

# HOME INSIDER

Summer 2020



## Smiling Eyes Give Healing & Hope

By: David A. Crenshaw, PhD, ABPP, Clinical Director

When I was a young boy, the polio epidemic struck fear in the hearts of parents and children alike.

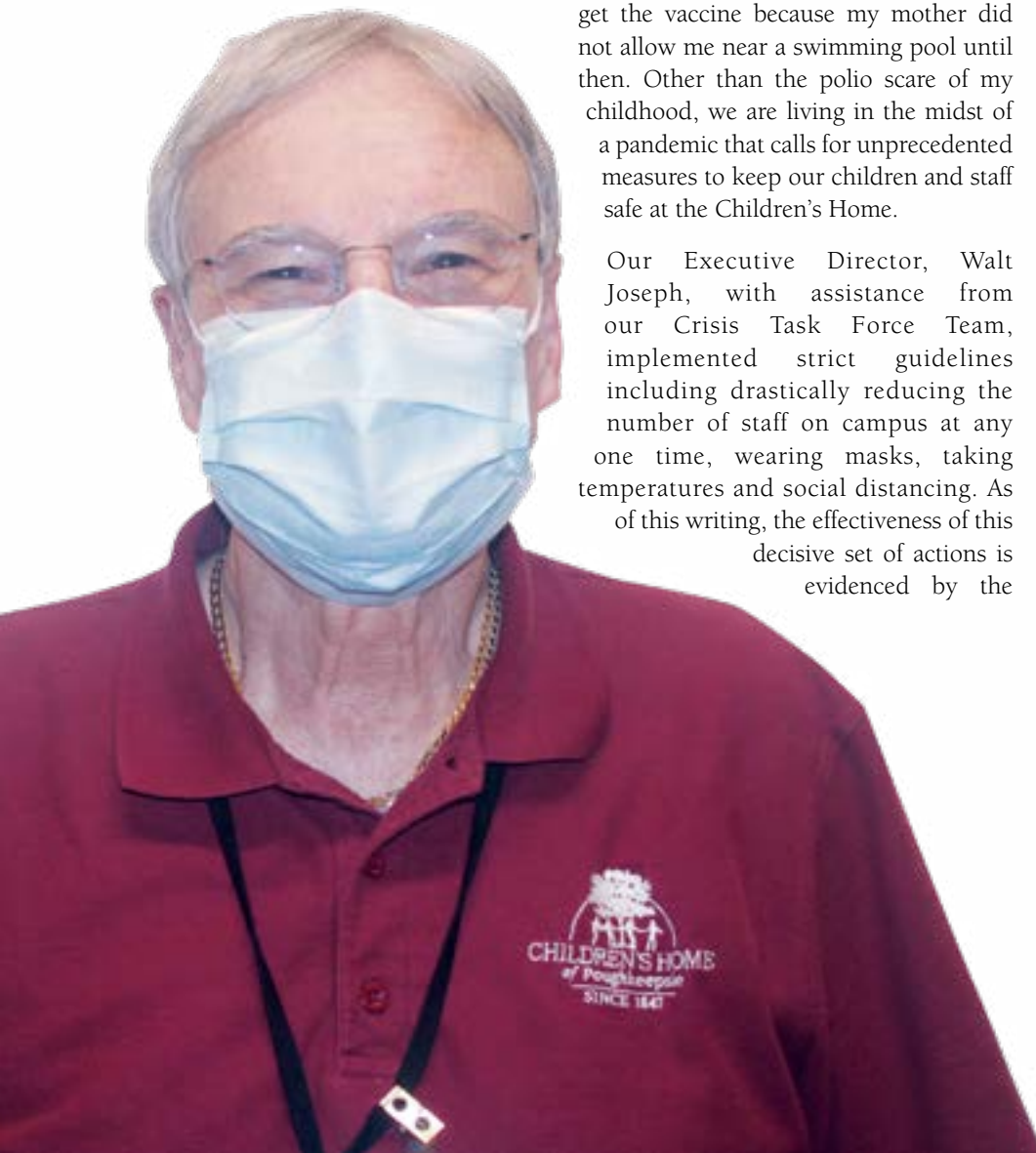
The government did not make the Salk vaccine until I was 10 years old. The following year, in 1955, the vaccine was temporarily suspended due to improper manufacturing methods in some of the labs. I remember how relieved I was to get the vaccine because my mother did not allow me near a swimming pool until then. Other than the polio scare of my childhood, we are living in the midst of a pandemic that calls for unprecedented measures to keep our children and staff safe at the Children's Home.

