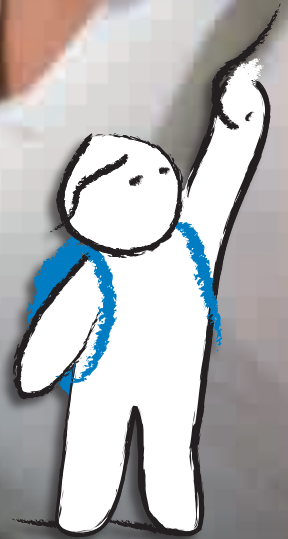




HCEF

hope through learning

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



HOMELESS
CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION
FUND



HOMELESS
CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION
FUND

MISSION STATEMENT

To serve as a voice
for the homeless
children in
Allegheny County
and to ensure
they are afforded
equal access to the
same educational
opportunities and
experiences as
their peers.

HCEF has from its beginning in 1999 been a strong voice in raising public awareness of the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. HCEF has persistently and effectively advocated for the educational rights of this vulnerable population. An early champion of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that identifies and protects the rights listed below, HCEF continues to advocate for the passage of its periodically required reauthorization.

- Children must be allowed to remain in the school they were attending before becoming homeless and for the entire time they are homeless, even if they move from place to place.
- The school district must arrange transportation for children who choose to remain at their school of origin but have moved outside that school's boundaries. This may require a long bus ride for the child.
- Children must be enrolled without delay, even if they lack necessary documentation or immunization records.
- Children cannot be segregated from peers solely because of their residential status.
- School districts are mandated to designate a homeless liaison to coordinate services and ensure compliance with federal and state mandates.

HCEF HISTORY

Founded in 1999 by Dr. Joseph F. Lagana, the Homeless Children's Education Fund is a non-profit agency dedicated to providing educational opportunities and experiences for children and youth residing in 17 of Allegheny County's transitional and permanent housing facilities as well as emergency shelters.

HCEF supplements and complements the work of the public school system with a host of educational tools, programs, and trainings to assist homeless youth in achieving academic success.

To do this, HCEF has established Learning Centers in eleven of the 17 partnering agencies. These provide children with a quiet study space, computers, web-based software, art materials, maps, and a wide array of educational games and toys. In each of the 17 sites, HCEF has developed an extensive Resource Library with books for children of all ages and reading levels. These programs align with the Pennsylvania State Education Standards.

HCEF has deliberately and successfully developed effective partnerships with the Allegheny County Bureau of Hunger and Housing, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Clairton School District, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County Library Association, Duquesne University, Citizens Bank, Duquesne Light, Scholastic, and Barnes & Noble, as well as local and state government policy makers.

The work of HCEF is supported also by the generosity of countless individuals as well as area businesses, foundations, and community organizations. Together we provide children with the greatest gift of all: *hope through learning*.

HOMELESS EDUCATION NETWORK

HCEF created the Homeless Education Network (HEN) in 2009, and continues to build this coalition of agencies dedicated to providing resources and opportunities for Allegheny County's homeless youth. Additionally HCEF spearheaded a joint study with Allegheny County's Department of Hunger and Housing and researchers from Duquesne University that has identified critical gaps in services, particularly in terms of after-school programming opportunities.

Given its inter-organizational, boundary-spanning expertise in the Pittsburgh area, HCEF is uniquely positioned to serve as the key connector of those who can meet homeless students' educational needs and advocate for their rights. HCEF will coordinate regular and purposeful dialogue between local school districts, community organizations, and federal, state, and county agencies so that the Homeless Education Network can make better use of existing resources and stay accountable to serving students who are homeless. By establishing a formalized network of like-minded partners, HCEF aims to bridge the gap between institutions and build greater inter-agency collaboration.

SUMMIT TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATION OF OUR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Held on November 20, 2009 during the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and functioning as an outgrowth of the Homeless Education Network, the summit continued the dialogue on the plight and the promise of homeless children in our region. A diverse audience of 130 educators, homeless providers, advocates, and leaders in the business and foundation communities listened as Barbara Duffield, Policy Director of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, presented the keynote address on the National Perspective on Educating Homeless Children. Also presented were the outcomes of a recent study by Dr. Peter Miller and Dr. James Schreiber (Duquesne University School of Education) entitled "Educating Homeless Children in Allegheny County: An Evaluation of Families, Agencies, and Services." Grant Oliphant, President and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation, served as convener.

