Suffolk Construction’s Charitable Golf Tournament

Thanks to HomeSafe Board Member Rex Kirby, GM and President of Suffolk Construction’s Southeast Region, HomeSafe received $60,000 from Suffolk Construction’s annual charity golf tournament. The well-attended event took place at Doral, one of the country’s premier golf courses.

“Rex Kirby and his team at Suffolk Construction are genuinely committed to helping the communities they serve,” said Matthew Ladika, HomeSafe CEO. “We’re fortunate to have Suffolk Construction’s continued support of HomeSafe’s result-driven family violence intervention and prevention programs.”

“This fundraiser helps so many abused and abandoned children in our communities,” said Kirby. “We could not have had such a successful event without the dedication and commitment of our sponsors.”


Stop Child Abuse Campaign

HomeSafe’s first-ever online fundraising campaign was an overwhelming success, greatly exceeding the goal of raising $5,000. Taking place throughout April’s Child Abuse Prevention Month, HomeSafe’s Stop Child Abuse campaign raised $8,993.

Top campaign fundraisers include HomeSafe Board Member, Bill Berger (Senior Partner at GreenspoonMarder, Palm Beach County), and HomeSafe’s Director of Human Resources, Billy Van Ee.

HomeSafe’s next online fundraising campaign is scheduled for October as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Matthew’s Story

Children exposed to family violence have a much greater likelihood of developing social, emotional, psychological and behavioral problems than those who are not. In fact, a recent study conducted by the Institute of Family Violence found that children who experience domestic violence, and do not receive any type of counseling, are 43 percent more likely to repeat domestic violence behaviors as adults.

Luckily, community programs such as HomeSafe’s Residential Group Care are more likely to break the cycle of violence and give children a better chance to survive and flourish in life.

Such is the story of “Matthew,” who, at the age of ten, was referred to HomeSafe from a Baker Act facility. Matthew originally came into custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) after a serious car accident, with his mother testing positive for opiates and benzodiazepines. Prior to the incident, there were 16 reported abuse allegations since 2004, including substance abuse, physical abuse, sexual misconduct and domestic violence. As a result of his family history, Mathew began displaying violent behaviors including aggression, and homicidal and suicidal thoughts.

When Matthew was first admitted to HomeSafe, many people were skeptical that he would be able to overcome the damage inflicted upon him. But HomeSafe staff had the vision, experience and determination to deal with his issues. He remained at HomeSafe for ten months and, during that time, Matthew explored his past experiences of abuse and learned how to manage his feelings of anger, depression and guilt.

It was not easy, but as time went on Matthew became less defiant and began trusting HomeSafe staff, especially Therapist Janeke Simpkins. An amazing transformation occurred, with Matthew evolving from a child constantly using profanity to a child full of warmth and positive words.

Today Matthew is reunited with his family and enjoying healthier relationships. His mother—who is now drug-free and gainfully employed—reports that he continues to demonstrate notable improvement. Matthew is now able to express his feelings and emotions by calmly communicating with his mother. He is performing much better in school, along with an improved attitude with teachers and peers. Since being discharged at HomeSafe, Matthew’s case no longer has any DCF involvement and continues to make progress with his individual and family therapy.

Learn more about HomeSafe’s Residential Group Care program by contacting Dr. Ricardo Buitrago, Director of Residential Services, at 561-383-9800, ext. 1249, or RicardoBuitrago@HelpHomeSafe.org.
Healthy Beginnings

HomeSafe's Healthy Beginnings staff has diverse roles in helping children realize their fullest potential. For example, Healthy Beginnings' Developmental Consultants screen and assess over 250 children monthly to identify signs of developmental delays and refer children to appropriate providers. These providers offer a large array of services including counseling, mentoring, family bonding, child social and behavioral development and effective parenting skills.

"HomeSafe gave my child an opportunity to thrive."

One of the many success stories include "Patrice," a little girl who was screened and found to display signs of developmental delays. Upon being assessed by Stephania Beaudouin, a Developmental Consultant, Patrice was unresponsive, extremely shy and withdrawn. Stephania referred Patrice to First Steps to Success, a program working with children, and their families, to strengthen cognition and communication skills, as well as social and emotional self improvement.