Our Executive Director, Walt Joseph, with assistance from our Crisis Task Force Team, implemented strict guidelines including drastically reducing the number of staff on campus at any one time, wearing masks, taking temperatures and social distancing. As of this writing, the effectiveness of this decisive set of actions is evidenced by the

fact that no youth at the Children's Home have contracted COVID-19.

The impact on our Clinical Services has been huge. Beginning March 18 and until recently, clinicians and graduate interns conducted all therapy sessions and family visits by one of the on-line platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, or Doxy.me. Clinicians and our children all deserve enormous credit for adapting quickly to the video platforms. Children and their families did the same with their family visits. No one is saying that virtual therapy sessions are equivalent to in-person therapy sessions or family visits, but when the health of our youth, their families, and our staff was at-risk, we made the best of a tough situation.

One of the challenges faced when clinicians returned to campus to do in-person sessions was the need to wear a mask. Research findings reveal that one of the most important clues that youth exposed to past trauma rely on is facial expressions. Masks cover the nose and mouth, blocking facial expressions. This impairs an important source of communication that children rely on to decide if they can be safe with a person. While wearing a mask doesn't allow our children to see our facial expressions, they are able to see our eyes and hear the tone of our voice. Research reveals that facial cues and tone of voice are the two most robust clues to traumatized children in deciding if they can be safe with us or



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Home is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment that improves lives and empowers at-risk children and families in the Hudson Valley and surrounding communities.

## VALUES STATEMENT

Our core principles guide us in fulfilling our mission and operating on a daily basis. We live by these values and use them to focus our decisions.

**Integrity** We will act ethically, honorably and with commitment in all that we do.

**Stewardship** We will manage our resources responsibly to ensure ongoing sustainability.

**Respect** We will show compassion and respect for ourselves and others.

**Opportunity** We will foster resiliency and seek to create growth opportunities.

### Dear Children's Home Friends,

These are uncertain times. This March, the COVID-19 pandemic began to shift our everyday lives. Grocery store lines became longer. Long-awaited events were postponed. Businesses closed. Children asked, "Do I really have to wear a mask? It's itchy and hot!".

At the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie, we knew that temporarily shutting our doors was not an option. As you know, hundreds of kids call the Children's Home their 'home' and depend on our staff and our community to provide them safety and care. On March 20, we were designated essential service status by New York State. Over the next few months we responded.

Just like in your home, hand-washing and sanitizing were reinforced as vital practices in our Home. We hoped for the best and prepared for the worst. Staff were provided masks and, along with the kids, given instructions on social distancing practices.

Schools closed and family visits at the Home were temporarily suspended to prevent the virus from spreading to our children, staff or their loved ones. By April, it was crucial that our kids be able to attend school despite closures and maintain open lines of communication between families and our social services and mental health team. In response, our IT Department installed computers and web cameras in cottages so that the children could easily access online school assignments and maintain contact with family and friends via live video stream.

A distance of six feet is roughly two arm's length. As you can imagine, asking children to maintain that distance has been no easy task. Many of our kids cope with memories of past trauma daily. Our staff had to explain that even though a hug from a best pal ordinarily provides comfort, temporarily social distancing would keep each other safe and healthy until the threat of exposure had passed. By May, the children had been distancing for weeks and like you and I, many were experiencing feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

On May 25, George Floyd was murdered by a police officer while three other officers looked on. By June, protests erupted nationwide. Similarly to many throughout our community and nation, many of our children felt outrage and fear, worsened by each's past trauma and present challenges. On June 3, the Children's Home invited children and staff to gather as a family to stand against racism. Children and staff stood outside with their noses and mouths covered—six-feet-apart, and yet side-by-side. **CHP, one family, many faces, standing together against racism.**

In June we saw the end of the school year. In a year that was anything but traditional, our children persevered. Our hats are off to our three high school graduates too! We are so proud of all of their accomplishments.

At the Children's Home, we continue to celebrate and support our children despite life's challenges. Even in uncertain times our work continues. It is our responsibility to provide comfort, care and hope. We don't know what next month will bring, but we will face it together.

