

FALL 2015



# Friends to friends

Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

"The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; the question is can we afford not to?"

*Marian Wright Edelman,  
Founder, Children's Defense Fund*

We are dedicating this issue to the children we serve. Last year we prevented or ended homelessness for **153** children. The majority were between the ages of 0 to 5 though we met and worked with kids right up to their senior year in high school. The newest child to enter our shelter is Sarah, now 3 weeks old born right here at Chester County Hospital. I am always struck, when one of our mom's gives birth, with the idea that a child is coming into the world homeless.



When we picture the room at the hospital with all the babies lined up in their bassinets we never imagine that one or more of them might not have a home waiting for them. Thankfully this family had a safe place to live; but, it isn't home. However, with your help and our services Sarah, her sister and brother, and parents will get there — and the cycle of homelessness will be broken for another family.

Your support is working! Please invest with us and invest in a brighter future for them.

*Catherine*

Catherine Friedman, Executive Director

## "What makes the children in our Emergency Family Shelter so unique?"

What's it like being a Chester County child, whose mom or dad announce, **"Pack up as many clothes and your belongings in these boxes, quickly! We have to leave here, tonight, and I don't know where we'll be tonight or tomorrow."**? You hear and listen, stunned and frightened; and you look, intently and with an unsettled stomach, at your parent and your sister.

Upset. Shaken. Fear. Anxiety. Worry. Trepidation. Doubt.

These are the range of response emotions. And if you are a child, you don't know how to process all of that. Even adults would struggle with this scenario, which plays out more often that you would expect in Chester County.

Yet, these children whose lives are affected by homelessness, are much like our own children. Despite the situation of family homelessness that has been thrust upon them, these kids are

unique as individuals...but very much like children everywhere.

They are boys and girls who are growing up — but in an ultimate struggle as a member of a family that is experiencing homelessness in our community.

Marcus, Savannah, Emily, Dante — these children are not only like our children, they *are* our children. Your caring and compassion, as donor, grantor, volunteer, sponsor or advocate for all children in our community is why Friends Association is able to help Taylen, Jorge, and Jocelyn get back on a solid path to housing stability; family solidarity; and, personal growth with future success.

Just "listen" to what some of the children in our Emergency Family Shelter apartments told us when asked about their family, and life in a shelter apartment:



*"I like school because I like being with my friends." - Dante*

*"When I grow up I want to be using math and science as a scientist or an engineer." - Savannah*

*"I like our apartment (at the shelter) but I wish I could have a dog. If I had a dog, I would take it for walks in the park every day. I would be very good at taking care of a dog. I really think I should get one." - Jorge*

*"It's hard having to go to a new school; but I make new friends, and I like my teacher." - Emily*

*"We do quiet family activities, like watching TV, playing games, or reading the Bible. My mom cooks for us, and I wash the dishes and dust. My brother mops and vacuums." - Jocelyn*

*"I would like for mommy to have new clothes. Someday I would like her to have a better job so she could get a car, too - that would make my Mom very happy." - Taylen*

*"When I grow up I want to be a famous singer." - Marcus*



## West Chester Charity Ball 2015: Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>!

If you enjoy great food, cocktails, music, dancing, live and silent auctions featuring fabulous prizes...AND...and a lively evening with old and new friends, don't miss the 2015 Charity Ball!

This signature event is the best way to start the holiday season – an elegant and festive bash that creates genuine change for homeless families in our own community.

This year's "Friend of the Community Award" honoree is **Glenda K. Brion**. MC for

2015 is national model/television host, **Ms. Kim Alexis!**

Exciting activities will include a photo booth, body paint artists, and complimentary portrait photography. All of this begins 6:30 p.m. at the holiday elegance of West Chester Golf & Country Club.

Visit [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org) to be a sponsor, or purchase tickets for this very important fundraiser. Or, contact us at **610-431-3598 ext 205**, or [j.luke@friendsassoc.org](mailto:j.luke@friendsassoc.org)

## Legacy Giving: Sustaining This Work for Long-term Community Impact

Have you included Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children in your will? It is easier than you may realize. Speak with your attorney about it, or call Jack Luke, Director of Development at 610-431-3598 ext 205; or email [j.luke@friendsassoc.org](mailto:j.luke@friendsassoc.org)

Other kinds of legacy giving are income or estate-tax advantaged, too.

