



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES



Creating
Brighter Futures
Since 1899

IMPACT

Issue 2 2015

Gratitude in Every Direction

When her children were in 5th, 8th, and 10th grades, Anne Oros, with the support of her family, decided to share the blessings of their life by fostering newborns whose parents were unable to care for them. Fortunate to be a stay-at-home mom who loves infants and children, Anne fostered babies first through Bethany Christian Services (a total of 12), then subsequently learned of Children's Aid and Family Services' Medically Needy Infants and Toddlers program. The babies who came to her home — 25 over the years — were always small, due to lack of prenatal care, sometimes weaned from addiction but always in need of the love, warmth and security that Anne and her family sought to provide them. Some stayed for a few months and a few remained as long as two years. There was always a loss when they left, but as Anne says, "it was about the babies, about giving them wings, not about us."

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John and Anne Oros.



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Message from the President

It is hard to believe that I have just about completed my first year as CEO of Children's Aid and Family Services. During this time, I've gotten to know many of our dedicated staff, our generous donors, our committed volunteers, and our devoted foster and adoptive parents and have seen firsthand the results of their combined efforts: second chances given to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

I have been touched by the children and families whom we serve and marvel at their efforts to overcome enormous obstacles to achieving happy and productive lives. You will read about some of them in this holiday issue of Impact. Stories of our remarkable efforts are numerous, and just a few of them are included in this brief newsletter.

I'm grateful for the extraordinary community of caring that is the fabric of Children's Aid and Family Services. As you enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner or otherwise celebrate the upcoming holidays, please keep in mind the mission of our agency and the work that we do. It is only with your help that we can provide high quality services that literally turn lives around. Children's Aid and Family Services is an extraordinary organization for which we should all be proud and thankful. I certainly am.

With gratitude, and best wishes for the holiday season.

Jerry Binney

"During this time, I've gotten to know many of our dedicated staff, our generous donors, our committed volunteers, and our devoted foster and adoptive parents and have seen firsthand the results of their combined efforts: second chances given to some of the most vulnerable people in our community."



Gratitude in Every Direction

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Approximately 10 years ago, the Oros family made a decision to adopt one of the children they were fostering. Actually, Anne says, "Alquan adopted us." After three years in foster care, with a permanency plan still uncertain, the Oros family advised the court that they were ready and willing to adopt, a process that was then finalized within a year. Adopting Alquan, now a handsome 7th grader at George Washington Middle School in Ridge-wood, "was the biggest and best decision we made as a couple and family." The rewards have been immeasurable. Alquan is a remarkable addition to the Oros household. They "are grateful to have had another chance to give a child love, hope, a voice and of course, the independence to fly...we are the lucky ones."

Anne's birth children are now grown and live in various parts of the country — Texas, California and Missouri. Two recently became parents and, no surprise, are wonderfully comfortable with their new-borns. No longer fostering babies, Anne and her husband John are very happy that Alquan is still filling their home. With a little extra time, and in her constant spirit of giving, Anne joined the Board of Children's Aid and Family Services in 2012, bringing the perspective of both a foster and adoptive parent. Anne is also an enthusiastic member of the agency's Medical Services & Advocacy Center Advisory Board. She and John are generous supporters of the agency as well.

**Thank you Anne Oros
for the love you
have shared, making
a difference in so
many young lives.**

Grateful to The Depot volunteers

The Depot Gift and Handcraft Shop is a testament to what dedicated volunteers can do. On October 18, The Depot celebrated its 50th anniversary. During that time, the all-volunteer store has donated over \$3 million in proceeds to Children's Aid and Family Services, helping thousands of vulnerable children and families. Founded in 1965 by a small group of volunteers, The Depot is the oldest independent gift store in the United States. Originally located in the baggage room at the Ridgewood Train Station, the shop is currently located on Prospect Street in Midland Park and draws customers interested in beautiful and handcrafted gifts from around the world.

