

children's hope INITIATIVE

A COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS OF SOMERSET COUNTY YOUTH, INC.

Newsletter—Fall 2016/Winter 2017

What We Will Do in 2017

With your financial assistance, in 2017, the Children's Hope Initiative (CHI) will be able to financially assist the following programs focused on helping abused and neglected children in Somerset County:

- **The Children's Hope Afterschool Program** at Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center (RHCMHC) by providing adjunctive therapies, including art therapy, pet therapy, music/movement therapy, a body imaging group with a certified nutritionist, and yoga. The range of children to be served will include children as young as 3 years old (formerly ages 12-17). These therapies will serve up to 40 children each week.
- **Middle Earth Lunchtime Mentoring** to provide mentors to 30 elementary and middle school children.
- **Family & Community Services** to reduce the waiting time (formerly as long as 12 weeks) for children to begin their treatment.
- **CASA Traveling Tutor Program** to provide in-home tutoring for children who have been removed from their homes by DCP&P. (This program is fully funded through 2017 through prior donations.)
- **Trauma Informed Care (TIC)**. CHI is leading a new initiative to bring TIC to Somerset County. TIC is an organizational and treatment approach that understands, recognizes, and responds to the effects of all types of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) upon children. TIC emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. The more ACES that children experience, the higher their risk of facing medical, mental health, and social problems as they enter adulthood if not responded to effectively. Through training sessions and by working with schools, police, mental health professionals, and families, CHI's goal is to empower our whole community to help children overcome the damage done through abuse, neglect, and other childhood traumas.

Our Mission

To meet the unmet needs of abused and neglected children and their families by providing resources for existing organizations in Somerset County.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead



<http://childrenshopeinitiative.org/trauma-informed-care-resources>

Total Community Impact To Support Abused and Neglected Children

CHILDREN'S HOPE INITIATIVE

The Numbers

**Dollars
Raised**



\$221,397

**Programs
Funded**



6

**Children
Served**



>350

The Programs

families mentoring
tutoring confidence
succeed overcome therapeutic
engage real impact youth
self-determination vision
relationships

- ★ Over **100 children** served by the Children's Hope Afterschool Program
- ★ Over **100 children** served by Middle Earth Lunchtime Mentors
- ★ Over **100 children** served by Creative Heartwork
- ★ **23 children** served by CASA tutors
- ★ Wait times **cut in half** at Family and Community Services of Somerset
- ★ Helped **prevent sexual abuse** with the YMCA's Darkness to Light Program

What We Have Done
From January 2012 through September 2016.

To learn more: please visit:
<http://childrenshopeinitiative.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/Childrens-Hope-Initiative-533265810054608>

2016 Progress Report

- 13 girls and 18 boys in elementary and middle schools in Bound Brook, Franklin, Warren and Somerville had professional adult mentors meet with them at least once a week during the lunch hour to help them learn to deal with their adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and behaviors. (Cost \$10,000) (See Anthony's and John's Stories below.)
- 50 children and adolescents participated in the 10-12 hour a week intensive outpatient program called the Children's Hope Afterschool Program in memory of Paige Whitney Imperatore at RHCMHC. Transportation and adjunctive therapies were funded by CHI. (Cost \$30,000)
- 13 children who were in out-of-home placements because they were abused or neglected had in-home tutoring from paid professionals in 2015-2016. (Cost \$5,000)
- Waiting times were cut in half for children at Family & Community Services of Somerset County by providing additional clinician and advanced practice psychiatric nurse time. (Cost \$4,000)
- Our administrative expenses for 2016, including insurance, PayPal fees, and bookkeeping, were less than \$3,000. These costs and printing and postage are paid in full by a Board member. Therefore, every dollar received in donations goes 100% to programming described in this newsletter.

Anthony's Story

When I first began meeting with Anthony, he was in 7th grade and was very quiet and kept to himself. His father had passed away in the past year and Anthony did not know how to express his feelings regarding this devastating loss. His mother began dating recently and Anthony did not know how to handle that either. These changes had a big impact on him and both his grades and behavior in school. He was not completing assignments and he was characterized as a bully at times because of frequent altercations with other students. Over time, Anthony began to open up to me and talk about his feelings of loss and of confusion about his mother dating someone new. I was able to listen to him and offer guidance and support. We discussed the goals that Anthony wanted to work towards and I helped him to break them down into smaller, more achievable goals so that he could experience success. Over time, he began to improve his grades and he also stopped getting into fights with others. More importantly, he was able to talk much more openly about his feelings and this helped him to move forward in a positive way in his life.

