CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Turning Points

SERVING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SINCE 1899

SPRING 2010

Baby Basics

HELPING MORE FAMILIES THAN EVER BEFORE

Between job losses, exorbitant housing costs and skyrocketing medical expenses, more families are having a difficult time managing all of their bills. As a result, the Baby Basics program, which provides free nutritional formula and diapers to low-income families with children ages 2 and younger, is serving more families in Bergen County than ever before. In 2008, Baby Basics helped 157 families and their babies. That number ballooned to 177 in 2009. Here are the stories of two families getting vital help from the program.

Charlie* and Annabelle*

Last year, Alyse* got, as she says, "an unexpected gift later in life – twins." The fortyish working mother of two teenagers had to start over again with midnight feedings and diaper changes. But she also had two happy, cuddly babies to come home to every day.

Alyse always enjoyed a middle-class lifestyle – complete with a beautiful home and financial security – but her life took a dramatic turn soon after Annabelle* and Charlie* were born. Her husband left when the babies were 6 months old, leaving her and her four children in a terrible financial predicament. "I never thought I'd be in this situation," Alyse says. A social worker introduced Alyse to Baby Basics, a program of Children's Aid and Family Services, and suggested she reach out for help. The program provides free nutritional formula and diapers to low-income families in Bergen County from distribution sites in Paramus, Ridgewood, Carlstadt and Englewood.

"It's an incredible amount of work to care for two babies, and the costs add up quickly. The Baby Basics program has been a huge blessing.

"As hard as this has been, I do feel like a lot of people have been put in my path who have really helped us, particularly Baby Basics." Alyse says. "For instance, I've been able to use the money I've saved on baby items for other important expenses, like dental appointments and eyeglasses for my older kids."

Alyse's family also received generous donations of clothes and toys for the babies during the holidays. "The program helped us have a wonderful Christmas," she says. "And the volunteers and staff offer me encouragement and always ask if there's anything my family needs."

Alyse's extended family also offers tremendous support to her. Her parents watch the twins while she works and her brother picks up wipes and baby food when he goes grocery shopping.

"People have been so good to me," she says. "Down the road, when I can turn things around financially, I want to give back."

Baby Basics Helps a Grandmother in Need

Every morning, Sarah* wakes up and "thanks God for giving me another day." Sarah exudes gratitude and faith, even though she has endured more than her share of heartache. She recently underwent knee surgery that makes it hard to walk, and has

See **Baby Basics** page 4

Message from the President

Welcome to the first issue of *Turning Points* in 2010. It has a fresh new look in time for a New Year and decade. I hope you will enjoy reading how the work you make possible helps so many vulnerable children and families in our community.

I thank all of you who helped us during the holidays, either by making a donation, volunteering your time to the children and families we serve, wrapping gifts or running supply drives to benefit the Baby Basics program. With many families on the waiting list of this important program, your help is greatly appreciated and still needed.

Our annual spring gala is quickly approaching. This year's theme is "Home on the Range," and it promises to be a fun-filled, memorable evening. Most important, it raises funds to benefit the children in our care. I hope to see you there with your spurs on!

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

MEET TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ridgewood resident Kenneth Bronfin and Franklin Lakes' resident Nina Sharma were recently elected to serve three-year terms on the agency's Board of Trustees. "I'm delighted to welcome Ken and Nina to the Board and truly appreciate their sharing their talents with the agency," says Bob Jones, Ph.D., president & CEO.

Mr. Bronfin, who is president of Hearst Interactive Media, and Ms. Sharma, a marketing consultant, both value giving back to the community. In the Q&A that follows, they discuss their involvement with the agency.

Kenneth Bronfin

Nina Sharma

Q. How did you become interested in Children's Aid and Family Services?

Ken: Many years ago we had a wonderful neighbor who was actively involved as a volunteer for the agency. My wife, Sarina, and I learned about the organization through her and became supporters. Over time, our interest has only grown.

Nina: I wanted to get more involved in the community and volunteer my time and skills helping vulnerable children. I took a tour of the agency's facilities and learned about its volunteering needs. I realized I could help by offering my business and marketing skills to organize fundraisers.

Q. Why did you join the Board of Trustees?

Ken: I met Bob Jones, the president & CEO of the agency, and asked how I could lend assistance to the organization. He suggested that I join the Board of Trustees, which would give me an opportunity to help the agency on a wider scale.

Nina: Helping vulnerable children is extremely important to me and I believe I can make a difference serving on the Board. I plan on raising awareness about the agency's work, especially in Franklin Lakes.

