

# HOMELESS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

## Creating "hope through learning"

Winter / Spring / Summer 2012 E-Newsletter — Vol. 7 No. 1

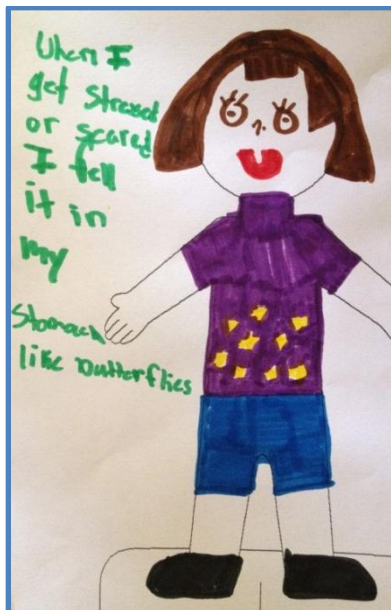
**AS WINNIE SAYS  
"IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS!"**



### ***Stress Relief. Freedom. Self-Expression. Pride.***

These are just a few of the many powerful benefits that art programs impart to children and youth who have lost their homes. This summer, in addition to our outstanding partnerships with the Andy Warhol Museum and the Institute for International Arts & Languages, HCEF welcomed three new partners to our CAPE program lineup:

**Art Expressions, Inc.** – We are proud to partner with this Pittsburgh-based non-profit which focuses on developing the social skills of children utilizing the components of art therapy.



Art Expressions brought their compassionate expertise to two partnering shelters, Womenspace East and Family

Promise of Southwestern PA, where families at each location participated in 6 workshops that strengthened their ability to communicate difficult emotions through drawing, sculpture, and collage.

**The Schmutz Company** – Inspired by the Yiddish word for "dirt," artists David English and Don Orkoskey have been delighting the Pittsburgh community with their imaginative blend of puppetry and digital animation since 2007.



HCEF was pleased to offer their clay animation classes at Bridge to Independence and the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh in summer 2012.

Kids who participated learned the collaborative craft of animation, which they discovered happens with patience, frame by frame by frame...

**To see the final project, please visit::**

[www.youtube.com/hopethroughlearning](http://www.youtube.com/hopethroughlearning)

and click on the video labeled "Summer Program Site 1."

**DreamMakers Ventures** – A project of Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation, this project connects creative professionals with youth in at-risk situations to provide creativity coaching- mentoring that focuses on artistic and entrepreneurial skills. This summer two DreamMakers were a welcome addition to HCEF's summer programming: quilt artist Christine Bethea taught the fundamentals of her craft at the Sojourner House MOMS and Bridge to Independence summer camps, while jazz musician and educator Shawnee Lake launched a weekly writing, music-making & mentoring program at Auberle's Movin' On transitional housing center for young men.

All of these art opportunities were made possible through the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) grants to HCEF from local businesses.

## **ACT123 Passed to Create a State-Wide Task Force for Homeless Education**

ACT123 "Task Force on Homeless Children's Education," enacted on July 5, 2012 by the State of Pennsylvania requires the establishment of a task force within the Pennsylvania Department of Education, providing for its powers and duties and providing for administrative support.

ACT123 was made possible through the efforts and dedication of Pa State Senator Wayne Fontana (HCEF Advisor), Dr. Joseph Lagana (HCEF Founder), Pa State Senator Randy Vulakovich, and others.

The task force will consist of 18 members throughout the state, including three from Allegheny County:

Nicole Anderson (Region 4 Coordinator, Pa Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness Program);

Dr. Joseph Lagana (Founder, HCEF);

and Bill Wolfe (Executive Director, HCEF).

**For more on ACT123, please visit:**

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/2012/0/0123..HTM>

## **Pitt. Library Partnership**

The American Library Association student chapter at the University of Pittsburgh teamed up with HCEF on a new volunteer initiative to place 11 masters level librarians-in-training at seven HCEF learning center sites in a local shelter and transitional housing agency to catalog and to maintain its children's book collection. The initiative began in February 2012.

## **Champs 2012 – A Record Year**

THANK YOU to all who contributed to the blazing success of the 13th Champions for Children Benefit.

It was truly a record year in event attendance, revenue, and fun.

We offer prolonged applause and loud hurrahs to our sponsors, patrons, supporters, and advertisers, as well as those who purchased tickets for the event; to our generous friends who contributed items for the auction and all those who bid on them; to the enthusiastic volunteers who "worked" the event; those who labored behind the scenes over recent months, our committed trustees and community advisors, and our hard-working staff!



We particularly celebrate:

**Event Chairs** Scott and Susan Lammie, **Honorary Chairs** Ralph and Ruth Anne Papa, and **Honored Guests** Brett and Sarah Keisel.

Receiving the **2013 Champion for Children Award** was Robert Fragasso, CEO and Chairman of *Fragasso Financial Advisors*.

Receiving the **2013 Linda Dickerson Service Award** was John Lovelace, President, *UPMC for You, Inc.*

Receiving the newly instated **Volunteer of the Year Award** was HCEF Founder Dr. Joseph Lagana who was taken by surprise when he was named its first recipient (Joe has been a full-time volunteer since HCEF's founding in 1999).

## Sewickley Academy “Stand-Up”



On Thursday, April 5th, Sewickley Academy held their first “Day of Service”. A team of trainers from HCEF spent the morning with 72 upper school students preparing them to lead the pre-K through 5th grade students through the Cabinet of Congregations awareness-raising curriculum.

At 2:00 PM, they moved out to the ball field and performed the “**Stand Up for Homeless Children**” art installation.

Three hundred and fifty children, teachers, and upper school mentors stood in silence for five minutes holding a drawing of the face of a child in front of their own faces to represent the 1,700 children who experienced homelessness in Allegheny County last year.