John's Story

When I first met John, he was a 3rd grade student filled with boundless energy. Both the guidance counselor and his teacher felt that he had great potential to be a good student but he often got distracted in class and displayed behavioral issues. John came from a single parent home. He had extremely limited contact with his father and the family had an open case with DCP&P. Because his behaviors were so challenging, I met with him twice per week throughout the school year. I helped to explain appropriate classroom behavior and what is right and wrong in specific situations. I worked closely with his teacher to develop a behavioral reward system that would help him to improve his behaviors in the classroom. His teacher reported that John asked every day if I was coming to see him. As the weeks passed, John made incremental positive changes in school. His behavior became much more appropriate and his grades improved. His teacher felt he was doing very well. I saw John at the park over the summer and he ran up to me with excitement, asking how I was. His mother was with him and she thanked me for helping him to have a successful year. He demonstrated what his teacher believed...that he was a great kid who just needed a positive male role model and some guidance and support.

Kim's Story

I have been privileged to be a member of the Children's Hope Initiative for three years, and I'm excited to work with such a dynamic and positive group of people.

Child abuse and neglect has been an interest of mine since college when I had an internship with a parenting group, Parents Anonymous. While I couldn't offer any firsthand experience, it was clear that the children there were in need of one simple thing – to feel safe and loved. I knew then, and I know now, that child abuse would become the issue I would champion for life.

I was in a library one day and happened to see a sign about a parenting group. This time, I was able to offer firsthand experiences as a mother of three. Because of the children I worked with many years ago, I realized that some of the parents were also abused as children and they too needed love and safety. After all, there are no instruction manuals when raising a child. In my work with this parenting group, I was connected to Children's Hope Initiative.

I enjoy being a member of the Children's Hope Initiative because the focus is clear, we each take an active part, and everyone feels welcome and involved. Most of all, it allows me to contribute to my own lifelong mission of eradicating child abuse and neglect, and working with others who have a similar goal. It is a great feeling!

Anita's Story

Carol Dvoor, a founding member of CHI, became a Traveling Tutor this summer. She was assigned to "Anita," a young girl who had only recently been reunified with her mother after several months in foster care. The experience was still fresh for Anita, her mother, and her little sister. Picking up the pieces and starting over as a family unit were challenging, as were changing schools and moving to a new apartment.

Carol was welcomed as a positive and supportive presence in the home, to the point where the mother called her to schedule tutoring sessions, not the other way around. To make summer lessons fun, Carol created an "All About Me" project for Anita to work on over the summer. She was also able to engage Anita's mom in the project with a focus on Anita's early years. This project has a multi-discipline focus, incorporating reading and geography (researching her heritage), organizing and summarizing, Social Studies (where she has lived), Science (cooking favorite dishes), Math (measuring and timeline of events), and vocabulary. Anita and her mother were engaged in this project throughout the summer, with Anita drawing some beautiful art to go with it.

Even more important than the actual tutoring services which Carol has provided to this child is the rapport which she has been able to develop with the family, especially the mother. In a recent exchange, Anita's mother wrote, "Thank you so much for everything you do for us...we highly appreciate it." She went on to invite Carol to Anita's birthday party. Carol notes that mom has been "much more involved and expressive about her role as a mother. I have seen so much growth from mom and a much more relaxed atmosphere in the home." The children are thriving and mom is taking a leadership role in her daughter's global well-being, she's much more involved in her schoolwork, and she is utilizing the tools provided to her to strengthen and maintain her family.

We Need Your Help!

Please join with us to continue serving Somerset County's abused children in 2017. Your donation is fully tax deductible, and 100% of your donation goes directly to support the programs described in this newsletter.

To donate, please go to our website:

www.childrenshopeinitiative.org

or make your check payable to:

Children's Hope Initiative

and send to:

Friends of Somerset County Youth

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