



# HomeSafe

Preventing | Protecting | Preparing

## HomeSafe

# H A P P E N I N G S

Volume II | Issue III

## SafetyNet

### Volunteers: A Winning Team

Since its inception in 1998, HomeSafe's SafetyNet domestic violence program has greatly benefited from the assistance of highly-dedicated and energetic volunteers in our community. A major obstacle for many adult victims to receive help is they cannot afford the cost of childcare to participate in evening SafetyNet adult support groups. It is only because of trained volunteers that victims' children receive free, high-quality childcare. Volunteers also provide children (newborns through 17) with free hot meals and activities while their mothers participate in group sessions.

SafetyNet attracts volunteers from all walks of life, ranging from college students to retirees to working class adults who simply want to "give back" to their community.



Volunteer Ruth Ellen Fleming helping feed a young child.

Here are some of the volunteers:

Patti Leonaggeo has been volunteering for ten years. By day she is an AFLAC broker and on Wednesday nights a steady and loyal SafetyNet volunteer.

Adele Holcomb is a five-year volunteer. She retired several years ago and rarely misses a Tuesday night. Adele stated, "I have helped provide child care for the five-and-under group, and I have truly received more out of my volunteering than I have given."

Gail Williams has been a volunteer for four years. She always has one or two toddlers who initially require a lot of attention, but after a few sessions they seem to calm down and feel right at home.

Mary and her daughter Elizabeth Divine have been volunteering for several years. They have both mastered the art of calming crying babies. One boy with Down Syndrome has been their special child, and his initial fears of being away from his mom were eased with their involvement.



SafetyNet volunteers: Adele Holcomb and Elena Maldonado helping with the teen groups' garden.

Elena Maldonado always brings a smile (and some fruit) to the group. Her energy level is contagious.

Rosie Deckert, from the State Attorney's Office, is always "tooting" SafetyNet's horn at her office. Her bright smile lifts up everyone in the building.

Saudia Mohammed began volunteering several months ago, but already feels like an invaluable part of the team. She jumped right in at a time when SafetyNet was low on volunteers and has done a fantastic job keeping kids busy with projects. She said, "I hope to be at HomeSafe for a long time as I'm surrounded by some of the most appreciative and kind people, from the staff straight to the kids."

Ruth Ellen Fleming, Sandra Livingston, Julie Friedman, Emmy Martinez and Nicolasa Garcia started several months ago, and have quickly fit right into SafetyNet's winning volunteer team.

Diana Ramirez volunteers with the monthly health clinic, a collaboration with Florida Resource Center for Women and Children. She translates for SafetyNet's Spanish-speaking clients with medical personnel.

For more information about HomeSafe's SafetyNet program, contact Brian McCarey, SafetyNet Supervisor at 561-383-9800, ext. 1240 or [BrianMcCarey@HelpHomeSafe.org](mailto:BrianMcCarey@HelpHomeSafe.org).



# Foundation

## Jump for HomeSafe



October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, with HomeSafe hosting a month-long online fundraiser, *Erase Domestic Violence*, to raise funds for HomeSafe's SafetyNet domestic violence program. Throughout October, visit [www.HelpHomeSafe.org](http://www.HelpHomeSafe.org) to learn about SafetyNet's comprehensive prevention and intervention efforts that not only help battered women, but their children as well.

The third annual *Jump for HomeSafe* is set for Saturday, January 12, 2013, at the Palm Beach International Equestrian Center. The family-friendly event will take place ringside overlooking an exciting equestrian competition with men competing against women riders. Equestrians and philanthropists, Paige Johnson and Clara Belden, are the event's Co-Chairs. More information will be available soon at [www.HelpHomeSafe.org](http://www.HelpHomeSafe.org).

The next edition of a top-rated South Florida charity event, *The Classic Rock & Roll Party*, returns to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Saturday, March 2, 2013. The event is hosted by Iron Maiden drummer Nicko McBrain, and co-chaired by Debora Kellogg, Jayne Malfitano and Laura Sylvester. A new laugh-inducing component - comedy - is being added to the event's signature rock and roll theme.

