



SOMERSET

HOME

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Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children • Spring 2007

Newest Home for Girls Celebrates First Anniversary

Samantha put her books on her desk, brushed her hair, and headed to the kitchen to start dinner for herself and her four roommates. Later they would clean up, study, and watch some TV in the rec room.

This scene sounds typical of homes everywhere, but Samantha lives at Somerset Home's newest transitional living residence, Whitney House. Opened last April, the single-family residence is home to five young women, ages 18 – 21. In addition to going to school and holding a part-time job, the girls also receive counseling, medical care and independent-living skills education.

This year more than 1,000 New Jersey teens will turn 18 and "graduate" from the child welfare system without the support they need to succeed in the adult world.

"We're here to provide that support," says Erica Maccia, the case manager at Whitney House. "The girls learn important independent-living skills, such as managing their time and their finances, and get practice at setting and meeting goals. There's a balance between structure and freedom that makes moving into the adult world less scary."

Whitney House is just a block away from Somerset Home's other transitional living residences, Passages and My Place, and a short walk to the public library and the mall.

The 15-year-old, three-bedroom house was completely renovated, including creating a rec room, a laundry room and an office in the basement. A deck and patio were added to give the girls a place to relax outdoors, and a group of Johnson & Johnson employees



It's move-in day at Whitney House, and staff and residents couldn't be happier.

dug in and helped spruce up the landscaping.

"I'm really happy to be here," says Samantha. "It's a nice place to live, and it's giving me a chance to get my life together and follow my dreams."

That chance to live at Whitney House was made possible by contributions to Somerset Home's 2005 - 2006 capital campaign.



Water Damage Strikes Twice in Two Months

The truth is that lightning really can strike twice. It turns out the same is true for flooding caused by a fire sprinkler system. Within six weeks, Somerset Home dealt with the same kind of emergency at two different buildings. The first damaged the girls' residence at Passages. The second, at Brahma House, damaged all of the bedrooms, as well as the administrative offices below. In both cases, the residents were evacuated safely and repair work began in record time.

Flooded Home Fixed in Record Time

Water, water, everywhere... that was the condition of the girls residence at Passages on February 15 when sub-freezing temperatures caused a ceiling sprinkler head to burst, spreading water throughout the three-story townhouse.



With extensive water damage and the power, water, heat and alarm system shut off, the residents and staff were moved to rooms generously donated by the

nearby Bridgewater Marriott.

"Our first concern is always the safety of the kids in our care," said Jeff Fetzko. "We were thrilled the Marriott was willing to help. Being relocated nearby made it much easier for the girls to go to school and to work at their part-time jobs."

Marriott General Manager Chris Hosmer didn't have to

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for Temporarily
Displaced Children**

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Two Floods in Two Months

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think twice. "When a neighbor needs help, that's what you do, whether you're an individual or a business."

Back at Passages, work got under way. Most of the sheetrock and carpeting were damaged. Electrical outlets were blown. The furnace and furniture were ruined.

The staff went to work beside the contractors, ripping out damaged materials, salvaging the girls' belongings, and making repairs. In just 19 days, the girls moved back in.

"It was a difficult ordeal," said Jeff, "but there were some bright spots. The kids showed their flexibility. The staff showed their willingness to pitch in. And the contractors, businesses and township officials did their best to meet our tight schedule."

Second Flood Forces Closing

When the sprinkler system at Brahma House was set off by an emotionally upset 13-year-old resident about 1 a.m. on Wednesday morning, March 28, the crisis intervention center had a crisis of a different kind.

With extensive water damage and

the power and fire alarm shut off, the Brahma House staff took their 14 teenage charges to the Somerset Marriott for the night.

"Although we don't have residents right now, we are continuing to provide all of our other outreach and crisis intervention services."

"Our case management team did a great job keeping the kids safe and

working to place each of them in an appropriate setting," said Jeff.

The bedrooms upstairs and the administrative offices below them were heavily damaged, along with the electrical, heating and phone systems. "We went right to work on

the repairs, and we expect to be up and running again in late May," Jeff said.

As word of the two incidents spread, offers of help came in from Somerset Home's many friends and supporters.

Insurance will

pay for most of the damage, but there will still be many expenses. If you would like to help, you can make a donation by mail or by logging on to somersethome.org.



