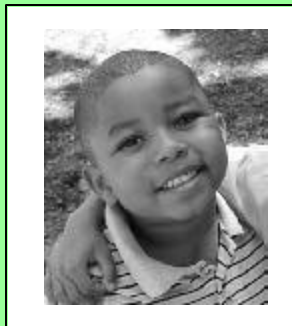


The Earth is Bountiful

Although the Spring weather was late, planting with Susan Cammer (a Horizon volunteer) was right on time. As soon as the Children's Center "water table" was filled with potting soil, the preschoolers were eager to get their hands dirty. They were learning about gardening and excited about potting peas. Susan explained to each group how deep to make the hole and how far to bury the pea. One preschooler was so fascinated she joined each group in rotation to



Joseph has a positive attitude and uses his imagination to solve problems.

watch the presentation over and over.

Not only did this activity expose some children to gardening for the first time, it also sparked a new type of play. They now dig with vigor in the sandbox as their imaginations soar. With shovels in

hand, they turn soil, pack it into buckets, grow food, and then pretend to eat and feed their guests. One preschooler was heard talking to her friends saying, "No, you can't have that tomato. I only have one." But another child, Joseph, responded, "Okay, I will plant another one so we have a 'lotta' more for every, every, everyone! Okay?"

Perhaps they learned from Joseph that the earth is bountiful, and if we want to, we can use our imaginations to solve the problem of feeding the hungry.

A Response to the Earth is Bountiful

**Margaret A. Leonard, LSA,
Executive Director**

If you listen well you can often hear wisdom in the words of a child! Would you not agree? Listen to Joseph! Capture his spirit! Joseph is not deterred by the response that there is only one imaginary tomato, instead he envisions another reality, "Okay, I will plant another one so we have a "lotta" more for every, everyone! Okay?"

YES, Joseph, it is okay! a comforting message and one that needs to be spoken and heard by a multitude these days.

There are the families hungry for adequate housing & shelter, those confronting lack of health care, food, loss of jobs, inability to pay mortgages. The faces in the multitude are children living in poverty, the working poor, low income families, those who once were part of the dwindling middle class, seniors living on fixed

incomes. And everyday we hear that this is just the tip of the iceberg and next year will be worse!

This story, these times leave us with many questions.

How do we nurture, cultivate and make grow Joseph's enthusiastic spirit (what I would call a "spark of divinity") unfettered within him?

(continued on page 2, column 3)

Ice Cream Tastes Better Home Made

The preschool room turned into an ice cream parlor for a day when our literacy specialist, Gloria Matlock, gave the children a taste of learning. The flavor was natural vanilla.

The preschoolers gathered around the ice cream maker and took turns touching, smelling, and tasting the ingredients before mixing them together in the ice cream machine.

Because all the preschoolers had a chance to stir, it took a long time for the ice cream to appear, too long for one who exclaimed, "This will take three years! I'm going to the book corner and read a book." He came running back, however, when it was time to eat his cup of delectable iced cream.



Waiting for the magic moment when ice cream will appear are Matthew, Darriana, Mark, and Avari.

Then another child called out, "I can taste the Milk!" It passed like a wave, each one naming an ingredient they had touched, smelled, or mixed that they were sure they could taste. Learning this lesson was a delicious experience. ■

(continued from page 1)

How do we expand the boundaries of my need, my family's needs to embrace our needs as a human family and claim them as our own?

I am reminded of the Gospel of the "Loaves and the Fishes"! It tells the story of Jesus before the hungry multitude. His heart is moved with compassion and like Joseph, Jesus made "lotta" more for every, everyone until every last one was full. The multiplication of the loaves was miraculous but born from a heart filled with compassion that claimed the multitude as his own.

Perhaps the real lesson of this story is this. Our world is indeed bountiful! There is indeed "lotta" for everyone!

Can we let our hearts be moved by compassion and claim the multitude as our family?

Can we find that "spark of divinity" that is in the depth of us all and let it motivate us to enthusiastically find the ways to multiple our resources and to share them in a more just and equitable way so that there is a "lotta" for every, everyone - Okay! ■

An Evening of Song

Kathleen Henry presented a concert of light classical music to benefit Project Hope in the Newton home of James Bryant, Chair of our Circle of Friends. It was a most enjoyable evening. We thank all for the \$3,000 it raised.

