



**HOMELESS
CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION
FUND**

HEADLINES of HOPE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST HALF OF 2023

AJ'S Communiqué

We are in the business of putting ourselves out of business! With 3,122 homeless students in Greater Pittsburgh, our mission is to break the cycle of homelessness one tutoring session at a time.

Through an unwavering commitment to compassion, action and solidarity, in the past six months, we have witnessed extraordinary transformations and awe-inspiring firsts that have empowered our homeless youth and I am pleased to share those milestones with you.

2023 is shaping up to become a flagship year in our organization's history for capacity building and program design. We are currently engaged in a 6–8-month strategic planning process which will be completed by the end of the year, ensuring a strong start to 2024. This strategic planning process, generously funded by the McElhattan Foundation, has been intentionally designed to include feedback from community members, donors, volunteers and staff. Helping to guide us through this work are Common Cause Consultants and DEI expert, Dr. Jessica Spradley.

We know our staff are the boots-on-the-ground champions who provide around-the-clock emotional support and emergency services to 650 students. In order to better serve these students, we welcomed three full-time staff members in late 2022 and early 2023. Every day, our



team immerses themselves in the lives of our region's homeless youth resulting in trauma transference. And, because of that, our Board of Trustees and I recognized the need for heightened support to ensure our employees' well-being.

Thanks to the Richard King Mellon Foundation, we launched the first stage of our employee retention and wellness program in January. Prioritizing employee well-being will increase engagement and productivity, foster positivity, attract and retain top talent. Also, we have intentionally dedicated funds for our staff's professional development for the first time in the organization's 24-year history. We are confident this path will allow our team to grow personally and professionally.

In May, we welcomed nearly 100 elected officials, supporters and community leaders to our first annual Homeless Youth

Policy Legislative Breakfast. Conversations surrounded state policies that support unstably housed youth as they transition to adulthood.

As we celebrated our 24th Annual Champions for Children Gala: The Soiree on the Shore on June 1, we had a few monumental firsts occur. Well over 200 guests gathered to rejoice in our accomplishments, cheered for those who are succeeding despite temporary struggles and honored our community of supporters. Sponsorships were at a record high this year, with Platinum Sponsors Dollar Bank, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and UPMC Health Plan leading the way. And as a result of our guests' generosity, we exceeded our goal, raising the most funds in our organization's history.

Our impact continues to grow daily. We work in 12 schools representing four school districts, 20 shelters and three out-of-school time agencies supporting the multifaceted needs of hundreds of students and their families. HCEF's collective efforts are making a tremendous impact, illuminating a path toward a future of hope and opportunities for our homeless youth. I am excited to witness the many more achievements in store for HCEF!

AJ Jefferson
Chief Executive Officer

UPCOMING DATES

OCTOBER 2023

Homeless Children's Awareness Month and YOU CAN Campaign

OCTOBER 17

Champions for Children Sponsorship Reception, hosted by Gala Chairs Matt & Katie Helfrich

NOVEMBER 21

Fundraising Dinner at Eleven Restaurant

IT CERTAINLY WAS... A NIGHT TO REMEMBER!

We welcomed our community of supporters, partners, leaders and friends, and celebrated our 24th Annual Champions for Children: The Soiree on the Shore Gala on June 1. It was a time for us to break bread as a community and remember why we chose this mission. It was a time to celebrate our victories and look to the year ahead with a renewed sense of purpose.

With the breathtaking views from the Carnegie Science Center's terrace, we ate delicious food and danced to lively music. We heard powerful testimonies from a HCEF family who battled homelessness. We honored our 2023 Champions for Children awardees, Nancy and Paul Collier, for their years of youth advocacy. We awarded our very first 2023 Collaborative Impact Grant to Auberle for their vision to renovate a permanent learning center in its McKeesport emergency shelter facility. And, we thanked our first-time Event Chairs, Matt and Katie Helfrich, for their determined efforts to make the Soiree a triumph.