- Some or all of (otherwise taxable) IRA, and 401 (K) or 403(b) distributions
- Setting up a charitable income trust
- Gifts of life insurance, or annuities
- Income from a charitable gift annuity

These types of gifts pay dividends into the Chester County Community, year in and year out - for many years to come. When thinking about, or discussing your estate - with an estate planning financial consultant or your estate attorney: think about 'legacy giving' with Friends Association as beneficiary.



## Coming Soon: Washer & Dryer to EFS



Renovated space at Friends Association's Emergency Family Shelter (for washer and dryer imminent delivery and install). Special thanks for this improvement to volunteers West Chester Rotary's Bill Freas and Jim Kammerer; and grantors Elite Companies Foundation; Kistler-Tiffany Foundation; and, West Chester Sunrise Rotary.

## Difference Makers: Volunteers

Teaching young children in the A+ Summer Tutoring Program opened the door to a new career path that Alexis Turco previously had not considered. Volunteering brought discovery about Alexis' interest in engaging children in their development. Through this experience during summer 2015, Alexis has shifted her plans so that she can impact academic and social growth of children.

Cindy Benzing and Fran Zappala, who serve as information-and-referral volunteers, found that they are a positive influence in someone's life. They offer hope and encouragement as well as concrete resources to families that need support, but are not eligible for our services. We bid farewell-for-now to our information-and-referral "warm line" pioneer, volunteer Jean Dawson, who is on hiatus.

Friends Association's volunteers share their time and talent, every day, and in so doing, help solve problems; strengthen communities; improve lives; and connect to others. **Friends Association's volunteers, in the past 8 months, have contributed more than 4,000 hours of their time and talent.**

Volunteering not only provides people with the opportunity to support a meaningful cause, but also provides the perspective to look beyond their own circumstances; and, appreciate and understand difficulties and circumstances of challenged families in the community.

If you've not volunteered yet, but have interest, call Robin Meixner, Volunteer Coordinator, at 610-431-3598 ext. 204; or e-mail: [r.meixner@friendsassoc.org](mailto:r.meixner@friendsassoc.org).



From left to right  
Cindy Benzing, Fran Zappala, Jean Dawson

22,794

Children were homeless throughout PA

896

Children experienced homelessness in Chester County PA

*\*Source: PA Department of Education 2013-2014*



## “To All Who in Any Way Support Friends Association...”

*Editor's note: This was the salutation on a note card, received by us in June, by a mother who had stayed in one of the family shelter apartments. The family has moved to permanent housing in Chester County.*



You all have helped change our lives in great and in small ways. I sometimes ask myself, “where would we be without each and everyone of you.

You provided us with so much more than housing referrals and resources, even meals and a sense of belonging but also with renewed sense of HOPE - something we all need no matter where we are in our journey of LIFE. I, personally, as well as my children will take our shared experiences with Friends Association with us throughout our future. Remembering always, and with grateful hearts, your many acts of kindness. You, collectively and individually, are a truly exceptional group.

Continued success as you touch families and impact their futures.

Your friend,

Mrs. M. V. and family

## Inaugural Awards from D.C. : President’s Volunteer Service Award!

The national PVSA awards recognize individuals, families and groups that have contributed significant volunteer hours served over a year; or, cumulative hours over one’s lifetime.

“It gives me great pride, and hope for our community, that so many Friends Association’s ‘friends’ have made such a significant commitment to service,” said Catherine Friedman, Executive Director. “In 2014, our first full year with a structured program, volunteers have provided thousands of hours of service in addressing some of our community’s most pressing needs,” she added.

Award recipients are: *Gold Award for Teens: Jocelyn Licwindo, Gold Award, Over 500 Hours of Service: Kelsey Mattson; Kelsy McAnelly; Brianna Ott, Silver Award, Over 250 Hours of Service: Lisa Barrickman; Carla DiProspero; Kelly Fomolant, Bronze Award, Over 100 Hours of Service: Jean Dawson; AmyDescovich; Pat Kimmel; Danielle London; Bob McCool; Terri Sellers; Serita Spadoni*



Award honorees show their award certificates for many hours of volunteer service to benefit Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children.

