



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES



Creating
Brighter Futures
Since 1899

IMPACT

Fall 2013

The Light of my Life

In Hebrew, Gila means joy and happiness, and Orit means light. According to adoptive mother Leah, it is the perfect name for her 2-year-old daughter. "Her first name is in memory of my grandmother, and her middle name is because she's the light of my life; she's changed my whole life," she says. "Gila's been a wonderful baby from the time I brought her home when she was two months old. She loves to sing and dance. She has a great sense of humor, and talks up a storm."

Leah exudes gratitude for her child. She originally thought of adopting a toddler when she met with staff at Children's Aid and Family Services. After going through the training process, she learned about Gila, who was 2 months old at the time. Leah became flexible about

her age preference. "I realized that time flies, and the baby will be



2 years old in a blink of an eye," she says. "I'm glad I got her as an infant, because I'm the only mother she's known."

Leah felt comfortable caring for a baby because she's been around infants most of her life; she's from a big family and has many friends with small children. Gila was an easy going baby, but she had some medical issues.

"At first, Gila had a lot of respiratory issues," she says. "In one month, she was at the pediatrician more than a dozen times. Shea Campbell, an adoption specialist with the agency, went with me to the ap-
pointments and gave me so much

support and help. She was always there whenever I called. I'm very grateful."



Leah and her daughter Gila.

Gila was born premature, and she was seen by a developmental pediatrician to ensure she met her milestones. "She's right on track developmentally," says Leah. "I'm a professional Sign Language Interpreter, and have been signing with Gila

since I got her, so now she speaks and signs. Plus, I have a wide circle of friends in the community, and she's been adored by all of them since her arrival. I definitely think all

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Welcome to *Impact*, our redesigned and re-named newsletter! It still features stories of the important work we're doing together: changing the lives of vulnerable children for the better.

We strive to be good stewards of your donations and mindful of the environment. Thus, the new design of our newsletter is cost efficient and has a lesser impact on the environment.

We also keep you up to date with our monthly e-newsletter. If you are not receiving it, please contact our development office at 201.261.2800 or e-mail info@cafsnj.org.

Thank you for all you do to support us each and every day!

Robert B. Jones, Ph.D., *President & CEO*



Heroin: The Silent Epidemic

It's been all over the local news. There has been a dramatic increase in teenagers and young adults using heroin, especially in Bergen County. According to *The Record*, in 2011 and 2012 combined, the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office counted 130 overdoses, 38 of which were fatal. The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources provided these tips to help keep your family safe:

1. Be informed. Often, the gateway to heroin use is prescription painkillers. Kids get them from a doctor to treat a sports injury or simply take them from their parents' medicine cabinet. Start talking to your children when they are in middle school about how easy it is to become addicted to these drugs.
2. Clear out your medicine cabinet. Be sure to get rid of unused or expired prescription drugs at a drug take back event in your town.
3. Be on alert. Consider how medications can be obtained and lock up those medications that you are taking. Many young people start taking medicine they find at home or the home of a friend or relative.
4. Know when it's time to reach out for assistance and support. Educate yourself about the signs of drug abuse. They include changes in mood, appetite or sleep patterns, sudden weight loss or weight gain, decline in personal grooming, slurred speech, skipping school or unusually low grades, money and valuables missing from your home. You know your child best. If you suspect something is going on with your child, chances are it is.

If you have questions or your parental "antennae" is up, please call The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources at 201.488.8680. We can help answer your questions in complete confidence and connect you to other resources.

Creating Healthy Futures

Our Medical Services & Advocacy Center team has been making great strides in ensuring our children receive the best possible care. Many of them have been in six to 10 state foster homes before coming into our care. They usually have little or no medical records, medical conditions that have been undiagnosed or misdiagnosed and they have rarely been to the same doctor with any consistency. Our medical team has been piecing together their health histories, coordinating their care with other medical providers, and building trusting relationships with the children.

The only program of its kind in New Jersey, The Medical Services & Advocacy Center has received national recognition. It was recently featured in the American Academy of Pediatrics newsletter, and it was just one of eight programs across the country to be awarded a federal Healthy Tomorrow's Partnership for Children grant that will run for five years.

Our Medical Services & Advocacy Center is supported almost entirely by philanthropy. Its work is making a meaningful and lasting impact on our children's futures. You can help by making a donation to this vital program at www.cafsnj.org. Thank you.



