FINDING FAMILY

Melissa and Mark* always knew they wanted a big family, so they attended an adoption event to learn more about the process and reached out to The Home for Little Wanderers. It wasn’t long before their family of two grew to a family of five.

The couple welcomed a trio of siblings, all under the age of eight, into their lives and their home, reuniting the children who had been living in separate foster homes. Melissa and Mark have provided a nurturing and structured environment for the children, who experienced abuse and neglect early in their young lives and continue to receive therapeutic supports.

Prior to coming to live with Melissa and Mark, the siblings only saw each other on occasion but now the two oldest share a room – and a love for their new bunk beds. The family stays active together with time spent playing in the yard, hiking, and trips to a lake in New Hampshire with Melissa’s extended family where the kids have learned to swim.

Bringing three young children into your home is a big change but the family has adjusted well and is thriving. Melissa and Mark are strong advocates for the children and encourage them to pursue and engage in activities they enjoy.

The couple is awaiting a court date to officially adopt the siblings.

*Names have been changed to protect the family's privacy

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

November is National Adoption Awareness Month and a time to shine light on the importance of every child finding a permanent connection for life. The Adoption Program at The Home is dedicated to helping the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families find and prepare permanent families for children of all ages. Our program, which includes a dedicated team of social workers, provides the necessary training, licensing, matching, and supportive services for families including post-adoption support.

But we can’t do it alone. The backbone of our work is the dedicated foster and adoptive parents who step up to make a difference in a child’s life. Our programs are always seeking new individuals or families to partner with us to become foster or adoptive parents.

To learn more about our foster care and adoption programs or to attend one of our upcoming trainings, visit: thehome.org/adoPTION
Dear Friends,

Just like many of your families, we have spent the last couple months helping our kids get back into school routines and adjusting to our new normal. Our kids are taking a variety of approaches to school this year, from remote learning to socially distanced classrooms. We are proud of the resiliency they are building and of the hard work and dedication of our staff helping them adjust. We hope you enjoy learning about what “back to school” looks like this year on the pages of this newsletter.

This school year also marks our first with school-based programs in New Hampshire and New York City. As we shared earlier in the year, The Home recently merged with Wediko Children’s Services. Wediko has a strong reputation for partnering with schools and families to promote the mental health and success of children and adolescents who face multiple barriers to learning. We are thrilled to have an expanded footprint across the Northeast and are excited to begin sharing more about these programs with you. Take a look at the right-hand page for a brief introduction to Wediko’s work.

While it feels like we just packed the backpacks and opened up the new textbooks, before we know it, the holidays will be here. Throughout this newsletter, you will find information about our holiday giving opportunities. Things will certainly look different this year in the ways in which we come together to celebrate the holidays around The Home but one thing we know for certain is that our kids and families will need our support more than ever this year. We hope you’ll continue to join us in helping to make this holiday season special for all our kids at The Home.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read about the latest news around The Home and for all your support.

With gratitude,

Lesli Suggs, President & CEO

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The chilly mornings and leaves crunching under our feet can only mean one thing: back to school. But for the kids at our Southeast Campus in Plymouth, school will look a little different this year. Southeast Campus’ student body is made up of both kids who live on site and day students who live in the surrounding communities and travel to the school. Students who attend Southeast Campus learn in a supportive and therapeutic environment intended to help them thrive when they are ready to return to school in their communities.

With social distancing a priority, students are assigned a home classroom with no more than five students and the teachers come to them rather than students moving through the hallways. Activities and learning have also been moved outside whenever possible. Through the vocational programming, students are working together to create outdoor spaces for learning and activities. Students learned how to use drones to measure outdoor spaces and develop designs for outdoor classroom space. The landscaping program developed quiet spaces and assembled outdoor tables with help from the woodshop program.

Each Wednesday, students participate in a Community Day, which in the past brought the whole school together but to ensure proper distancing, students this year will break into teams to work on large projects. For example, students are redesigning the soccer field and clearing out an area of the forest to build a kindness garden where students can paint rocks with positive messages. Another group is working on murals to beautify campus while others are learning video skills to begin producing a newscast for the school.