PROGRAMS

Learning Centers and Resource Libraries

These remain at the center of our partnership with agencies providing housing for families with children. It is here that children and parents have access to computers, internet, regularly updated software, and printers—the all-important tools they need to facilitate learning, complete homework assignments, and do required and personal research. School supplies, board games, art supplies, and educational software are also available to enhance learning and creative activities. Each Resource Library features a well-stocked and regularly replenished library of books for all ages, interests, and reading abilities. In the Learning Centers, children regularly meet with reading mentors and tutors.

Mini-Grants for Educational Innovation

The Mini-Grant program—now in its 8th year and funded by donations from individual supporters—awarded \$24,757 for the 2009-10 school year to 14 of our partnering agencies. These grants make possible a

variety of creative programming opportunities appropriate to the specific needs of each recipient. A June Kick-Off event was an occasion for agency staffers to “show and tell” their projects from the previous grant year and to share best-practices.

Additionally, Educational Field Trip Transportation Grants of up to \$300 each were awarded for summer and fall opportunities for our children to explore the rich resources available in our region, including the Carnegie Science Center, Phipps Conservatory, Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, National Canal Museum, Just Ducky tours, area state parks, and RiverQuest.

Building Blocks for Success

At the center of this program is Renaissance Learning’s much respected online Star Reading and Accelerated Reader programs. With Star Reading, the Learning Center staff can quickly assess a child’s reading skills. Test results help the staff direct a child to books appropriate to his or her capabilities. Learning Center staff, reading tutors, and volunteer reading mentors encourage the children to read and to take the online quizzes that test how well they have understood what they’ve read. The Renaissance Learning software tracks each student’s progress and awards points for accurate completion of the quizzes. As students successfully complete reading comprehension quizzes, they can earn individual prizes. Overall progress by children in the program is celebrated with certificates of achievement, pizza parties, movie passes, end-of-the-school-year picnics, and even on occasion an afternoon of roller skating.

Customized Accelerated Program for Education (CAPE)

CAPE programs were again offered as workshops during the school year and summer at our partnering agencies and focused on topics and activities not found in the course of a normal school day. Through this program, children and families have been able to take part in hands-on science workshops with the LabRatz Science Club, Creative Play workshops introducing the theater arts, and multidisciplinary, arts-based foreign language classes with the Institute of International Arts and Languages.



Additional CAPE opportunities in 2009 included silk screening workshops provided by the Andy Warhol Museum and a variety of accelerated art workshops led by artists from the Society for Contemporary Craft. The CAPE program is funded by grants from area businesses through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

Gear for Grades

In full partnership with Citizens Bank, HCEF celebrated a successful community-wide collection drive and subsequent distribution of backpacks and school supplies to Allegheny County children residing in partnering facilities. As one agency staff person has said about the 2,500 backpacks distributed, "They allowed our kids to feel good about the first day of school."

Opportunities for Service

HCEF established its first full-fledged Volunteer Program in 2009, with a wealth of opportunities for individuals and groups to help make a difference in the lives of children as well as to provide much needed assistance in the HCEF office and with fundraising events.

In this inaugural year HCEF's Volunteer Program offered opportunities for over 100 individuals to support HCEF as they completed "room makeovers" in two of our Learning Centers, spent countless hours reading one on one with children, and volunteered at the Hundred Acres Manor Haunted House whose proceeds support the work of HCEF.

To support our Learning Center volunteers, a training program has been developed to offer insight into the issues facing our homeless children. These subjects include: Homelessness and Poverty, Diversity, Domestic Violence, Addiction, Mental Illness, and Reading Strategies.

Lewis Hine Award

The National Child Labor Committee, headquartered in New York City, awarded HCEF Founder Dr. Joseph F. Lagana its prestigious 2009 Lewis Hine Award for "exceptional work on behalf of the health, education, and welfare of children and youth, particularly those at risk."



