

# HIGHLIGHTS



This holiday season has been especially generous to the children, youth and families at Homespace as well as the agency as a whole. We have received more donations and support from our Holiday Angels than ever before. I would like to thank the following for going way above and beyond in providing special holiday cheer for our youth: SEFCU, North Presbyterian Church, Zeta Phi Beta (Buffalo), NuLevel, WKBW, CTG, Trinity Episcopal Church, Level Financial Services, as well as many Homespace Board Members and individual donors.

One of my favorite stories about holiday giving this year is that a family with three growing boys save their change throughout the year so that they can donate to a special child/family during the holiday season. This year these young men decided to fully support one of our children by getting him just what he had asked for though some items were a bit expensive; a special thank you for a year of savings to support a child's holiday wishes.

The last quarter of 2017 lead to many changes and strategic planning for the agency. In 2018 Homespace will be working on opening a Agency Operated Boarding Home (AOBH). This program will provide a level of care for females only that does not currently exist within our community. Young women will be provided with structure and support while they are learning Independent Living skills in order to step down from higher level of care programs (ie: Residential/Institutions) to a lower level of care such as our Supervised IL Programs (SILP). The goal is to have this program approved and ready between 6/1-8/15 of this year.

Homespace is also planning our first ever Gala "Growing Loving Homes" with Honorary Co-Chairs: Congressman Brian Higgins and Mayor Bryon Brown. This event will be held on October 13, 2018 at the Larkin Center of Commerce and catered by Eckl's at Larkin. We are looking forward to raising funds to increase living options for our young families as well as to update several of our existing apartments. Further information can be found at [www.homespacecorp.com](http://www.homespacecorp.com) in the near future.

Best, Kim Morris/Executive Director, Homespace Corporation

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**During this past holiday season we asked what our children, youth, and residents they were most **THANKFUL** for, here's what they had to share:**

“Homespace has taught me a lot and I am thankful for that. I was able to learn many different independent living skills that I have always struggled with before being here at Homespace.”

“I want to thank Homespace staff for opening all their doors for me and my baby girl. I also want to thank Homespace for giving me the best advice which is giving up is not the right thing to do because I am not doing it for myself I’m doing it for my daughter as well. I am thankful for the new person I am becoming!”

“I am thankful for Second Chance Home for helping me be more independent and teaching me the value of life and to be a good parent. I am thankful for Mr. Loren for being a father figure and pushing me towards my goals, I am also thankful for the staff helping me with me and my kids.”

“I am thankful for being able to walk to the fridge knowing I have food. I am also thankful for warmth in my house, clothes on my back and a loving family (in Second Chance Staff) that will never give up on me; **the support is extremely strong!!**”

“I am thankful for my grandmother and the staff at Homespace.”

“I am thankful for the staff, being here at Homespace instead of on the street/I am thankful for a roof over my head/I am thankful for a place to stay.”

“I am thankful for the respect that I receive from staff at Homespace”

“I am so thankful for the support I had this year from the workers at Homespace. I am thankful for less stress and more happy times.”



# The Resident's Corner...



Homespace has helped me, has opened many doors and provided many opportunities for me and my children. Homespace has also helped me to better myself and prepare me for independence. My future goal is to finish school, join the Community SILP, and become successful so I can take care of myself and my children independently. Thanks to Homespace I will be able to do that.

- Summer S.

In the Fall of 2016, Summer was living at the Homespace SILP. She was not attending school regularly, frequently not returning home for curfew, and in December of 2017, her daughter A'lainah was removed from her care. Summer was also pregnant during this time. In January 2017, Summer began her journey to reunite with her daughter. She began attending counseling and school more regularly, and attended OB appointments for her unborn baby. Summer also began working with the Homespace team more frequently to ensure she was on her way towards achieving her goal of reunifying with her child. We began to see improvements in Summer's motivation. In June of 2017, Summer gave birth to her daughter A'naillah. She happily was able to reunify with both of her daughters in July of 2017. Being a parent to two children and managing schedules is not easy! Summer took on this task with a new drive that we had not seen from her before. She secured a job at McDonald's that she has maintained for quite a few months now. Summer will be turning 21 next October, in which she will be aging out of foster care. Her goals are to finish her High School Equivalency exam (she has one section left to pass), save money, and move into a Community SILP apartment that she would be able to

continue to live in after she turns 21. We have all the faith that Summer can achieve these goals. Summer has demonstrated that she is resilient, dedicated, and a loving mother to her two daughters.

Leah Riley, Clinical Supervisor

Darian is a participant in our community based program called YPREP. YPREP stands for the Young Parent Resource and Empowerment Program. The program provides case management services as well as independent living skills training for pregnant and parenting youth ages 14-22. Services most commonly include housing, education, vocation, parenting skills, and reunification efforts.

Darian is currently 20 years old and has two children Treasure (3 years old), and August (1 year old). Upon entering the program in March of 2017, Darian did not have her children in her custody, as she had been struggling with stability in housing and employment. In less than 8 months working with staff on her goals, Darian had achieved her High School Equivalency diploma, and obtained employment as well as a paid internship with a law firm. Darian's long term goal is to attend college to become a lawyer. Darian obtained her learners permit, and is currently three driving lessons away from taking her road test. She is very excited for this opportunity, and has been thankful to The Buffalo Urban League for enrolling her in driving lessons.

