



Miles of Smiles

Dear Friends,

I am writing on behalf of the Children's Home of Easton. Since 1885, the Home has provided a caring, loving, and supportive environment for children in need as well as assistance to their families. The Home supports children overcoming abuse, neglect and other traumatic experiences to believe in their self-worth and reach their full-potential. The Home offers emergency housing, group homes, foster care, specialized foster care, independent living, health care, education and much more.

Last year, the number of children living at the Home increased from 273 in 2009 to 325 in 2010. Their ages ranges from 2 months old to adulthood. Below are two case studies that reflect the history and challenges of children at the Home.

- Regina is 14 years old. Her mother and father have a history of mental illness. Regina found her mother dead after school. Regina wants to live with an aunt who shows no interest in her life. Before arriving at the Children's Home, she was living in a homeless shelter.
- John is 17 years old. He had a fight with his older brother and was stabbed twice. His mother wants him to drop the charges. She continues to blame John for instigating the argument and for his brother being in jail. There is no father or other family members involved in his life.

The most pressing need is supporting youth who are at risk of turning 18 years old. The youth can be automatically discharged from children services without families or homes to support. Currently, 16% of the Home's youth are 18 years old or older. In addition, 35 youth will turn 18 in 2011.

STAR Touring and Riding Association, Lehigh Valley Chapter 386, has set a goal to raise a minimum of \$10,000 to help Joe Gonzalez, a former resident, to help children at risk of turning 18 years old. Joe works with students starting in 11th grade for prepare for the SAT's, to visit post-secondary schools, to apply to school, to fill out financial aid applications, to prepare for the academic rigors of higher education, to live the Children's Home during vacations and much more.

This program is funded entirely by contributions and provides an alternative to life on the streets. This year, the Home helped 17 youth attend college or trade school and six youth apply to schools. Either way, these youth will need our support to become independent or to live in homeless shelters. Please join with us to provide them with hope and a future.

We need tax deductible donations, non-monetary support and gifts-in-kind for our fund-raising event on September 25 from 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM. The event is a motorcycle ride involving over 100 riders through the Lehigh Valley and ending at the Children's Home.

As a supporter, we will feature your business in our sponsor listing. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or additional needs. Contributions are tax deductible and made payable to The Children's Home of Easton and can be mailed to Marc Spinowitz, 378 Hamilton Drive, Stewartsville, NJ 08886.

Thank you for your consideration and help for children at-risk.

Sincerely,

Marc Spinowitz
President
STAR Lehigh Valley, PA Chapter 386



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