We wish health and safety to you and your loved ones.

Walter J. Joseph  
Executive Director

# Children's Home Welcomes New Board and Executive Committee Members

**By: Erin Cafarelli, Director of  
Development and Public Relations**

The Children's Home Board of Directors is comprised of generous community members who have been selected for their knowledge, expertise and commitment to our mission. With the start of a new fiscal year underway, we are delighted to welcome two new board members to our Board of Directors and a new slate of officers.

**The two newly elected  
board members are:**



**Catherine Forbes** is the Senior Director of Advancement at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. She previously worked at the Adirondack Mountain Club. Catherine earned her MPA in Non-Profit Management at Seattle University. She is a member of the Board of Directors at Grace Smith House and serves on the Town of Hyde Park Democratic Committee. In her free time, Catherine is training for her 15th marathon. She resides in Hyde Park, NY, with her husband and daughter, who just completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at SUNY Albany, Catherine's alma mater.



**Patrick Meaney** works at IBM and is a Senior Technology Staff Member. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Clarkson University and his Master of Science degree in Computer Engineering from Syracuse University. Patrick is a member of Hudson Valley Bridge Builders, is President/Area Director of Toastmasters, and is a New Hackensack Reformed Church Elder and Youth Leader. Patrick is a regular Children's Home volunteer through his work with IBM and the Hudson Valley Bridge Builders. He has helped to obtain grants from IBM for the Home and presented engineering programs to our youth. Patrick enjoys volleyball, hiking, reading and crossword puzzles. Patrick and his wife Susan live in Poughkeepsie and have three adult children.

"As we move forward this year at the Children's Home, I am excited by the talents and passion our newest Board members will bring to the organization and so grateful for the strength and wisdom of our collective Board of Directors," said Maureen Crush, President, Children's Home of Poughkeepsie Board of Directors.

**Thank you to all who serve.**

## Children's Home 2020-2021 Board of Directors

Maureen Crush,  
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Walter J. Joseph,  
*Executive Director*

# CHILDREN'S HOME PARTICIPATES IN 5TH ANNUAL LOCAL DAY OF GIVING

By: Emily Mathews, Development Associate

“The Facility Service Dogs make the Children's Home an ideal place for children,” said a 12-year-old resident.

As an essential part of the Home's Clinical and Case Management team, Ace, Elvis and Marshall work 5-days a week.

The team provides unconditional love, support and comfort to children that have experienced neglect, abuse and broken hearts. Our 4-legged therapists intuitively read each child's emotions and respond with individualized comfort and care. The therapy that they provide is especially critical this year as our children cope with challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to you, their important work continues.

On May 20th, the Children's Home celebrated the fifth annual Hudson Valley Gives Day (#HVGives) by fundraising for Ivy's Fund, which supports the board and care of the dogs and training of the Facility Service Dog team. #HVGives is a 5-year-old virtual event that encourages Hudson Valley residents to “give where you live” and make our home an even better place to live, work, play and serve.

**What makes #HVGives successful? You.** Likes, shares, e-blasts and phone calls spread excitement about the critical services that Hudson Valley nonprofits offer locally. This year, #HVGives marked an incredibly timely opportunity to unite our community around causes we believe in, like the Facility Service Dog Program at the Home, Ivy's Fund, as we faced the COVID-19 pandemic together.

