

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



# HEADLINES of HOPE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SECOND QUARTER 2024

## AJ'S Communiqué

Wow, what a whirlwind quarter it's been! Gala season always brings out the best in our scrappy, ambitious, and determined team. On June 1st, we celebrated our 25th Annual Champions for Children Gala: The Silver Jubilee, Presented by Dollar Bank. This event was a joyous celebration of philanthropy, education, and fun, marking twenty-five years of unwavering community support.

Reflecting on our legacy, I marvel at the countless books, pens, paper, job interviews, college admissions, and personal essays we've contributed. It's dizzying! Despite the long journey and the fantastic leaders and staff before me, we're still here, fighting the good fight. We're driving to coffee shops and libraries for tutoring sessions, growing vegetables in community gardens, planning family fun nights, and running backpack drives.

We're amplifying our students' stories so the faceless and voiceless are genuinely felt and viscerally heard.



▲ OUR CEO WITH MAYOR ED GAINNEY AT THE SILVER JUBILEE!

We're not alone in this journey. With immense gratitude, we acknowledge the support from our government leaders like Governor Josh Shapiro, Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis, Representative Aerion Abney and the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Their encouragement and support helped secure HCEF a nearly \$640,000 state-funded grant through the Violence Intervention and Prevention program. This 3-year partnership will expand our programming and enhance violence intervention services in Allegheny County, paving a bright new path for our students. Thank you to everyone who has filled the first six months of this year with love and abundance, especially our Gala's Presenting Sponsor, Dollar Bank. Jason Jones, Peter Kubiska, Morton D. Stanfield Jr., and Joe Stromei, this journey thrives because of partners like you. Keep reading to learn more about The Silver Jubilee's success and our incredible 25-year milestone!

AJ Jefferson  
Chief Executive Officer

## UPCOMING DATES

**AUGUST 22, 2024**  
Summer Bash

**JULY – AUGUST 2024**  
HCEF Annual Backpack Distribution

**OCTOBER 2024**  
Homeless Children's Awareness Month



# HEADLINES of HOPE

SECOND  
QUARTER  
2024



## CHERELLE HOGAN

Teen Outreach Coordinator

In April 2024, HCEF enthusiastically welcomed Cherelle Hogan, Family Engagement Coordinator for the Teen Outreach Program. Cherelle comes with more than 10 years of experience supporting at-risk youth. She is passionate about giving all youth the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and develop positive relationships along the way.

**WELCOME** to the team  
Cherelle!

We're so happy you're at HCEF.



# CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN GALA: THE SILVER JUBILEE, PRESENTED BY DOLLAR BANK

The night truly sparkled! On Saturday, June 1st, we celebrated twenty-five incredible years of serving this community and providing premium educational supports for our students. On behalf of Gala Co-Chairs, Matt & Katie Helfrich, the HCEF board, staff, and executive leadership, we want to thank everyone who attended the Silver Jubilee.

Thank you to all state and local representatives who joined us on this night and made remarks: City of Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey, County Executive Sara Innamorato, Representative Emily Kinkead, Representative Dan Miller, Representative Rob Mercuri, and

Representative Izzy Smith-Wade-El. We could not think of a better person to receive this year's Champions for Children Award, than the founder of HCEF, and former Executive Director of Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Dr. Joseph Lagana. To further honor his legacy and contributions to this community, the award is now called the Dr. Joseph Lagana Champions for Children Award. Thank you to Carlos Carter and Bill Wolfe, previous HCEF leaders, for joining us on stage as we honored Dr. Lagana's legacy.

The Westin ballroom shimmered and sparkled as Cello Fury graced us with their orchestral arrangements of modern pop music. And during the night's program, Children's Civil Light

Opera gave a stirring rendition of "A Million Dreams." There wasn't a dry eye in sight!

We couldn't be more thrilled, more honored, more humbled, and more excited to celebrate twenty-five years with our nearest and dearest friends. With all the love and support in the room that night, we raised more than \$270,000 – a 50% increase from the year prior! That is the power of community giving.

One final thank you to all the Silver Jubilee sponsors who made this event possible. It's because of partners like you that HCEF's mission lives on.



▲ COUNTY EXECUTIVE SARA INNAMORATO SHARES HER LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH HOUSING INSTABILITY

▼ MORTON D. STANFIELD JR., SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT DOLLAR BANK POSES WITH SVP REGIONAL MANAGER AT PNC, BRANDON GRINAGE

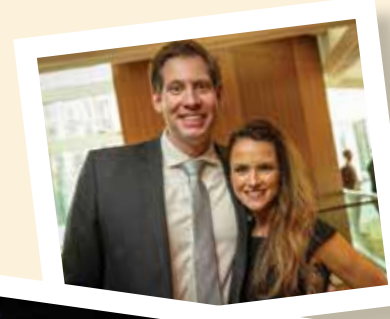


▲ THIS GENERATION CONNECT IS HONORED AS THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF THE COLLABORATIVE IMPACT GRANT

▼ JASON JONES, VP OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT DOLLAR BANK AND HCEF CEO, AJ JEFFERSON, WELCOME ALL GALA GUESTS



▲ MAYOR ED GAINEY GIVES A STIRRING SPEECH



## TEEN HIGHLIGHT



"To make ends meet my mother and I lived in a one-bedroom motel, where she took the bed, and I slept on the floor. This was our reality for at least two months as we were waiting to be transferred to a family shelter..."

**B**riana Beach was introduced to HCEF when she was a senior in high school. Her mother struggled with her mental health and an abusive relationship. The only way Briana's mother knew how to cope with her circumstances was with substance use. Before Briana knew it, her family was evicted from their apartment with nowhere to go.

Once Briana was introduced to HCEF, the team supported her through the Hope Through Learning Award application process and helped her plan and prep for college.

Terrel Williams, Teen Outreach Program Manager, says, "Briana has come a long way. It's not easy to finish high school with all that going on in your life. But she was a dedicated student and a fierce worker. She knew what she wanted and was open to the resources HCEF had for her."

Having just completed her first year at Carlow University, and being a part of the Community Scholars Program, Briana hopes to become a resource for those who have experienced homelessness. "I know my journey wasn't easy, but my story has given me opportunities that I never thought I would have come across. Through scholarships and being part of many programs, I continue to build my path to success."

Finishing the year with a 3.9 grade point average, we are in awe of Briana and grateful to have met her as she continues to forge her own path. Congratulations Briana, you inspire us all!



▲ BRIANA WOWS THE CROWD WITH HER POWERFUL TESTIMONIAL AT THE SILVER JUBILEE

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EDUCATION FUND**  
*creating equity through education*