HOPE IS BORN: PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS CONTINUE TO GROW

In early April, a baby girl entered the world; she is the first baby born at The Home in quite some time. Thanks to the Manchester Village – Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Program, one of The Home's newest housing programs for young adults ages 18 to 24 who have aged out of state care, Mom didn’t go into labor in a homeless shelter. She was in her own apartment, her two-year-old toddling nearby, until her delivery.

The newborn arrived early, but she is happy and healthy. She just left the hospital, in fact, now that she is big enough. Tucked into her new car seat, she didn't go to a shelter or into foster care. She headed to the safety of Mom's apartment, where a bassinet, diapers and baby essentials awaited her—everything Mom needs to welcome her little one to the world and wrap her with love.

The opening of the Manchester Village – YHDP Program brings the success of the Boston model to New Hampshire. The initiative is designed to reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness by offering temporary, independent housing to those with the highest need in select communities. Because the Manchester Village – YHDP Program offers multi-bedroom units, young families can occupy these apartments while they regain their footing and work towards permanent housing.

In just three weeks, all four units were filled with young moms, including one who has one-year-old twins and a toddler, and a 19-year-old with custody of a toddler and 13- and 15-year-old stepchildren. "We picked up two families directly from the local shelter agencies and gave them a way out of that environment," shares Program Director Autumn Nall. Then the five-person Home team, all of whom have children of their own, met the young families’ needs.

“...It's a different kind of grateful. They can make mac and cheese, cookies in the oven—all of those things we take for granted. It has been beautiful to see.”
—AUTUMN NALL, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Our staff, too, felt the impact and emotion created by these new sets of circumstances. “When you’re housing a young mom with kids, it’s a different kind of grateful,” explains Autumn. “They can make mac and cheese, cookies in the oven—all of those things we take for granted. It has been beautiful to see.”

WRAPPING AROUND THE FAMILIES
Since the program’s inception, our team at Manchester Village – YHDP Program has provided...

- Furniture and housewares, from carpeting to baby gates
- Clothing, baby gear and essentials
- Life coaching
- Parenting support
- Counseling
- Connections to community resources
Dear Friends,

Hello from The Home! I’m happy to share our early summer newsletter. As you will see, we have been busy!

This spring, I embarked on a personal journey. I ran the Boston Marathon with my 22-year-old daughter, Sydney, to give visibility to the children and families served by The Home and raise awareness about the mental health crisis that is impacting our kids’ ability to thrive in school, in their communities and at home.

When The Home got two bibs, Sydney, an avid runner who has grown up with a social worker for a mom and fully appreciates all she’s been given, said “Mom, we have to do this!” While I thought it would be amazing, I honestly did not think I could. I am not a marathon runner. She said, “I know you can do it! We will do it together.” Given that there is no other cause I am more passionate about, I ran. The training wasn’t easy. At mile 17, my knee was hurting so badly I didn’t think I could take another step. Instead of focusing on the pain, I thought about how my daughter, and my partner, Rich, helped me go the distance by taking it step by step. It was doable because week after week, I pushed and ran further. I took it mile by mile with people around me who believed in me—even when I didn’t believe in myself.

That is what my colleagues at The Home do every day. We help our children and families break it down, step by step, and believe in their potential, and in their hopes and dreams. Day after day, we help them meet one goal and then the next. We don’t give up. As a result, a young mom and her newborn have a safe, clear path to the road ahead; a student is accepting his diploma; and a child’s ten-year journey to find family is complete.

Sydney and I surpassed our marathon fundraising goal of $20,000 to support the work of The Home. Thank you to everyone who encouraged us, and to all who believe in the power of potential and dreams.

Warmest regards,

Lesli Suggs, LICSW
President & CEO

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**GRAD SPOTLIGHT**

**A STAGE FOR SUCCESS**

When Billy* came to The COVE School as an eighth grader in 2018, he was reluctant and resistant, and afraid to try new things. Too much in his life was new and uncertain. His single mother had just suffered a stroke, and she was unable to care for him while she recovered, so he was placed at The Home’s Southeast Campus residential program also onsite.

At school, Billy would demand that his activities and schedule match what he was used to in previous grades, where he last felt safe. His apprehensions and responses to trauma found expression in challenging, aggressive behaviors, common in youth who have experienced periods of neglect.

Over time, Billy began to trust The Home’s teachers, clinicians and direct care staff, who helped him work through his behaviors and connect them to his emotions. His behaviors slowly subsided, while his excitement for The COVE School’s vocational programs, like the culinary arts and equine science, grew...as did his aptitude.

In 2020, he returned home, as his mother had further recovered. He stayed on as a day student at The COVE School and became a leader, looked up to by his peers, in our vocational and academic classes. His growth was also felt at home. He began working at a local grocery store to help support his family, and he prepares meals and participates in household chores.

Because of his academic success and ability to regulate his behaviors, in 2021, Billy’s school district extended him an opportunity to “step down” to a mainstreamed public school environment. Billy advocated to stay right where he was, where he felt supported and successful. Billy graduated from The COVE School this month, to the cheers of the students and faculty of his school community. Billy has a college acceptance as well as his diploma. In the fall, he will study nursing.