Congratulations to Anne Armstrong-Coben, M.D., an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Columbia University and the Medical Director of the Medical Services & Advocacy Center. She has been nominated for The Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award, which honors a medical school faculty physician who exemplifies the qualities of a caring and compassionate mentor in the teaching and advising of medical students.

The Light of my Life, *continued from cover*
their love and socialization has helped her thrive.

"The support I've gotten from the staff and other foster parents at Children's Aid and Family Services is amazing," she says. "And even now that she's been adopted, I know I can still call anytime.

"I sometimes think, where would Gila be if she hadn't been adopted and had all of this nurturing, encouragement and love around her?" says Leah. "When she was formally adopted in June, I couldn't believe that it finally happened. I thank God for her every day."

To learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please call our family recruiter at 201.226.0300. You can view our children in need of families at www.cafsnj.org.

Introducing the **YOUth** Ambassador Program

We are seeking service-minded teenagers to start YOUth Ambassador Programs in their local high schools.

We will engage in fun volunteer projects, including drives for birthday gifts, making holiday goody bags for children in need, creating care packages for teens leaving foster care and going on to independent living, and volunteering at exciting agency fundraisers. We also have opportunities available to beautify our group homes by gardening and painting.

Of course, this will be your club. We would love to hear your ideas of how to help the children we serve!

To form a club in your school, please call Erica West at 201.261.2800 x225 or email ewest@cafsnj.org. You will have fun and feel good knowing you're helping your community become a better place.

Please help us spread the word! The YOUth Ambassador Program provides a way to build school spirit and create additional partnerships with teachers and children outside of the classroom. Perhaps your high school-aged child, grandchild, niece or nephew wants to start a YOUth Ambassador Program at their school.



A local Girl Scout Troop designed and painted a mural for the child therapy room at our South Orange office.



Julia Wood created Lifebooks of photos and memories for all the children in our Path to Adoption homes and for some of our foster families.



United Water interns participated in a field day for our children in foster care.

Here's what some of our volunteers say:

"Volunteering at Children's Aid and Family Services has really opened my eyes and given me a different perspective on life."

~ Amy Zembriski, recreational volunteer

"The Saturday morning classes are packed full of wonderful kids. We have about 20 students each week who come in excited, eager and ready to learn. The instructors and I aspire to become individuals they can trust and believe in as we interact with the kids through this class."

~ Soobean Jo, volunteer taekwondo instructor



Soobean Jo runs the "All Together" taekwondo program and provides free lessons to our children in foster care. Instructors (l. - r.): Christine Lee, Soobean Jo, Alex Rhoades, Jane Yoon and Suzan Kim.

Digital or print?

To provide you with the best possible communications about our work, we'd like to know how you prefer to receive news. Please either take our brief online survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5B2VWHX> or mail this survey in the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

- I prefer the printed version of Impact I like both
 I prefer the online e-newsletter

I'd like to start receiving the online version. Please send it to the following e-mail address: _____

Becoming part of the community

One of the goals we have for the children and teenagers with autism in our care is helping them to participate in the community. Recreational activities help them to learn the social skills that come more naturally to their peers. Last summer, our staff kept the children busy with fun activities and experiences, including swimming, bowling, trips to water parks, the library and restaurants.

"We want the children to feel like they are a part of the community," says Donna Kennedy, Senior Vice President, Community Services. "This helps them to interact with others and strengthen their social skills. Recreational activities help them build self-esteem and confidence, and promote inclusion and quality of life. The structure also helps lessen challenging behaviors the children may have."

We are able to provide these important activities for our children with autism because of the generosity of our donors. You can help us help our children develop social skills and integrate into the community. We are in need of gift cards to restaurants and for experiences such as "Build a Bear" Workshop, the Bronx Zoo, Great Adventure, Bounce University, Liberty Science Center, ice skating at Rockefeller Center and bowling. Please call our Development Office at 201.261.2800 to discuss. Thank you!



Logan loves taking horseback riding lessons.

Andrew Liso of Children's Aid and Family Services with Eli at Sea of Change Surf Outreach in Belmar, NJ. More than 100 volunteers taught surfing skills to children with autism.



The boys had a great day at Van Saun Park.



Patrick goes to the Fair Lawn Community Center where he does arts and crafts projects.



The boys had lots of fun at the water park this past summer!

Peter loves to read and frequently goes to the public library with our staff.



You can make a gift that will help children forever

Incredibly, that's what's possible with your gift to the Anne Goheen Crane Endowment. A planned gift, bequest, or donation to the endowment fund can do good forever. That's an impressive legacy.

You can help give these children and the future generations of children a brighter future by making a gift to the Anne Goheen Crane Endowment. Thank you!