As the sun set on our night of advocacy and fun, we surpassed our fundraising goal with a total of **\$179,233!**

THANK YOU to our Host Ticket Holders:

- Ty Allen
 - De'netta Benjamin-Miller
 - Carl Bergamini
 - Christopher Brennan
 - Mark Caldone
 - Nancy Collier
 - Paul Collier
 - Leslee Dobson
 - Kathy Fitzgerald
 - Cindy Gray
 - David Gray
 - Danielle Grooms
 - Cheryl Hall-Russell
- AJ Jefferson
 - Paul Lebovitz
 - Teresa Massey
 - Peter McAneny
 - Kathy McAneny
 - Tim McKenna
 - Eric Mendel
 - Dr. Beverly Moore
 - Kalani Palmer
 - Brian Sheridan
 - LaTrenda Sherrill
 - Harry Soose, Jr.
 - Michele Soose
 - Richard Stephenson
- Alan Steinberg
 - Elizabeth Wasel
 - Latresa Zak
 - Joe Zewe
 - Laura Zewe

Thank you to our entertainers:

- Kelly Sasso, WTAE-TV
- Selecta
- Cameron Warren
- Zachary Rutter

THANK YOU to our Platinum, Gold and Silver Sponsors:

- ### PLATINUM

 - Dollar Bank
 - Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
 - UPMC Health Plan
- ### GOLD

 - Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.
 - Duolingo
 - M&T Bank
 - PITT OHIO
- ### SILVER

 - Bender Leadership Academy
 - Jo Clark & Frances Woodward
 - Duquesne University
 - Erie Insurance
 - First National Bank
 - Matt & Katie Helfrich
 - Hundred Acres Manor
 - Keytex Energy
 - Light of Life
 - Rescue Mission
- McKamish
 - Modern Transportation
 - Nonprofit Talent
 - Pittsburgh State Education Association - Western Region
 - R&R Express
 - Tucker Arensberg Attorneys
 - Vibrant Pittsburgh
 - Waldron Private Wealth
 - Washington Financial Bank
 - YourCFO



HCEF TESTIMONIAL SPEAKER, ANESTHA, AND HER DAUGHTER JAYDEN



THANK YOU TO PLATINUM SPONSOR, UPMC HEALTH PLAN!



AJ WELCOMES OUR GUESTS AND GIVES A YEAR IN REVIEW



LIVE ARTIST, ZACHARY RUTTER, PAINTS AN ODE TO HOPE AND PITTSBURGH



(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) LOREN KURPIEWSKI, ANESTHA, JAYDEN, ALIZÉ STRICKLAND, AND HCEF VOLUNTEER ANABELLE THEODAT



THE 2023 CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN, NANCY AND PAUL COLLIER, ARE PRESENTED WITH THEIR AWARD



AJ EMBRACES THE SOIREE'S MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES, WTAE ANCHOR KELLY SASSO



THE HCEF TEAM, OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS IS MOST SUCCESSFUL CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN IN HISTORY!



THANK YOU TO PLATINUM SPONSOR, HIGHMARK BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD!

THANK YOU TO PLATINUM SPONSOR, DOLLAR BANK!



FRIENDS AND FAMILY FROM WALDRON PRIVATE WEALTH ENJOY THE SOIREE



GALA EVENT CHAIRS, MATT AND KATIE HELFRICH



THIS YEAR'S CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN AWARDEES, NANCY AND PAUL COLLIER



Scan to view our Champs sizzle reel!





A special thank you to Dollar Banks's Morton Stanfield, Senior Vice President of Community Development and Jason Jones, Vice President of Community Development for generously donating tickets and transportation to the February 11 showing of *A Midsummer Night's Dream in Harlem*.

This was the perfect opportunity to treat our moms to a self-care afternoon by experiencing a cultural event at the O'Reilly Theater. It was a magical show that highlighted the legacy of Harlem through art and music.

At HCEF, we know housing instability happens to the whole family. And we make certain the entire family unit receives some form of support and care. We are grateful for our partnership with Dollar Bank for making that a reality!



