

Northern Home

FOR CHILDREN

Since 1853

CELEBRATING CONTINUOUS SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

A LOVING FAMILY CREATES "BELLA'S BACKPACKS" TO ASSIST FOSTER CHILDREN



Over 5 years ago the relationship between Northern Home and the Munari family began and it has been one that just keeps growing. Michelle and Marco Munari originally lived in Virginia with their biological son Nico and his two adopted brothers Luka and Mika. In May of 2004, the Munari family moved to Pennsylvania and the Northern Home connection began. Michelle's college roommate, Wendy, was working for Northern Home at the time and knew the Munaris had been fostering children in Virginia. She had them starting their home study even before their boxes were unpacked! They had the opportunity to foster a few children that summer and then in November a call came about a newborn girl who had been abandoned in the hospital. Wendy knew that they wanted a girl, and she began calling them frantically to tell them about her. Although Michelle did not answer the phone right away, Wendy would not give up! Finally she got hold of the Munaris, and within hours, they were on their way to Northern Home to meet this baby. They fostered "Baby Girl," whom they called Isabella, for one year, and adopted her on National Adoption Day

on November 17, 2005. That month, they also held their first KidsMarch, to bring awareness to kids in foster care awaiting adoptive families. The Munaris have fostered about 25 kids over the years, and Michelle says, "The joy we receive from each one has blessed our family greatly. Although it has been very difficult to see most of them go, we keep on going because we know that all kids deserve a safe and loving home, even if only for a night."

So what are Bella's Backpacks? Many times children come in to foster care with nothing. The Munaris saw this many times and they also know how difficult it is to run to the store that first night to get things that they need. And so, "Bella's Backpacks" came about for that first night in care. Each bag includes a new pair of pajamas, socks, underwear, toothbrush, toothpaste, and a stuffed animal. Some even have journals, coloring books, deodorant, and brushes. We cannot thank the Munari family enough for the kindness and support they have given to the children of Northern Home. For more information about Northern Home's Foster Care Program or our Adoption Services, please contact Toni Randolph at (215) 482-1423 Ext. 1250.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



We are quickly approaching the holiday season. It is at this time that agencies like ours reflect upon the accomplishments we've achieved as well as the challenges we've faced over the past year. We are most proud to have completed the opening of our Generations II program, designed to prevent homelessness for young mothers and their children. The

program was developed to help young families acquire permanent housing and economic stability while challenging the moms to attain educational goals and employment. I am proud to say that the young women living in Generations II are now on their way to fulfilling these goals with the help and support of our dedicated staff.

The challenges we faced stemmed from the budget crisis in Pennsylvania and the impending overhaul of the current social service system. Despite these obstacles, we have stayed true to

our mission and rely on the many partnerships that we have established throughout the years. These partnerships have been the pillar of support for Northern Home for Children for over 156 years. From that beginning in 1853, when Mrs. Hutter recognized that there was a need to develop community and business partnerships, we have continued this process. This year these partnerships became more important than ever in helping us to maintain our commitment to the community we serve.

We are extremely proud that our continuum of services provided support for close to 3,000 children and families this past year. We have increased our quality through internal performance improvement initiatives. Our board and staff remain more energized than ever in this process and are working hard to support the agency in achieving its strategic goals. We look forward to your continued involvement with Northern Home for Children and know that by working together, we can look forward to a very bright New Year.

*Tracey Lavallias
President and CEO*

**Southeastern Pennsylvania United Way Donor Option Number: 01882
Tri-County United Way Donor Option number: 061346**

RECENT EVENTS AT NORTHERN HOME



Councilman Curtis Jones (center) presents a check to the Board of Trustees at their meeting on October 20, 2009. The contribution will be used for special projects and activities in the Partial Hospitalization Program. Pictured with Councilman Jones are Tracey Lavallias, President and CEO of Northern Home for Children (left) and Joshua M. Cohen, Northern Home Trustee and Deputy Chief of Staff to Councilman Jones.



G. Bradley Rainer, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Trustees, delivers greetings to the entire staff of Northern Home for Children at its All Agency Meeting on October 12, 2009.



These staff members each received awards for reaching milestones of either 5 or 10 years of service to Northern Home for Children. Pictured from left are: Ed Coley (5); Donna Bolno (10); Rebeckah Leatherman (5); Tracey Lavallias, CEO; Toni Randolph (10); Elijah Douglas (5); Khan Browning (5); Lydia Morton (5); Melissa Meshyock (10). Not pictured, LeeVan Hamilton (5).

THANKS TO OUR WONDERFUL TEAMS OF VOLUNTEERS



Episcopal Academy
6th graders spent their Day of Caring cleaning up our playground and raking leaves.

On August 4th, 2009 **Brandywine Realty Trust** volunteers spent the day beautifying our campus.