While school may look and feel different this year, it is giving students opportunities to learn new skills, build confidence, pride, community, and team spirit.
WELCOMING WEDIKO

In April, The Home for Little Wanderers merged with Wediko Children’s Services. Established in 1934, Wediko works with students who have faced repeated obstacles in their lives due to a broad spectrum of social, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges.

Wediko and The Home share a mutual passion for and rich history of serving youth and families. Wediko’s extensive programming in Boston, New Hampshire, and New York City will allow us to expand needed services to vulnerable youth throughout the Northeast. This page highlights just a glimpse of the incredible Wediko programs and we look forward to sharing more updates and details on our new programs in coming publications.

THE WEDIKO SCHOOL

Located on 450 lakefront acres in New Hampshire, The Wediko School is a residential treatment program offering therapeutic and educational services for middle and high school aged boys experiencing significant social-emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges. The Wediko School’s unique approach focuses on relationship building, which allows the students to build trust in the staff and becomes a foundation for successful therapeutic intervention. Students come to the Wediko School from all over the country and spend on average a year and a half at the school before transitioning to less intensive environments.

CAMP WEDIKO

The Wediko Summer Program, located at The Wediko School, is a 45-day residential treatment program serving boys and girls ages 8-19 with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. The children who come to Camp Wediko are referred by schools, educational consultants, and clinicians from across the country who believe a fresh-air relationship-based, therapeutic experience can create positive change.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

Wediko partners with public schools in Boston, New Hampshire, and New York City, expanding their capacity to provide social-emotional learning and support to students. Staff offer a range of supports for students and teachers, from side by side groups in classrooms to in-person support for students throughout the school day.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place and most students beginning the school year online, Wediko’s school-based programs adapted to continue to support schools and teachers remotely. Prior to the start of the school year, staff in New York City participated in a 5-day virtual orientation that included workshops on remote engagement and remote counseling practices. The New York team is also launching a monthly remote Learning Series focused on working with marginalized communities that will compliment quarterly workshops about social justice topics such as antiracism, racial equity, and racial injustice.

Students enjoy some of the many outdoor activities at Camp Wediko including a scuba diving program.
A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS: DEFINITIVE HEALTHCARE

With social distancing protocols in place and the annual Boston Pride Parade canceled, our corporate partners at Definitive Healthcare’s Out at DHC employee group reached out to see how they could help the kids at Waltham House plan an extra special Pride celebration this year. We jumped on a Zoom call with DHC, The Home, and mostly importantly, residents at Waltham House, to brainstorm ideas and give the kids the opportunity to let their creative juices dictate the planning.

We are grateful to DHC who made that vision a reality, donating balloons, gift bags, food, a water slide, obstacle course, and costumes for a celebratory “Drag Race.” Giving kids a day of fun not only lifts spirits and reduces stress, it also gives kids an outlet to be creative, to learn planning skills and teamwork, and to build confidence.

But the generosity didn’t stop there. The needs of the families served by The Home are great and no family should ever have to choose between putting food on the table and getting school supplies for their kids. DHC generously donated backpacks stuffed to the brim with school supplies that our families picked up at our Roslindale site. We worked with DHC to set up an Amazon Wishlist that their employees so generously purchased from to fill the backpacks. Thanks to DHC, our kids are headed back to school set up for success.

Keep Kids Warm Gift Card Drive

The air is getting cooler and many of the children we serve aren’t prepared for the changing weather. You can make a huge impact on a child’s life by donating a Gift Card to fulfill the need for a sweatshirt, fleece, winter coat, or rain jacket for our children. (T.J. Maxx/Marshalls, Target, Walmart, Amazon)

Please Note: We CANNOT accept donations of physical coats this year due to COVID-19. Gift cards will allow our staff and parents to purchase a coat for the children.

Gift Cards for Coats can be mailed to:
The Home for Little Wanderers
Attn: Coat Drive
10 Guest Street Boston, MA 02135

December 1: Giving Tuesday

Be part of the world-wide initiative for giving back! Donate to The Home this Giving Tuesday on December 1, which follows the two biggest shopping days of the year – Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Please consider making a donation online at www.thehome.org on December 1, and share your support of The Home on your social media account! Learn more at thehome.org/givingtuesday

Amazon Smile

Visit smile.amazon.com and choose The Home for Little Wanderers as your charity recipient – a percentage of what you spend will then be donated back to The Home each time you shop with Amazon Smile!