For 50 years, volunteers have spent countless hours securing merchandise, creating displays, marketing and providing first-class customer service. The result of their efforts has been remarkable — the \$3 million donation to Children's Aid and Family Services has supported many vital agency programs, including our Educational Support and Advocacy Services which provides tutoring to children in our therapeutic foster care homes. The Depot has also garnered a regular clientele who appreciate the unique quality of the merchandise and who are happy to help support the community through their purchases.

The current roster of volunteer staff is a mix of working professionals, women in the pharmaceutical, media, IT and education professions, and long-time volunteers who boast careers in publishing, the airline and food industry, and nursing. Many have also served as stay-at-home moms and channeled some of their time and expertise to The Depot. Children's Aid and Family Services deeply appreciates the important role the shop and its volunteers have played in the success of the agency as do the countless vulnerable children and families who have benefited from a half century of giving.



Depot co-directors Linda Mendrys and Eileen Negrycz with Midland Park Mayor Patrick "Bud" O'Hagan and Jerry Binney, President & CEO of Children's Aid and Family Services at The Depot's 50th anniversary celebration.

Be sure to stop by The Depot during the holiday season. It is a literal Winter Wonderland, replete with gorgeous decorations and unique seasonal gifts. The Depot is located at 22 Prospect Street in Midland Park. Its hours are Monday – Saturday 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Thursdays until 7:00 p.m. Visit www.depotgiftstore.com.

Gratitude for making wishes come true

These are just a few of the corporations and community organizations that give so generously to help vulnerable children.

Ernst & Young – Members of their team painted our Safe Journey group home.

KPMG – Gardened at two of our group homes.

Microsoft - \$650,000 software grant; the staff at their Paramus store has volunteered at our Turrell Center and with our children with developmental disabilities throughout the year.

Most Blessed Sacrament youth group – Painted our community homes for people with developmental disabilities; created artwork for the homes; gave a "spring cleaning" to the Turrell Center.

Thomasville Furniture NJ – Furnishing our group foster homes, Zoe's Place and community home for people with developmental disabilities.

Tickets for Kids Charities – Donated more than \$7,000 worth of professional sports tickets and sports camps.

United Water – Their staff has helped out during field days for our children and prepared numerous event mailings.

UPS – Painted Zoe's Place and offices in our 200 Robin Road building.

Wyndham – Read to children at the Turrell Center; designed mini hope chests for our children in therapeutic foster care.

Grateful to our staff

Reflecting on its progress over the year, Children's Aid and Family Services is particularly thankful for the efforts of its staff — 265 members at last count. Among those members is Melissa South (formerly Goring) who serves as the Senior Clinical Case Manager in the Safe Journey Group Home in West Orange. Melissa came to the agency in 1999, starting as a child care worker. With a Masters degree in Clinical and Counseling Psychology, Melissa now devotes herself to providing much needed individual therapy, group therapy and case management for boys ages 11 -15 who suffer from emotional, behavioral and/or mental health issues, often associated with trauma. Some of the boys come from state foster care, some from families, but all require significant therapeutic treatment and support during the time they are in Safe Journey.

Melissa faces many challenges in her job but is rewarded when boys successfully move back to lower levels of care or home with their families. For example, at age 12, James came to Safe Journey from foster care, having grown up in an inner city with a mother who was in and out of his life. He had suffered from trauma and experienced a great deal of instability and chaos throughout his life. At the outset, James was oppositional and didn't want to participate in therapy. Melissa remained patient, and together with the youth counselors, she provided reassurance and constant reminders that she was there to

help. Eventually, he began to co-operate. Special recreational experiences provided by the agency's generous donors included trips to Turtle Back Zoo, basketball and baseball games,

and even lacrosse camp, encouraged James to see a new way of living. He requested a transfer from the inner city school he was attending to a school in West Orange he understood to be better for him academically and socially. With Melissa advocating on his behalf, even to the point of working with his attorney and sending letters to the court, James made the change to the new school and excelled, even making honor roll.

