

# Friends to friends

FALL | 2009

## Local Foster Children in Dire Need of Families – *help us make a difference in the life of a child!*

FRIENDS ASSOCIATION currently has 27 children under our supervision, but that is just a fraction of the children who need our help. Children need to be placed into foster care at alarming rates in our community. Children, as young as 24 hours old, are in need of foster parents and families to provide safety, love and care.

Due to a lack of foster parents and families in our community and in the Friends Association network, we can currently only help 14% of the children referred to us for foster care. The children come into foster care when a child would not be safe in the care of their present caregiver. Even with the addition of vigilant supportive services, it is not always enough to keep the child safe and they are placed into foster care. If there is not an appropriate adult relative or family member with whom the child can be placed, then the county Department of Children, Youth and Families agency will reach out to private agencies like ours.

Issues for finding foster families for special needs children arise when the child is one of a sibling group, medically frail (i.e.: birth defect or affected with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), older children, or children who may have behavioral issues. Time is of the essence – we need to find a family to keep the children safe! These children

need a loving family immediately and we currently have a very limited number of families who are willing to open their hearts and homes. Friends Association looks to traditional family units as well as in same sex families with whom to place these special children.

If we had more foster care adults and families, we would have an appreciable increase in the number of children in need that we help. Currently, Friends Association must decline the offer of finding foster homes for over 180 children per year due to a lack of foster families. Many of these children will then be placed into “group homes” where they will have only basic necessities, and they will not experience the same quality of care and attention that a family could provide. Most importantly, there is little support during extremely difficult and traumatic times in their lives.

If becoming a Foster parent is something that you have thought about, call us and let us walk you through the steps towards making a difference in the life of child. For more information contact:

**Melrena Flowers, Director of Foster Care**  
[m.flowers@friendsassoc.org](mailto:m.flowers@friendsassoc.org)  
610.431.3598 x209

*A Newsletter of Friends Association  
for Care and Protection of Children*

Martha Boston, *Executive Director*

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Braceland, *President*

Susan Frens, *Vice President*

Rick Macek, *Treasurer*

John Spangler, *Secretary*

Cindy Bortner

Val DiGiorgio

Richard J. Hartmann

Bill McFalls, Jr.

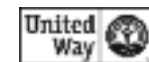
Valetta

Dennis Wallace

Karen Watkins



206 North Church Street  
West Chester, PA, 19380  
**PHONE** 610.431.3598  
**FAX** 610.431.9768  
**WEB** [www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org)



## Forever Homes WANTED

**These two young girls are available for adoption immediately – will YOU help?**



**Maura** (far left) is a vivacious, 14-year old intelligent, outgoing and athletic girl with an engaging personality and an electric smile. She is in 8th grade and is an excellent student. She enjoys basketball and soccer, and is on the track and field team. Maura is active in her church and sings in her church choir. She loves animals and dreams of going to college to become a veterinarian. All she needs is a forever home to make her life complete. For information, **contact Melrena Flowers, Director of Foster Care at 610.431.3598 x209.**

**Cynthia** (left) is a friendly, 14-year old affectionate girl. She loves to cook, play basketball and enjoys bowling, jumping rope and singing. Her favorite foods are soft serve ice cream, hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken noodle soup. Her favorite holiday is Christmas – she would love to be with a new family in time for Christmas! She loves to receive attention and affection from adults and she is very excited to find a forever family that will love and care for her. Things have been tough for Cynthia in her young life, if you can help her please **contact Louis Couderc, Director of Adoption at 610.431.3598 x208.**



Every child needs a family, every family needs a home.