Most of the office equipment was spared, but the staff had to move to temporary quarters.



Water soaked through the ceilings and damaged everything below.



Planned Giving: A Chance to Give *and* Receive

The generosity of our donors is an essential ingredient in allowing us to help homeless youth, both now and in the years ahead.

In addition to saying thank you, we'd like to tell you how your support can have an even greater impact in the future and create income for you at the same time.

Somerset Home is introducing an income-generating charitable gift annuity program (CGA) in conjunction with The Community Foundation of New Jersey. "This is a great alternative to low-rate bank CDs, creating income that won't be affected by the stock market," says Hans Dekker, president of the Community Foundation of New Jersey.

If you're 65 or older, a CGA provides a fixed, guaranteed lifetime income, payable to you or your designated beneficiary. With a minimum investment of \$10,000, a charitable gift annuity provides you with:

- The peace of mind of a guaranteed fixed income for life
 - Rates ranging from 5.6% to 11.3%, depending on your age
 - Partially tax-free income payments
 - An immediate charitable income tax deduction
 - The satisfaction of supporting a charity you believe in
- "Charitable annuities create an income you can't outlive," says Dekker. "And at the same time, you can see how your money is helping

Sample Charitable Gift Annuity Rates			
Single Life		Double Life	
Age	Rate	Age	Rate
65	6.00%	65/65	5.60%
70	6.50%	70/70	5.90%
75	7.10%	75/75	6.30%
80	8.00%	80/80	6.90%
90	11.30%		

to make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable kids in the care of Somerset Home."

For more information, please contact Anne Bradley-Sosis, Somerset Home assistant executive director, at 908-526-6605.



Contributors Honor Friends, Family and Loved Ones

We would like to extend our gratitude to those who have made a contribution in honor of, or in memory of, a family member or friend. These donations help Somerset Home keep its commitment to giving the youth we serve a home and a hopeful future.

For a gift of \$250 or more, you may have an engraved brick placed in our Walk of Fame, a garden walkway at Somerset Home, as a permanent symbol of your generous support. You can use the form on the enclosed envelope or get more information by calling Joe Godby at 908-526-6605.

In Honor Of

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| C. Bateman | Joel & Josef |
| Bobby Caruso | Leslie List |
| Helen Cramer | Kate & Kim Nordstrom |
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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Vivian Ackerson | Jeanne Levis |
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| Enterprise H.S. Students | E. Maria Stefanski |
| Paul Gubitosi | Elaine Strampp |
| John & Elizabeth Kreutzer | Karl & Sophie Strampp |
| Nellie Kroposky | John Tombro |

Annual Run Was a Runaway Success

More than 1,200 youth run away from home every day. What are they running from? Nearly half report being beaten by a caretaker; 25 percent have had parents or caretakers request sexual activity; and two out of five were abandoned for at least 24 hours.

Some of these kids find their way to Somerset Home, and the annual Run for Runaways helps us give them a safe haven and the many services they need to deal with the trauma they've experienced.

The 8th annual Run for Runaways, held last November, brought an outpouring of support from near and far: runners, walkers, sponsors, donors,



It's a great day for people of all ages to get out and run, walk or sprint to the finish line.

volunteers – all people who want to help give these kids a safe environment and a brighter future. And the part they

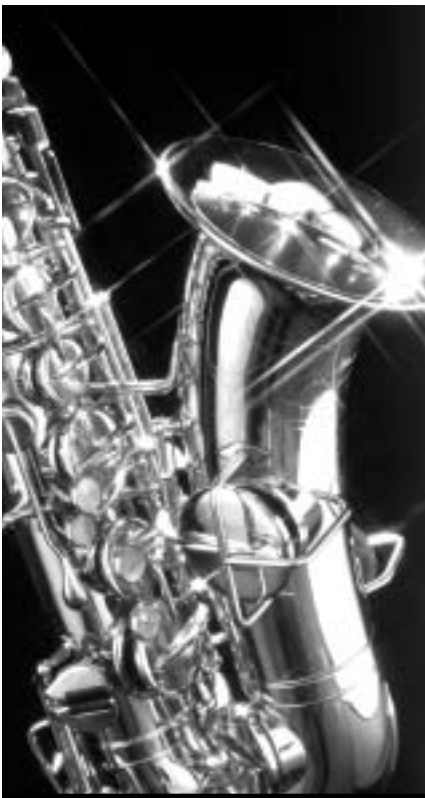
all played is significant – Somerset Home made nearly \$40,000, and all of the proceeds are being used to provide services directly to the youth in our care.

