Stretch, Steve and Irene Knicos

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Honored guests of our 2013 “Champion of Children,” Capitol Health: Samuel J. and Barbara Plumeri Jr., Javier Mercado and Carmen Garcia, Mindi and Telly Sudbakar, Samuel J. and Barbara Plumeri Jr., John and Connie Thurber, Don and Amy Loff

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GALA ALBUM - CELEBRATING DECADES OF CHAMPIONS  (cont. from page 1)

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CHS foster parents enjoyed the evening as special guests of Bronze Sponsor Griffith Electric Supply Company: Anna Caesar and Latanya Wellington, Aurie and Ken Good, Donna and Gary Maccaroni, Valerie Fiorentino, Linda Pangalos, William and Lauren Parker

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Carol Meta Stretch with some of the evening’s special performers and their guests: LaTonya Gentile, Damien Gaeta, Steve and Ann Lobis, Susan Fowler and Jennifer Newby, Robert Jaymes Domingo

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CHS of NJ Board Member Rosalind Doctor and her granddaughter Kaili Doctor dance to the music of the evening.
This April, the Child Welfare League of America presented Donna C. Pressma, President and CEO of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey, with the national David Roth Leadership Award in recognition of her life-long commitment to the well-being of children and her leadership and national contributions to the at-risk children of America. Pressma received the award this past spring while attending the CWLA’s annual Washington, DC conference with more than 500 of the nation’s most influential leaders in child welfare.

“I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition,” said Christine L. James-Brown, CEO of the CWLA. “Donna and her team at CHS of NJ consistently go above and beyond what is required in order to serve their children and families. The most recent and visible example is their response to Hurricane Sandy, but I know that every day lives of thousands of children are made better by the work of their organization.”

In accepting the award, Pressma said she did so not only for herself but also in recognition for her team of passionate managers, board, workers and volunteers who make CHS of NJ’s outcomes so effective for our children and parents. We save children’s lives and build healthy families.

Pressma has spent the past 27 years leading the staff at CHS of NJ as President and CEO. Under her guidance, the agency has grown from a team of 14 staff to nearly 200 full and part-time professionals. Her vision and dedication have helped build CHS of NJ into a nationally recognized child welfare agency to which others turn to learn best practices and seek advice.

Thank you to Janssen Pharmaceuticals for helping us create inspiring artwork for our GrandFamily Success Center! It was a fun day for both the children in our Kinship program and the Janssen team. “Air, Sea, and Land” was picked as a theme for the pieces. The Janssen team provided all supplies and helping hands to make this event a success. The beautiful canvases are now on display at our GrandFamily Success Center.

NAIFA-GP’S 24TH CHARITY GOLF OUTING TO BENEFIT CHS OF NJ & PA
September 18, 2013

Mark your calendar and join us on the golf course to make a difference. Not a golfer? Sponsor a hole. All proceeds are used to sustain and strengthen the programs of CHS of NJ & PA.

For information about sponsorship opportunities or to register yourself or your foursome contact Denise Wentzler at DWentzler@chsofnj.org or 609-695-6274 x153.
We wish to thank our Honor Roll Sponsors and our Annual Giving Club Donors whose gifts of $100 or more were received between February 1, 2013 and May 31, 2013. These were given as memorial, baby bottle, Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) or United Way contributions or in response to our website and direct mail appeals.

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CHS OF NJ CONGRATULATES STAFF ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey takes great pride in having a staff that continues to expand its professional knowledge and expertise so that it can better serve at-risk children and families in need of assistance. We are pleased to announce that:

Marilyn Pantoja, RN, was awarded a prestigious one-month internship working with the Deputy Director of Population Health and Medical Management with the United States Department of Defense at the United States Pentagon.

Kathleen Franklin has received her Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) certification.

Yolanda Franklin was honored for her outstanding contributions in Ocean County by the NAACP Freedom Fund Benefit.

We congratulate each of these dedicated staff members on their achievements!