## Being Homeless

*became the foundation for getting on the RIGHT TRACK!*

### Barbara's Story

**B**arbara came to Friends Association fifteen years ago with two of her four boys looking for shelter. She had just finished a 12-month stay in drug rehab and was anxious to have her children back with her in a home. Friends Association gave her shelter and a chance to find her way back to being a family again. She felt comfortable in her new surroundings and was able to focus on what she needed to do to "get out" of the shelter. Barb worked during the day and hit the pavement in the evening looking for a place to move. The meetings with her case manager motivated her; they provided help and positive influences in her daily life. She never thought she would be able to raise herself up, and be as strong as she became because of this adversity in her life. Everyday she feels positive about where she is and she continues to give back to the homeless community. By giving back, Barbara says "it keeps her on the right track." Barbara is only one of the many women and children who have been touched by Friends Association and are a success. Your support makes this all possible – PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY.

## GIRL SCOUTS

### give back to the children at Friends

One Girl Scout brought in a pizza dinner for the families and children and she helped the kids make craft items. The children were thrilled to have some special crafts of their own to decorate their rooms and to wear. Another Girl Scout troop chose to donate two years of their hard-earned cookie money to Friends Association so that children in our emergency housing would have money to pay for music lessons, dance lessons or some form of art or music classes to enhance their lives.

THANKS GIRLS!

## RESPIRE DAYCARE and MENTORING assistance needed for our struggling families

Would you like to volunteer your time to help some of our families by providing a few hours of daycare for our special needs children? This help would be on a needs basis and would be on a flexible schedule. We are also reaching out to the community for volunteers who would like to become mentors for some of our single mothers and fathers. This would be a huge help for our families and give our single parents another avenue for learning how to be good parents, tenants and employees. For more information please contact Regina Horton, Assistant Executive Director at [r.horton@friendsassoc.org](mailto:r.horton@friendsassoc.org).

## Community Friends help our families

Numerous community groups have helped Friends Association in the past with everything from bake sales to "casual jeans days" at local corporations. The **Hershey's Mill Women's Club** rallied around our families and provided them with laundry baskets full of cleaning products, paper goods and other needed kitchen items. These baskets were a huge savings for our families! The **Saint Francis in the Field St. Clares women's group** made curtains for all six units, which will give our families privacy as well as a feeling

of home. These curtains are a much-needed addition to our units. The women purchased all the materials and the finished curtains look like they were made by a professional seamstress! The **UAW Girl's Softball League** had a charity tournament in October with six teams playing to support Friends Association. The weather was dismal, but the teams gave it their all and raised much-needed funds for our program. Thanks to all the community fundraisers that are arranged for Friends benefit – we appreciate all the community does for us.

## FAMILIES IN STABLE HOUSING

- makes good sense!

When a child and his family become homeless, Friends Association has the solution for safe and secure housing. Following the progressive Housing First model of emergency housing, we have closed the emergency shelter in the basement of our office building and eliminated our transitional housing for more effective housing programs. Research has found that families in communal living arrangements and transitional units take longer to move into permanent housing, need more community services and utilize extended hours of case management support. Friends Association is following the model of Housing First, which places families into private housing units. The families feel more settled, less traumatized and are quickly on track toward gaining independence.

We recently renovated our transitional apartment units into energy efficient housing that will house six families for approximately sixty days before we move them into an apartment of their own in the community. The units have been newly furnished thanks to wonderful supporters in the community and they have all the supplies they need to be "home." Donors provided new towels, sheets, blankets, and cleaning supplies in order for our families to be able to move in. Thanks to our case management support, these families are better able to prepare for living independently in a shorter period, making our units available for more families on a continuing basis.

If you would like a tour of our housing building, for further information please contact us at **610-431-3598 x219**.



## Girls Night Out a smashing success!

Thanks to Kikki Comerford of **Jane Chalfant & Kikki's Boutique**, Friends Association was the lucky recipient of a very large check. Thanks to our shopping supporters, a portion of the proceeds from our Girls Night Out event is going to help our families! Our friends and supporters spent over \$5,500 on beautiful clothes and accessories, knowing that a portion of the proceeds would come back to Friends Association. The shopping was fast and furious with ample wine, champagne and cheese to help sustain the weary shoppers! Kudos to Kikki and her fabulous staff for a wonderful evening out! For more information on this great boutique, visit [www.janechalfant.com](http://www.janechalfant.com).