*The student’s name has been changed for privacy.
A LONGTIME CLIENT OF THE HOME FINDS FAMILY WITH ONE OF HER EARLIEST CONNECTIONS

Tanya* and Abriana Morales go way back. Tanya came to live at Abriana’s childhood home when she was six, and Abriana was attending college. Abriana recalls being home for winter break, a few weeks shy of Christmas, when Tanya and her sister arrived. Abriana’s mother often fostered four to six children at a time.

“It was never about us. It was about Tanya getting the family she dreamed of and wanted.”
— ABRIANA MORALES

Tanya lived with the Morales family for two years, during which time, Abriana would come in and out of their lives, depending on her college schedule. She’d do Tanya’s hair and take her on trips to the library or zoo. Unfortunately, Tanya’s behaviors—a product of her early childhood trauma—began to affect the other children in such a way that she could no longer live in that household. Abriana recalls Tanya’s abrupt departure. “It was heartbreaking,” she says. “We literally had one day’s notice, and she was gone.”

Tanya was placed at Harrington House, The Home’s group residence for children ages 8 to 13, and, when she was older, at The Home at Walpole. Abriana’s mother remained a constant in Tanya’s life. “My mom never stopped calling, never stopped visiting,” says Abriana. Meanwhile, Tanya’s sister continued to live with her mom until another family adopted her.

REDEFINING FAMILY
Tanya began to lose hope when a pre-adoptive family of her own fell through. “After seeing her sister’s full adoption, it was hard on her to be unable to have that person,” says Clinical Coordinator Caitlyn Buttigieg, Tanya’s direct care clinician. “All she wanted was love.”

When Caitlyn first began working with her, Tanya didn’t have any permanency placement options or folks in her life who could give her a lasting, loving home. So Caitlyn and her team set about redefining the concept of “family” and cultivating connections with past teachers and visiting resources who clearly cared for Tanya, including Abriana.

SWEET SIXTEEN
When her mother was unable to drive to Walpole to pick up Tanya for Saturday visits, Abriana went instead. “I knew how devastating that could be,” reveals Abriana. “No child should ever have to feel alone.” During those drives, Abriana was able to build a relationship with Tanya. Day passes soon became overnights, then full weekends. Tanya even vacationed last August with Abriana, her fiancée, Chelsea, and their six-year-old.

Abriana and Chelsea, who are both teachers, now have their own apartment and what they need to give Tanya a bright future. They “took it slow to go fast,” stresses Abriana, and had patience and empathy. “It was never about us. It was about Tanya getting the family she dreamed of and wanted.”

This past winter, Abriana, Chelsea and her newest sibling welcomed Tanya home on her 16th birthday. “That wasn’t planned,” says Abriana. “The universe had perfect timing.”

*The youth’s name has been changed for privacy.
The Home’s signature spring event, **Voices & Visions**, was an evening of joy and purpose. Members of our giving community, supporters, staff, and children and families served by our organization gathered to celebrate our mission and impact at The Fairmont Copley Plaza, April 27.

Following a spirited cocktail reception, made all the more festive by magician DaSean Greene’s sleight of hand and a 360-photo booth, eventgoers filed into the ballroom for welcome remarks from Vice Chair of The Home’s Board of Directors Damon Hart and Board Chair Tim Miner. Children’s choir Voices Boston then gave an enchanting performance of inspiring songs from the musical *Into the Woods*.

Next, CEO & President Lesli Suggs stepped to the podium to delve deeper into The Home’s focus and work, and share a video about the ways we turn hurt into hope. She spoke about the importance of our community and recognized 15-year-old Zack Gusenoff with The President’s Award for his volunteerism with children at Harrington House.

After enjoying a delicious dinner, the spotlight shined brightly on seven incredible individuals served by The Home, who shared their personal success stories. The children, teens, young adults and families honored in the program are living better, brighter days because of their courage and conviction, and the work of The Home. They are the reason we do what we do. The evening raised over $930,000 to support children and families across the Northeast, including $50,000 in matched donations from the newly established England Gray Legacy Fund! Special thanks to our generous partners Deborah and Charles Gray, The TJX Companies, Damon and Kathy Hart and Liberty Mutual Insurance, Natixis Investment Managers and SEI Investments Company and to all for coming together to build permanent, positive change!

1. (l-r) Jack and Carol Harrington, Lesli Suggs, Zack Gusenoff, and Alyssa and Dan Gusenoff. 2. (l-r) Deborah, Charles and Maddie Gray. 3. Members of The Home’s Board of Directors (l-r) Deborah Gray, Delphine Zurkiya, Beth Johnson, Ashlee McClary, Damon Hart, CEO & President Lesli Suggs, Adrienne Penta, Renee Connolly, Tim Miner, Katie Bouton and Dan Tempesta. 4. Denny (r) and Therapeutic Mentor Danny Mai (l) receiving a standing ovation. 5. Voices Boston children’s choir (Photo credit: MelOPhoto)