

A Story of Hope...

When Nikki J. stepped up to the mic of the Columbus City Council Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee Briefing, all eyes were on her. As a former HFF resident, she relayed the experience of family homelessness in Columbus. "I am a success story for the family system homeless services," she began.

"At [The] Homeless Families Foundation, I received counseling, case management, and a support staff group that checked on me every day. I learned to set goals. I learned life skills such as housekeeping and how to take proper care of my children. My son was able to use the Dowd Center for after school tutoring."

With the help of her case manager, Nikki's family was able to move from HFF to permanent supportive housing, where she "had a funeral for my past and a birthday for my future."

As Nikki's story came to a close, she shared "These programs have changed my life for the better and continued funding will enable them to help others."

We applaud Nikki's courage in tackling challenges head-on, and appreciate her willingness to share this inspiring story.

10th Annual Come Home For the Holidays Event a Record-Setting Success!

With over 400 in attendance and a record amount of funds raised, the 10th Annual Come Home For the Holidays (CHFTH) at Brookside Country Club was a night filled with great food, great gift items, and great opportunities to learn more about The Homeless Families Foundation.

Once again this year, the dedicated CHFTH committee volunteered many hours, and over 50 volunteers worked throughout the event to make it a success. Many thanks to all who worked tirelessly to raise funds for HFF!

Gift of Warmth \$7,500

Jean Oddi

Gift of Hope \$5,000

CD 101

Casey and Rod Clark

Suzi and Steve McVoy

Gift of Nurturing \$2,500

Columbus Board of Realtors

Commerce National Bank

Lane Bryant

Navigator Management Partners LLC

Nationwide
Kathy and Jim Rutherford
Star Leasing

Mary and Jon Tabor
UBS Financial Services, Inc.

Gift of Caring \$1,000

Debbie and Tom Comer
Melissa and Michael Falter
Linda and Robert Harbrecht
Kimball-Midwest, Inc.

Miles-McClellan Construction and Development

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www.homelessfamiliesfoundation.org



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from the Executive Director...



The start of a new year – what a perfect and clean slate for the realization of hopes, dreams and promises!

An inspiring fresh logo for The Homeless Families Foundation, unveiled in this newsletter, captures the possibilities that guide our work and that we add to this New Year's slate on behalf of our children and their families: the sun of warmth and brightness; the door to a safe and fulfilling home; stability and nurturing for the child at the center of our commitment.

The staff and I feel privileged to work with our children and parents toward the challenging goals reflected in this logo. Annual assessments of our education and family programs confirm that both children and adults achieve many successes! You, our valued friends and supporters, champion our ability to serve our families exceptionally through the encouragement, financial gifts and talents that you generously share.

When the lights and cheer of the holidays dimmed, 2009 opened with glaring uncertainties for our futures - the realities that fill the news and affect our everyday lives. Measures that we apply to our personal situations – options, alternatives, connections, networks of family and friends, belt-tightening – elude the families in our care. We not only need to manage our own choices and changes; we also must act as the Keepers of the Slate for the children and families who come through our doors.

Trying times often gain significance when people look outward and remember the causes that are dear to their hearts and that speak to their souls. HFF may beckon to you in those ways. We hope so and look forward to a continued, if not increased, partnership with you, bringing the resolutions on HFF's '09 slate to fruition for the youngest victims of homelessness.

Adrienne Corbett



HFF is proud to welcome Steve LaRosa as Director of Property Maintenance. Steve is a Grove City native, with over 20 years'

experience in commercial construction, home improvement, and property management. After working with a local housing non-profit, Steve decided to seek employment that would allow him to serve the community.

"I was building stores, homes, and working hard to meet deadlines and budgets, but what was the purpose? I want to feel good about what I'm doing."

Why did Steve choose the Homeless Families Foundation? "The hook was the kids. Once I saw the Dowd Center, I knew where I wanted to be." Citing the look in a 2-year-old's eyes when Steve recently delivered a Christmas tree to her apartment, "I know I made the right choice."

After work hours, Steve enjoys spending time with his wife, Kim, kids Lillie and R.J., and playing softball. He looks forward to meeting and working with new families, donors, and volunteers.