▲ TWO OF OUR FABULOUS MOMS OUTSIDE THE O'REILLY THEATER

HOMELESS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND
creating hope through learning

WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

With a strong start to 2023 and so much to look forward to in the coming months, HCEF is proud to be supported by such an outstanding Board of Trustees of community leaders and advocates. Their commitment, along with their guidance and unwavering passion for accessible education, continues to be one of our biggest assets. We welcome our newest members, Carrie Keller, Kalani Palmer and Peter Schramm. Thank you for choosing HCEF and for believing in our cause!

JO CLARK – CHAIR

Vice President, Value Based Care, Highmark Health

JOYCE BENDER – VICE-CHAIR

Owner – Bender Consulting Services

TIM MCKENNA – SECRETARY

Independent Business Consultant

MICHAEL JASPER – TREASURER

Community Volunteer

TY ALLEN

Realtor – Coldwell Banker

MATTHEW CLARK

Front-End Developer, UX/UI Designer and Strategy Consultant at CGI

PETER SCHRAMM

CEO and Founder - Latitude

TROY BLAIR

Vice President & General Counsel, Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.

CARRIE KELLER

Senior Director Creative Strategy – UPMC Health Plan

BRIAN SHERIDAN

Vice President – Account Manager, M&T Bank

BERNICE BOYDEN

CEO, The Boyden Group

KEVION LATHAM

GreenRose Wealth Management

ALAN STEINBERG

Retired Attorney

CHRISTOPHER BRENNAN

Attorney, ReedSmith LLP

KALANI PALMER

Associate Professor/Project Director – Indiana University of Pennsylvania

JOE ZEWE

President and CEO, Eyenavision

NEW 2023 BOARD MEMBERS



▲ PETER SCHRAMM



▲ KALANI PALMER



▲ CARRIE KELLER

RUN FOR HCEF IT WAS A GREAT MARATHON!!

The first weekend of May, we set our alarms and tightened our shoelaces for the 2023 DICK'S Sporting Good Pittsburgh Marathon. As a "Run For A Reason" Charity, HCEF raised more than \$20,000 thanks to our runner's incredible advocacy and spirit. It was HCEF's most successful marathon fundraiser to date!



▲ JOSH TETI SHOWS OFF HIS MARATHON MEDALLION!



▲ EBTEHAL BADAWI SOARS THROUGH THE FINISH LINE WITH HER BUILDING BRIDGES FLAG

Special shout-out goes to our top fundraisers:

- Lindsay Maggioncalda - \$2,721.70
- Ebtehal Badawi - \$1,225.82
- Moon Middle-Aged Marathoners - \$1,181.13
- Josh Teti - \$1,146.16
- Zachary Mineroff - \$1,107.47
- Kirstein Sharrow - \$1,018.36
- Kimberly Gould - \$748.36
- Campbell Johnson - \$744.95
- Abby Chen - \$612.88

HCEF Runner Josh Teti recounts his experience, "It was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but it was all worth it. I kept saying to myself, DO IT FOR THE KIDS!" With motivation like that, Josh finished his marathon in 4 hours and 7 minutes. WAY TO GO, JOSH!

We are so in awe of our runners. They turn a love for running and a passion for personal growth into something so much more. They extend their generosity to those in our community who need it most and raise critical dollars to help our students soar.

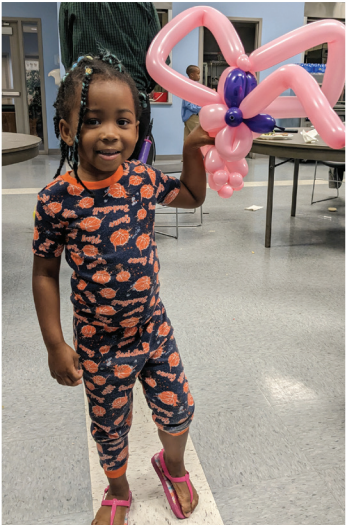
FAMILY FUN NIGHT



On May 25, we joined our students and families at Salvation Army in East Liberty for Family Fun Night. These quarterly gatherings allow our families to connect with one another and enjoy quality time with our educators and instructors outside of normal programming. Neal Donovan, HCEF's Out-of-School Time Coordinator, showed our students his balloon-making skills and taught them how to make their own four-legged friends. These events are a fantastic way for our educators to strengthen their bonds with HCEF families and share a delicious meal.