“What really makes this event special,” says Executive Director Jeff Fetzko, “is the way people of all ages get involved to help keep the kids in their community safe from harm.”

So mark your calendar: The 9th annual Run for Runaways will be held on Saturday, November 3, 9 a.m. at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater. We're hoping for another big turnout and another chance to raise awareness about runaways.



Success Stories...One Child at a Time



Luke's parents had a history of drug and alcohol abuse, and he and his siblings were removed from their home when he was only three years old. The children were placed with their grandmother, and as Luke grew older, he learned to play the saxophone and attended Arts High School.

But eventually his grandmother, also an alcoholic, became abusive toward him as well. Luke said he had lived with abuse his entire life, and he finally decided he didn't want to suffer any longer. His DYFS case worker brought him to Brahma House, Somerset Home's short-term residential crisis intervention program.

There, he met April McGrath, his psychotherapist. In addition to attending the in-house school, doing his assigned chores and participating in recreational activities, Lucas met with April for regular counseling sessions to address his history

of physical abuse and family substance abuse. Slowly, he learned to find new ways of dealing with conflicts and improved his ability to use appropriate coping skills.

One day, April told Lucas she had a surprise for him. She had persuaded a local music center to donate a tenor saxophone and music for Luke to use for practice. This was one part of his past he was happy to reconnect with.

When it was determined Lucas didn't have any other family members to live with, April recommended a long-term placement close to his grandmother's home, so he could return to his high school.

“Playing the saxophone helps me forget about the bad things that have happened to me,” Luke told April recently. “It has made a big difference in my life.”



Help Keep Your Teen on an Even Keel

The teen years can be quite a challenge for parents, and it's often hard to know when behavior you think is "growing pains" crosses the line into behavior that is cause for growing concern.

How can you know the difference? Therapists look at a cluster of behaviors defined as oppositional defiant disorder, or ODD, including:

- Hostile
- Foul-mouthed
- Negative
- Resentful
- Defiant
- Easily frustrated
- Pessimistic
- Unreasonable
- Aggressive
- Blaming
- Argumentative
- Spiteful
- Angry
- Bad-tempered

If this has become the usual emotional state of your teenager, he or she may have ODD. This disorder can disrupt home and family life, other relationships and school performance.

The signs of ODD tend to show up during pre-adolescence, about ages 7-13. At first, you may notice that your child is hostile and unmanageable at home, but doesn't act the same way in public, so parents may feel guilty, thinking they "must have done something" to cause the hostility.

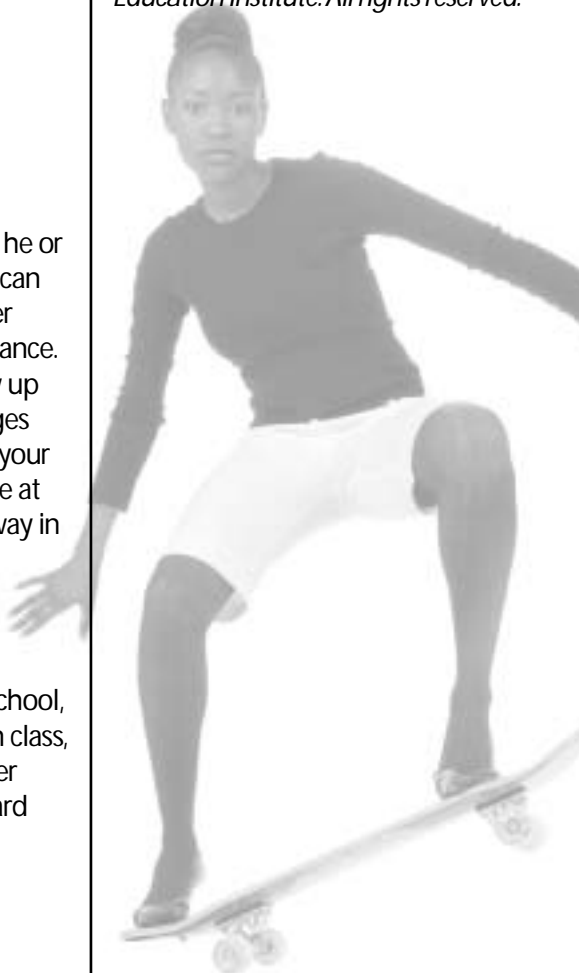
Over time, however, the child's behavior will also deteriorate in school, and he or she will be disruptive in class, disrespectful of teachers and other authority figures, aggressive toward peers, and generally act like a malcontent.