Darian has obtained stable housing through BMHA, and fully furnished her home with the assistance of referrals to community resources such as The Potter's Hands Donation Center (through The Chapel). Darian worked relentlessly to accomplish specific goals, in hopes of being able to have both of her children return to her care. As of December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Darian was awarded custody of both of her children! Darian has accomplished so much in a short time period, and we can only imagine what she will achieve in the near future. Darian is a motivated young lady, who has been an example of determination leading to successful outcomes.

Over the next six months, Darian must finish completing her court menu, and must maintain stability for her children. As her Case Planner I have no doubts that Darian will continue her success, and continue to be the best mom for her two beautiful children. We are so proud of you Darian, keep up the great work!!

Alexandra Mastoras, YPREP Case Planner





# HOMESPACE CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS "IN FOCUS"



Marcey Bryant is a motivated and energetic professional, with a heart for guest service. She is currently serving in her second year as Program and Alumni Manager for Leadership Buffalo, Inc. With experience in event management, marketing, and development, Marcey has previously held positions with the Buffalo Bills, Girl Scouts of Western New York, and Walt Disney World. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for both Homespace, Inc.; and the Family Justice Center. She is a graduate of Michigan State University.



## **From the desk of the Director of Program Operations**

In 2017, Homespace applied for and received a wonderful grant through the Patrick Lee Foundation. The foundation has been in existence since 2007 and have focused their work on focus areas, which include Education, Medical Care & Research, Behavioral Health, and Human & Community Services. One of the Educational components is providing professional development opportunities for persons working in mental health services. The grant received by Homespace afforded us the opportunity to plan for and provide training and education to our employees focusing on mental health and trauma as well as the work we do with our vulnerable population. We have been able to plan trainings throughout 2018 for all of our clinical staff and Direct Care Workers.



In addition to the wonderful training opportunities for our staff, in January 2018 Homespace hired two new supervisors for the programs. The focus will be on the direction and supervision of all of the Direct Care Workers in the agency. We welcome Elizabeth Bocchino and Corneisha (Coco) Brown to our staff.

Elizabeth brings her knowledge of program coordination, management, supervision and hands on work with the teen population. Corneisha brings her knowledge of the pre-school and school aged population, supervision, advocacy, and staff training. Some of their goals for the year will be to increase in child specific training such as shaken baby, car seat safety, safe sleep, and reviving the ages and stages curriculum with our young ladies. Concurrently, they will be helping to build relationships with and between the Direct Care Workers and the young ladies and bringing the family atmosphere back into the home.

Submitted by, Kim Berghash

## Agency Updates and Improvements

I would like to welcome Tim Mollen and David Hemjenowski, to Homespace. Tim and David were hired as our new Maintenance Workers and will oversee the upkeep and maintenance at both of our facilities. In 2018 Tim and David will make their top priorities to provide a clean, safe, and secure environment for residents and staff alike. This will include a full assessment, update, and implementation of a new security management system from Doyle Security, thus increasing the staff's ability to provide a secure environment at all times.

Homespace has been dedicated to ensuring that all residents feel at home within our agency. At Second Chance Home (SCH), we were able to update our kitchen with new cabinets and flooring with the design help of Patricia Folts of Adornment and the expertise of Skip Lindner from Skip Creative Laminates. The outcome was a cleaner and safer environment for all at the group home; not to mention how amazing it looks. Our board has continued their dedication to updating and increasing the "home" atmosphere with their approval and funding to fully paint the eight bedrooms and the entire second-floor hallway of SCH. Additionally, with their approval two bathrooms were updated with new bathtubs/surrounds, vanities, and accessories. The new updates at Second Chance make the house feel warm, comfortable and very "homey."

At Homespace, we have continued to work on a connection for our youth to the agency within the Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP). The Community Room was made into a relaxing common area that youth can enjoy with or without their children; have family visits, and meet with staff in a more information setting. Throughout 2017 the agency continued to maintain an updated environment within our 13 units by installing new flooring, adding new furniture, and updating several bathrooms; additional updates will continue throughout 2018. Due to the generosity of East Hill Foundation all 109 windows will be replaced throughout the Homespace SILP. This grant will not only provide us with new windows but will also allow us to decrease our heating costs while increasing the safety and security of our townhouses/units. Additionally, the James H. Cummings Foundation supported the SILP program repairing the concrete work in the courtyard area with a grant provided to the agency. This generous support is instrumental in updating and maintaining the facilities within the agency.

Barbara Stoehr, Program Support Specialist

In 2017 we held two very successful events, in May we hosted Brunch for Babies and in October we held our 2nd Annual Laughtober Fest. Based on the generosity of our sponsors and those who attended we raised over \$10,500! All the money raised goes directly towards supporting the needs of the children, youth, and families in all of our Homespace programs. As an agency we are switching gears in 2018, and will be holding our first ever Homespace Gala "Growing Loving Homes" to be held on October 13th, 2018. Please be on the lookout for more information.

We look forward to seeing all of you in October!





**October 13, 2018**

**Homespace Gala  
"Growing Loving Homes"**

Larkin Center for Commerce Building  
701 Seneca Street  
Buffalo, NY

Visit our website for details  
**[www.homespacecorp.org](http://www.homespacecorp.org)**

Contact  
**[kim.morris@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:kim.morris@dfa.state.ny.us)**  
for information regarding  
sponsorship levels

**Our website will be changing from [www.homespacecorp.com](http://www.homespacecorp.com) to [www.homespacecorp.org](http://www.homespacecorp.org)**

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