## St. Agnes Life Works Community Mission helps our families!

Under the direction of David Kiefer, twelve volunteers worked for over 32 hours on our housing units at 128 E Chestnut Street as one of their many local community projects. They raised and redid the brick sidewalk; power washed and stained the stairway woodwork, cleaned out the backyard and put in new fencing, and a family picnic table area accented with stone planters. All of their time and materials were donated and we cannot thank them enough. When asked how the volunteers felt about the project, David said "everything we did touches someone in need." What a great testament to their generous gift of time and labor. Thanks to all the fabulous volunteers for the hard work - now the property looks and feels like a home.

## WHO WE ARE

AT FRIENDS ASSOCIATION FOR CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, WE BELIEVE EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO GROW UP IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUPPORTED BY A LOVING, NURTURING FAMILY. IN ORDER TO REALIZE OUR VISION, WE PROVIDE THESE SERVICES:

### HOUSING

*Emergency Housing for Homeless Families*  
We can accommodate as many as six families at a time in private apartment units. Families may stay up to 60 days.

#### *Scattered Site and Home For Good*

We place families who have graduated from our emergency housing program in scattered apartment sites in the community or we provide rental assistance to local families in need.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### *Specialized Foster Care Program*

Friends Association provides foster care services for hard to place children, including teenagers and sibling groups.

#### *Specialized Adoption*

Our adoption program serves children with special needs. We are the only Statewide Adoption Network (S.W.A.N.) affiliate in Chester County.



206 North Church Street  
West Chester, PA, 19380  
**PHONE** 610.431.3598  
**FAX** 610.431.9768  
**WEB** www.friendsassoc.org

NON PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ITP of USA  
17022

Every child needs  
a family,  
every family  
needs a home.

**Wish List** Your support of our wish list will enable us to use our operating capital in the areas of most need. We are in need of gift cards for our children and families. We use these cards to purchase NEW clothing, household supplies and food items tailored to their specific needs. We are wishing for gift cards to Target, WalMart, Giant and Acme Markets.  
**Thanks so much!**

## Birthday Parties that Teach PHILANTHROPY

Two young ladies in our community decided to forgo receiving presents for their birthdays in order to purchase gifts and supplies for our children and families in need. Emily from West Chester and Marisa from Devon chose to invite their friends to a special party to learn more about giving to others and about the work that Friends Association does. A great lesson for all children to learn about; being philanthropic is the way to be and selfless gestures like these make such a big difference for our families. For more information, contact Jennifer Kriesel, Director of Development at [j.kriesel@friendsassoc.org](mailto:j.kriesel@friendsassoc.org).



## Friends Association WINS WEST CHESTER CHILI COOKOFF!

Marty Boston, Friends Executive Director and her chili-cooking colleagues from Residential Living Options and Interfaith Housing Assistance Corporation, won the much-coveted first place in the 7th Annual West Chester Rotary Chili Cookoff. They developed a smoked brisket-based "Welcome Home Chili – Because Everyone Deserves a Home" chili that won the hearts of the judges. Their delicious chili beat all the other entries in the Non-Profit category! The cash prize will help fund emergency housing for our local families.

## More Board Members Needed

Do you have the desire to help Friends Association by being on our Board of Trustees? Friends is always looking for volunteers who have taken our mission to heart and who want to help navigate the course we are on. Currently we need members with marketing experience, development experience and members with a passion for our mission. Please contact President John Braceland at [jbsolutionsllc@verizon.net](mailto:jbsolutionsllc@verizon.net) for more information.