What is the solution? Behavior

modification and other therapeutic interventions. Wilderness programs have an enormous impact on kids with ODD. Teens in these structured therapeutic programs learn to recognize their role in the group, to take responsibility for their behavior and to recognize their hostile and negative attitudes are self-defeating and do nothing to create a harmonious and successful life among their peers.

Teens whose behavior is more severe and includes physical violence toward property or other people, or criminal acts such as stealing, may be suffering from a more serious disorder, and parents should get help immediately.

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Volunteers Give a Helping Hand J&J Employees Bring Spring to Somerset Home

Corporate employees left their desks behind for a day last spring to do some digging... and mulching... and planting, all for a good cause.

More than 20 people in Johnson & Johnson's pharmaceutical strategic marketing group spent a day at Whitney House, the newest transitional living program of Somerset Home. In short order, there were teams raking, mulching, clearing and planting.

"We're grateful to the J&J employees, who took a day out of their busy work schedules to help," said Somerset Home Executive Director Jeff Fetzko. "Five young women had just moved in, and the new landscaping made them feel right at home. It also helps them to know that people in the community are willing to work so hard to brighten up their lives."

The Johnson & Johnson employees participated as part of the Somerset County United Way's annual Day of Caring. They are just one example of the groups and individuals who offer their help, whether it's for a spruce-up, a special meal, or a summer outing.



Charity Tennis Tournament Hits Grand Slam for Homeless Teens

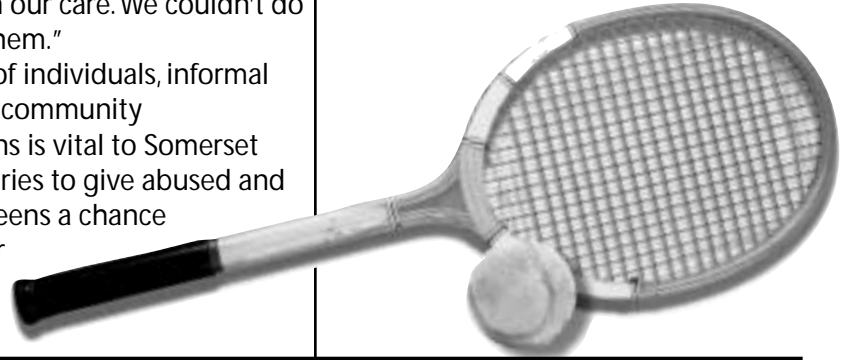
It wasn't an ordinary group of friends who played tennis at Colonial Park one weekend last fall. It was The Friends of Archie Chiles. For 11 years, they have organized a charity doubles tournament to honor their late friend's two passions, tennis and education.

More than 100 players now participate in men's, women's and mixed doubles, raising funds for Somerset Home. The group also awards scholarships to students from three area high schools.

"The Friends of Archie Chiles have been wonderful friends to Somerset Home," says Executive Director Jeff Fetzko. "Their fundraising efforts have helped us meet the needs of the youth in our care. We couldn't do it without them."

The help of individuals, informal groups and community organizations is vital to Somerset Home as it tries to give abused and neglected teens a chance at a brighter future.

Please let us know if you would like to help by holding a fundraising event. Call 908-526-6605, or send an email to: absosis@somerset-home.org



Homeless Youth Get Help with College Tuition

When she was removed from her home at age 13 because of her mother's drug addiction, Nicole had no idea what her future would hold. She certainly never thought college would be part of it.

But Nicole is now a student at Middlesex County College, paid for in part by a scholarship from Somerset Home.

In 2005, Somerset Home created an Endowment Scholarship Fund to provide financial aid for Nicole and other Somerset Home residents continuing their education. The first year, five \$500 scholarships were awarded to residents graduating from high school.