### Thank You HomeSafe Supporters! Recent Major Gifts & Grants

Bernstein Family Foundation • Cultural Council of Palm Beach County • Goody Two Shoes • The Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation • The Nichols Foundation • Schmidt Family Foundation • John F. Scarpa Foundation • The Town of Palm Beach United Way • United Way of Palm Beach County

## Healthy Beginnings

HomeSafe's Healthy Beginnings program serves families throughout Palm Beach County by conducting specialized assessments and screenings for children, from newborns through age five. The main objective is to determine if children being assessed exhibit any signs of developmental delays or potential abuse.

At-risk children are referred to a variety of Healthy Beginnings system providers, with the focus on helping them reach their fullest potential. These network providers offer a wide array of free services including counseling, breastfeeding support, parenting education as well as child social and behavioral development. Providers also work closely with children's families to increase bonding and ultimately reduce cases of child abuse and neglect.

HomeSafe's Hospital Liaisons currently screen 97 percent of all newly delivered babies in Palm Beach County. This is accomplished through Infant Risk Screens in the hospital, which identify risk factors that could negatively affect the health and development of babies.

The nine maternity hospitals in Palm Beach County are required to submit Infant

Risk Screens, along with birth certificates, to the Vital Statistics office. A strong partnership between the Hospital Liaison and the Birth Certificate Registrars office in every hospital is vital to ensuring all newborns are properly screened for services provided by the Healthy Beginnings system.

### The Hospital Challenge

Through 2013, the Healthy Start Coalition has agreed to support HomeSafe's plan to strengthen partnerships between hospitals and Hospital Liaisons. Every quarter, two hospitals will be awarded gift baskets in recognition of notable collaborative efforts with HomeSafe. The contest's goal is to improve and expedite services for newly-delivered mothers. This will be achieved through increased screening rates that are more consistent with Infant Risk Screens completed by the Hospital Liaison and the Birth Certificate Registrars office. Prizes will be awarded on a quarterly basis with winners announced in future HomeSafe newsletters.



### Maternity Hospitals in Palm Beach County

Boca Raton Regional Hospital • West Boca Medical Center • Bethesda Memorial Hospital

• Wellington Regional Medical Center • Lake-side View Medical Center • Palms West Hospital • St. Mary's Medical Center • Good Samaritan Medical Center • Jupiter Medical Center

## Facts

### Why is it so important to screen all children in Palm Beach County?

- 5,023 children were victims of child abuse and neglect between 2009-2011.
- 50% of children who are neglected and abused are under the age of 6.

### What are the long term consequences of child abuse and neglect?

- 59% of abused children are more likely to be arrested as juveniles and 28% as adults than those who were not abused.

Learn more about the Healthy Beginnings program by contacting Paloma Prata, Director of Prevention Services at 561-383-9800, ext. 1702 or [PalomaPrata@HelpHomeSafe.org](mailto:PalomaPrata@HelpHomeSafe.org). Selected by the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, HomeSafe is the exclusive entry agency (serving newborns through five-year-olds and their parents) for the Healthy Beginnings program.

# Residential Group Care

## Thomas' Story

At a young age “Thomas” was subjected to significant physical and verbal abuse by his father. Compounding the abuse, he witnessed his dad physically assaulting his mother, as well as using illegal drugs and alcohol. Thomas also witnessed his father going in-and-out of jail for a variety of criminal activities. When he was only nine years old, Thomas' dad abandoned him and his family. His dad is currently serving a prison sentence on a sexual battery conviction.

Thomas was admitted to HomeSafe after his mother desperately reached out for help to address her son's increasingly unstable and dangerous behaviors, which included depression, defiant behavior, verbal and physical aggression, compulsive lying, drug use, homicidal threats, and auditory and visual hallucinations. Thomas also had a history of poor academic performance, struggling with math and reading comprehension as well as refusing to attend school.

Thomas resided at HomeSafe for nine

months and, during that time, focused on rebuilding relationships with his family members, especially his mother. Thomas remained engaged and dedicated to the therapeutic process, and worked hard to learn the skills necessary to regain mood stability and live a drug-free lifestyle.

