



# HomeSafe

Preventing | Protecting | Preparing

HomeSafe

# HAPPENINGS

Volume II, Issue II

## 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."

Notable supporters of Suffolk Construction's golf tournament included Platinum sponsors Baker Concrete and Nagelbush Mechanical Inc., and Gold sponsors Acousti Engineering Co., Applegate Interiors Inc., Continental Florida Materials Inc., Gate Precast, Kirlin Florida LLC, M&P Reynolds, and Sims Crane and Equipment Co.



Check Presentation (l-r): Chuck Bendgen, CFO of Suffolk Construction's Southeast Region; Matt Ladika, HomeSafe CEO; Roy Hinson, HomeSafe board member; Rex Kirby, GM and President of Suffolk Construction's Southeast Region, and HomeSafe board member

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

Steven Bernstein Family Foundation \* Community Development Block Grant (via County of Palm Beach) \* Emergency Solutions Grant (via County of Palm Beach) \* Hux Family Trust \* The Jim Moran Foundation \* Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation \* Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office \* Kenneth Rosenberg Foundation \* Town of Palm Beach United Way \* United Way of Palm Beach County \* Suffolk Construction \* Victims of Crime Act (via Florida Office of Attorney General) \* Wycliffe Charities Foundation

## Stop Child Abuse Campaign



HomeSafe Board Members (l-r): Donna Biase, Cherie Copenhaver (President), Steven Bernstein, Roberto Vargas, Rex Kirby, Debbie Ellman

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.

[HelpHomeSafe.org](http://HelpHomeSafe.org)

Phone: 561-383-9800

Facebook: [Help HomeSafe](https://www.facebook.com/HelpHomeSafe)

# Residential Group Care

## Effects of Domestic Violence

### Emotional

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Fear of abandonment
- Depression
- Feelings of helplessness
- Embarrassment
- Shame, guilt and self blame

### Behavioral

- Acting out or withdrawing
- Aggression
- Manipulation
- Mood swings
- Crime

### Social

- Isolation
- Mistrust
- Poor anger management skills
- Volatile relationships
- Avoiding home
- Poor problem solving skills

### Physical

- Anxiety
- Short attention span
- Poor personal hygiene
- High risk activities
- Self abuse
- Regression in development

## 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, Matthew 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](mailto:RicardoBuitrago@HelpHomeSafe.org).*

## SafetyNet

### A Reunion to Remember

HomeSafe's SafetyNet domestic violence program hosted its yearly reunion for 33 of its former clients and families. The event has been coordinated every year since 2000 by Marlene Rivera, Victim Advocate for the Office of the State Attorney, who collaborates directly with HomeSafe by working on family cases.

The event brings together victims of domestic violence who successfully completed SafetyNet's support group classes. Former clients speak about their milestones since graduating from the program and share advice to empower others to continue fostering healthy family relationships. Changes in the law regarding domestic violence are also discussed, as well as free services to assist other victims in need of information to get help and stay safe.

Two former SafetyNet teen clients (now college students) and one volunteer, Doris Morales, presented testimonials. The keynote

speaker was Olga Cabrera, a motivational speaker from the Mujer de Conquista organi-



Former SafetyNet clients listening to testimonials

zation in Miami. They all delivered emotional speeches about their personal experiences with domestic violence and how they were able to overcome considerable adversity and pain. Their stories serve as examples of hope for other families experiencing similar struggles.

Also during the event, ten of Brian McCarey's (SafetyNet's Program Supervisor) former

teen group members participated in therapeutic art activities, which were facilitated by LCSW therapists Sherry Weinschenk and Elaine Donaghue and funded by the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County. The teens created artwork related to personal changes and experiences. Themes ranged from surviving domestic violence to pursuing their goals, dreams and aspirations.

The event came to a successful close, but not before all attendees came together and shared in a magnificent feast. Some of the food was donated by El Bodegon Supermarket of Lantana, with a large portion prepared by the parents and children attending the event. This included traditional dishes from each family's native county.