Alizé Strickland, Family Engagement Coordinator, says, "I hope family nights give our families the reassurance that they'll be supported as long as needed and those supports will continue even after transitioning out of the shelters and into mobile learning support!"

The HCEF team looks forward to August 24, the annual Summer Bash at the Sherwood Event Center. A supersized version of Family Fun Night, students will enjoy bounce houses, swimming and a sit-down dinner with HCEF staff and volunteers. The HCEF Summer Bash is a farewell to summer and one of the last opportunities to connect with our summer program families. If you would like to volunteer at this event, send us an email at info@homelessfund.org.



▲ HCEF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR, ALIZÉ STRICKLAND, AND HCEF INSTRUCTOR, BRIANNA HENDRICKSON, POSE WITH TWO STUDENTS

POLICY BREAKFAST



▲ (PANELISTS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) DR. KATHY HUMPHREY, CARLOW UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT; REPRESENTATIVE EMILY KINHEAD, PA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; SENATOR LINDSEY WILLIAMS, PA SENATE; IDELIA ROBINSON CONFER, ADVOCATES4CHANGE; BRIAN KNIGHT, HCEF



▲ REPRESENTATIVE SARA INNAMORATO, AND HONORABLE AUSTIN DAVIS, PA LT. GOVERNOR, ENJOY A CUP OF JOE BEFORE THE MORNING REMARKS



▲ (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) SENATOR LINDSEY WILLIAMS, HCEF CEO AJ JEFFERSON, REPRESENTATIVE SARA INNAMORATO, AND HONORABLE AUSTIN DAVIS, PA LT. GOVERNOR



◀ SCHOOLHOUSE CONNECTION DIRECTOR OF STATE POLICY, RODD MONTS, GIVES A STIRRING CALL TO ACTION

On May 12, HCEF convened with elected officials, community advocates and local leaders for the first annual Homeless Youth Policy Breakfast. It was a pleasure to start that beautiful Friday morning with a delicious meal and by building a roadmap of the policy reform needed to better serve the homeless youth of our region.

A sincere thank you to the speakers and panelists who shared their thoughts and expertise on the work ahead:

- Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis
- Representative Emily Kinhead, PA House of Representatives
- Senator Lindsey Williams, PA Senate
- Dr. Kathy Humphrey, President, Carlow University
- Rodd Monts, Director of State Policy, SchoolHouse Connection
- Idelia Robinson Confer, Policy Consultant, Advocates4Change

We ask that policymakers and legislators support and co-sponsor HB 127, HB 729 and HB 730. These three bills represent a huge step forward for Pennsylvania youth experiencing homelessness. We also encourage changemakers to reach out to their local youth advocates to learn more about the lived experience of unstably housed youth and the support they need.

Fellow advocates, please contact your state representatives and ask for their support on the three bills mentioned above. Consider joining the statewide Legislative Action Committee that will push this work forward in the future. The committee holds monthly virtual meetings to develop actionable strategies and coordinate work supporting legislative reform benefiting youth experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania. Current leadership comprises advocates from the Western PA CoC, Advocates4Change, HCEF, SchoolHouse Connection, National Network 4 Youth and the American Bar Association.

Scan to view our Champs sizzle reel!



▲ THE HONORABLE AUSTIN DAVIS, PA LT. GOVERNOR KICKS OFF THE POLICY BREAKFAST

HB 127

Waives fees to obtain driver's licenses for youth experiencing homelessness and allows them to use a shelter or school address as a temporary address in order to receive their driver's license. The youth must be enrolled in an education program to receive the fee waiver.

HB 729

Requires colleges and universities in Pennsylvania to prioritize housing for students experiencing homelessness, designate homeless liaisons to connect students to services and financial aid, develop plans for youth to access housing during school breaks, and provide tuition waivers to students experiencing homelessness.

HB 730

Allows minors age 16+ who are experiencing homelessness to consent to contract for essential services like bank accounts, shelter, employment, mental/physical health services, and housing if they do not have parental support.

