

How You Can Help

For more than 200 years, The Home for Little Wanderers has earned a reputation for doing whatever it takes to strengthen vulnerable families and keep children safe in their own communities even when they don't have family support. Best practices have come and gone in those 200 years: difficulties faced by children with violent or traumatic histories have escalated; obstacles to a stable and healthy environment for children at risk have multiplied. The one constant is The Home's presence and its commitment to be there for the next child or family that needs help: we never give up on children — and we don't let children give up on themselves.



Innovation and the ability to respond quickly to the changing needs of children and youth in state systems of care has always been a guiding principle of The Home. Although we contract with the state for certain basic services, the amount of money allotted per child is much less than the actual cost to provide the comprehensive level of service the children and families need and deserve. We depend to a great extent on the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations to fill this gap.

In order to most effectively target the use of philanthropic dollars, The Home develops fundraising priorities that reflect not only the most current critical needs of those in our care, but also anticipate where funds can be used most effectively to benefit children and families living in at-risk circumstances.

The initiatives outlined here are just three of the many programs and services we provide to our children and families that go above and beyond what is funded by the state agencies. As we have done throughout our history, we strive to go above basic care. We believe that those who come to us for help deserve the same opportunities and “extras” as we would want for our own children and our commitment to them is unwavering: a real shot at a strong and productive life.

“ Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. ”

—Dr. Seuss



The Home's mission is to ensure the healthy behavioral, emotional, social and educational development and physical well-being of children and families living in at-risk circumstances.

Serving children and youth from birth to 22, The Home provides a seamless continuum of vital programs and services for every stage of child and family development. We make a positive impact on over 7,000 lives each year through a wide network of programs including behavioral health, therapeutic residential and special education, adoption and foster care. In addition, a number of innovative programs provide specialized assistance to youth transitioning to adulthood from state systems of care.

The Home provides services in eight different languages and in multiple venues throughout Eastern Massachusetts, including in schools, clinics and homes. Our dedicated staff of over 600 includes more than 130 licensed clinicians and 180 direct care counselors, five psychiatrists, four psychologists, and 24 teachers.

For questions, contact:

Director of Development
617-927-0670

For more information about The Home's programs for children and families, visit:

www.thehome.org

Administrative Offices
271 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115
888-HOME-321 | www.thehome.org



Current Philanthropic Opportunities



Aging Out



Aging Out is a term used to describe youth who have typically spent most of their life in the care of the state and now, in their late teens or early 20s are suddenly on their own with few, if any, resources. Even in strong family situations, most youth are not ready for complete independence. For those who have experienced difficult pasts — in many cases involving abuse and neglect — the future can look very grim. They are at much higher risk than the general population for outcomes such as homelessness, drug abuse, prostitution, and incarceration.

For the past decade, The Home has played a leading role in addressing the plight of this population. As an overarching approach to address policy, advocacy and funding, The Home co-founded and continues to lead the statewide Task Force on Youth Aging Out of the Department of Children and Families Care. Beyond the Task Force, The Home has launched several “one-of-a-kind” programs designed specifically to provide the tools, skills and access to resources that these youth need to get them on the path to an independent and successful adulthood:

- **Academic Support for College and Life (ASCL)**, in partnership with Bridgewater State University (BSU), provides youth with the opportunity to live on the BSU campus while receiving college preparatory and college-level academic instruction, as well as clinical, social, vocational, and daily living supports. Students who remain at Bridgewater to pursue their degree will continue to have access to ASCL’s support services, reinforcing their continued academic, social, and emotional success and keeping them on track to graduate.
- **Young Adult Resource Network (YARN)** assists young adults ages 17-22 who are involved with the Department of Children and Families with obtaining stable housing, employment, physical and psychological wellness, and access to educational and community resources, while developing supportive relationships. Programming includes workshops on topics such as healthy relationships, empowerment and anger management. YARN also has a computer-based GED preparation course and a special young women’s group.
- **Roxbury Village** provides safe and affordable housing for nine young people who are homeless, or at risk of being homeless. The program offers support and community connections to help build the resources and skills young people need to become self-sufficient and productive adults. Assessments of current needs, plus education, career, trade, and/or employment goals are conducted with each resident and are used to develop individual life plans.



Education

The Home has made an unprecedented commitment to completely revise and upgrade the educational product at its residential treatment and state-approved special education schools for children and adolescents: the Upper and Lower Schools at Longview Farm in Walpole and the Southeast Campus School in Plymouth. During the first year of the initiative, The Home retained the services of an esteemed Special Education consultant from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to move us forward in assessing the ways we could improve our schools.

Five primary goals have been identified as essential to the success of the initiative, including improved curriculum and teacher instruction, new assessment tools, evidence-based reading instruction as a basic component of every classroom, behavioral support systems during class time, and introducing youth to a range of employment opportunities through career and technical education programs.

The emotional and behavioral health challenges that the children and youth in our care face do not stop during school hours. As a result, students spend time out of class, missing the benefits of the learning environment. To address this, we have designated a Behavioral Specialist at each school to intervene with students who leave class and to support teachers’ management of behavioral/mental health needs in the classroom. In addition, we have trained all teachers in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and have in place classroom sensory tools and special sensory integration rooms.

Many children come to The Home’s schools with difficult educational backgrounds. Often, they have failed courses and require a significant amount of makeup work in order to stay on track for graduation. To address this need, we have in place a Credit Recovery System, a computerized, state-supported system which allows students to complete course requirements more rapidly, recover credits, gain self-confidence and graduate on time.

We believe that while our population of youth require and deserve intensive academic programs, they also need a career and options for training and employment. At both of our schools we are introducing a Career Development program which will include elective vocational courses, community internships and volunteer opportunities.

Nutrition and Wellness

Nearly one in three children in America is overweight or obese. For those living in The Home’s residential treatment and group home programs, this statistic is even higher, with almost 50% of youth scoring as obese or overweight. The children in our care face additional challenges that put them at greater risk than the general population, for example weight gain as a side effect of psychiatric medications, emotional eating triggered by traumatic events, or lack of outdoor activities due to fear of neighborhood violence.

The Home has made a commitment to creating a strong wellness environment in our programs. Eating healthy and being physically active play a big part in energy for learning and growing. We have added two new staff positions: a Dietician, who is available for the youth and parents/caregivers to speak to with any concerns or questions; and a Food Services Manager, making it possible for us to hire a single food vendor for all eight of our residential and group home programs and to create a centralized nutritious menu. Our menus include healthy selections of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat milk. Each group home now has one staff person designated as “the cook” for that program. These changes are significant, allowing us to train and educate staff, ensure consistent food preparation across all the programs, and measure and track results.



Getting children to eat better is just the beginning. The wellness initiative also includes an effort to increase physical activity. Our programs are being creative about ways to get kids moving, from “kids vs. staff” softball games to weekly walks around Jamaica Pond. Thanks to philanthropic dollars, many programs have been able to obtain memberships to local gyms such as the YMCA, or participate in community sports at local Boys & Girls Clubs. Our



two therapeutic residential and special education programs both take advantage of their beautiful natural surroundings, involving the youth in physical activities from hiking to swimming and the Project Adventure ropes course.

Our goal is to teach children how to make healthier choices, a skill that will benefit them long after they leave our care. This is a huge effort that involves everyone, not just the chefs and cooks who prepare the food, but the staff who work directly with the children, the doctors who prescribe medications, and the families to which the children return.