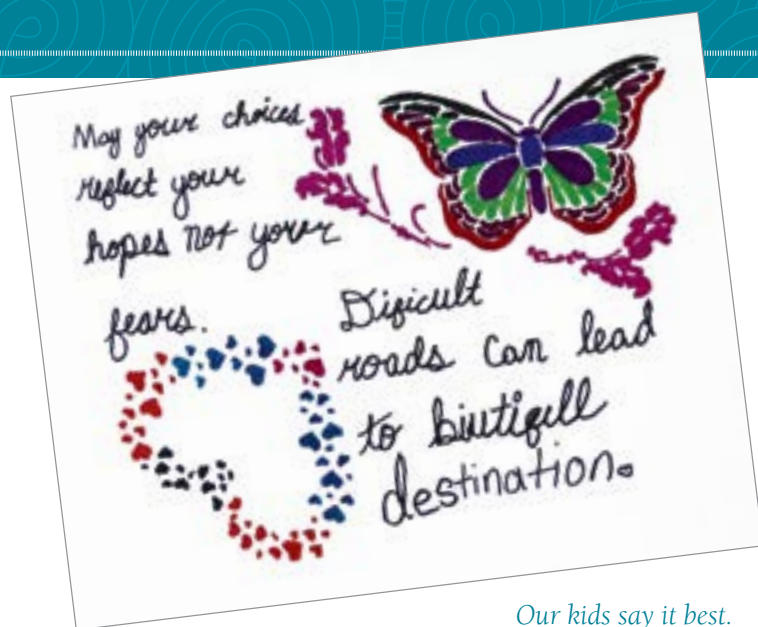
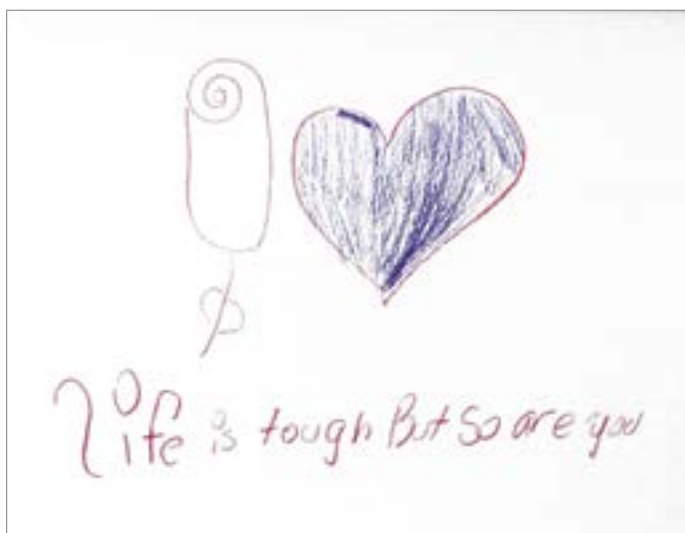
With a goal of \$5,000, our morning kicked off with a match challenge by our very own Clinical Director, Dr. David Crenshaw. We spent the day connecting with our Facility Service Dogs, their handlers and the kids that they serve, and by 5:00 pm, our community had already surpassed our \$5,000 goal. The excitement continued and in total, we raised \$8,711, over 170% of our goal!

We are overwhelmed by our community's generosity on, before and after #HVGives. Thank you to everyone that shared and supported the essential work that Ace, Elvis and Marshall are doing right here in the Hudson Valley to help our kids heal and find hope.

*“I am a clinical therapist, currently working with male youth offenders, which can be pretty challenging most days! On the outside, some of these youth come off as very tough and hardened, but I have witnessed even the most somber faces light up when I have a facility dog in my office. Ace, Marshall, and Elvis help my kids feel safe, loved, and comforted both inside and outside of the therapy office. They bring unconditional affection, provide the best empathy, and never judge anyone. On days that are harder than others, I have personally utilized the comfort of these dogs by playing a quick game of tug-of-war or giving belly rubs. The Children's Home feels more like HOME with these pups roaming the halls!”*

— Kara Canelli, Clinical Therapist at the Children's Home





*Our kids say it best. Here are two beautiful pieces done by youth in care that we turned into note cards.*

## PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE

By: Lori Stella, LCSW-R, Program Director, Safe Harbour Program

Statements that have often been made by youth in the program include “thank you for believing me” and “you changed my life”.

The Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie’s Safe Harbour program opened its doors in October 2016.

The program was developed in response to the high need for residential, trauma responsive services for adolescent girls and transgender youth within the foster care system that were experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. Since its inception, the program has expanded its intake criteria to provide services to youth assessed at medium to high risk of trafficking and exploitation, in addition to youth with a complex sexual trauma background.

The program’s ultimate goal is to help provide enrolled youth with a safe space to process their traumas and to prevent revictimization. The program offers a variety of intensive therapeutic and case management services, which provide the youth with access to the support they need to achieve healing and success. Healthy and safe relationships, along with the development of independent living skills, is key.

In the last four years, the Safe Harbour program has provided services to 62 youth, some having been admitted more than once. Youth served within the program have come from all over New York, ranging from Erie County to Suffolk County. Approximately half of the youth

served have been confirmed as victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Although law enforcement is not involved in every case, there have been some cases that have resulted in traffickers being tried and incarcerated for their crimes. The Safe Harbour program is highly regarded as a model for other programs throughout the State and our staff have assisted in program development and training for other agencies.