Kathleen



Among the attendees were Joanne Allen-Willoughby, a member of Project Hope's Board, and her husband Gerald Willoughby.

Community News is a semi-annual publication of Project Hope.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

*Editor: Patricia Curran,
SND
617-442-2054*

ALP Teaches the Whole Person: Mind, Body & Soul

This Spring, the students and staff of the Adult Learner Program participated in the *Body and Soul Health Fair* at the Dimock Community Health Center. Students who would not otherwise have the opportunity, received free blood and cholesterol screening and blood pressure checks.

One student, whom we shall call Tykeia, was able to speak with a nurse about the symptoms of depression she had been experiencing. As a result, Tykeia was connected with appropriate resources and took a short leave of absence to learn how to manage her symptoms. Refreshed and refocused, she returned to Project Hope for the summer session and is ready for the September GED exams.

LaWanda poses with the heart robot.



We thank the *Dimock Community Health Center* for offering this invaluable service to our students. ■



Melissa extends her hand for a blood prick.



Amy visits the blood pressure booth.

The Helpers' Hullabaloo

On May 28th, volunteers braved a horrendous thunderstorm to attend Project Hope's *2nd Annual Volunteer Recognition Event* held at the Alexander-Magnolia Community Center.

Despite the cold and rainy conditions outside, the *Helpers' Hullabaloo* was warm and cheery. Students from the Children's Center made the centerpiece, colorful paper flowers, which many of our volunteers took home with them.

Kathleen Bellicchi, a very talented chef, generously

volunteered her services and those of her family at the event at which she was being honored! She prepared a delicious dinner with a tropical theme: jerk chicken, rice and beans, cornbread, fruit salad, and strawberry shortcake.

Alida Castillo, our computer guru of many years, who buys the staff new computers, loads great software and rids them of all the viruses, received enthusiastic applause.

Trish Hembrough, director of the Adult Learner Program, said farewell to **Sr. Barbara Eaton, SND** who will be leaving Project Hope after having taught science

to the GED learners for the past four years.

Meg Lusardi, Director of Operations, praised **Dan Vaccaro and Phillipp Kapperstein**, the Little Sisters of the Assumption volunteers who help out in all of the programs and keep the building in working order besides!

Project Hope is fortunate to have many talented and dedicated volunteers that are devoted to our mission of "moving families up and out of poverty."

There are many needs that can be met and rewarding experiences to be had for anyone volunteering at Project Hope. ■

A n O d y s s e y

of a no-fault eviction

The Clapps are the people next door. A typical American family for many years, Lydia worked as a nurse and Ronald owned a small industrial cleaning business. Loving and economically stable, they had room for a handicapped child, Mark, whom they adopted 19 years ago. And six years later they were blessed with the birth of a son, Ronald Jr.

Staying on Course

There are “bumps” on the road of life, Lydia says, and you just have to get over them. The first of these came when Ronald starting have seizures in 1987. An MRI showed he had a brain tumor. An operation was successful in reducing those seizures, but he lost the business and steady employment. In recent years, she, too, has had trouble finding steady work in Private Home Care, her field of nursing because of budget



Did you know?

- ✓ **The Federal government is not funding any new Section 8 vouchers.**
- ✓ **No family in our shelter has been able to find affordable housing or move out since funding was frozen.**
- ✓ **Families used to be in shelter for 2-3 months. Now the projection is for 18 to 24 months.**

Please call your elected officials to let them know that the Section 8 voucher program is vital.

Even with the earnest efforts of the supportive organizations, getting a She apartment took four months.

As the system is presently set up, m documents that establish need, filing a agencies. Each of these processes inv next step.

Meanwhile charitable groups/agenci shelter by offering financial support. U remaining sheltered means being upro and sometimes requires children to enr example, moved three times before re unable to access transportation to Mai

cuts in Medicare and Medicaid and reductions in insurance policies that used to cover that contingency. But they always managed to pay their bills.