Q. What aspect of the agency's work is important to you?

Ken: I believe in Children's Aid and Family Services because of the wide range of services it offers and the way in which it professionally and caringly manages all of these services.

Nina: The agency serves so many people in our community and has many beneficial programs. What's close to my heart is helping the babies and infants served by the Baby Basics program and the foster children living in group homes.

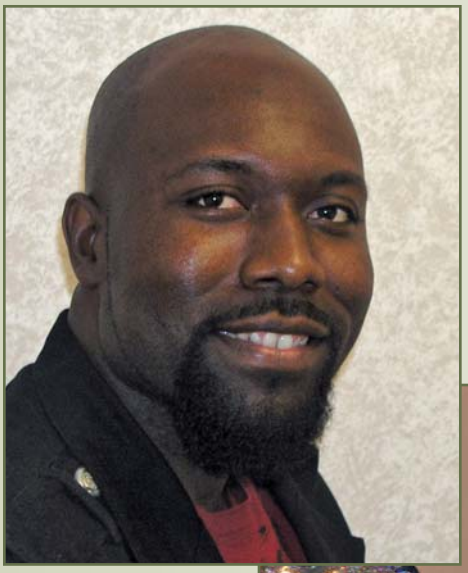
Q. Are you involved with any other charities?

Ken: I am involved with FIRST, which is a national organization with a mission to inspire young people to become science and technology leaders.

Nina: I'm primarily dedicating my time to helping the children served by the agency. However, I also volunteer at my children's elementary school and I've been on the Board of the Franklin Lakes Newcomers and Neighbor's Club for more than five years.

Professional Foster Parent

RODNEY AUGUSTE



"This is our Home"

I joined Children's Aid and Family Services in 2005 and worked at the Path I group home as a youth counselor for three years. I learned a lot working with the children in foster care, and last year decided to use my knowledge and experience to become a Professional Foster Parent. My wife and I live in an agency-owned home in West Orange with four teenaged boys. After working at Path I — where I could go home after work — it was a big change to live with the children all the time. I learned quickly I needed to be very organized and manage my time well. Each of the boys has school, therapy and medical appointments in addition to recreational activities every week. I collaborate closely on the schedule with the full-time Youth Counselor who assists me.

Markius, one of Rodney's foster children, at the agency's holiday party for children in foster care.

Most days are a blur of activity and the time passes quickly. For instance, on a typical weekday, I get the boys up at 6:45 a.m., we have breakfast together, they get dressed and are off to school. I then speak to their case managers and therapists and make their various appointments. I straighten up the house and buy groceries before the boys get home. After school, they have snacks, do their homework and have some free time before dinner. We talk over meals about the day and joke with each other. After dinner they shower, straighten their rooms and go to bed. During the weekend we relax and don't follow such a strict schedule.

I've come to like this job very much. Since I live with the children, I've gotten to know them well and have a strong connection with each of them. I know they care about how I feel and I care deeply about them. For instance, if I become discouraged with one of them for misbehaving, he will go out of his way to get my attention and behave well.

The kids seem to thrive in this innovative model of foster care. They feel like the house we live in is their home, which is something they've never known before. In fact I tell them all the time, "This is our home." I've taught them to take care of the house and show pride in it. They like it when their friends come over and tell them they have a nice house. Best of all, they feel comfortable here.

I've seen the boys make so much progress in the time they've lived with me. To me, this is the best thing about the job. At first, they were all scared, shy and didn't know what to expect. Slowly, they've become more comfortable. Like children in a traditional family, they've started to ask me for things, tell me the details of their days, enthusiastically call my name and joke with me. It's so beautiful to see them become confident and capable young men.

If you or anyone you know is interested in learning more about becoming a Professional Parent, please call our recruitment specialist at 201.226.0300. The agency offers a salary, generous benefits and the opportunity to live rent-free in an agency-owned home.

For most children in foster care, moving from place to place is a way of life. Before coming into the care of Children's Aid and Family Services, children typically experience as many as seven to 10 placements. The sad result is no place ever feels like home to them. The caregivers and rules change so often during their young lives that they have little sense of security or what to expect.

Last year, the agency opened three Professional Parent foster homes to offer some of the children in foster care a more secure, consistent and nurturing environment. Professional Parents live in agency-owned homes with four teenaged foster children, much like a typical family.

Rodney Auguste has been a Professional Parent since 2008 and shares his experiences.

A Holistic Approach to Teaching

Children learn where the body organs are located in the HALO program.

