

PRESS RELEASE

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**Local Non-Profit Organizations Partner to Enhance Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Ocean County Children**



CHSofNJ Social Worker Emily Dean demonstrates self-soothing techniques for young children at Peppermint Tree Child Development Center during Mindfulness training, an important workshop made possible through CHSofNJ's partnership with the Helping Others Grow Foundation.

**Toms River, NJ (September 11, 2015)** – Local non-profit organization Helping Others Grow (HOG) has awarded up to \$35,000 to The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ) to fund services that directly support the agency's mission of saving children's lives and building healthy families in Ocean County. HOG recently announced the grant award, citing CHSofNJ's dedication to the children and families of New Jersey as a factor in this generous investment in the agency's services.

HOG is committed to improving health and well-being outcomes for young children by supporting and enhancing the existing programs and services of family-serving agencies with a proven ability to impact the lives of children and their families. CHSofNJ has positively affected health outcomes for New Jersey's children and families for over 120 years, and has successfully provided mental and behavioral health counseling in Ocean County under state contracts and grants since 1975. Both agencies are excited to work together toward a shared goal of improving the health, wellness, emotional, and social development of local children and families.

The partnership represents a major, multi-faceted effort by HOG and CHSofNJ to improve the well-being of our children at school, at home, and in the Ocean County communities in which we live and work. Grant-funded services available to children, parents, educators and counselors during the 2015-2016 school year will include; trauma-informed professional development for counselors of homeless and runaway youth; professional development for preschool teachers focused on developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed techniques to address challenging behaviors in preschool students; and mindfulness, yoga, and social skills training for teachers, parents, and children. Services will be delivered by skilled and caring CHSofNJ professionals within the Toms River School District, as well as to community partners The Peppermint Tree Child Development Center and Harbor House.

Owner & Director of The Peppermint Tree Child Development Center Valerie Frost-Lewis, MS Ed., looks forward to a continuing partnership with HOG and CHSofNJ, saying, "Through this partnership, Helping Others Grow and CHSofNJ have provided vital support for the families and young children we serve." Frost-Lewis elaborated, "CHSofNJ's Mindfulness training, sponsored by Helping Others Grow, has truly helped our students learn to focus, self-calm, and be more in touch with their emotions and the world around them. CHSofNJ's outstanding clinical staff has also helped our staff infuse 'Mindful Moments' into our program to extend what the children have learned, and parents have praised the Mindfulness lessons for giving their children the tools to better handle stress."

CHSofNJ Program Administrator Joseph Zdeb, Jr., LCSW. Zdeb said of the collaboration, "Our partnership with Helping Others Grow will lead to significant improvements in the well-being of children and families throughout Ocean County." Zdeb continued, "Our agencies have come together to make a meaningful difference in our community, and we are thrilled by the positive response from families, educators, and local organizations benefitting from our work together." CHSofNJ President & CEO Donna C. Pressma echoed Mr. Zdeb's enthusiasm, saying, "We are so excited to partner with Helping Others Grow to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of our Ocean County children. Together, our agencies are able to help even more local families achieve health and happiness, and reach their full potential."

#### **About The Children's Home Society of New Jersey**

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey is a non-profit child and family serving agency whose mission is to save children's lives and build healthy families. Founded in 1894, the agency protects abused or neglected infants and at-risk children by ensuring stable, permanent, and loving homes for each and every child it serves. All services are confidential and most are free. For more information, visit our website at [www.chsofnj.org](http://www.chsofnj.org).

#### **About Helping Others Grow**

Helping Others Grow is a non-profit organization that supports family-serving agencies to promote protective factors and address children's physical, social, emotional, and behavioral wellness. Established in 2014, the organization builds upon existing programs in Ocean County, New Jersey to improve health and well-being outcomes for young children, improve racial/ethnic disparities in child wellness, promote strong and nurturing parent/child relationships, increase safety and security of children and families, improve early literacy and school readiness, and help prevent child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect.

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