



Friends to friends

Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome home! What does that phrase mean to you? For many of us it conjures up images of a comfy chair next to a cozy fire or a large family homecoming.

For Friends Association, "welcome home" is the ultimate symbol of our mission at work. Nothing means more to us than watching a family move into their own home and seeing the relief and pride of moms and dads providing for their families again.

We have had a wonderful year at Friends Association. In FY 2013, 94% of the families living in our Emergency Family Shelter moved into homes of their own and 90% of our Homeless Prevention Program Families remained stable in their homes after our assistance had ended. We attribute that success to the initiative of the dedicated families we work with and the first rate services we strive to provide. However, we couldn't do our work without you, our donors, volunteers and friends, who take our mission to prevent and end homelessness for families from a dream to reality.

We are so grateful and hope you know that you are changing lives! Like Sarah and her son who moved to a great apartment in West Chester or Sandy who because of our intervention was able to keep her housing, get back to full-time work and finish her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology at West Chester University.

Your gifts, of time, household items, gift cards and financial support mean the world to our families and help to make the homecoming that much better.

Wishing you many happy homecomings,

Catherine

Catherine Friedman
Executive Director

Single Mothers Facing Challenges

The impact of homelessness on mothers is profound. Many experience anger, self-blame, sadness, fear and hopelessness. Mothers experiencing homelessness have significant histories of interpersonal violence. For them, the experience of becoming homeless is another major stressor amidst already complicated, traumatic experiences. We recently interviewed single mothers living in our shelter and heard firsthand some of the fears and obstacles they face on a daily basis.



WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED YOU TO THE FRIENDS ASSOCIATION EMERGENCY SHELTER?

Barbara: I was working and even had a savings account. I developed a medical problem and was hospitalized. I lost my job because I had to take off work. I then had to use my savings and after five months I was evicted from my apartment. I lived with my brother for a short while and that was not a good situation for my three year old daughter. I did not want to live in a shelter. My pride made me think I had to fix this on my own, but I now realize that it takes a strong person to ask for help.

Marla: I made some bad choices and I had to get over my fears about coming to a shelter. Nobody wants to enter a shelter, but I had to do what was best for my family. My children inspire me to do better. I want to do better in taking care of my three kids by myself.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING?

Barbara: Yes. I have a job. My challenge is getting affordable child care for my daughter since child care is expensive and I do not have any family members to help with babysitting. It is very difficult when Annie is sick and I have to leave work to pick her up.

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT SINGLE MOTHERS?

Susan: We want to be able to pay our bills and hold our heads high. We never expected to be single raising our children. But this is the reality and we can't just give up because our children depend on us. So we do what we can with what we have and pray that one day things will get better. We do our best to change our circumstances on our own.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUE FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

Barbara: We had been on a regular schedule of nap times, story time, etc. Now it is much more hectic trying to get everything done. I felt so overwhelmed. I feel like I have made a lot of progress recently with the help of my case worker. I am learning how to get things done, one day at a time. My children and I are happier and a little less stressed out.

Marla: It has been very hard for my kids to be away from certain family members that we do not see anymore. The good thing about not seeing my family all the time is that it is sometimes better that we don't have all the drama of my family.

ARE THE RESOURCES YOU'RE RECEIVING AT FRIENDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU?

Barbara: It is a big relief to get the help I needed. Sometimes I didn't even know I needed certain things like seeing a therapist. It has been so good to talk about my issues.

Marla: I feel that I can make better choices now. I don't want to run away anymore. I know it is not just about me; it is my children too.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT AS A SINGLE MOTHER?

Barbara: Finding the strength to come to Friends Association and reaching out for help. I am always second guessing myself wondering if I have made the right decisions. When my daughter smiles and shows me how smart she is, I know I am doing something right. ☀

DID YOU KNOW? 71% of single-parent families are headed by females and are among the poorest in the nation and, as such, are extremely vulnerable to homelessness.



