

Bedding - Twin Size

- Comforters
- Sheet Sets
- Pillows
- Pillow Cases
- Crib Sheets

- Bathroom Cleaners
- Vacuums/Electric Brooms –
new or like new condition
- Steam Carpet Cleaner

Paper Goods

- Seasonal Plates and Cups
- Napkins
- Paper Towels
- Plastic Utensils

Other

- Local Gift Certificates for:
beauty salons
- movies*
- groceries*
- family restaurants*
- department stores*
- local cable company*
- Coffee: regular & decaf
- Non-perishable Food
- Picnic Table
- Sturdy Outside Patio
- Furniture – *new or like new condition*
- Floor buffer for vinyl flooring
– *new, or like new condition*

Personal Care Items

- Towels - bath set
- Face Clothes
- Shower Curtain & Rings
- Toiletries – *shampoo, conditioner, lotions*

Basic Housewares

- Dishes
- Pots & Pans
- Glasses
- Kitchen Utensils
- Flatware
- Dish Towels
- Cutting Boards
- Dish Rack & Drainer
- Laundry Basket
- Kitchen & Bathroom
Trash Cans

Basic Cleaning Supplies

- Dish Detergent
- Laundry Detergent
- Glass Cleaner

Monetary donations are always appreciated.



Coming Soon!
Visit our new website...
www.trfp.org

Thames River Community Service

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LEAVE A LEGACY[®]
CONNECTICUT

Thames River Community Service is a participant in Leave a Legacy Connecticut, a statewide public awareness effort to promote charitable giving through wills and estates. Leave a Legacy Connecticut urges people to leave their mark on the community by making gifts from their estates to their favorite nonprofit organizations. By remembering nonprofits in your estate plans, you can help improve the lives of future generations of Connecticut residents.

Interested individuals are encouraged to discuss their intentions with financial and estate planners. When you make a charitable bequest, there is no end to the good you can do. For more information, please call **Laura Hobart** at (860) 887-3288.

Thames River Community Service

Families Creating Self-sufficiency

THAMES RIVER FAMILY PROGRAM, BEYOND SHELTER PROGRAM AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM • WINTER 2008

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Dear Friends,

The holy days of Hanukkah and Christmas celebrate the presence of the miraculous in our lives. The meaning of the season tells us we are all brothers and sisters, we are all one. We are called to celebrate the presence of the divine in our lives and our oneness during this special time of year.

At the same time, the people in our country are going through a very difficult time. The stock market is nearly half of what it once was. There is a crisis in financial institutions. Costs of necessities like food and utilities have increased dramatically. The automobile industry is near collapse. Retirement funds are depleted.

Yet it is precisely in very difficult times that we must hold onto the miraculous. There is hope for a new tomorrow. 28 graduates of our program have gone on to own their own homes after coming to us homeless. 61 children have been reunited with their mothers upon entry into Thames River. Most of those moms and kids are still together today. In the past year, 28 children ages four years and up had on average a 10.4% increase in level of functioning after residing at Thames River for nine months. Miracles do happen at Thames River.

These miracles happen in the lives of our moms and kids because of your support. We are eternally grateful. I ask for your continued support at this time. With the economy like it is, these are difficult times for Thames River. I ask you to increase your donation from last year. If you haven't donated before or haven't donated in some time, I ask you to donate now. Your contribution will help bring about new life, new hope, and new freedom for our mothers and children at Thames River Family Program. Your donation will keep miracles happening.

May all blessings of the season be yours.

Peace,

Thomas J. Hyland
Executive Director



Thanksgiving came early for the 24 moms and their children in our program.

For the third time in five years, the coaches and staff of the CT Sun Women's Basketball team sponsored a Thanksgiving feast for families living here at Thames River Family Program.



Photograph by Sarah Johnson



A United Way Member Agency

Thames River Community Service Launches Supportive Housing Program

Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations

April 1, 2008 marked the beginning of a new initiative for Thames River Community Service, Inc. (TRCS). We launched a Supportive Housing Program under a contract provided through the State Department of Social Services (DSS), in conjunction with the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). This program provides permanent housing for nine families who were formerly homeless. Through this award, we were able to offer tenant-based rental assistance certificates (vouchers) and support services to families who have multiple barriers to housing stability. These families are now permanently housed in apartment units scattered throughout the Norwich/New London area.

The first task of this new initiative was to find suitable, safe, and affordable housing for the nine families who, at the time, were living in area shelters. We solicited the support of our Beyond Shelter Program's Housing Coordinator who has established a regional network of landlords with whom she collaborates as part of the Beyond Shelter Program. Within two and one-half months, all nine apartments had been secured and the families were moved into their new homes. For some, this was the first apartment they had ever had to themselves!

Families immediately began working with the Supportive Housing Program's two case managers. Services include referral and linkage to chemical, mental, and family health support services, advocacy, community information and referral, life skill development in tenancy education, parenting, education/employment, communication, and conflict resolution, money management, and personal growth.

In addition to providing families who have a history of homelessness with permanent housing, the goal of the Supportive Housing Program is to help them retain their housing, increase their skills and income, and achieve greater self-determination. Finding and maintaining viable and appropriate employment is the key to making this happen. To this end, we have contracted with an employment specialist to provide employment services to the participants. Southeastern Employment Services spends time with each family and assists with finding appropriate employment based on an individualized goal plan developed during the intake process. With intensive case management services and the holistic approach to securing employment, the nine families are well on their way to achieving the stability and self-sufficiency that they desire.