For more information on making a planned gift or bequest, call Children's Aid and Family Services' Development Office at 201.261.2800 or visit www.cafsnj.org.

More Help for our Youth Leaving Foster Care



Carlotta, who received scholarship help from the Thomas R.S. Burgin Fund and the Woodlea-Path I advisory council while going to college, recently graduated with a degree in business management!

In the United States, each year over 27,000 young people "age out" of foster care to independent living. Usually they lack traditional family support and must make the transition into adulthood on their own. Predictably, the outcomes are grim: nearly 40% are homeless, nearly 60% of young men are convicted of a crime and only 48% obtain employment.*

We know that the transition into adulthood can be a lonely and frightening time for our teens, and we are deeply committed to ensuring that they overcome the odds and have bright futures. In addition to the support of our youth services staff, we recently began offering affordable housing (in partnership with a developer) for former foster children, teens and young adults who have left foster care to live independently. **Five beautiful, new apartments are located in Morris County, and their occupants are provided with case management support by our staff.**

The young people must work and contribute toward their rent and utilities. The apartment complex is located near employment, recreation activities and child care facilities. It is a true community setting, with a mix of seniors, families and young single people living in the complex.

We also offer help to our teenagers leaving foster care through our Thomas R.S. Burgin Fund. It provides financial help for scholarships to college and vocational school, as well as emergency funding for any former client of our foster care programs. **In 2012, there were 15 recipients of scholarship funding. Three young people graduated with bachelor's degrees and one young woman is going to graduate school!**

We couldn't offer these vital services to help our youth "aging out" of foster care without your help! To make a donation to the Thomas R.S. Burgin Fund and help a young adult continue his or her education, please visit www.cafsnj.org or use the enclosed envelope. Thank you!!

**Source: Fostering Connections*

Grants UPDATE

Children's Aid and Family Services wishes to thank the many generous organizations and foundations that recently provided vital support to its programs for vulnerable children and families:

- Fred J. Brotherton Charitable Foundation
- Gift of Life America Fund
- Helen's Hope Foundation
- The Hyde and Watson Foundation
- The Kaplen Foundation
- Macy's
- Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
- The Orange Orphan Society
- Todd Ouida Children's Foundation
- The Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation
- TJX Foundation
- United Water Foundation
- Edward W. & Stella C. Van Houten Memorial Fund

Fall at The Depot



The Depot has reopened this fall with many wonderful handcrafted items, made in the U.S.A. Whether you are looking for tabletop items, jewelry, or baby sweaters, The Depot is the perfect place to shop for unique, one-of-a-kind gifts.

Fired Up Clay Works from Eugene, Oregon creates beautiful and functional Terra Cotta pottery. These handmade pieces are oven and dishwasher safe and completely lead and cadmium free. They are a pleasure to cook with as well as being beautiful, decorative pieces. The Depot is the only store in NJ to carry this line of pottery.

The Depot is located at 22 Prospect Street, Midland Park, NJ. It is open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 pm. and until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Please call 201.444.6120 for more information. All proceeds benefit Children's Aid and Family Services.



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Visit us online at www.cafsnj.org
 Call us at 201.261.2800

An Evening of Wine and Food

Come join us at our annual Evening of Wine and Food, which benefits Baby Basics and other programs supporting vulnerable children. This year's honorees are Bernadette and Michael Davis and Carol and Jim Whaley, who are being honored for their dedication to Children's Aid and Family Services and the community.

Date: **Saturday, November 2, 2013**
 Time: **7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.**
 Place: **Indian Trail Club**
 830 Franklin Lake Road
 Franklin Lakes, NJ

This evening, to be emceed by CNBC's Tyler Mathisen, will feature wines selected by Chuck Russo of Carlo Russo's Wine and Spirit World of Ho-Ho-Kus, fabulous food, silent auction, Pop The Cork wine raffle and musical entertainment. Tickets are \$125 and \$250. To order tickets, please visit www.cafsnj.org or call the Development Office at 201.261.2800.

Many thanks to the evening's sponsors: Atlantic Stewardship Bank, ConnectOne Bank, Marion and Bob Jones, OritaniBank Charitable Foundation, PNC Wealth Management, Prestige, The Shannon Rose Irish Pub, TD Bank and United Water.



Our **Mission** is to preserve, protect, and when needed, provide families. Motivated by compassion and in partnership with the community, we make positive lasting differences in the lives of those we serve. We provide high quality, innovative services to children and their families that advance social, educational and emotional development and well-being.