

### Agency Wish List

#### Housewares for Apartment Move-Ins

New dish sets/glassware  
Silverware and cooking utensils

Pots and Pans

Linen supplies:

- Towels
- Wash cloths
- Shower curtains
- Twin sheet sets/comforters

#### Family Entertainment Passes

Norwich Bowling & Entertainment Center  
Norwich Ice Rink  
Groton Bowling Alley  
Groton Skating Rink  
Regal Movie Passes  
Monster Golf (Groton)

Ocean Beach Arcade/Mini Golf Passes  
Children's Museum in Niantic  
The Garde Arts Center- Holiday performances

#### Miscellaneous

SEAT bus passes  
Gift Cards for:  
Family Dollar Store  
Stop & Shop  
ShopRite  
Local family restaurants  
Gas Stations

#### Agency Needs

Vacuums for resident use  
Wet/Dry Shop vacuum

**Monetary donations are always appreciated.**

### Thames River Community Service, Inc.

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PHONE: 860-887-3288 • FAX: 860-887-4146

WEBSITE: [www.trfp.org](http://www.trfp.org)

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### Thames River Benefits from "GoodSearch"

"GoodSearch" is a search engine which donates half of its revenue to the charities and schools designated by its users. You use "GoodSearch" as you would any other search engine. Because it is powered by Yahoo!, you get proven search results. Just type in "GoodSearch" and then type in Thames River Family Program as your preferred charity. You can also shop on-line.

"GoodSearch" provides a link to "GoodShop" where you can get coupons and specials for more than 1,300 stores. Or you can go to "GoodShop" directly.

On behalf of the families at Thames River Family Program, thank you for using "GoodSearch and GoodShop."



### Visit our website

Please visit our website @ [www.trfp.org](http://www.trfp.org) to learn more about Thames River Community Service, ending homelessness, and to donate. Donations can be made by MasterCard, VISA or PayPal.



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.**

### THE PROGRAMS OF

# Thames River Community Service

Families Creating Self-sufficiency

WINTER • 2010

Family Program • Beyond Shelter • Rapid Re-housing/Homeless Prevention • Supportive Housing

### You Make a Difference

Dear Friends,

We are coming upon the season when we give thanks and celebrate peace, joy and love. It is a time to gather with family and friends and share in each others lives. We eat feasts together and exchange gifts which express our caring and love for one another.

Yet in our country and in our county, there are many who do not have anyone to share with, eat with or exchange gifts with. They do not experience peace, joy and love but only loneliness and isolation. These are those who are homeless among us.

In the last full Point in Time Count, which numbers the sheltered and unsheltered homeless in New London County, there were 299 people who were without homes. 23 of these were living outdoors. 276 were in shelters or transitional living programs. 30% of those who were homeless were children.

I believe there is a moral imperative to end homelessness. There is also an economic imperative. A few years ago there was an article in The New Yorker magazine about "Million Dollar Murray." Murray was an individual in Reno, Nevada who was helped by two policemen over 10 years. Murray consumed \$1 million in health and human services over this time. Yet nothing was different. He was still homeless. It costs more to have a person homeless than it does to house them.

Thames River Community Service has worked to end homelessness for over 18 years. We are a leader in our region and in our state in working to end homelessness. Thames River Community Service provides a home and supportive services to over 150 men, women and children who were formerly homeless. Lives are changed at Thames River. People who haven't worked in years are now employed. Those who experienced a cycle of evictions in the past are now



### Give a Holiday Gift...

You can make a contribution to **Thames River Family Program** as a holiday gift to a friend or loved one. We will gratefully acknowledge your thoughtfulness to the recipient.

maintaining their housing. Those who believed they had no future now have hope.

Thanks to you Thames River residents are no longer alone and isolated. They are part of a caring community where peace, joy and love are abundant. This holiday season they will enjoy healthy and hearty meals and receive gifts from others who care. These good things that happen at Thames River occur in partnership with you. Your generosity has brought an end to hunger, homelessness and hopelessness for our residents. We thank you and ask for your continued support at this time. Our hope is that all the blessings of the season may be yours.

