

HCEF

2010
ANNUAL
REPORT

hope through learning



HOMELESS
CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION
FUND



OUR MISSION:

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



**HOMELESS
CHILDREN'S
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FUND**

HCEF | HISTORY

The Homeless Children's Education Fund...

...a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, was established in 1999 by Dr. Joseph F. Lagana. Its purpose is to serve as an effective voice for children and youth who are homeless in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County and to vigorously advocate for their being guaranteed the same educational civil rights, the same educational opportunities that their housed classmates can take for granted.

HCEF pursues this mission by raising public awareness of the challenges faced by parents and their children when they've lost their homes—whether they've been displaced by fire, domestic violence, substance abuse, illness, loss of a job, inability to make mortgage payments, or foreclosures on owners of rental property. Often, homelessness has simply been due to insufficient income to cover the basic necessities. Whatever the cause, the parents' uncertainties about finding safe haven, coping with bureaucratic paperwork, and ignorance about children's lawful rights regarding school admissions and support services can mean serious consequences for a child's academic performance.

The innovative and ever-evolving ways with which HCEF is having a significant and positive impact on the lives of thousands of Allegheny County children and youth are at the heart of this report to you.

Your faithfulness has been such a gift to "our" families. Their children so need the quality educational opportunities HCEF makes possible at a time when keeping up in school is a real challenge. With your monetary gifts and grants, we together are providing children and youth with the greatest gift of all: hope through learning.



WE ADVOCATE FOR THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

In a 2009 study commissioned by the Homeless Children's Education Fund—"Educating Homeless Children in Allegheny County: An Evaluation of Families, Agencies, and Services"—Dr. Peter Miller and Dr. James Schreiber of Duquesne University named as their primary recommendation the development of what would come to be called the Homeless Education Network (HEN).

HCEF, in partnership with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, established the HEN in early 2010. Its goal: To create and implement an effective model of collaboration in Allegheny County for services to children and youth who are experiencing homelessness.

The HEN connects and advocates with interested parties, facilitates discussion among partners, serves as a catalyst for action, creates effective models, brokers resources, and provides a forum for community discussions to ensure unstably housed children and youth are enrolled, attending, and succeeding in school as mandated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The major collaborations in 2010 have focused on literacy development, housing for unaccompanied youth, school orientation, a guide for providers on "The Right to Education for Students Experiencing Homelessness," early intervention screenings for children ages 3-5 residing within the Pittsburgh Public School District, training for staff from schools and homeless service providers, parent engagement, and advocacy.

In addition to HCEF, the primary partners of the HEN are: Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Clairton City School District, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, Education Law Center, Homeless Service Providers, Operation Safety Net, Pennsylvania's Homeless Children's Initiative - Region 4, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Sisters Place, The Heinz Endowments, and The Pittsburgh Foundation.

To date, major funding for the HEN has been provided by The Heinz Endowments, The Pittsburgh Foundation, the United States Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

THE FACES OF HOMELESSNESS A 2009 report published by the National Center on Family Homelessness estimated that 1 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 are numbered as homeless and 18,103 of them are unschooled children 6 years and younger. These numbers do not include the approximately 10,618 "homeless unaccompanied youth" in the Commonwealth.

"Families with young children now account for 40% of the nation's homeless population and in the course of the year, more than 1.3 million children are homeless." (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty)

"The number of children we could not serve in our shelter program are as follows: 2010 – 485; 2009 – 509; 2008 – 259. Although we try to help every woman who calls for shelter find someplace else to stay, we have no way of knowing whether they actually move into another shelter with their children." (Data from an Allegheny County domestic violence shelter)

"Among fourth graders taking the NAEP reading test in 2009, 83% of low-income families' children were not proficient." AND "It's reasonably accurate to say that a child not at least a 'modestly skilled' reader at the end of third grade is unlikely to graduate from high school." (2010 Annie E. Casey Foundation Report)

In the 2009-10 school year, 107 students participated in HCEF's Building Blocks to Success (an after-school program focused on reading and comprehension) during their period of residence at the five sites that offer the program. Average test scores for a just-completed book? 85%.