Welcome, Steve!

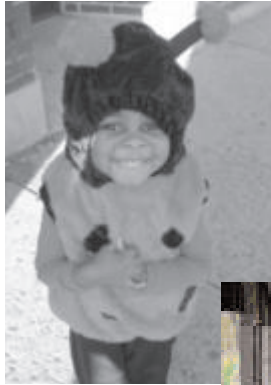


▲ Our new logo

New Year, New Look

HFF is changing its image! Our black and white house logo has been updated with a graphic that better represents the heart of HFF: the children. Special thanks to Mona and David Barber for their donation of time and talent in developing our new look!

Holiday Highlights



- Thanks to a **generous donation** of brand new costumes and accessories from **Toys 'R' Us**, HFF children were transformed into lady bugs, princesses, pirates, and other fun personas to trick-or-treat.



- Over **300 boxes of food** were donated by St. Joan of Arc Church.
- **80 Thanksgiving meals**, including turkeys, trimmings, and cooking instructions, were delivered to HFF families
- Over **50 Volunteers** helped with sorting, organizing, and delivering food boxes.

- Thanksgiving Dinner at the Dowd, provided by Jones Middle School **served 75 children and parents.**



- OSU nurses provided a Fall Family Festival at the Dowd Center for HFF families.
- **70 Christmas trees**, including lights, ornaments, and candy canes, were donated and delivered by over **25 volunteers from Battelle.**



- More than **180 volunteers** and **150 groups and businesses** donated time, toys and clothing to stock the **4th Annual HFF Holiday Store** which provided **gifts for over 250 children.**
- The 2008 Holiday Store provided holiday gifts for over **250 children.**
- Over **60 Dowd Center students and parents** enjoyed a complimentary trip to Wildlights at the **Columbus Zoo.**
- **Columbus Blue Jackets** (including Stinger!) delivered toys for the Holiday Store and visited with Dowd Center students.



FAST FACT: HFF's Dowd Education Center served 217 children September 2007-August 2008.

Volunteer Spotlight:

Stacy Girdler



How did you first get started as a volunteer with HFF?

As a member of OSU KidCorps last school year, I was able to choose a volunteer opportunity from a

list of 12 agencies. When I saw "homeless" in the title, I immediately felt drawn to the Homeless Families Foundation. My family lived in a shelter when I was younger, and I wanted to be able to show kids that no matter where you come from, you can graduate high school and go on to college. There is hope.

What do you do as a volunteer?

Currently, I intern at the HFF Main Office three days

and volunteer at the Dowd Center one afternoon a week. I have learned a lot about customer service by working with the families, the inner workings of a non-profit by assisting with administrative efforts, and coordinating special events during my time here.

What is the most rewarding part of your volunteer experience?

I love seeing the families, and knowing that I am helping to meet their needs.

What would you say to someone who is considering volunteering with HFF?

If you have a heart for the homeless, do it. It doesn't matter what skills you have when you come in the door, there is something that you can be doing to help HFF families.

Math Talk at Home



Dowd Center math teacher Barbara Cleveland and a select group of students are currently participating in the "Math Talk at Home" program, funded through a grant awarded by the Gamma Nu chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation. Program participants and their parents sign contracts agreeing to help each other use math in everyday activities. Club members take home student-designed tote bags with manipulatives and other math items. By keeping their commitments to incorporate math concepts every day, they earn literature-based math materials. Although the program is aimed at raising math competency levels, it also goes a long way toward raising members' self esteem.

As the club rap goes, the program and its participants are "very very very very . . . very very smart!"

What can YOU do?

Did you make a New Year's resolution to give more back to the community? Visit our website for more information on the countless ways that you can help our families:

- Donate by mail or online.
- Volunteer your time at the Dowd Center or Main Office.
- Drop off your used cell phones with chargers and inkjet printer cartridges for recycling.
- Donate gently used household items for our families.
- Provide your e-mail address to help us reduce our paper costs.

For questions on how to get more involved at HFF, contact Julie Lovegrove at 614-461-9247 or jlovegrove@homelessfamiliesfoundation.org.

FAST FACT: In 2009, HFF volunteers contributed more than 9,000 hours of service.