By working with his primary Therapist, Elizabeth Strout, Thomas learned to cope with, and process, much of the grief and anger towards his father. At 17, Thomas was able to participate in a Termination of Parental Rights Trial, facing his father for the first time in almost nine years. While at HomeSafe, Thomas attended Palm Beach Lakes High School and began exhibiting a renewed dedication to academics – even earning the “Most Improved” award.

Upon discharge, both Thomas and his mother stated that their communication has greatly improved, and that they have significantly strengthened their parent-child relationship. Thomas left HomeSafe having achieved

the highest level of the Behavior Management System, emerging as a leader within the house. Thomas touched the lives of both residents and staff, exhibiting a high degree of self-esteem, dedication and confidence in his future.



Learn more about HomeSafe's Residential Group Care program by contacting Linda Wyckoff, Chief Operating Officer at 561-383-9800, ext. 1209 or [LindaWyckoff@HelpHomeSafe.org](mailto:LindaWyckoff@HelpHomeSafe.org).

## LifeSkills<sup>SM</sup>

## Elton's Story

by Eric Peterman, LifeSkills Coordinator

Reflecting back to about three-and-a-half years ago, I remember observing from afar a young, timid and apprehensive child at HomeSafe. I patiently waited until he eventually gave me the opportunity to listen to him as he ranted that he did “not belong at HomeSafe,” and asked, “Why can't I go home?”

Slowly but surely he began acclimating to his new surroundings, with Elton starting school at Indian Ridge High School as a tenth grader. Elton despised school and it worsened with a challenging transition to Palm Beach Lakes High School (PBLHS) as he started eleventh grade. At that point, he was unable to imagine, even in his wildest dreams, that he could graduate from high school – let alone attend college. For him, it was another traumatic ‘rip’ in relationships. He was not acquainted with anyone at PBLHS. He didn't have a single friend. He was scared. I could visibly see the despair on his face.

Elton struggled with waking up. His closest friend was a video game and he preferred to be holed up in his room, alone, playing ‘Call of Duty.’

With the approaching 2011-2012 school year,

there was talk about Elton transferring to yet another school, this time Seminole Ridge High School. Elton wanted no part of it. Even though it was only 25 minutes from HomeSafe, to him it was the same as going to school in Thailand.

I assured him that he would love Seminole Ridge, meet new friends, and do very well. I strongly encouraged him to give it a chance. Again, fear of the unknown blinded his ability to see new opportunities.

Upon my encouragement, Elton's senior year began – at Seminole Ridge – and an epiphany occurred. Elton began envisioning the thought of graduating from high school. Suddenly, he was getting up for school, completing homework assignments, studying, and earning better grades. He accepted the aid of Best Foot Forward, and committed to working with a tutor to improve his math grades. He then set his sights beyond high school, with a focus on going to college. Elton started speaking favorably about school, was making friends, and liked his teachers and guidance counselor. All of this positive change enabled Elton to improve his GPA for possible college

admission.

He worked diligently to find himself on track to graduate from high school. Finally, after numerous pop quizzes... tests... essays... FCAT's... ACT's... and a prom, Elton made HomeSafe history by becoming the first youth to graduate high school while living at HomeSafe. LifeSkills' Transition Specialist, Bobby Crume, helped Elton enroll at Palm Beach State College. It was a process. However, Bobby was well prepared for the task, and again Elton made history as the first youth to attend college while still at HomeSafe.

His story makes me very proud to be a LifeSkills Coordinator. Elton habitually referred to me as “Fatha E,” and I always responded, “Yes, my son.”

Elton benefited from an intensely supportive cast of employees at HomeSafe, which helped make Elton's amazing transformation become a reality.

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](mailto:AngieBailey@HelpHomeSafe.org).