With the addition of the Supportive Housing Program, there are now three programs under the TRCS umbrella that provide support to families who are homeless: Thames River Family Program (a transitional living program established in 1992) and the Beyond Shelter Program (a housing placement and support program, established in 2000). We are very grateful to all of our supporters for their partnership in our efforts to end homelessness in Southeastern Connecticut.

A Volunteer Extraordinaire

Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations

Margaret Sabe is a volunteer at Thames River Family Program (TRFP). For the past year and a half she has been a familiar face at One Thames River Place where she has done everything from helping out in our Children's Activities Program, securing a grant for material for that program, and soliciting the help of other volunteers. Margaret tutors residents who are studying for their General Educational Development (GED) tests, facilitates trainings for moms, and participates in and contributes to celebrations and events.

Formally a Pfizer employee and now a financial planner, Margaret has given of herself and her time to the families at TRFP. She is a welcome face in Children's Activities, a two hour evening program for our children while their moms are in trainings and meetings. She has brought a variety of creative games and art and science activities that the children look forward to each week. In addition, she has increased our volunteer participation by bringing with her a crew of enthusiastic workers who have joined in her tireless efforts.

Life skills training is an important component of Thames River Family Program. Support and development in areas such as money management, parenting, home management, and education/employment are essential to our mothers achieving self-sufficiency and stability. Margaret's volunteer activities also have included teaching classes for residents on money management and computer skills and tutoring residents in preparation for their GED. Her efforts have contributed significantly to residents achieving their goals.

Recently, Margaret's hard work on our behalf has resulted in TRFP receiving a Volunteer Ventures Grant by the MetLife Foundation. She submitted a proposal to enhance the activities provided in the Children's Activity Center. As a result, we were pleased to find out that we would be receiving \$500 to purchase educational software and art supplies for that program.

While it is difficult to sufficiently thank Margaret for all that she has done in support of the families and staff at TRFP, we made an attempt to show our appreciation this past spring. At our 16th Anniversary Celebration we presented her with a token of our gratitude for all she has done, and we proclaimed the day as "Margaret Sabe Day" at TRFP. We feel very fortunate that Margaret is a part of our Thames River Family community and look forward to a long relationship.



Back to School

Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations

Three of our resident moms have left behind their past homelessness and instability and have begun a climb which will move them in the direction of securing a better life for themselves and their children. These women attend Three Rivers Community and Technical College and are doing quite well with their studies.

Balancing classes and the work that it entails, in addition to having to work part time and transport children to and from child care, is not an easy task for anyone. When you also include the fact that these three moms are a part of Thames River Family Program (TRFP) which has various requirements for residents, including attending meetings and trainings, you can begin to understand the challenges that they are going through to accomplish their goals. In spite of the rigorous routine, all three moms report receiving excellent grades.

Sarah, who has worked for several years in child care settings, has not been able to advance in that field because she does not have a degree. She is studying now to achieve this. Her determination was evident at the beginning of the semester when she did not have a car and had to put one child on the bus for school, take the city bus to bring her youngest daughter to day care, walk to her work/study job at one Three Rivers campus and then take the bus to the other campus across town for class. At the end of the day, Sarah had to reverse this whole routine! There was more than one day when Sarah had said that she was feeling overwhelmed, especially when they were walking in the 80 degree heat, but she continued. She has since been able to obtain a car which has made her situation much more manageable.

Ashley has three-year old twins and a two year old. She has always worked, but in jobs that did not offer her a future. She knew that without a college degree, her dream of being an office administrator probably would not happen. Like Sarah, Ashley balances her classes and studying with being a single mom, working two part time jobs, and fulfilling the requirements of the Thames River program. At this time, Ashley is pursuing an Associates Degree in Business and Office Technology. By January 2009, she will have taken enough classes to earn a certificate in this area which will open the door for her to obtain a better paying job while she finishes her degree.

Laura also has three children, two of whom are in day care, has a work/study job, and is taking the pre-requisite courses to eventually enroll in the Nursing Program. Laura also does not have a car and relies on the city bus for transportation. Laura has said that she wanted to do more than just become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), but with 3 children, didn't think this would be possible. Although she has tried to further her education in the past, she was not successful. She says the support that she receives from Thames River Family Program, the increase in



Maintaining Stability

Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations

We have many stories of women who have left Thames River Family Program (TRFP) and continue to do well today. One of our former residents, Takiesha Davis, was recently featured in the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut's 25th Anniversary Book.

Takiesha described her rise from a shelter to stability, attributing the skills she acquired at TRFP to as helping her get back on her feet. The Community Foundation has long supported this program. Programs such as Nurturing (Your) Children and Parent/Child Communication, in which moms learned more effective parenting skills, were possible due to grants awarded to us over many years from the Community Foundation.

Today, a year after leaving Thames River and moving into permanent housing, Takiesha works helping mentally disabled adults. She and her three children live in an apartment which they happily call "home."

her own confidence level, and being in a healthy relationship, has made all the difference in her ability to follow through with her goal.

In order to be competitive in today's employment market, those who have more education are in a better position to secure careers that offer more growth potential. At Thames River, we place a great deal of emphasis on providing assistance in this area since having significant employment is one way for our moms to regain stability for their families. We are quite proud of these three women and the effort they are making to create a brighter future for themselves and their children!