TEEN SPOTLIGHT: TEENIE HARRIS VISIT AT THE MUSEUM

HCEF students were invited to a special viewing of the Teenie Harris Archives at the Carnegie Museum of Art. Hosted by Museum staff, the students walked through the exhibition and saw Mr. Harris' work up close and personal. Best known as a photographer for *The New Pittsburgh Courier*, Mr. Harris detailed the Black experience in America with more than 70,000 images.



▲ THE CHARLES 'TEENIE' HARRIS ARCHIVE AT THE CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART

Throughout the tour, our students browsed images of the Hill District and Pittsburgh landmarks while drawing connections to other lessons of Mr. Harris' life taught in school. It was a full-circle experience and a fun way to link their formal and informal learning. Museum staff explained the importance of Mr. Harris' depiction of the Hill District neighborhood, and the power of art and storytelling when it comes from a lived experience.

The private tour included a hands-on workshop allowing the students to practice portraiture photography with different types of cameras. They learned the roles and responsibilities of museum curatorial work and other elements of careers within the arts.

Our students were thrilled to receive take-home goodie bags with photography accessories, a book on the Hill District's history and

complimentary passes to the Museum for future visits.

Thank you to the Carnegie Museum of Art and its staff for providing our students with a wonderful afternoon. Exposure to cultural events like this helps our teens feel valued and embraced by our shared community, and inspires them to pursue a career in the arts.

If your organization would like to support a future community outing, email us at info@homelessfund.org.



◀ SELF PORTRAITS TAKEN DURING THE TEENIE HARRIS WORKSHOP



▲ SMALL CROWD GATHERED OUTSIDE STUDIO DEE, WHOD RADIO STATION, HERRON AND CENTRE AVENUES, HILL DISTRICT, AUGUST 1, 1951. (PHOTO BY TEENIE HARRIS)



K-8 PROGRAMS: MEET JENNY



▲ VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF JENNY

Jenny is a bright and spirited 2nd grader who has received mobile tutoring since the beginning of the 2022 school year. Any friend of Jenny's can spot her in a crowd with her bouncing braids adorned with bright, colorful beads. Jenny's mom passed away a few years ago and she was recently staying at an extended-stay motel with her dad and brother. The grief of losing her mother and instability at home caused Jenny to fall back academically. Repeating 2nd grade, Jenny was determined to improve her reading, spelling and grammar skills.

"Jenny never wants to take brain breaks. Despite everything she has been through, she has such an enthusiasm for learning," said HCEF Education Support Coordinator Loren Kurpiewski. "One of Jenny's biggest struggles was that of the 'Magic E,' how an 'E' at the end of a word will determine whether the vowels within the word are short or long."

Jenny began focusing on this exercise in her tutoring sessions. Our HCEF educators noticed Jenny's in-school teachers also observed this barrier and sent Jenny home with remediation packets that helped her practice these skills.

With Jenny's in-school educators and HCEF tutors cheering her on, Jenny worked hard and reignited her love for reading. A few months later, Jenny's father informed us that she received a certificate for the honor roll - what an accomplishment! And, most nights, she reads aloud to her brother. With determination, hard work and the right cheerleaders, Jenny has started the spring semester with fortitude and belief in her abilities. Way to go, Jenny!

HOMELESS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND
ONE HOPE SQUARE
1901 CENTRE AVENUE, SUITE 301
PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-4378



HEADLINES of HOPE

FIRST
HALF
2023

NEAL DONOVAN

has been hired as the Out-of-School Time Coordinator for HCEF. He manages the day-to-day operations of the Afterschool and Summer Programs, providing tutoring and literacy development at local shelters. He also oversees nearly 75 Enrichment Workshops across shelters and housing agencies and partners with various arts, science and cultural enrichment organizations, identifying additional programs and locations.



▲ NEAL DONOVAN



▲ ALEX JONES

ALEX JONES

has been promoted to Administrative Coordinator for HCEF. In her new role, she ensures all human resources policies and procedures are value- and future focused. She implements best practices to achieve an equitable and welcoming workplace and improves the recruiting, hiring and onboarding process to retain top talent, especially for BIPOC staff.

**Congratulations
Neal & Alex!**