LOCAL GIRL SCOUT’S GIFT OF MOBILE LIBRARY HAS “POSITIVE IMPACT” ON TRENTON STUDENTS AT WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Charlotte Mendes, a member of Girl Scout Troop 71500, earned her Gold Award (and the thanks of countless students!) by creating and donating a mobile library with over 1,000 new books to our CHS of NJ KIKS “Positive Impact” afterschool program at the Washington Elementary School in Trenton. With a goal of wanting to help improve literacy for the students at the school, Charlotte spent almost a year planning, organizing and promoting the project. While most of the books were donated or purchased with contributions from community members, some were bought by Charlotte herself with money she had earned by babysitting and dog sitting. The books were then color coded by reading level and arranged on two large carts, making the library easily accessible to students in grades 1 through 5.

“I felt so exhilarated when the kids crowded around me to talk to me and thank me,” Charlotte said when the mobile library was unveiled. “They were all so enthusiastic and very thankful. Some kids even ran to the book carts and asked if they could take home a book that day!” She hopes that the books will encourage a love of reading in the children.

BARSAN INTERNATIONAL HELPS OUR BABIES

Thank you to the employees of Barsan International for the many cases of diapers and baby wipes they collected and donated to our agency earlier this summer. Upon learning about our “Baby Bottle Formula for Hope” campaign, each of the four Barsan volunteers asked to participate and were given a bottle to take with them to fill with coins and cash. We look forward to Barsan’s return!
BABY BUNDLES DONATION

Dolores Bryant, Director of Kinship & School Based Services, accepts a “Baby Bundle” donation from a member of the Spanish Honor Society at Hamilton High West. The students collected formula, bottles, baby food, clothing, baby wipes and other essential items for our babies and toddlers. A big thanks to advisor Rosita Santiago Peters and everyone who helped with this effort!

HORIZON FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY GRANT TO FUND CHS OF NJ CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION PROJECT

The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey has received a two-year $50,000 grant from the Horizon Foundation of New Jersey in support of its new Childhood Immunization Project. Through this program the agency will provide free screenings, case management, education services and monthly immunization clinics for families most at-risk for immunization non-compliance. This grant was one of 49 the Horizon Foundation of New Jersey awarded to non-profit organizations striving to improve the quality of life in New Jersey.

SUMMER FLOWERS FOR THE NORTH WARD FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER

The North Ward Family Success Center held a Summer Garden and Beautification Project this year. The project was outdoor gardening surrounding their parking lot. Trish Verbeyst and Joyce Bush from 4-H lead the volunteers from inVentiv Health Clinical in Princeton and families from the North Ward Family Success Center. It was an exciting, educational experience Trish and Joyce guided and trained all the volunteers and staff on planting. Please come by and check out our Butterfly Garden and the wall of Sunflowers.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Backpack Drive
Last day to deliver donations of new backpacks and school supplies - August 16

NAIFA-GP’s 24th Annual Charity Golf Outing
To benefit CHS of NJ
Wednesday, September 18

8th Annual Latino Parenting Conference
Saturday, September 21

Thanksgiving Food Drive
Last day to deliver food donations or grocery gift cards – November 22

Holiday Toy Drive
Unwrapped gifts and gift cards must be received during the week of December 9-13 to ensure delivery by Christmas. Please call Ella DeAngelis at 609-695-6274 x141 for information or to schedule a delivery.

For information about events and drives, please visit our website at chsofnj.org.
Driscoll’s and Wegmans have once again teamed together and stepped up to protect The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey’s at-risk babies and children. Strawberry Days has become an annual three-day campaign in July that promotes a healthy summer snack and raises funds to save the lives of our babies in foster care. Driscoll’s pledged to donate 50 cents for each package of strawberries purchased from a NJ Wegmans, and with your help CHS of NJ received the maximum contribution of $20,000 this year.

Thank you to our caring friends at Driscoll’s and Wegmans – and to everyone who came and bought strawberries to support our Strawberry Days!

Jay Johnson (second from left) and Nancy Mabes (second from right), Driscoll’s category managers, join Wegmans management team members Lauren Steinach and Pete DiRaimondo in presenting a $20,000 check to CHS of NJ Board Chair Kati Chupa (third from left). One of CHS of NJ’s very special foster families was also on hand to represent CHS of NJ’s Infant Foster Care program which will benefit from this generous donation.