Each volunteer received a personalized certificate and letter from The White House; a lapel pin; and a letter from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation. “By recognizing these volunteers, and placing a spotlight on their volunteer activities, we hope to motivate others to recognize how they can contribute, also, to their community,” Friedman said.

13 were honored on September 11, 2015 at West Chester Borough Council Chambers. The President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation established the President’s Volunteer Service Award program in 2003 to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service.

## #Giving Tuesday: Kathy’s All In, and Then Some!

When volunteer Kathy Ventresca learned about #GivingTuesday, a Cyber Monday-type initiative to support charities, she jumped into action.

She considered going online and making a donation to Friends Association, but wanted to expand her impact by organizing a campaign. Her employer, Accenture, offered matching gifts and joined our efforts to end family homelessness. When Kathy’s colleagues realized their donations would be doubled, they wasted no time in adding their generous support.



Thanks to Kathy’s compassion and Accenture’s determination to help our community, this #GivingTuesday campaign totaled over \$1200! This gift is making a tremendous difference for children in need.

Don’t forget about this year’s national campaign, #GivingTuesday, on 12/2/2015. (You don’t have to be on Twitter; just go to [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org) and click ‘Donate’.)

Perhaps YOU can take a page out of the winning play in Kathy’s playbook?!

## WELCOME: Leadership & Staff Positions

The board of trustees has a new leadership slate for the next two years:

*President:* Maureen McBride, Esq.  
*Vice-President:* Brian M. Boreman, Esq.  
*Treasurer:* Dennis Wallace  
*Secretary:* Serita Spadoni

A special welcome, too, to new board members: Lee Bohs, and Jim Kane. Board members are volunteers who are so valued and gratefully appreciated.

A warm welcome to new staff: Karen Wise, Outreach to Homeless Families Case Manager; and, Lorri Sarosy, Grant Proposal and Business Manager.



Maureen McBride, Esq.,  
Lamb McErlane, P.C.



Karen Wise



Lorri Sarosy



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*Yes, you can help  
prevent and end  
family homelessness  
in our community!*

By contributing online

- or -

Enclosing your gift

See our wish list  
at [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org)



**Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015**  
Is available at [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org)  
click 'Recent News' at home page

## New Training to Better Path for Moms

Most of the phone calls our staff receives require their problem solving skills. So you can imagine the surprise when Karen Wise, our Outreach to Homeless Families case manager, received the offer of a special training program for parents transitioning out of homelessness.

Vicki Stambaugh of Contemporary Health Career Institute in Exton explained that the Institute just announced a big success: a grant was received from PA Department of Education to fund a dental assistant training program covering all tuition and fees for 48 economically disadvantaged adults!

Karen shared the exciting news to two mothers in need of better employment through a 'surprise gift' phone call. Both Kim and Aaliyah wanted to apply immediately and asked "how soon can I start?"

Fast forward to July, and both Kim (mom of one toddler) and Aaliyah (mom of a grade schooler) are successful students in the 80-hour certificate program. With these credentials, both moms have the opportunity to find good jobs in a growing medical field. Starting salary is \$17 per hour, even more with experience. This means they could afford housing in Chester County and are on a path forward to self-sufficiency.

Vikki, the admissions coordinator at the Institute, was once in the same place as Kim and Aaliyah. It is Vikki's personal mission to help others and see them achieve success. Now that's paying it forward!



Student, Kia in the practicum training with Vicki, Admissions Coordinator, Contemporary Health Career Institute.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Maureen McBride, *President*
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## STAFF MEMBERS

- Catherine Friedman, *Executive Director*
- Nova Adams, MSA, *Housing Programs Supervisor*
- Rob Henry, *Emergency Family Shelter Manager*
- Jack Luke, *Director of Development*
- Robin Meixner, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Marie Paxson, *Administrative Assistant*
- Lorri Sarosy, *Grant Proposal and Business Manager*
- Karen Wise, *Case Manager, Outreach to Homeless Families*