## HomeSafe

Matthew Ladika  
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Linda Wyckoff  
Chief Operating Officer

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## Anniversaries [April 1 - June 30]

### 12 Years

Tommie Duhart, *Youth Developmental Professional*

### 10 Years

Robin Doran, *Youth Developmental Professional*

### 9 Years

Margie Garvey, *Human Resources Generalist*

### 8 Years

Monique Barnett, *Program Supervisor*

Derek Earl, *Program Supervisor*

Rhonda Houston, *Shift Leader*

Robert Simpson, *Youth Developmental Professional*

### 5 Years

Bonnie Barwick, *Executive Assistant*

Alean George, *Youth Developmental Professional*

### 4 Years

Tonnie Watson, *Youth Developmental Professional*

### 3 Years

Tauna Clifton, *Therapist*

Lisa Cover, *Associate Director of Prevention Services*

Sonia Garcia, *Hospital Liaison*

Cynthia Grazioso, *Clinical Supervisor*

Sandra Lozano-Castro, *Developmental Consultant*

Catherine Moretz, *Developmental Consultant*

Betty Santos, *Developmental Consultant*

Silvia Tray, *Hospital Liaison*

### 2 Years

Stephania Beaudouin, *Developmental Consultant*

Fleurante Joseph, *System Navigator*

Diana Marquez, *Developmental Consultant*

Lorenzo Razz, *Shift Leader*

Billy Van Ee, *Director of Human Resources*

### 1 Year

Jenny Briceno, *Data Support Coordinator*

Bobby Crume, *Transition Specialist*

Diana Davila, *Developmental Support Specialist*

Katina Jackson, *Youth Developmental Professional*

Meghan Mayo, *Marketing Associate*

Sandlie Salomon, *Developmental Support Specialist*

## New Employees [April 1- June 30]

Amanda Brouillet, *Therapist*

Sarah Kennedy-Liccardi, *Program Supervisor*

Rinaldi Tropnas, *Youth Developmental Professional*

## Employee of the Quarter

Tahlia Vera



(l-r): Matthew Ladika, CEO; Tahlia Vera, Front Desk Coordinator; Billy Van Ee, Director of Human Resources.

## New Board Member

Harley Davidson

## HomeSafe Happenings

Volume II, Issue III

**Editor:** Joe Maltese

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**Contributors:** Dr. Angie Bailey, Meghan Mayo, Brian McCarey, Glenn Mueller, Eric Peterman, Elizabeth Strout, Billy Van Ee

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

## Meet the Board



### Bill Berger

#### Tell us about yourself. I

was born and raised in New York City, and earned my undergraduate degree from the University of Buffalo and law degree from Brooklyn Law School. I've been married to my dear wife, Ferne, for 43 years, and we have two children, Aimee and Seth, and two grandchildren. We moved to South Florida in 1973 and quickly grew 'roots' and became involved members of the community.

As Senior Partner and Managing Partner (Palm Beach County) for the law firm Green-spoon Marder, I'm blessed to be involved with

many worthwhile causes – including HomeSafe. A HomeSafe board member since 2003, I'm especially proud of my involvement with *The Classic Rock & Roll Party* as its Co-Chair to help raise millions of dollars to fund HomeSafe programs.

**How did you learn about HomeSafe, and what inspired you to get involved?** I was introduced to HomeSafe through Board Member Ward Kellogg, who is Chairman and CEO of Paradise Bank. Upon touring the campuses and personally meeting clients and staff, I learned HomeSafe was a first-class organization making a positive difference in the lives of abused children. I instantly knew I wanted to be a part of HomeSafe realizing that my time and efforts would result in positive outcomes for a large number of area children.

**What is most challenging and rewarding about being a HomeSafe board member?**

The biggest challenge is an ongoing one, and that's securing sufficient funding to ensure the continuation, and growth, of HomeSafe's programs. It's very rewarding for me to learn, on a regular basis, about all of the successes of current and former HomeSafe clients. Amazing things occur at HomeSafe... from mothers and their children learning to leave an abusive household, kids overcoming the trauma of abuse, children performing better in school, clients gaining useful job skills, and breaking the cycle of violence - just to name a few.

**What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of HomeSafe?** I'd like to see the completion of the master plan for HomeSafe's Sylvester Family Campus, which will allow us to serve an even greater number of children in Palm Beach County and South Florida.