When it was time for James to move on from Safe Journey, Melissa once again served as a key advocate, arguing for placement in a lower level of care with the agency as opposed to a more restrictive residential setting. Fortunately, James was placed in the agency's Professional Parent foster home and did very well. Adding to this success...over the years a volunteer in the program came to know and love James and happily became his adoptive parent.

Melissa sometimes hears from her former clients — one left to live with his father in North Carolina and at age 21 called her to chat, remarking that he "still remembered all that you taught me."



James once told Melissa that he wanted to become a lawyer, to which she responded, "and when you are famous come back to say 'hello.'" Melissa sometimes hears from her former clients — one left to live with his father in North Carolina and at age 21 called her to chat, remarking that he "still remembered all that you taught me."

The agency is grateful to its dedicated staff such as Melissa South for her expertise and her amazing commitment to the vulnerable children she serves.

Grateful for Advocacy

When asked how he came to be associated with Children's Aid and Family Services, Tyler Mathisen remarked that "he wanted to be helpful to an organization that helped me." Since adopting his son Ian with the assistance of the agency 22 years ago, Tyler has maintained a connection to the agency as a regular donor, emcee of events and since 2013, as an active member of the Resource Development Committee and Board of Trustees. In the latter capacity, he has recently devoted time and energy to outreach in the business community and to soliciting financial contributions from both new and former donors.

This outreach — through both phone calls and the mail — might seem a natural outgrowth of Tyler's profession as a television journalist. Tyler currently co-anchors CNBC's "Power Lunch" as well as "The Nightly Business Report," an award-winning evening business news program that is broadcast on 150 public

television stations throughout the country. He has reported many one-hour documentaries for the network, including "Best Buy, the Big Box Fights Back" and "Death, It's a Living." Tyler's credits also include 15 years as a writer, senior editor and top editor for Money magazine and an Emmy for a report on the 1987 market crash that aired on WCBS-TV (among many other achievements).

Actually, Tyler says his fundraising calls are not that easy. He asserts he is "basically shy" and that his work in front of the camera is a far distance from his personal contacts on behalf of the agency. He notes "fortunately, the work of Children's Aid and Family Services speaks for itself and we have a generous, relatively affluent community in northern Jersey" that lends its support. He also recognizes that individuals receive many requests for donations and that not all of his requests for contributions can be answered in the affirmative.

Tyler wishes he had more time to volunteer and hopes in the long run he can get his family more involved in charitable activities. In the meantime, Tyler's role as an ambassador for Children's Aid and Family Services is making a difference and is greatly appreciated by all who benefit from his special commitment to giving back. Thank you very much, Tyler Mathisen.

Tyler Mathisen and Jerry Binney, President & CEO of Children's Aid and Family Services.

Grants UPDATE

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

- BD
- BJ's Charitable Foundation
- CME Group Community Foundation
- Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation
- The Giants Foundation
- Gift of Life America Fund
- Greater Newark Holiday Fund
- The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, founded by the Jewish Community
- Hopes & Dreams Foundation for Children
- Horizon Foundation for New Jersey
- Hyde and Watson Foundation
- Kaplen Foundation
- The George Link, Jr. Foundation
- Nordstrom, Inc.
- Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
- Orange Orphan Society
- John & Margaret Post Foundation
- The Provident Bank Foundation
- RGK Foundation
- Lillian P. Schenck Fund
- The Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- The TJX Foundation, Inc.
- The Toy Lending Library of Bergen County
- The Valley Hospital Foundation
- Verizon Foundation
- Yaw Paw Camp Foundation of Ridgewood/Glen Rock, Inc.





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

Save The Date: Annual Spring Gala

Don't miss the most exciting event of the spring: dancing, delicious food, open bar and silent auctions! Best of all, proceeds benefit the vulnerable children and families we serve.

Valet parking will be available.

Date: **Thursday, April 21, 2016**

Time: **7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.**

Place: **The Venetian, Garfield, NJ**

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.