The preschool children attending Turrell Child Care & Early Learning Center are learning more than their ABC's and 123's. They are also receiving valuable lessons on the importance of growing in healthy ways — physically, emotionally and socially. Each week, they discuss the importance of healthy choices through HALO (Healthy Alternatives for Little Ones). This is a unique, comprehensive substance abuse prevention program designed for children 3 – 6 years of age, and consists of developmentally appropriate lessons emphasizing the importance of growing in healthy ways.

Each month the Turrell Center staff focuses on a particular lesson. For example, "Healthy Bodies/Healthy Choices," is about taking care of the body, and is reinforced by teaching children where their vital organs are located. To help the children learn this concept, they take turns wearing a vest of body organs attached by Velcro. They learn where each organ is located and how important its healthy function is to the rest of the body.

The Turrell Center staff also incorporates everyday examples to reinforce the lessons. For instance, at mealtimes the children will talk about what foods they think are healthy or unhealthy. Parents are encouraged to get involved through a monthly newsletter that lists ways they can talk about healthy choices at home, too.

Pre- and post-testing is done at the start and end of each HALO program to see how well the children absorb the concepts. Typical results show that 73 percent of children can define the word "healthy" and give one or more examples, and 71 percent of children can differentiate which medicines are safe and unsafe at the conclusion of the program.

The Turrell Center serves children ages 8 weeks through kindergarten and is open 7:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. It features large classrooms, an age-appropriate, comprehensive curriculum and freshly prepared nutritional meals and snacks. To schedule a tour, contact Sandy Richards, director of childcare services, at 201.261.5970 or email childcare@cafsnj.org.

Baby Basics *continued*

Madison*

suffered through the heartbreaking losses of her parents, all her brothers and sisters and her son, before she turned 50. She is the matriarch for her nieces and nephews – giving them loving advice and guidance – and even assumed guardianship for her deceased sister's 9-year-old son several years ago. She's his class parent and serves in the PTA. She also cares for her 8-month-old granddaughter, Madison*.

"I love the Baby Basics program," she says. "I can't work right now and am on disability, and the program's been such a big help. Donors went above and beyond and gave my granddaughter such a beautiful Christmas. They gave her a winter coat, blanket, adorable outfits and extra diapers and wipes. I'm so thankful for what the program does for us."

Madison is 8 months old and thriving. "She eats well, is crawling and active," says Sarah. "With so much of my family gone, I feel blessed to have Madison. She brings so much joy to my life."

There is always a waiting list of families seeking assistance from the Baby Basics program. There are many ways you can get involved, from running a product drive to making a cash donation to sponsoring a family for a month. To find out how you can help these struggling families and their little ones, call the Baby Basics program coordinator at 201.261.2800 or visit www.cafsnj.org.

**Names changed to protect client privacy.*

Holiday *Wrap Up*

The children in the agency's care had a wonderful holiday season, thanks to the generosity of many individuals, organizations and businesses. Special thanks to the Bergen Volunteer Center for including the agency in its All Wrapped Up program, which resulted in hundreds of gifts for the children from many donors. We also thank the many generous donors that donated to our Holiday Appeal.

Employees of JP Morgan Chase took a "wish list" of gifts for some of the children in the agency's care. Rebecca and Bob Wilcox helped deliver the generous donation of presents.

Several dozen of the agency's dedicated volunteers attended the holiday gift wrapping party. They listened to Christmas carols and wrapped presents for all of the children in the agency's group homes. Thanks to all who attended and lent their talents.

(l. – r.): Nancy Warren, group home director; Lisa Ekmekjian, county coordinator of the Pajama Program; and June Sosland, administrator, Out-of-Home-Care with donations from The Pajama Program. The Pajama Program is a non-profit organization that provides new books and pajamas to children in need, many of whom are waiting to be adopted.

Kathy Sophias, billing coordinator for the agency, volunteered at the holiday gift drive at Paramus Park Shopping Center. Shoppers who donated a gift to one of the children in the agency's care received a gift card to the mall.

The agency's holiday party for foster children and their foster families was a big hit. The children had fun singing karaoke, dancing and opening their presents.

Helping Parents Help Their Children Through Divorce

Like most kids her age, Emily loved Harry Potter books. She was in her room eagerly reading his latest adventure. But the 10-year-old was having trouble concentrating. She could hear her mother on the phone with her father. Her parents separated recently and were both so angry all the time. It seemed that their fighting was becoming worse. Emily's mother's voice was rising as she argued with her soon-to-be ex-husband about money. Tears started to slide down Emily's cheeks as she remembered the days not so long ago when her parents were happy and they did fun things together as a family. She slammed the book closed and put on her iPod to drown out the horrible noise. She felt awful. She loved her parents and wished they were still together. It was bad enough they were breaking up the family. Did they have to hate each other, too?