*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).*

# 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.



**Rising Leaders Graduates** (l-r): Michael Boro, Marketing Coordinator; Luzmaya Friedlander, Program Supervisor; Paloma Prata, Director of Prevention Services; Ana Ramos, Program Supervisor; Lisa Cover, Associate Director of Prevention Services; Sandra Lusunariz, Program Supervisor

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.

# LifeSkills<sup>SM</sup>

## 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.



The genuine care and attention given to Johnny is provided to all clients, with LifeSkills' staff cultivating productive relationships with teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators. This collaboration provides structured support resulting in reduced in-school suspensions, positive classroom behaviors, improved academic performance and grade promotions.

"Through a partnership between HomeSafe

and Best Foot Forward, we had the privilege of working with 'Johnny' during his senior year," said Donna Biase and Debbie Ellman, HomeSafe Board Members. He's a model student who is very determined to succeed in college. He always has a smile on his face and completed all of his college application paperwork without one complaint. We look forward to working with him at the college level."

- Fewer than 10% of foster care youth graduating from high school enroll in college
- Less than 1% of foster care youth who enroll in college will graduate

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](mailto:AngieBailey@HelpHomeSafe.org).

## HomeSafe

Matthew Ladika  
Chief Executive Officer

Linda Wyckoff  
Chief Operating Officer

## Board of Directors

Cherie Copenhaver  
President

Alice Nelson  
Vice-President

Donna Biase  
Treasurer

Debbie Ellman  
Secretary

Mike Nichols  
Past President

Steven Bernstein  
Member at Large

Roberto Vargas  
President-Elect

Lawrence M. Abramson

William Berger

Suzi Goldsmith

Roy Hinson

Lynn Holcomb

Ward Kellogg

Rex B. Kirby

David M. Layman

Gloria D. Pierson

Thomas J. Rooney

Richard E. Timmons

## Anniversaries [Jan 1 - March 31]

### 14 Years

Matthew Ladika, *Chief Executive Officer*

### 9 Years

Natarsha Auguste, *Youth Development Professional II*

### 7 Years

Tanya Barnett, *Youth Development Professional*  
Leschawn Flowers, *Youth Development Professional II*

### 6 Years

Lisa Walton, *Clinical Supervisor*

### 5 Years

Berdie Duvelsaint, *Developmental Consultant*  
Engran Frazier-Elie, *Youth Development Professional*  
Craig Jackson, *Youth Development Professional*  
Audrey Major, *Youth Development Professional II*

### 4 Years

Mary Clarke, *RN*  
Cristen Garrity, *Youth Development Professional II*

### 3 Years

Randy Jackson, *Shift Leader*  
Keith Johnson, *Director, Community Based Services*  
Miriam Morales, *Developmental Consultant*  
Paloma Prata, *Director, Prevention Services*  
Janice Pulve, *Data Support Coordinator*

### 2 Years

Sherril Barnes, *Youth Development Professional*  
James Grice, *Youth Development Professional*  
Abner Pedraza, *System Navigator*

### 1 Year

Maria DeMoreta, *Developmental Support Specialist*  
Maritere Maysonet, *Developmental Support Specialist*  
Demetrius McDougale, *Youth Development Professional*  
Kevin Williams, *Youth Development Professional*

## New Employees [Jan 1- March 31]

Euell Barnett, *Youth Development Professional*  
Rachelle Justafort, *Developmental Consultant*  
Kimberly Luchina, *Office Coordinator*  
Ethel McCormick, *Youth Development Professional*  
Isiah McCormick, *Youth Development Professional*

## Employees of the Quarter

Katie Rivero & Kehan Rahming



(l-r): 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.

## 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 the 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 HomeSafe does is simply amazing

and seeing the transformation of our children and adults is nothing short of inspiring. As a Board Member I'm incredibly proud of HomeSafe employees, who are the organization's greatest asset in making the positive difference in children's lives.

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

Certainly one of the most challenging areas is financial. The more money raised allows us to more directly impact children and families. It's rewarding to see young men and women leave our care equipped with the confidence and tools to begin a productive new life.

#### 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.