Pictured Above: The Enoches Family

West Chester Charity Ball 2013

SUPPORTS HOMELESS FAMILIES

On December 7, 2013 the 25th Annual West Chester Charity Ball ushered in the holiday season in festive style at the West Chester Golf and Country Club. Over 260 guests attended the Ball, which sparkled with holiday decorations and featured gourmet dinner stations, silent and live auctions, a raffle of diamond jewelry from Kaplans Fine Jewelry, Angel Card readings, a boardwalk-style photo booth, Karaoke Room and beautifully posed photos by Gifford Photography. It was a lovely evening to visit with old and new friends, enjoy beautiful holiday music by the Shaw Strings Quartet and dance to the beat of the Tonebenders.

Thanks to the overwhelming response from businesses and community members, the Charity Ball raised over \$150,000 for our Emergency Family Shelter and Homeless Prevention Programs. We are very grateful to our Presenting Sponsor, The Piazza Auto Group, along with the many other sponsors listed below.

Our special thanks go to the members of the Charity Ball Committee, who devoted their time and talent to plan and produce this beautiful event. 🌟

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS 2013 CHARITY BALL SPONSORS

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The Charity Ball Committee



*Pictured: Rose Marinelli, Glenda Brion, Claudia Hutter, Pat Kimmel (bottom row)
Jen Jester, Marie Paxson, Catherine Friedman,
Val Jester, Mary Cooke, Lisa Kaplan (top row)*

Congratulations Graduate!

Sandy recently graduated from West Chester University with a BS in Psychology. This hardworking mother of two teenaged girls completed her degree while participating in our Homeless Prevention Program. Sandy and her two daughters are facing a brighter future because Friends Association provided assistance to stay in school and complete her education. She is now working full-time at the VA Hospital and at the Brandywine Hospital on the weekends.



When Sandy first came to us, her situation was very stressful. She was in an abusive relationship and needed to move out of her current housing. She knew that if she could just receive short-term financial help, she would have the necessary earning power after graduation to become self-sufficient. Sandy became a client of our Homeless Prevention Program. Case Manager, Nova Adams, provided management plus a portion of her rent so that she and her family could stay in their home and avoid moving into a homeless shelter. Working together they applied for helpful community resources and created a family budget. This gave Sandy the peace of mind to focus on her studies and her family.

It wasn't easy to manage so many details while balancing her role as a parent and a student, but Sandy's hard work paid off. As you can see from the photo above, Sandy reached her goal to become a college graduate! We are so proud of her and excited about her promising future.

working to end family homelessness

Remember Friends Associations in Your Estate Plan

A Powerful Way to Create a Legacy to Help End Homelessness!

Friends Association was funded by a simple designation made by Ann Yarnell in her Last Will and Testament over 193 years ago and her legacy continues today. You, too, can create your own legacy by naming Friends Association as a beneficiary. Remember, if you do not leave a plan for your estate, state law will direct that your property be distributed under a one-size-fits-all formula. Wills and Bequests offer innovative ways to leave a lasting estate gift that will make a difference for years to come.

- One way to remember Friends Association is to provide for a bequest or legacy in your will. In this way you will have the use of your assets during your lifetime, and then when you no longer need them, your assets will provide for Friends Association in a meaningful way.
- It is very simple to name our organization as the beneficiary of property such as a bank account, life insurance policy, or retirement plan. Your bank or other company usually provides a form for you to use and we will be happy to assist you with this process.
- Designate your donation to the General Operating Fund or to the Friends Association Endowment Fund.
- Securities (Stock) transfers can be made to Friends Association.

Friends Association is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. We hope you will give serious consideration to our mission to end family homelessness by including this organization in your estate plan. Visit our web site for our Tax ID information or contact Catherine Friedman at c.friedman@friendsassoc.org or 610-431-3598, ext. 222.

DID YOU KNOW?