The statistic is well-known but still startling: One of every two marriages ends in divorce. In Bergen County in 2005, there were 4,768 marriages and 2,404 divorces, placing the county second in the state for the highest rate of divorce *(Source: NJ Center for Health Statistics)*.

The end of a marriage, while never easy, can be particularly traumatic if there are children involved. Divorcing parents may inadvertently use their children to manipulate or control each other or speak badly about each other in front of their children. These behaviors can exacerbate the stress and anxiety usually experienced by children of divorce and can increase the risk of depression, anger, behavior problems and substance abuse.

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, a program of Children's Aid and Family Services, offers the evidence-based substance abuse prevention program, "Children in the Middle" to divorcing parents to teach them the skills needed to avoid putting their children in the middle of the conflict. "During divorce, parents are caught up in the highly charged emotions of the situation and often, without even realizing it, make their child feel guilty or disloyal if they don't side with them," says Ellen Elias Rocca, director of The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources and vice president, prevention & addiction services for the agency. "This can have devastating consequences on the children, including declining grades, withdrawal from social relationships, intense anger at the parents and an increased likelihood to become involved with using alcohol and drugs. With 'Children in the Middle,' we try to limit the impact of these negative behaviors on the children. It's extremely important for parents who are in the middle of a divorce to learn how to communicate and cooperate more effectively to reduce the stress their children experience."

"My husband took this class a couple of weeks ago and I have seen a difference in his behavior as a result of it. After taking the class myself, I can see why. Have to say I loved the message and found it to be very helpful."

Attendee of "Children in the Middle"

The program has proven results, with participants reporting a 57 percent reduction in litigation (e.g., child-access, change of custody, and/or child-support disputes); 30–53 percent reduction in parental conflict and 70 percent fewer physician visits by children *(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)*.

"Children in the Middle" is currently offered twice a month at no cost to participants through grant funds from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Addiction Services. The one-time, four-hour session includes a video that shows positive and negative ways that families of divorce handle conflict, workbook exercises and role playing. The Center offers the program at its office at 241 Main Street in Hackensack and at Bergen Community College Adult Learning Center at 355 Main Street in Hackensack. The Center is a recognized leader in community and school-based education programs about alcohol and drug abuse prevention in Bergen County.

The Center can also offer "Children in the Middle," as well as "Kids' Turn," the program's child-centered complement, in your community on a fee-for-service basis if requested. For more information, call The Center at 201.488.8680 or visit www.cafsnj.org.

THE CENTER
FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG RESOURCES
A Program of Children's Aid and Family Services

Grants News

(l. – r.): Bob Jones, Ph.D., president & CEO of the agency; Laura Sulborsky, branch manager, Paramus branch, TD Bank; and Dennis McSherry, regional vice president, TD Bank.

Children's Aid and Family Services is profoundly grateful to the many generous corporations and foundations that support its programs and services. Recent grants include a $6,000 donation from the Lillian Pitkin Schenck Fund and a $5,000 grant from BJ's Charitable Foundation, both in support of the agency's vital Baby Basics program, which provides free nutritional formula, diapers and other baby essentials to low-income families in Bergen County. For our older children, a recent grant of $25,000 from the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey will help us to assist current and former clients of the agency to successfully transition to adulthood, and a generous $9,500 grant from TD Charitable Foundation will provide funding for our Life Skills program, teaching the foster children in our care important skills. From doing laundry and cooking dinner, to opening a bank account, paying bills and managing money, getting a driver's license, and applying for a job or to college, these types of skills help to ensure healthy, productive futures for our youth.

"Organizations such as these play a critical role in the agency's ability to help vulnerable children and families," says Bob Jones, Ph.D., president & CEO of the agency. "We're tremendously grateful for their support."

Helping Vulnerable Children Forever

Imagine doing something that would make a profound and long lasting difference in the lives of children. Imagine that by sharing your personal resources you could help children in need achieve their full potential, brighten their futures and bring positive changes to your own community. Helping vulnerable children forever is exactly what a gift to the Anne Goheen Crane Endowment makes possible.

The Anne Goheen Crane Endowment ensures that Children's Aid and Family Services is here to help for generations by providing a reliable source of interest income to the agency. A gift to the endowment fund provides a steady and growing source of funding to help the agency care for children who have endured abuse and trauma, as well as families navigating life's challenges and transitions.