"Last year, nine scholarships went to Somerset Home's high school graduates and residents finishing their first year of college. By giving additional scholarships to our residents in college, we are letting these students know we will be there to support them in their journey to becoming successful adults," said Jeffrey Fetzko, Somerset Home



The scholarships were presented at a graduation picnic at My Place, where residents and staff celebrated the graduates' achievements.

executive director.

Teenagers aging out of the child welfare system don't have a support system to help them through the process of choosing a college, applying for financial aid, finding housing – the kind of support most of us took for

granted when we were their age.

If you would like to be part of that support system for deserving students at Somerset Home, consider contributing to the endowment scholarship fund. Contact us at donor@somerset-home.org.



Youth Speak Out

Somerset Home Kids Get Creative

My Birth

My name is "Nathan." I was born in San Diego, California on June 9, 1991 at exactly 10:30 p.m. My mom "Linda" and my dad "Victor" met on the beach and started dating. Before you knew it my mom was pregnant with good old me.

I was born in San Diego Medical Center weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. I was a big baby. I had a really big head and feet. My head was so big my mom would often have to cut a sweatshirt to get it off my head. I had my dad's face and my mom's eyes.

My mom didn't want to find out what sex I was to keep it a surprise. When I was born my dad was happy because he wanted a boy and my mom wanted a girl. She eventually got over it.



N.F., Age 15

- N.F., Age 15

A Special Person

Someone important in my life is my big brother Oscar. He's more like a father to me. I can tell him anything, bad or good, knowing he would try his best to steer me in the right direction.

I can ask him for the shirt off his back and he would give it to me with no problem. Ever since September 2003 it seems like nothing but bad luck has been thrown my way, but my brother was always there to help me get back on my feet.

My brother is a prime example of not letting a criminal background discourage him in any way, shape or form from achieving his dream. My brother has a good job, three kids and a wife. When I get his age God willing I hope that I achieve most of my goals.

- A.P., Age 18

If I could change two things about myself...

I would want to be taller. I would want to be taller so I could block Tim's jump shot better. Being taller could also help me reach higher places. I would be able to do so many other things that I'm not able to get to do right now. I would be able to get the taller ladies, not that I can get them right now. I could also lie about my age easier.

I would also not want glasses, because they are very annoying. It is annoying to remember to take them off every night. I also don't like having metal on my face. I think I might try contacts, but it would be cool if I could just get perfect eyesight. I would love it if I was able to change two things about myself.

- N.F., Age 15

Two things I would like to change are my attitude and my impatience. If I curse people out, people don't want to be treated like that. I wouldn't like to be treated like that, and that is why I should change my ways.

- Z.S., Age 17



A.O., Age 18

If I could do one thing for the rest of my life...

I would be with all of my family and just be happy and not go through the pain and suffering that we are going through. I would want to see all of my five sisters together and happy. I would want to see my mother and father not get divorced and to still be married, being one whole big happy family, and to have no complaints the rest of my life.

- I.E., Age 16

e-Helpers Make Special Wishes Come True

Kara wanted to go to her senior prom, but she couldn't afford a dress.

Sharon needed to purchase white shoes and stockings for her nursing studies at Somerset County Vo-Tech.

When Kevin came to Somerset Home, he attended Bridgewater-Raritan High School, and he wanted to buy a yearbook to remember all of the new friends he had made.

Jake had a talent for graphic arts, but needed special software to help him improve his reading skills.

Through a special program called e-Help, generous donors have chipped in to help nurture careers, create perfect prom nights, and provide educational tools for success and self-esteem.

We do our best to meet the physical and emotional needs of our residents,

but often there are "extras" that just aren't in the budget. Yet it's so important to give our teenage residents, who've been faced with some tough family situations, a chance to do the special things that most "normal" teens get to do.

To meet these special needs, donors sign on to be e-Helpers. When a resident has a wish, we send out a quick email describing the request. Those who can help either mail a check or donate instantly online.

For people who are busy, but still want to make a difference, this is a simple way to help. There's no obligation to respond to each request, but every little bit helps. If you're interested in being added to our list of e-Helpers, just send an email to kcoulahan@somersethome.org.



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