COVID-19 Relief

The Home for Little Wanderers is deeply appreciative of your interest in supporting our children and families as we continue to weather this unprecedented situation together. The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging for vulnerable children and families, increasing the need for our support this year. The health of our youth, families, and workforce is of the utmost importance and we are taking every precaution in accordance with recommendations from public health officials. Donate to COVID-19 Relief Fund: thehome.org/covid19relief

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE
*PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO COVID-19 ONLY GIFT CARDS WILL BE ACCEPTED THIS YEAR – AND THE TOY ROOM IS CLOSED TO ALL DELIVERIES.

Nov. 16 – Dec. 18, 2020

You can make a difference for the thousands of children and families served by The Home by participating in our Gift Card Drive. The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging for vulnerable children and families, increasing the need for your support this year. With your help, we can make more wishes than ever come true this holiday season!

WHY should I give?
You help to ensure every child in our care has a gift to open and every family we serve is provided with much-needed essentials. In some circumstances, children in our residential programs will spend the holidays with us and your gift helps us to create warm holiday memories for them. You help us to do everything we can to make this time of year as joyous as possible for those who may be having difficulties, including many of the families in our community-based programs who are struggling to make ends meet and would not otherwise be able to afford to celebrate the holidays.

WHAT types of items do you need?
Our greatest need this year is gift cards. Due to the pandemic, we cannot accept donations of physical items, so we hope to provide gift cards so parents and our program staff can purchase the items on children's and families' wish lists on your behalf.

WHERE can I send donations?
Please send all gift cards to The Home for Little Wanderers at 10 Guest Street, Floor 3, Boston, MA 02135. Attn: Big Wishes. NOTE: Our Toy Room is CLOSED this year. We are NOT accepting physical items at any of our locations due to COVID-19.

HOW can I give?
Please choose an option below or one that works best for you to send a gift card for our children and families.

- **Wish Lists** Select an individual child or purchase a gift card for family essentials using our Wish List website (www.giftdrive-thehome.org). This easy and fun online tool allows you to search by age, gender, gift category, family size, etc. Then go out and purchase a gift card to fulfill the item(s) and send after to The Home for Little Wanderers, 10 Guest Street, Floor 3, Boston, MA 02135. Please send all gift cards by Dec. 18, 2020 if possible, though we will accept through the holidays!

- **Amazon Wish List** With just a few clicks you can purchase and send a gift card to a specific store from our Amazon Wish List directly to The Home for Little Wanderers. Use smile.amazon.com and select The Home for Little Wanderers as your charity to make an even bigger impact!

- **Gift Card Challenge** Citizens Bank and TJX will match, dollar-for-dollar, up to $10,000 in gift card donations this year. Help us reach our goal! Our kids and families need gift cards for places like T.J. Maxx/ Marshalls, Target, Stop & Shop, Walmart, CVS, Rite Aid, Amazon, VISA and more.

- **Donate Online** Too hard to choose which child or family's wishes to fulfill? You can make a monetary gift online at thehome.org/donate. Your gift supports our programs and helps vulnerable children and families during the holidays and year-round.

Thank you to our partners:
THE HOME’S HOLIDAY CARDS
Choose from a selection of cards featuring unique artwork created by children in our care. All proceeds benefit The Home.

Holiday Card Packs
Show your friends and family you care with a holiday card from The Home. Each pack contains 12 cards of four different designs, plus blank envelopes. Card size is 7” x 5”.
$20 per package

thehome.org/giftshop

Customized Electronic Corporate Holiday Cards
For a personal and professional greeting, The Home’s customized electronic corporate holiday cards are a great way to show your clients, colleagues, employees, and friends your commitment to those in need this holiday season. Personalize an e-card with a custom message, optional company logo and electronic signatures and send it out without ever having to print!

To view the full collection and place an order, visit:

thehome.org/cards

2021 CALENDAR OF CHILDREN’S ART
This colorful calendar full of original artwork created by children makes a gift for everyone on your list — or keep it for yourself! Calendars will be available for purchase in November.
$20 each

thehome.org/giftshop