Peace,

Thomas J. Hyland, Executive Director

Foxwoods Resort Casino employees painted hallways during the United Way "Day of Caring" at Thames River.



Halloween costumes at Thames River.



A United Way Member Agency

## Gaining Life Skills and Hope, One Family at a Time

**Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations**

“I have my own room!” “I feel safe!” “My mom doesn’t cry anymore!” These are the words expressed on a hand-made quilt by Thames River Family Program children a few years ago when asked what they like about living at Thames River. Our program offers hope when families have all but given up hope of having a better life for themselves and their children. We are a two-year transitional living program which provides a safe, stable environment for formerly homeless single women and their children.

But Thames River is not simply a housing program. This isn’t a quick fix. Most families have experienced chaos and turmoil for most of their lives and much of this is being passed onto their children. Significant long lasting changes are not going to happen over night. At the core of programs offered for families during their up to two-year stay at Thames River is a life skills training program. We provide weekly trainings in seven life skill areas: **Employment/Education/Career, Parenting, Money Management, Home Management, Family Healthcare, Communication and Personal Growth.** The material in these areas is comprehensive and provides an in depth look into each of the seven areas.

Supporting families through this process of obtaining life skills are the program’s two Family Advocates, Joyce Furman-Cox and Elaine Eppy, and two Child Advocates, Shanda Easley and Veronica Granger. Each mom works individually with their own family and child advocate to take the skills that they’ve learned through the trainings and apply these skills to their own “real life” situations. Integrating new skills to overcome past experiences takes time. For many, a great deal of their time at Thames River is spent simply coming to terms with just how much past experiences have impacted their lives. At the same time, they are learning to integrate their newly acquired skills to begin turning their lives around. While the average length of time that families stay at Thames River is between 15 and 20 months, they continue to build on those skills for a lifetime!!

This is the difference that being at Thames River has made for many of the over 400 families who have walked through our doors. Meet Judy, a Thames River post resident, whose life, she says, would not be “the same” had she not come to the program and benefited from the 20 months that she resided here.

Six years ago, Judy moved into Thames River Family Program with her three children, then 3 year old Hannah, 8 year old Brandon and 10 year old Jacob. In her exit interview, she reported that her most significant accomplishments while here were in the areas of **personal growth** in which she learned to accept her own feelings and emotions. She said thorough **communication** trainings she learned that asking for help does not make one weak; that it’s important to know

when as well as how to reach out for support. Judy also explained that seeing herself in a more positive light helped her to become a much more effective parent. She was able to assert herself and as a result gained back the respect of her children. Judy continued to say at her exit interview that acquiring skills in **money management** was also significant for her, helping her to budget and make her money last.

Judy has been successfully housed for the last 4 years, but says she has had a series of “ups and downs” since leaving Thames River Family Program. For one thing, Judy battled on-going mental health issues with one of her sons, which eventually led to him being hospitalized for a period. During the time prior to this, Judy was forced to leave her job due to all of the appointments that she had for her son. This, she says, took a toll on her as well as her other children because while she knew it was necessary for him to get the help he needed, it was nonetheless a very difficult decision for her to have to make. The good news is that her son is back home with the family and he is thriving at both school and at home!

In spite of the occasional setbacks she has had, Judy says she would not have been able to cope with any of these situations had it not been for what she learned from being at Thames River Family Program. For one thing, she now knows about the various community resources that are available to help people when unforeseen situations arise, and more importantly, she is no longer afraid to ask for help. She says she often pulls out the materials from her Thames River Program Organizer (notebook), reviews the information as well as letters she had written at various times while in the program. She says doing this reminds her of how far she has come from the young, frightened mom that she was six years ago, but the journey has been well worth it!

