

Newslink

Bringing you closer to the lives you help change

Summer 2015 · www.communityhealthlink.org

Grateful kids - in their own words

You helped children at our Burncoat Family Center learn how to thrive

When children are faced with severe emotional issues, they may end up hospitalized. Thanks to the support of generous donors and funders like you, CHL is able to offer these children a safe, secure alternative to hospitalization that helps them learn to thrive by using their strengths to solve the problems they face.

Since 1992, CHL's Burncoat Family Center (BFC) has provided residential, educational, and treatment services to kids as young as four and as old as 18. Many of the children who leave BFC write letters expressing gratitude for their time in the program. We are pleased to share these words of thanks with you to show the impact your support has on the lives of our clients. ■

what this program means to me-being able to realize and accept what makes you truly beautiful, and show it without fear of being judged.



No words will ever be enough to express to you all, all that you have done for me. The past fifteen months of my life have been overwhelmed with trips to the emergency room, month-long stays in hospitals and CBATs, diagnosis after diagnosis - yet through it all, my stay at the Burncoat Family Center gave me something that I don't think I could have found had I gone anywhere else.

It gave me internal peace - a kind of peace that had been lost to me for several years.

I'm shaking as I write this whole part for you because I made a real connection with you. I was always excited when I came back from "the school", and heard you say "my man!" I'm telling you man, you're someone I will never forget for the rest of my life



I have decided to keep trying, for myself and for my family.

And I have all of you to thank for that.

Generosity from donors like you made our HOAP Health Fair a success

Your generous donations of time, food, and client giveaways for our Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Program (HOAP) Health Fair meant that dozens of homeless clients were treated to a day of free health education and services. THANK YOU!



Above left: Fair attendees enjoyed free hair cuts, courtesy of Untamed Salon. Above right: HOAP staff members served a buffet lunch throughout the afternoon, featuring generously donated food from The Boynton, Holy Cross, and staff members.



Above left: A popular feature of the health fair was the smoothie bar, which served nutritious fruit smoothies throughout the day. Above right: Beacon Pharmacy donated dozens of gift bags for clients, each filled with a variety of toiletries and personal care items.



Above left: Representatives from a number of community agencies spent time at the health fair providing health education materials to clients. Above right: Valentin R. provided great background music at the fair by performing on his keyboard.

Thank you for joining us to “Listen In” for Mental Health Month!

“Listen In: Stories of Illness and Recovery,” featured city officials, business leaders, other well-known community members, and students reading excerpts from published works by authors with personal experience of mental illness, addiction, and recovery.



Above left: CHL’s President and CEO, Deborah Ekstrom, introduces the evening’s readers, who flank her on the stage. Above right: Worcester City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr., reads a passage about the difficulty of managing bipolar disorder.



Above left: Three-time World Boxing Association champion Jose Rivera evocatively reads about the power of group therapy in treating addiction. Above right: Worcester Technical High School sophomore Tehya Casey captivates the audience with her reading of the experience of schizophrenia.



Above left: Cristal Steur, one of the evening’s attendees (left) congratulates Holy Cross senior Victoria Gay (right) for her powerful reading about obsessive-compulsive disorder. Above right: SHINE Initiative Executive Director Paul Richard (left) discusses the content of the evening’s performance with Tuyet Tran, Director of CHL’s Community Support Program.

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Questions and comments can
be directed to:

Sarah Loy
Director of Resource Development
sloy@communityhealthlink.org
(508) 860-1217

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Cutting edge advocacy

In May, staff from CHL's Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Program (HOAP) conducted a workshop at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference in Washington, D.C. titled, "Intimate Partner Violence and Homelessness: The Dilemma of Providing Services to the Couple in Conflict." It explored the difficult and unique task of providing advocacy for both victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV). Conference attendees were so interested in learning from the HOAP staff that the workshop space was standing room only, and



the presenters received rave reviews. From L to R:
Brian Bickford, LMHC; Evangelina Gonzalez-Dufresne,
LICSW; Tammy Brisebois, BS; and Erik Garcia, MD. ■

My Gift To Help Adults, Children, and Families Recover

YES! I want to assist Community Healthlink to help people recover from the effects of mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness!

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 **UMass Memorial Health Care
Community Healthlink**

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www.communityhealthlink.org

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form with your tax-deductible
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