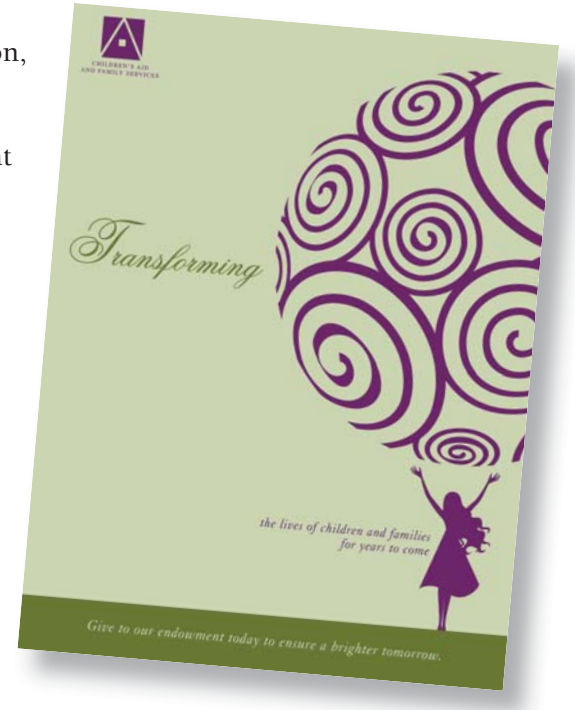
Many of those we serve often have no one but Children's Aid and Family Services to care for them. Our agency counts on people like you to help those who count on us.

Even if you already give to Children's Aid and Family Services on an annual basis, please consider a separate gift to the agency's endowment fund. We need your help to build a lasting legacy of caring.

Many donors view an annual gift to the endowment as part of an overall strategy for reducing taxable income. You may also wish to build a lifetime gift to Children's Aid and Family Services into your estate planning or as part of your long-term financial strategies.

With tax season upon us, now is the perfect time to review your estate plans.

For more information, or to schedule a private meeting, call the Development Office at 201.261.2800.



YOU CAN STILL HAVE A ROOTIN' TOOTIN' GOOD TIME

The Event Committee is planning a big gala, one with some country-western flair. And you still have time to join them at the agency's seventh annual gala, "Home on the Range," on Friday, March 26, 2010, at The Hackensack Golf Club in Oradell, NJ. Tickets start at $150 and registration is available at www.cafsnj.org. The event will benefit vulnerable children and families in our shared communities.

This year's sponsors include Applebee's Neighborhood Grill and Bar, First Franchise Capital Corporation, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Boiling Springs Savings Bank, BD, Toys "R" Us, Inc., The Shannon Rose Irish Pub, Brenda and Frank Gallagher, Patti and Robert McKillip, United Water, and media sponsor Town News. The gala will include hors d'oeuvres and a buffet, open bar and live and silent auctions.

For more information, to purchase tickets, donate to the live or silent auction or advertise in the ad journal, please contact the Development Office at 201.261.2800 or log onto www.cafsnj.org.

Event Committee. Front row (l. – r.): Ellen Goodman, Nancy Slott, Andrea Visser and Kelly Welsh.
Back row (l. – r.): Martha Fickinger, Nina Sharma, Carol Whaley, Bernadette Davis and Christine Dunn.

MISSION

The Mission of Children's Aid and Family Services is to preserve, protect, and when needed, provide families. Motivated by compassion for vulnerable children, young adults, frail elderly and their families, we provide high-quality and innovative services that meet their social, educational and emotional needs. Since 1899, the agency has been recognized as a leader in adoption and specialty therapeutic services for children who have been severely traumatized and abused.

Children's Aid and Family Services
200 Robin Road
Paramus, NJ 07652-1414

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hackensack, NJ
Permit No. 104

Change Service Requested

Board of Trustees

Chair Erik Sorenson
1st Vice Chair Joyce A. Snider, Ed.D.
2nd Vice Chair Carol L. Whaley
Treasurer & CFO Joanne E. Mandry, C.P.A.
Secretary Carol Smith
President & CEO Robert B. Jones, Ph.D.

Marie Adler-Kravecas
Jerrold B. Binney, Esq.
Barbara Abney Bolger
Harvey D. Braun
Kenneth A. Bronfin
Gregory J. Bullock
Joan K. Doherty
Hon. Nicholas R. Felice
Brenda H. Gallagher
Barbara Hyslop
Ellen Jacobs
Kenneth J. Karl
Heidi Kay
J. Christopher Nettleton
Frank Plateroti
Nina Sharma
Dan Shiver
Robert G. Sommer
Eve van den Bol

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

If you would like your name removed from our mailing list, please call Gail in the development department, at 201.261.2800.
Interested in receiving newsletters and updates by email?
Please send your address via email to info@cafsnj.org