## A Summer to Remember

“Is Joe here yet?” “When is Joe coming?” This is what we heard throughout this past summer from the children of Thames River. The “Joe” for whom they were asking was our summer intern, Joseph Massad. Having just completed his freshman year at the University of Notre Dame, Joe spent 8 weeks here as a participant in the University’s Summer Service Learning Program sponsored by the Notre Dame Alumni Club of Southeastern Connecticut.

The purpose of the program is to expose college students to a variety of experiences outside of their own communities. But for our children, all they knew was that Joe provided them with a special time of fun and enjoyment, while allowing Thames River moms to have a bit of a break for a few hours each day throughout the summer. Joe read



stories, listened to the children’s “stories”, played ball outside and enjoyed time in our Children’s Activity area. The connection that he had with the children during those eight weeks was astonishing to those of us observing the activities and laughter throughout the hot summer months. Indeed, the children had a special bond with Joe and he with them!

As expected, there were tears when Joe had to say goodbye in August to return to school! A few weeks ago, however, the children came home to a special surprise. Joe had returned for a visit! The enthusiasm in the lounge was electric as children’s squeals of laughter and delight filled the downstairs. He will long be remembered by our children as someone very special in their lives. Thanks, Joe, for bringing joy to this community of families pursuing hopes and dreams!

## Our Agency Offers Many Choices to Many People

**Kathy Allen, Director of Services and Operations**

Families who are homeless and/or at risk of being homeless have several options for housing through Thames River Community Service, Inc. Our agency operates three programs and is part of a collaboration that helps to rapidly re-house families and individuals and provides services to prevent homelessness.

For many years Thames River Community Service, Inc. was comprised of **Thames River Family Program (TRFP)** which began operations in 1992. TRFP is a residential transitional living program for families headed by single women and their children. During the up to two years that they reside at TRFP, residents work at developing goals and acquiring life skills needed to move from the program to permanent housing.

In 2000, we became one of three agencies in the State to be funded for a **Beyond Shelter Program**. Those in this program work with a Housing Support Coordinator who provides up to one year of follow up services to families and individuals leaving shelters and transitional living programs for permanent housing. The Coordinator assists families and individuals to locate safe, affordable housing, build landlord relationships, mediate landlord/tenant issues and obtain resources needed to achieve and maintain housing stability.

The **Supportive Housing Program** was established in 2008. This program’s two case managers partner with nine families to provide comprehensive, individualized services and permanent, safe and affordable scattered site housing units. Heads of household in these families have mental illness and/or chemical dependency, histories of trauma/domestic violence, are homeless and have incomes at or below 50% of the median income of this area.

Most recently, in October 2009, we began sub-contracting with the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) to provide services for a **Rapid Re-housing**



## Mayflower Drops Anchor at Thames River Family Program

In September, the Mayflower Montessori opened its doors at Thames River Family Program. Mayflower Montessori is a state-licensed, nationally accredited child care and early learning facility which serves the local community as well as the moms in our program. Since the School was established in 2000, it has received high accolades from the early childhood community.

When you walk into the doors of the school, you are able to see what the Mission Statement reads: “a learning, exploring, joyful community centered on the discovery and needs of children”. Melissa Canova and her well qualified staff of early childhood professionals serve children from six weeks through kindergarten. It is a tremendous sense of assurance for the moms of Thames River, as well as all of the families, knowing that their children are in such a safe and nurturing learning environment, while they are juggling work and school. We look forward to a long partnership and many collaborative opportunities that will be mutually beneficial to the families we serve.



*A day at Mayflower.*

**and Homeless Prevention Program.** Through *Rapid Re-housing*, individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and need temporary assistance receive support in order to obtain housing and retain it. The *Homeless Prevention* aspect of this program focuses on providing homelessness prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless – many due to the present economic crisis.

Through these programs, Thames River Community Service is able to provide housing and support services to over 200 families in Southeastern Connecticut. We are proud of the work we have been able to do on behalf of all of them and we thank all of you for your continued partnership and support!