Although it is unfortunate that commercial sexual exploitation continues to remain a problem in our community, the Safe Harbour program staff work to identify affected youth and to provide services to address the trauma they have experienced. In recent months, we expanded from an 11 bed program to an 18 bed program. Our staff is dedicated to ensuring the safety and health of the youth. Most importantly, the program has fulfilled its purpose to provide a trusting and safe space for vulnerable youth. We are proud of our work at the Children’s Home and most especially our youth.

2020 Date Canceled

**SAVE THE  
2021 DATE**

April 22, 2021



## OPEN YOUR HEART UPDATE

With heavy hearts, the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie has made the decision to cancel our 2020 Open Your Heart Cocktail Concert. We wrestled with this decision as our organization relies on the fundraising support we receive from this event to help further our mission to provide a safe and nurturing environment that improves lives and empowers at-risk children and families in the Hudson Valley and surrounding communities.

Our Open Your Heart event allows us to connect with friends and share our story of healing and hope. We will miss that in-person opportunity this year. We are grateful to our sponsors and supporters who diverted their event support to a donation to help further the mission of the Home. A special thank you to all of our friends that turned their reservations into donations. We appreciate you! **Please save the date for our 2021 Open Your Heart Cocktail Concert: April 22, 2021.**

### Thank You to our Supporters!

## EVENT SPONSORS



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# FINDING JOY IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

By: Jay McGinnis, Recreation Director

Although the past few months have been a trying time for everyone, we have actually been able to find ‘a silver lining’ here at the Children’s Home. We have an extremely dedicated and committed staff and our residents have been able to accept the necessary inconveniences with a positive, can-do attitude.

We’ve been able to focus on many enjoyable on-campus activities such as gardening, bike riding, movie nights, water play, crafts in our log cabin, campfires (with s’mores, of course), spa days, basketball and many others.



We have especially enjoyed planting and nurturing our Victory (over the virus) Gardens and preparing for our on-campus Fourth of July parade with floats and banners constructed by the youth and staff.

We are looking forward to getting out into the community and the recreational opportunities that are out there, but we have also learned some good things about ourselves during this trying time.



Together our kids and staff created “Victory Gardens” around campus and the giant wooden bear that adorns our entrance that all can see.

## Donation Form

I am making a tax deductible gift of:

\$30  \$50  \$100  \$500  \$1000

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check made payable to: Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie.

I will transfer stock or securities.  
*Please contact our Fiscal Director at 845.452.1420.*

Please charge my credit card:

AMEX  MC  Visa  Discover

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to make a monthly gift.

*Please use credit card information above.*

I authorize CHP to charge

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ /month for \_\_\_\_\_ month(s),

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\$ \_\_\_\_\_ .

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Please include me on the Home’s email list.

I would like my gift to remain anonymous.  
*Please do not print my name in CHP’s Annual Report.*

My gift is made in  honor  memory of:

Please acknowledge the gift but not the amount to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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My company matches gifts. *Please include form in envelope.*

I would like information about making a bequest to the Home.

**Thank You!**



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*Please consider leaving a lasting legacy by remembering the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie in your will or estate plans.*

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not. Our clinicians are self-aware and realize that during this time when children are unable to see our full face, it is extra important to soften our eye gaze and to speak in a warm, friendly, and welcoming voice tone. Our kids, staff and families are adapting well to the changes and are happy to be able to see each other in person now.

This pandemic has certainly challenged many of us in a number of ways. Adults can help children in this pandemic by providing perspective. Children often lack perspective when any kind of highly stressful or traumatic event occurs. While the pandemic looks like it is going to affect our lives for some time to come, children need to know that in the lifetime of most adults, the government has not required anyone to wear a mask and there will come a time when we will not be wearing masks in the future. Our children take their

cues from the adults who care for them, if we are able to remain calm and positive, that alone will go a long way towards calming their anxiety and fears. It is important at a time when rumors are plentiful to teach children the skill of "checking the facts."

**a place  
of healing  
and hope  
since 1847**



“

**“The staff here are first responders and heroes. You are coming in everyday and taking a risk that most people can avoid. Your dedication is amazing and you should be proud!”**

**— Walter J. Joseph, Executive Director**

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