

HOPE

Grounded in Reality

by Margaret A. Leonard, LSA
Executive Director

Over the past year those of us who make up the extended family of Project Hope were challenged to look at how we describe the "core" of who we are in the written word, particularly in the

expression of our mission statement. The question was asked: "Do these words resonate with your aspirations, commitments, actions? Individually, collectively we discovered a dissonance - the breadth and depth of who we are and what we dream for ourselves, others, our world was not reflected in the existing mission statement.

**We see the potential
in those who cross
over our threshold.**

How does one express in word the HOPE that abides in our hearts? My friend Webster says that hope is believing that what we see and desire is attainable! If hope like beauty is in the eye of the beholder, what do we see and desire?

We see the potential, the possibilities in those who cross over our threshold and enter into our lives. And how do we see our world which we know to be marred by the threat of war, violence, poverty and injustice?

Denise Levertof, a favored poet, conveys the hope that abides in us in her poem entitled: "Beginnings"

We have only begun to imagine justice and mercy, only begun to envision how it might be to live as siblings. Yet so much is in bud. How can we tire of hope?

With this as prelude let me share with you Project Hope's new **Mission Statement.**

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MISSION

Project Hope works in partnership with families so they can move up and out of poverty.

We do this by:

- ◆ being a catalyst for change in the lives of families and in the systems that keep them poor;
- ◆ developing and providing family support solutions for homelessness and poverty;
- ◆ advocating for just public policies which strengthen families.

We do this in collaboration with a multitude of organizations which support these goals.

Event Benefits Community Center

Judy George, Founder and CEO of *Domain Home Fashions* (left) is pictured here with **Sr. Margaret A Leonard, LSA**, Executive Director of Project Hope. Judy hosted a Holiday event in her Newbury Street store.



On December 6, 2002, new and longtime friends gathered for Project Hope's Holiday Party benefit, organized by Domain Home Fashions. The event raised over \$20,000 in funds to help Project Hope construct its new community center, a job training and education center for low-

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New Building Update

Many of you responded to an Appeal Letter sent in the Fall of 2001 for a New Building Fund. We are acutely aware of many gifts having been made at that time in memory or honor of loved ones, and your desire (and ours) of seeing a building erected as a testimony to their spirit present in service to this community.

Sometimes life throws us a curve ball. We have not been able to break ground as yet and we want to explain why. Despite overwhelming support from our neighbors voiced at a community meeting many months ago, one neighbor voiced his discontent by challenging the building project in court, requiring our seeking variances for zoning and parking. Though our architect and *pro bono* lawyers feel confident we can prevail in the long run, we do not know when that will be.

We have not previously sent an update because we hoped to satisfy the neighbor and move forward, but this is not the case. Now we ask you for your understanding and patience. Because our need for space is so critical to Project Hope programs that help families move up and out of poverty, we are exploring alternatives, including potential sites and short-term rental.

Thank you for being a donor for our dream. Keep believing, as we do, that dreams can come true. ■

Community News
is a semi-annual publication
of Project Hope
Editor: Patricia Curran, SND
617-442-2054

Would you like to see our programs in action and hear a former resident describe her experience of being in Shelter?

Come to a 2003 **Sharing Hope Tour** on Wednesday

February 26	11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
March 26	9:30 AM to 10:30 AM
April 23	9:30 AM to 10:30 AM
May 21	9:30 Am to 10:30 AM

Simply call Sarah Schieron at 617-442-1880 x 13 to reserve a place.

Where Wishes Come True

We thank you for your generosity during the holiday season. We were able to play Santa to eight families in our shelter, twenty-two families recently moved out of shelter, and handle 14 emergency referrals as well. Some of the latter requested food instead of toys or clothing. With your help we were able to meet that critical need, too.

Many of our programs sent out a wish list for supplies, paper, crafts, linens. Those practical gifts will help us balance our budget in these tight times fiscally.

When we ask, you answer. So now we are putting out an agency

wish list, too. Would any of you be able to gift us with these?