Overboard

The tidal wave that hit them came in the form of a new owner of their house who ordered them to move out in one month so he could bring his family in. Unable to negotiate with him for an extension on time, they turned to court based mediation. They willingly signed an agreement that they would find another place within six months, a reasonable amount of time they thought. They see that now as their *Big Mistake*. Their disabled son

Photo: Lydia and Ronald Clapp with son Mark are shown here seated in the livingroom of their new apartment. Their 10 month odyssey of fighting homelessness ended when they qualified for a special Section 8, a Shelter Plus Care Voucher for families with disabilities, and were selected for a pilot housing program called Rolling Stock.

needed a first floor apartment. Current rents, they discovered, were beyond their means.

Meanwhile they were contacting all the agencies they knew for help, but none had a permanent solution. So the Clapp family had to move without having another place to go to. Anxious to keep their children within commuting distance of their schools, they put their belongings in storage, packed up and went to a nearby Dorchester motel charging \$209 per day. Their life savings disappeared. They told their sons they were on an Adventure, a hunt for a place to live and it would be exciting. They never used the word “homeless” in front of them.

When they called their representative, *Marie St. Fleur*, and told of their plight, she knew where to turn. She turned to the Housing Service Department of Project Hope.

Looking back on all that has happened, Lydia says, “The

darkest day of this whole situation was the day that new owner told us to move. But I told myself *I will not be a “victim”, and I am not*. And from the day Alfredo

(Project Hope’s Housing Coordinator) entered the picture, there were no more hard times.”

**“I will not be a victim,
and I am not.”**

It was in April that Lydia and Ronald called their Representative for help from their motel. Project Hope then took over the case. As the highlighted text below shows, moving a case forward is complex. It takes time because it involves many processes and partners.

This odyssey ended in July. The Clapps are in a furnished first floor apartment in Dorchester, renovated for their son’s disabilities. During the next three months when Traveler’s Aid holds the lease, they will have the services of a social worker to handle any outstanding issues, like school and transportation needs. In October they will be on their own again, lease in hand.■

ling a Place to Call Home:

amily, Project Hope’s Housing Services and
; Care subsidy and finding a first floor

ward requires gathering and authenticating
ons for assistance, and personal visits to state
review for approval before moving on to the

keep families from being without food and
ately, especially for families with children,
re than once to unfamiliar neighborhoods,
ultiple schools. The Clapp family, for
to Dorchester and in one location they were
ool for children with special needs.

Accessing a Shelter Plus Care Section 8 Voucher

We are grateful to all those cooperative sets of people who assisted us: *The Family to Family Foundation, Travelers Aid, ABCD, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, staff of the Department of Transitional Assistance*, for this particular case and for their ongoing assistance to all families in crisis.

We who work with wonderful families like the Clapps advocate for change in the system: *to refocus on preventing homelessness rather than in providing emergency services to families who are already homeless*. We wholeheartedly support the work of the *One Family Campaign* whose mission is to end homelessness by 2005.

A Focus on Families

Congratulations are in order for **Tasha Jette**, a woman who is “moving on up” with the help of two of our programs, *Transition to Work* and the *One Family Scholars*.

The mother of three delightful children ages 13, 12, and 10, Tasha had tried unsuccessfully to move out of poverty and stay out of homelessness. To support her family she has worked as a housekeeper, stock assistant, order assistant and cashier, but her income could not keep pace with expenses.

Setting Goals

Once she secured a Section 8 so she could move out of shelter, she realized that she needed to set new goals, “move beyond low wage dead-end jobs” for her children’s sake. “My children need a role model,” she wrote in her application for a scholarship. “I have to be their role model, since they have no one to look up to. If they see me reaching for my goal, then they will follow in my footsteps.”

What is her goal? “I would like to go back to school so I can get a job that I enjoy and that will give me financial stability.” Tasha pictures herself in a nursing uniform in a hospital setting when she imagines that dream future.

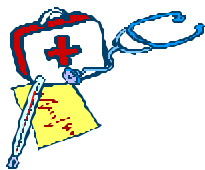


Photo: Tasha Jette is embraced by her two sons, Steven and Demetrius.



Education

With the support of her Career Advocate, Dolly Almonte, she attended the Allied Health Certificate Program orientation at Bunker Hill Community College. She was accepted into the program and is taking English and math classes right now to prepare for the Fall training.