## Duquesne University Stand-Up



Two service learning classes at Duquesne University coordinated with the HCEF Outreach Team to promote and produce a

“**Stand Up for Homeless Children**” performance art installation on Saturday, April 14th before the spring football game. They also arranged for the PA announcer to promote HCEF to the crowd.

## Summit III Highlights

*SUMMIT III: Impact of Poverty on Learning and Brain Development for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness* was held on Friday, May 4, 2012 at the Rivers Club. This year’s Summit welcomed **more than 230 attendees representing more than 106 organizations** that traveled from across the city, state and nation.



One of the Summit’s keynote speakers, Dr. Ralph da Costa Nunez of the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, wrote in a post-event blog entitled “Pittsburgh – A Model for Addressing Child Homelessness” that “The Summit was a model for connecting the dots of research, policy and practice with everyone coming from different perspectives, but sharing the same goal.”

This blog post appeared nationally in *The Huffington Post*. Read it by visiting our website at:  
[www.homelessfund.org/specialinitiatives](http://www.homelessfund.org/specialinitiatives).

Additionally, Summit III received very positive feedback from its attendants, with one comment describing the event as “filled with information everyone should [use] to help reduce the stigma of homelessness, as well as provide awareness in order to work together to reduce the causes of homelessness.”

It was an insightful and inspiring day for everyone involved.



## Young Brothers Tae Kwon Do



On Saturday, May 19th, Young Brothers Tae Kwon Do held their spring tournament with all proceeds benefitting HCEF. On June 5th, HCEF was presented with \$9,000 from the tournament. In 2011, Young Brothers gave HCEF over \$17,000 in donations, and the October 2012 tournament will also benefit HCEF.

Bill Wolfe presented Grand Master Kong and the entire Young Brothers TKD with HCEF's honorary Unsung Hero Award for their commitment, support, and dedication to HCEF's mission.

## Clubs for Kids Golf Tournament

HCEF's Second Annual Clubs for Kids Golf Tournament took place May 29, 2012, at the Sewickley Heights Golf Club. Our sincere thanks to the 60+ golfers who participated in this year's tournament, raising over \$15,000! Stay tuned for information regarding the 2013 tournament.



## Sizemore Conference

HCEF participated in Duquesne University's Third Annual Dr. Barbara A. Sizemore Summer Conference on June 1st. This conference brings together Duquesne University and the Pittsburgh community to address issues related to improving

education for all students, particularly those in urban schools. Along with Dr. Jinhee Kim of the School of Education, Laura Bailey co-facilitated workshops for school personnel, highlighting lessons learned from the Clairton Collaborative.

## Monroeville Mall Supply Drive

The Monroeville Mall sponsored an HCEF "Stand Up for Homeless Children" in the mall's food court on Saturday, July 7.

Those participating in the performance art installation stood together in the court for 15 minutes of silence on behalf of the school-aged children identified as experiencing homelessness in Allegheny County. They also contributed school supplies.

Throughout the month of July, the mall hosted a school supply drive on behalf of the children HCEF serves. School supplies valued at more than \$10,000 were donated.

## Speaker's Bureau – Class II



HCEF's latest Speakers Bureau class graduated on June 18, 2012 consisting of five volunteers prepared to raise awareness about the educational challenges that children and youth experiencing homelessness face in our community. HCEF hopes to secure engagements in the community, as well as specific groups, to allow its speakers bureau members to be a voice for children living without a home.

## Volunteer Celebration 2012

On Friday, June 29, 2012, HCEF celebrated its dedicated volunteers with a reception and attendance at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's (PSO) Community Partners Program Concert at Heinz Hall.

Volunteers enjoyed a Winnie cake, received a small gift, and attended the PSO concert, which featured the 90's Pop group En Vogue and Gabriel Cabezas, winner of the 2012 Sphinx Competition. Both were accompanied by the PSO.

## Save-the-Date . . .



*14<sup>th</sup> Annual Champions for Children Benefit*  
March 4, 2013, Rivers Club

For event information or questions, please contact Zach Marsh at 412-562-0154 or at [zmarsh@homelessfund.org](mailto:zmarsh@homelessfund.org).

## United Way Campaign – An Easy Way to Give this Fall

Please consider designating HCEF as your United Way recipient this year.

Our United Way Contributor Choice number is 963315. For questions on designating your United Way gift to HCEF, please ask your employer, contact Donor Support at 412-456-6824 or go to [ecomunity@uwac.org](mailto:ecomunity@uwac.org).

## We Celebrate Children's Learning and All Who Make it Possible

Heartfelt thanks to all who have made monetary contributions to HCEF, have made donations in honor or memory of loved ones, sponsored and attended fundraising events on our behalf, and tutored the children. In all these ways, you have helped make a difference in the lives of children caught up in the uncertainties of homelessness.

<http://homelessfund.org/donate.html>

## A Fond Farewell by the HCEF Team – We Will Miss You Both!

**Charlie LaVallee** – Effective May 7, Charlie LaVallee, Director of the Homeless Education Network assumed the position of CEO with *Variety: The Children's Charity*, an organization focused on supporting children with physical disabilities. This is a great opportunity for Charlie and we are sad to lose him. Charlie has done a great job for HCEF and helped to position HCEF on the state radar screen.



**Peggy Neal** - Longtime HCEF volunteer-turned-employee Peggy Neal retired effective July 31, 2012. As HCEF's "general factotum" since 2005, Peggy has provided invaluable communications and events support, including putting together HCEF's Annual Report, "wordsmithing" external documents, organizing the yearly Champions for Children Benefit auction, and creating HCEF's top-rate website

The absence of Charlie and Peggy is greatly felt at the office, and both are truly a part of HCEF's legacy.



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