A full-time worker earning minimum wage cannot afford a one-bedroom unit priced at the fair market rent anywhere in the United States. Nationally, a full-time worker must earn \$18.32 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

Volunteers Make an Impact

Bubbles floating through the air, crafts, cupcakes and squealing children scampering through the park in pursuit of filled eggs looks like pure fun. And so it is, but it is also much more. The **Spring Fling and Egg Hunt** hosted at Marshall Square Park promoted intergenerational volunteering where family and group volunteers interacted

Homelessness Hurts Families is a workshop that provides families and groups opportunities to teach children and teens how homelessness impacts families. Through interactive activities such as What's It Like to be Homeless, a Family Scavenger Hunt and Feeding Your Family on \$10, families learn empathy and create a plan to volunteer and make a difference.



For many of us, birthdays are occasions of getting stuff... a lot of stuff. Others are finding joy in participating in less materialistic celebrations and selecting a charity to benefit. Madison asked guests to give money for Friends Association instead of gifts. Nolan delivered presents to us to be shared with our teen clients on their birthdays. In planning your next celebration, consider hosting a **Giving Party** to benefit Friends

one-on-one with clients and their children modeling appropriate family communication and behavior along with the fun. Friends Association provides an opportunity to help children, teens and their parents develop an empathy for others and begin a tradition of generosity to give to those in need.

Association families. Ideas may include: Quarters for the Laundromat; Gift & Gasoline Cards to help families stretch their budget dollars; New Books, Games and Toys.



Holiday Party 2013

The annual Holiday Party was held December 15, 2013 for all the families being served by Friends Association in the shelter and homeless prevention programs. A generous group of volunteers from Sts. Simon and Jude donated all the delicious food enjoyed by everyone and they organized a wonderful variety of activities and art projects for the children to enjoy.

A very talented face painter created creatures and characters on the very happy faces of kids all ages. Thank you to our friends at Sts. Simon and Jude and thank you to Chester County Art Association for sharing your art galleries with us. 🎨



***Yes, you can help
end homelessness in
Chester County!***

*By making a donation online
at www.friendsassoc.org*

- or -

*Sending a donation in the
enclosed envelope*

- or -

Contributing to our wish list

THANK YOU!



***Working to End
Family Homelessness***

Thanks Ted!

Ted Brinton, a retired resident living at the Kendal-Crosslands Community, likes to help families being served by Friends Association. He collects household items no longer needed by his Crosslands neighbors and arranges to have them given to families in need. Ted has been active in Birmingham Township committees and the American Friends Service Committee for many years.

Ted's roots to Chester County go very deep. His Brinton family ancestors left Birmingham, England and came to Chester County in 1684 where they lived in a cave their first winter before building a house. The Birmingham Friends Meeting was founded in the Brinton's house in 1690. Ted, his wife and three children lived in Birmingham Township for many years before he moved to Crosslands. Ted and his dog, Shanti, enjoy long walks together in the beautiful open space at Crosslands. 🌟



Matching Gift Programs

You can partner with your employer to increase your donation!

We are grateful for the donations we receive from employees at Siemens, ArcelorMittal and QVC. Their donations are matched through their respective company's program: Siemens Caring Hands Giving, ArcelorMittal Matching Gift Program and QVC Partners in Giving. Many other companies also offer Matching Gift Programs. Please check with your employer and consider making a charitable donation to Friends Association in partnership with your company. 🌟

**Friends Association's
Housing Programs**

Emergency Family Shelter

Our shelter program combines a private, safe setting and basic necessities with effective, individualized case management services for homeless families with children. We strive to keep parents and children together as they work toward becoming stable and productive in their homes, jobs and schools.

Homeless Prevention Program

We help families with children find or maintain safe, permanent housing. Our program balances strong case management services with financial assistance, when needed, for families coming from a shelter or those facing eviction. Our goal is to help families become independent within 12 to 18 months. 🌟

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**Welcome to our new Board Members!*

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