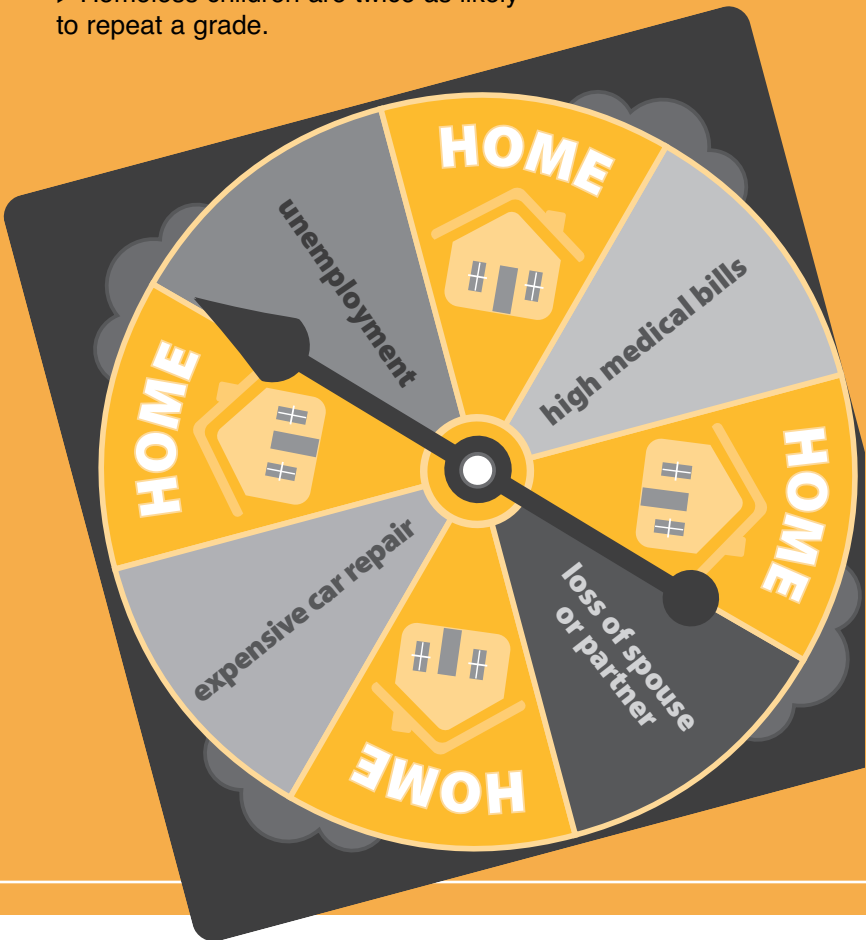
# Homelessness is no game.

## it's a spin of the wheel.....

Friends Association helps homeless children and their families in our community. These children need your generous support today to break the cycle of homelessness - **let's not leave their future to chance.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ One in fifty children are homeless in America.
- ▶ Homeless children are twice as likely to experience hunger than other children.
- ▶ Children who are homeless get sick twice as often as other children.
- ▶ Less than one in four homeless children graduate from high school.
- ▶ One in six homeless children suffer from emotional disturbances.
- ▶ Homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade.



**YES!** I want to support Friends Association in their mission to help the homeless children and their families in MY community.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD: Visa MasterCard EXP DATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please make this a monthly donation.

Make checks payable to FRIENDS ASSOCIATION.

\_\_\_\_ **YES!** Please send me my thank you via e-mail.

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

CLIP AND RETURN



206 North Church Street | West Chester, PA 19380

[www.friendsassoc.org](http://www.friendsassoc.org)

**WE NEED YOUR HELP to continue changing children's lives for the better. Your support is important to the children and our community. Let us know if you would like information on how to include Friends Association in your estate planning.**

*Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children is a 501 (c) (3) organization - donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. A Copy of Friends Association's last financial statement may be obtained by contacting Friends Association, 206 N. Church Street, West Chester, PA 19380. The official registration and financial information of Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania (800) 732.0900. Registration does not imply endorsement.*