Through therapy, Patrice began to dramatically improve. She began interacting more with other children and achieved developmental milestones, specifically in the areas of communication skills. Just a few months following the initial assessment, Stephania conducted a follow-up visit to find Patrice full of life and excited to start kindergarten. Thanks to Healthy Beginnings identifying signs of developmental delays, Patrice's mother said, “HomeSafe gave my child an opportunity to thrive.”

Rising Leaders Graduates

Recently, six Healthy Beginnings supervisors graduated from the Rising Leaders program, which was created and sponsored by Nonprofits First.

As part of the program, participants worked in teams for nine months to help local agencies identify and solve current issues through practical solutions.

The program helped graduates acquire valuable skills to build stronger and more strategic organizations. Graduates also learned about other agencies and, as a result, formed stronger, mutually-beneficial partnerships that will not only benefit non-profit organizations but ultimately citizens of Palm Beach County.

LifeSkills SM

Education - a key to changing abused kids’ lives

"Johnny" entered the foster care system at the age of nine. Between 2003 and 2009, he was placed in and out of six different foster homes until finally being admitted to HomeSafe. Johnny struggled with aggressive behavior, property destruction, and woefully inadequate coping skills.

He initially was underperforming in high school due to negative behaviors and a stubborn unwillingness to complete class assignments.

HomeSafe's LifeSkills' staff took a caring, proactive approach to give Johnny the best chance to succeed. They first successfully advocated to get him enrolled in a high school specialized in dealing with at-risk youth and their unique, challenging issues. HomeSafe also secured individualized tutoring, as well as provided the ongoing mentoring and encouragement to ensure completion of homework and regular involvement in extracurricular activities. This approach bolstered Johnny's confidence and motivated him to become more engaged with his studies.

The results are impressive, with Johnny improving his academic performance to a 3.1 GPA during his senior year. Johnny is now registered to attend Palm Beach State College this summer in preparation for the fall semester.

Thanks to HomeSafe's LifeSkills program, at-risk youth are given a better chance of overcoming the steep challenges of attaining a high school diploma, and graduating from college or learning a valuable trade and job skills. Learn more about HomeSafe's LifeSkills program by contacting Dr. Angie Bailey, LifeSkills Development Supervisor, at 561-383-9800, ext. 1221, or AngieBailey@HelpHomeSafe.org.
Meet the Board

Mike Nichols

Tell us about yourself.
I was born and raised in Boca Raton, then attended high school in North Carolina followed by undergraduate studies in Michigan and graduate school in Ohio. I also spent a summer studying abroad in Oxford, England.

I'm very fortunate to have enjoyed two equally rewarding careers in my life, first as a teacher and currently as a commercial pilot. Being a pilot for the last eighteen years is no doubt a result of a strong influence from my father who made his career as an airline pilot.

As a Board Member and Past-President of HomeSafe, I'm proud to be part of an organization that cares so deeply for others. **How did you learn about HomeSafe, and what inspired you to get involved?** Before joining HomeSafe I helped children while serving as a board member at an educational institution in North Carolina. While tremendously rewarding, I decided to make a difference in my own community. A friend introduced me to HomeSafe and, after a campus tour, I knew instantly HomeSafe can make a real difference in so many lives—including my own.

One of the wonderful things about HomeSafe is that it not only helps our residential children, but also serves a larger portion of our community through important prevention and intervention programs. **What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of HomeSafe?** I would like to see HomeSafe expand its services and help as many people as possible. It's vital that we provide the positive influences missing in the lives of so many of the children.

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**Employees of the Quarter**

Katie Rivero & Kehan Rahming

(1-4): Billy Van Ee, Director of Human Resources; Katie Rivero, Accounting Coordinator; Kehan Rahming, Program Supervisor; Matthew Ladika, CEO

**New Board Members**

Roy Hinson

Richard E. Timmons

**HomeSafe Happenings**

Volume II, Issue II

Editor: Joe Maltese
Assistant Editor: Michael Boro
Contributors: Dr. Angie Bailey, Meghan Mayo, Brian McCarey, Glenn Muller, Janeke Simpkins, Billy Van Ee

HomeSafe is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing results-driven prevention and intervention programs for child abuse and domestic violence. Each year, HomeSafe serves more than fifteen thousand infants, children and families in South Florida.

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