THE FACES OF HOMELESSNESS A 2009 report published by the National Center on Family Homelessness estimated that one of every 50 American children is homeless. That's 1.5 million kids. The same report shows Pennsylvania with 472,000 children living in poverty, 43,103 children identified as homeless, and 18,103 unschooled children ages 6 and under. These numbers do not include the estimated 10,818 "homeless unaccompanied youth" in the Commonwealth.

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services' *Point in Time* survey revealed that on a given day:

- In January 2009, 631 children were being served by homelessness programs from street outreach to permanent housing. In January 2010, there were 875.
- The average age of these children in January 2009 was 8 years old and 7.5 years old in January 2010.
- The number of homeless families with children was 181 in January 2009 and 224 in January 2010.
- In January 2010 36% of the individuals being served by the county's homelessness programs were children, up from 28% in January 2009. Children are now the largest segment of the county's homeless population.

The continuing economic crisis, home foreclosures, reductions in pay and hours, lost jobs and savings have led to a surge in homelessness that is unlikely to end soon.

When families lose their homes, the school may be the only safe haven for their children. The familiarity of the classroom can provide a sense of normalcy. Even so, they remain at greater risk than their peers for underachievement, behavioral problems, and failure.

It is vitally important that we intentionally invest in ALL of our nation's children—whatever the circumstances of their lives—and that we invest today and tomorrow and all the days that follow. The importance of addressing the learning needs of those 43,103 children homeless in Pennsylvania is unmistakable. These children, whose very futures are at risk, deserve no less.

WHERE WE SERVE

HCEF Learning Centers and Resource Libraries have been established in eleven of the region's shelters, transitional and bridge housing centers, and in a drop-in center for unaccompanied youth.

In Pittsburgh: Open Arms, Salvation Army Family Caring Center, Sojourner House, Sojourner House MOMS, Three Rivers Youth—The Hub, Womanspace East, Inc., Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh
Allegheny County: Crisis Center North, Healthy Start House, Sisters Place, and Womanspace

Resource Libraries have been provided to agencies serving children that do not have the space to accommodate a Learning Center.

In Pittsburgh: New Beginnings and Sankofa House
In Allegheny County: Allegheny Valley Association of Churches Hospitality Network, Alle-Kiski Area Hope Center, Bridge to Independence, and HEARTH



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To learn more about the Homeless Children's Education Fund, visit www.homelessfund.org or call (412) 562-0154. To make an online donation click the DONATE button upper right on each website page and lower right on the home page.

A B C D E

"We are privileged that HCEF has partnered with us throughout the years to provide our kids with the extra support they need to succeed in school and in life. You really understand the devastating difficulties faced by kids who become homeless."

— STAFF MEMBER,
Partnering Agency

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2009

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$426,351
Prepaid Expenses	1,049
Contributions & Other Receivables	77,503

Total Current Assets	\$504,903
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Investments	756,547
Property and Equipment	29,646
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(24,415)
Net Property and Equipment	5,231

Total Assets	\$1,266,681
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Liabilities

Deferred Revenue	34,125
Accrued Liabilities	5,100

Total Current Liabilities	\$39,225
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Net Assets

Undesignated	
Operating	527,998
Fixed Assets	5,231
Designated	469,098
Temporarily Restricted	225,129

Total Net Assets	1,227,456
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Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,266,681
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Statement of Activities

As of December 31, 2009

Change in Net Assets

Revenues

Contributions	\$118,654
Grants from Corporations & Foundations	148,531
Special Events—Tickets & Sponsorships	134,479
Interest Income	29,844
Unrealized Gains	53,845

Total Revenues & Gains	\$485,353
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Expenses

Programs	387,952
Fundraising	50,081
Administrative	25,385

Total Expenses	\$463,418
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Change in Net Assets	21,935
Net Assets (January 1, 2008)	1,205,521

Net Assets (Dec. 31, 2009)	\$1,205,521
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This financial statement is based on an independent audit performed by the certified public accounting firm of Schneider Downs. Contact 412-562-0154 to obtain a free copy of the 2008 auditor's report. HCEF is registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Donations can be made online at www.homelessfund.org and through United Way Contributor's Choice #963315. The official registration and financial information of the Homeless Children's Education Fund may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania at 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



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