“Tasha is a people-person, friendly and positive even in the midst of very trying circumstances,” Dolly reports. “We at Transition to Work are thrilled that she will be tuition free as a Scholar and be given leadership training.” While Tasha responds, “Working with Transition to Work was one of the best things I have ever done. They are a great support team who help you in all different ways. They showed me that I can be anything that I want, if I try, and that is the kind of support I need.”

That is the kind of support Project Hope hopes to give every woman trying to break out of the cycle of poverty. ■

Volunteer Opportunity

The One Family Scholarship Program currently enables 32 formerly homeless women to continue education through Associate, Bachelor’s and/or professional certificates.

Each scholar needs a wise woman who understands the struggles of women in juggling children, household chores, work and school.

Mentors have bi-monthly contact with their scholar and there is a 1 year commitment.

Please contact Jessica Colby, Development Associate, at 617-442-1880 x 21 or at jcolby@prohope.org, if you or someone you know is interested in a rewarding volunteer experience.

Photo: Raquel Ruiz-Tennyson holds her son Antonio, age 2.



Raquel Ruiz-Tennyson and her son, Antonio, are currently in our Shelter but hope to be on their way to permanent housing in New Hampshire soon. Like hundreds of other mothers, Raquel's desire to move out locally has been frustrated by the lack of section 8 vouchers to make that possible. She was near the top of the list when it was frozen in place and shelter families like hers throughout Massachusetts were likewise frozen in place. But Raquel is resourceful and discovered that New Hampshire still had vouchers. Not only that, many of its public schools were as highly regarded as private ones are here, she heard. It would be good for Antonio, and hopefully, the local colleges would be good for her, too. So Raquel's name is on a list there for affordable housing. She waits for the phone call that will give her good news.

Affirmations

Raquel is ready for college, having passed her GED exams through our Adult Learner Pro-

gram and coached to define her goals through the Career Club. But of all the classes she credits "Loves Herself Regardless" as having the most influence on her. "Loves Herself" taught Raquel to draw positive energy to herself, energy that sustains you "no matter what life throws your way." She

posted some of the affirmations from class over her mirror: "*I am optimistic*", to lighten her pessimistic leanings, and "*I can make the best of every situation.*"

Life has not always gone smoothly for Raquel. Her childhood stopped at age eleven, when her mother died of cancer. When she assumed the role of being the mother to her younger sister and brother, she fell behind in school and eventually dropped out. She found her footing as an adult, had a job and an apartment, but lost it all through domestic violence.

Hope

Now she wants to give Antonio all that she can so that he has a chance to develop his personal, educational and spiritual abilities. Her own dream is to study Criminal Justice and eventually become a lawyer. Whatever comes her way, as her affirmation suggests, Raquel will surely make the best of every situation. ■



Generation X – might just be the best!

On Friday, June 6th, the St. Clement's Young Adult Group joined forces with The Rack in Boston to sponsor an event, which raised over \$5,000 for Project Hope's Family Child Care Business Enterprise (FCCBE).

Over 200 Young Adults from a number of different parishes showed up to support the FCCBE. The evening included live music, pool, food and a raffle. Every penny donated went to Project Hope's FCCBE program which had nine graduates this Spring. The funds will help the new graduates get access to the equipment they need to start their own child care businesses – including playpens, high chairs, toddler-sized table and chairs, floor mats and educational toys!

The St. Clement's Young Adults proved that Generation X is eXtremely concerned about the needs of others in the community and is eXtremely generous!

Mintz-Levin Sponsors “Lawyers for Project Hope”

Close to 100 lawyers attended a June breakfast @ \$100 per ticket. Tickets, gifts and pledges from that morning will bring nearly \$20,000 to Project Hope! Many thanks to all who helped make the event such a success.



At the event, Sussy Hidalgo spoke from the heart about her experience of suddenly finding herself to be without financial resources and the sole support of 6 children. Project Hope’s programs have helped her family move on.

Sussy Hidalgo was chosen to be a One Family Scholar and is now a junior at Northeastern University pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice.



Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Sr. Margaret A. Leonard (left) were featured speakers. Co-chairs were John K. Markey of Mintz-Levin et al. and William H. Woolverton of Putnam Investments.



Attending were 3 members of the illustrious Curran family, John of LaHive & Cockfield, Sister Patricia, SND (this editor) and Dennis of the National Football League.

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.

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