Project Hope Wish List

- ✓ Office space
- ✓ Storage space
- ✓ Graphic design expertise
- ✓ Printing services
- ✓ Digital cameras

These are large requests, we know. But we have HOPE.

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income families. Over 150 guests came out to support Project Hope and attend the grand reopening celebration of Domain's Newbury Street Store

"The generosity of the guests and Domain Home Fashions exceeded our highest hopes," said Sister Margaret Leonard.

Funds were raised by selling raffle tickets for fabulous prizes donated by many of Domain's Newbury Street neighbors. Guests enjoyed *hors d'oeuvres* and refreshments compliments of *Gimme the Skinny and Best Cellars*.

Many thanks to Domain Home fashions for organizing such a successful event! ■

Skilled and Trustworthy:

Our Child Care Providers

A Mother's Praise

Caroline Gonzalez can't say enough about how happy she is with her particular child care situation and with Project Hope for making sure Providers continue to take workshops and grow professionally.

Caroline's job at DSS is stressful, but knowing that her children are not only safe but getting quality care brings her peace. Her 2 year old son, Gianni, has grown under Janette's ("Titi's") guiding hand from the time he was 5 weeks old. He can count to 10, knows his colors (loves blue), speaks in sentences, delights in imaginative play activities, and cheerfully follows good health care practices - like carefully brushing his teeth. When he wakes up each morning, he says, "I want to go to Titi's." Once strangers, Janette and Caroline are like family: In fact, Janette is now the godmother of Gianni's little sister, Hirma.

Career Decision

"It's as though I was always meant to take care of children," Janette muses. "When I was little more than a child myself, my mother told me I would be a great mother some day because babies wanted me to hold them, and I loved holding them." When her baby was born prematurely, Janette decided that being a child care provider in her home was the career track for her, both because she loved children and because being at home would allow her to spend quality time with her own son.

Career Growth

Since becoming licensed in 2000, Janette took a course in "Observing and Recording" children's developmental progress and is now taking a class in "Literacy" at U Mass which will help her plan activities that prepare children for reading and will help parents engage their children's interest when they read aloud to them.

Your Opportunity

Recently two children in Janette's care have moved on to kindergarten so there are 2 rare open slots

in her attractive first floor apartment in Jamaica Plain at present. If interested, please call our Director, Arlene Ramos, at 617-442-1880 ext. 29.

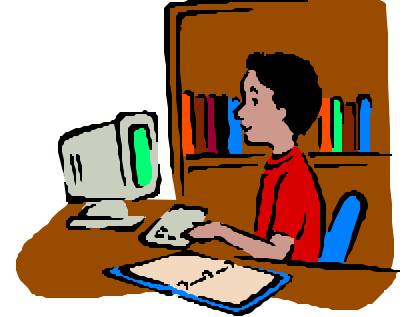
Currently we have 12 home based child care providers serving families in Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain and Hyde Park. ■



Parent Conference. Seated in the sparkling kitchen of her home, **Janette Nazarro** (left) discusses two year old Gianni's latest art work, hand prints in blue tempera, with his mother, **Caroline Gonzalez**. Janette was trained and licensed through Project Hope's *Family Child Care Business Enterprise* and is now being certified nationally for providing quality home based care.

Celebrate

The Writers' Group Offers Students a Creative Venue to Share their Talents and Treasures



By Lula Johnson and Leneice Gennis

A teacher and three students are sitting in the library at Project Hope after school. They've come together for the creative writers' group, where they share personal life experiences that one day they hope to write about. Issues, people and things that affect them are explained in detail as they think about how they would write it down.

Gloria is listening to one of Lula's life stories with intensity, hanging on to every word. Every time she can relate to the story, she shows it with her facial expressions. "Yeah," she comments, nodding her head. "Mmmm."

As Lula tells her stories, the others feel like they are there with her, 50 years ago, chopping wood and doing chores. Listening to her is like opening a Danielle Steele novel and crawling inside. The students all sense the strength, will, and hope that she possesses.