For children who are homeless, classroom routines can provide a sense of normalcy. School can be a familiar and safe haven. It is not only important that, if they so choose, they continue to attend the school they attended before they became homeless, but also that transportation to that school be provided. These are their rights by law. Should they choose to attend a school nearer to where they are living, their immediate enrollment cannot be up held for lack of necessary documents. This too is their lawful right.

We must intentionally invest in ALL children—whatever the circumstances of their lives—and we must do so today and tomorrow and all the days that follow. This is as true for those 43,103 children homeless in Pennsylvania as it is for their "housed" classmates. Our children are the future.

WE PROVIDE A MENU OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

SCHOOL'S OUT - NOW WHAT?

It's 2:55 p.m. A Thursday. The bell rings, the classroom lights dim, the school buses depart. Students scatter in every direction—toward houses and apartments, soccer fields and rehearsal rooms. Some, however, will board special buses for an hour-long journey to a relative's house. Some will get dropped off at a nearby church with open beds. Some will walk "home" to the motel down the block.

Still others will ring the security door of an emergency shelter or homeless housing provider—their version of a safe haven in a time of crisis. In seventeen of these Pittsburgh and Allegheny County facilities, the Homeless Children's Education Fund has created Learning Centers and Resource Rooms. It is to one of these that they head.

HAPPENING PLACES

Afternoons are busy times at HCEF Learning Centers. Weekdays when the children are in school these rooms appear serene (the computers, books, and chairs at rest and in their proper places). After school,

Learning Centers are buzzing with mental, social, creative and physical activity—so much so that the staff of one Pittsburgh housing agency nicknamed their Learning Center "the Happening Place." Built by HCEF over the last decade, the Learning Centers and Resource Rooms serve as sites for more educational programs than ever before. It is here – for as long as they stay—these children and youth can find "hope through learning" for their own lives.

AN AFTERNOON IN THE LIFE

Jenny and her four younger school-aged siblings live with their mom and dad, a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, in a transitional residence for homeless families. Every weekday, the children come home from school and are immediately picked up by the agency van that takes them to the Learning Center down the hill. Upon arriving, the children are greeted with welcoming smiles from their after-school tutor and an HCEF-trained volunteer. A quick snack and it's down to the business at hand. For Jenny it's a thick packet of math homework. Because math is Jenny's most challenging subject, the tutor spends extra time coaching her and reviewing her steps. Meanwhile Jenny's little brother Tim breezes through his homework, so the volunteer leads him to the library to pick out a new picture book they can read together. A chart on the wall monitors and awards points for each student's daily activities, and at the end of the week the children will "cash in" their accumulated points for a small prize of their choice.

"ANDRE" WARHOL

Andre and his mom fled an abusive home and are now residing in a domestic violence shelter in a different city from where Andre attends school. Andre arrived at the shelter with nothing but the clothes he was wearing. As part of his intake process, Andre's caseworker gave him a new backpack filled with folders, notebooks, pencils, and other school supplies donated by HCEF. He now attends the after-school program at the shelter, taking advantage of HCEF's partnership with several of Pittsburgh's most acclaimed arts, science, and cultural institutions and organizations. Over the past two months, Andre has participated in such enrichment activities as hands-on science, radio broadcasting, and—his very favorite—silk-screening. He is proud of the silk-screened T-shirt with the image of his favorite Pittsburgh Penguins player that he made with the help of artists from the Andy Warhol Museum!



MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

Cara is a childhood development specialist at a transitional program for mothers in drug and alcohol recovery. As part of her job, Cara runs the shelter's Learning Center and ensures that the children have a variety of educational experiences during their stay. Because of her background in holistic treatment, Cara wanted to bring yoga to the center as a therapeutic practice for mothers and children. But funding was scarce. Cara explained her rationale in an HCEF Mini-Grants for Educational Enrichment application and was awarded funds to purchase yoga mats and to hire a yoga instructor for family workshops throughout the year. Cara has also taken advantage of the periodic HCEF trainings with expert psychologists. These free opportunities have helped her in her work with children who've experienced trauma.

AWARDS

Dr. Joseph Lagana was awarded the 2010 **ACHIEVA:**
Sattler Humanitarian Award of Excellence

1 in 50 = an American child's chances of experiencing homelessness in his or her lifetime (National Coalition for the Homeless)

21,749 = the number of school buses (seating 44 students per bus) needed to seat the 956,914 homeless children attending public school in the United States (Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness)



WE OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

In 2010 the HCEF Volunteer Program expanded to include an Outreach Team: volunteers dedicated to raising community awareness about the plight of children who are homeless. The Team created numerous public events providing an opportunity for their audiences to learn more about the mission and work of HCEF. During National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week in mid-November, the first *Purposeful Gathering: A Performance Art Installation* attracted almost 100 volunteers who stood in silence for 875 seconds to represent the approximately 875 unheard children receiving homeless services on any given day in Allegheny County.

The volunteer Reading Mentors serving in five of our partnering homeless providers attended monthly presentations—guided by experts in their fields—on Stress in Adolescents, Diversity and Inclusion, Mental Health, Phonemic Awareness, Reading Strategies, and Disabilities in Children.



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WHERE WE SERVE

Learning Centers and/or Resource Rooms have been established in fifteen regional shelters, transitional and bridge housing centers, permanent housing facilities and a drop-in center for unhoused youths:

Allegheny Valley Association of Churches Hospitality Network, Alle-Kiski Area Hope Center, Bridge to Independence, Crisis Center North, Healthy Start House, THE HEARTH Benedictine Place, Primary Care Health Services - Open Arms, Salvation Army Family Caring Center, Sisters Place, Sojourner House, Sojourner MOMS, Three Rivers Youth - The Hub, Womansplace, Womanspace East, Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.



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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 at the upper right on each website page and lower right on the home page.

A B C D E

"I want to express my sincere thanks to the foundations, business/ community leaders, and individuals who made monetary as well as in-kind contributions to the Homeless Children's Education Fund in 2010. Your support has enabled us to provide educational assistance to the over 3,000 children unstably housed in Allegheny County at some time during 2010."

— BILL WOLFE,
Executive Director

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2010

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$472,010
Prepaid Expenses	\$998
Contributions & Other Receivables	\$231,074

Total Current Assets **\$704,082**

Investments	\$873,521
Property and Equipment	\$29,646
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	\$(26,161)
Net Property and Equipment	\$3,485

Total Assets **\$1,581,088**

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$8,527
Deferred Revenue	\$27,550
Accrued Liabilities	\$6,686

Total Current Liabilities **\$42,763**

Net Assets

Undesignated	
Operating	\$494,866
Property and Equipment	\$3,485
Designated	\$595,108
Temporarily Restricted	\$444,866

Total Net Assets **\$1,538,325**

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$1,581,088**

Statement of Activities

As of December 31, 2010

Change in Net Assets

Revenues

Contributions	\$148,001
Grants from Corporations & Foundations	\$415,923
Special Events—Tickets & Sponsorships	\$247,025
Interest Income	\$21,475
Unrealized Gains	\$25,304

Total Revenues & Gains **\$857,728**

Expenses

Programs	\$428,907
Fundraising	\$82,386
Administrative	\$35,566

Total Expenses **\$546,859**

Change in Net Assets	\$310,869
Net Assets (December 31, 2009)	\$1,227,456

Net Assets (Dec. 31, 2010) **\$1,538,325**

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 2009 auditor's report. HCEF is a 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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