Dr. Stephen Spinelli came out to speak to our Partial Hospitalization Program. Thank you to all of the **Philadelphia University** students who have volunteered on our campus over the past year!



Credit Suisse's Day of Caring included painting the halls of the Lowry Building.

Gap team members collected school supplies to help our kids start the new school year off right.



Prudential Fox and Roach Realtors participated in a fall clean up of our campus and painted our activity center.



Old Navy volunteers spent the day re-decorating our Girls' and Boys' Partial Hospitalization rooms as well as our day care rooms.

To view photos of all of our volunteers, please visit our website at www.northernhome.org.

NORTHLINK TREATMENT SERVICES RELOCATE TO DELAWARE COUNTY

When 14-year old Carlton was expelled from his Philadelphia public school, he didn't know it would change his life forever. Angry, fatherless, and the primary caretaker of a disabled mother, he arrived at Northlink Family Services with all the ingredients for failure. But the mid-

dle-aged family who took Carlton into their home was committed to giving him an opportunity to succeed. Carlton arrived four grades behind in school. His foster family helped him to apply the tenacity he used to care for his mother towards his school work and he now attends school every day, has attained grade level, and has emerged as a talented athlete who became a member of the football team and captain of the basketball team in the same year. Carlton's biological mother, whom he visits every week, also receives therapeutic services from Northern Home for Children and reunification of mother and son remains the ultimate goal.

Northlink Treatment Services is a satellite facility of Northern Home for Children that provides Treatment Foster Care and Magellan Wraparound Services in Delaware County.

When Northlink was started nearly ten years ago, it was located in rural central Pennsylvania, placing children in a setting surrounded by an ethic of family centeredness, self-sufficiency and hard work outside the hustle-bustle of city life.

Under Northern Home for Children's new leadership and vision, Northlink has recently been relocated to Delaware County, close to the Widener University Campus in Chester, PA. This move will allow the program to grow as well as allow Northern Home for Children to begin to provide services in the counties outside of Philadelphia. Northlink Treatment Services will provide a Home Based Therapeutic Foster Care Program and foster care placement homes for children with serious emotional needs. In addition, Magellan Wrap Around Services will be available,



utilizing a team approach involving intense individual and family therapy and a behavioral systems approach to educate and rehabilitate the child and his/her family.

Northlink welcomes Dr. Cheryl Burkett (pictured at right) as its new director. Dr. Burkett is a Psychologist with



a diverse and rich background. Her focus has been on social and mental health services, with over twenty years experience in her portfolio.

Dr. Burkett's areas of expertise include coaching, counseling, training and development, and public relations. She has developed, implemented, and conducted individual, group, and family therapy/counseling sessions.

Dr. Burkett received a Bachelor of Science degree from Temple University, her Master of Education from Pennsylvania State University, Malvern, PA and her Doctorate in Family Psychology from Capella University in Minneapolis, MN.

Dr. Burkett and her family reside in Philadelphia, where they enjoy breeding and raising Rottweilers, traveling, and reading in their spare time.

Nearly half of the children in foster care across the country are adolescents. Children in foster care come from every background and culture. Foster parenting demands committed families who will meet the needs of children in the child welfare system. Stable and secure foster homes offer children an opportunity to overcome obstacles and recognize their resiliency in order to realize their full potential. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent, please call Dr. Burkett at (215) 482-1423 Ext. 1374.

Northern Home
FOR CHILDREN

Founded 1853

5301 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19128
215.482.1423
www.northernhome.org

NORTHERN HOME BOARD OF TRUSTEES

G. Bradley Rainer, Esq., Chairman
Tracey Lavallias, President and CEO
Lesly L. Attarian
Joshua M. Cohen
James C. Crumlish III, Esq.
Adam Green, Esq.
Jeffery C. Hayes, Esq.
Valerie Joseph-Darden
Christopher J. Jud
Elizabeth Kane
Carolina Lobo
William C. Morsell
Russell J. Rossi
Paul Rovner
Jesse Shafer
Thomas Sulpizio, Jr.
Jennifer H. Unterberger
Laura Solomon, Esq., Solicitor

NORTHERN HOME FUND BOARD

Russell T. Hauer, Chair
Diallo Johnson
Christopher J. Jud
William L. Lane III
G. Bradley Rainer, Esq.
Denean Williams
Cynthia A. Zickel

OUR MISSION

The mission of Northern Home for Children is to foster the development of self confidence, resiliency and other life skills in at-risk children, youth and their families primarily through the provision of behavioral health, child welfare and preventive services.

Newsletter Editor

Maureen Klein

Contributing Editor

Mary Fran Riffel

For further information:
Please contact
mklein@northernhome.org
or call 215.482.1423 Ext. 1202