For Lula, the Adult Learner Program is one step in a larger journey: "I came to Project Hope to improve my learning skills, get my GED, and go forward from there. Project Hope has done so much for me. I can't say enough about the teachers last year and this year. They have taken a personal interest in me. I want to say thank you so much to everyone at Project Hope."

Another student in the writers' group looks to the program to help her achieve her life goals: "My name is Leneice. I attend Project Hope to get my GED and better my self-confidence. One of my most important interests is to write.

I write when I'm happy, sad, or just have something interesting to say. I've been writing poems and short stories since I was about 8 years-old. When I discovered the never-ending possibilities of a pen to paper, my imagination began to soar. It has been flying ever since.

My goal is to eventually be a great writer. I can picture myself in the country in a colonial home, drinking a cocktail, coming up with my latest novel. Or as a journalist, covering the latest story about a struggling inner-city mom. Or even as a writing teacher, sitting in a class like this one two years from

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now.

With guidance, structure, and motivation, the possibilities are endless. I'll begin with this writers' group, sharing and creating wonderful words." ■



Members of the New Writers' Group offer one another support and encouragement.

The Spirit of Giving

Lemonade stands staffed by children dot the summertime memories of many of us. For most of us it was a one day plan to get rich. Four little girls from Arlington radically changed the focus of that vision. 100% of their proceeds were given to us.

On an afternoon visit, these children came to Project Hope and played with our children in the Children's Center.. What we learn from children can radically change our vision!



Young Donors and Moms (left to right): Victoria Edelman, Shea Necheles, Elizabeth Edelman, Ella Necheles, Marliisa Briggett. 2nd row: Pam Edelman

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This new way of wording our Mission Statement takes the somewhat ethereal aspirations of Hope and gives it a solid foundation. It describes the acts that make Hope a reality.

Not only do we believe in the potential and possibility of others but we try to be a catalyst that provides access to resources that make individual growth of parents and children a reality.

Human support through quality programs, shelter, education, child care, housing, access to education & training, jobs that pay a living wage are the substance of our lives. Not just belief that a new kind of world is possible but opportunities to bond with others and shape public policies that will create more justice, equity, that truly strengthen families in our neighborhoods, our state, our world.

Yes, the core of our mission is to be in partnership with families so that they can move up and out of poverty.

We are interested in hearing how this new mission statement fits with your perception of us. Do e-mail your response to info@prohope.org.



Six year-old Shea and seven year-old Elizabeth personalized their gift with these messages.

Paul Pierce Is Our Hero

Gift enables Project Hope's Children's Center to receive a major face-lift



When Paul Pierce visited Project Hope's Children's Center, the children showed him all they knew about the numbers 3 & 4 because his jersey number is 34.

On September 26th, over the gleeful cheers of 18 preschoolers, **Paul Pierce** cut the ribbon on the Children's Center improvements he made possible at Project Hope. Joining Pierce at the event was former Celtic, **Tiny Archibald**; Fannie Mae Foundation Representative, **Jack Wilson**; and State Representative, **Marie St. Fleur**.

Renovations and im-provements to the center were made possible by a combined donation from the

NBA and the Fannie Mae Foundation on behalf of Paul Pierce.

- The \$50,000 funding enabled Project Hope to refurbish the Children's Center and playground with a new
- playground structure
 - indoor loft
 - playhouse
 - sandbox and gate
 - books
 - computer software for reading readiness

Those in attendance during the ribbon cutting were given a tour of the renovations by Project Hope's Children's Center Director Lori Thames and eighteen 3-5 year-old children from the center.

The Celtic's Star thrilled the children by sitting down with them in the classroom and reading aloud a book produced and illustrated by the Children's Center about Paul's childhood. The finishing sentence of the book read, "And Paul became the best basketball player in the whole wide world." Indeed, for these children, he already is.

PROJECT HOPE

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