

Fall 2018



HomeSafe

Preventing | Protecting | Preparing

# HomeSafe Happenings

**Our Mission: Creating safer, more productive lives for infants, children, young adults and families**

## Clients Surprised with Christmas in July

HomeSafe was one of seven agencies in Palm Beach County to be selected to participate in the Mary Alice Fortin Foundation's special initiative, "Christmas in July." The Foundation's intention was to make a difference in people's lives at a time of year when it is easy to forget those in need in our community. HomeSafe nominated seven clients with compelling stories and financial challenges. We are so grateful that all of our nominees were each awarded \$7,000 for a total of \$49,000. Many thanks to the Mary Alice Fortin Foundation for helping these families when it was needed the most.

During a week in July, CEO Matt Ladika and various staff members met with each of the winners to surprise them with their award.



*Pond Place client Alexia is surprised by CEO Matt Ladika and supervisor Kehan Rahming*

he learned to show empathy, remorse for his past negative behaviors and appropriate behavior with his family. After a year, Marc was discharged and returned home. The award money enabled the family to move to a nicer apartment in a safer neighborhood with better schools.

**Alexia** – A client at Pond Place, our independent living housing program, Alexia has her mind set on getting to Harvard University to study law. Alexia needed assistance with a new car so she would have reliable transportation to get to Palm Beach State College, where she has earned straight As, and do volunteer work at a local law firm.

**Marc\*** - Abandoned and neglected by his parents as an infant, Marc was adopted by his aunt, who wanted to give him a better life. When behavioral problems stemming from his trauma became too overwhelming and caused issues at home, Marc came to HomeSafe's residential program. Here,



*Marc's aunt learns about the unexpected gift for her family.*

**Lucia\*** – As victims of domestic violence, Lucia, her 8-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son had to leave their home and live in a bedroom in someone else's home for several months. Through the SafetyNet program, Lucia and her children have overcome the trauma they experienced and are focused on a better life ahead. The award money allowed the family to move into a new apartment and furnish their new home.



*Lucia and her children with SafetyNet staff Brian McCarey, Marlene Rivera and volunteer Doris Morales.*

**Melissa** - Having experienced upheaval in foster care since she was 9 years old, this 23-year-old found a place to call "home" at Pond Place, our independent living program for youth who have

"aged out" of foster care. Pond Place has given Melissa the stability she needed to pursue her educational and career goals. Melissa is using the award money to find a nice apartment of her own, since her age requires her to move on from the program.



*Pond Place client Melissa (with certificate) celebrated with supervisor Kehan Rahming, therapist Tauna Clifton, and CEO Matt Ladika.*

*Continued on page 2*

## Clients Surprised with Christmas in July ... cont. from page 1



*Evan's parents with clinical director Michelle Hebbeler and Matt Ladika, CEO*

**Evan\*** – At 7 years old, Evan and his twin brother and their older sister were removed from the only home they knew, and moved into foster care. A year ago, it was recommended that Evan be placed at one of HomeSafe's group homes in Boca Raton so he could receive needed intensive therapy to address his trauma and mental health needs. Thankfully, Evan made huge progress, and the family has been reunified. The award money has made it possible for the family to rent a home where they can be together and move forward with their lives.

**Yolanda\*** – Yolanda and her four children, ages 15 to 8 years old, endured domestic violence for two years. This tight-knit family was able to get away from the abuser and move into their own apartment. SafetyNet's weekly therapy support groups has helped the family to heal and move forward with their lives. Unexpectedly, Yolanda lost her job, which meant no income for the family, and fear that they would be separated. The award money made sure rent and utilities were covered for several months so the family could stay together and Yolanda could focus on finding a job.

**Maria** – Despite major health issues and limited education, Maria, a single mother, has made sure her young son has had a healthy start to life. Since birth, he has been enrolled in our Growing Smart program, which provides his mother with routine assessments of his development and activities she can do to help him achieve key milestones before his second birthday. Maria struggles every day, and had lived in a small room with a friend who helped care for the baby while Maria worked. The award money allowed Maria and her son to move into a larger space with adequate furniture.

\*Names have been changed to protect clients

## Libra Boys Resident Tees Up for Success

Over the last four months, Ryan, 15, a client in our Libra Boys North group home has been learning to golf through The First Tee of the Palm Beaches. This program helps kids not only learn the game, but also build character and confidence, developing core values and life skills that stay with them on and off the golf course.

Every Saturday morning for an hour, Ryan joins 10-20 fellow participants at the Michael B. Finnegan Learning Center at Dyer Park. The group practices on the range and does putting and/or chipping activities. For the last half of the class, they move to the course where they play three holes and get guidance on their playing strategy from skilled volunteers who share their love for the game. According to his coach, Ryan is an excellent golfer and immediately took to the game. His natural skill and Ryan's growing love for the game, led the organization to give him his own set of clubs.

"I really like the interaction with the staff and the other participants," said Ryan. "I've learned the importance of safety when you are on the course, and Coach Dave has helped me with my stance, grip and swing. I want to be a pro someday."

Ryan looks forward to staying with the program and also volunteering to help younger participants. Good Luck Ryan!



# Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence

HomeSafe's SafetyNet Program strives every day to end the cycle of domestic violence and abuse. Each week, our therapists on staff provide one-on-one sessions and several support groups for both English and Spanish speaking adults and children affected by domestic violence. In one month alone, up to 150 client sessions may take place at the agency's office in Lake Worth.

In the last year, close to 500 victims received domestic violence crisis intervention services. Of those, 96 adults, 39 teens and 41 children enrolled in intensive group and/or individual therapy, and successfully "graduated" the program. SafetyNet assists the family with safety planning and needs assessment and, if necessary, relocation to a safe haven. Support is provided in navigating our sometimes complex criminal justice system. Victims and their children enroll in services not only seeking ongoing support and guidance, but to process their feelings of trauma caused by months or years of family violence. Our goal is for families to begin the long healing process by growing safer and stronger as a healthy family unit.

"We tell our families to use the crisis that they are in, to make the *real change* they need in their lives, said SafetyNet Supervisor, Brian McCarey, LCSW. "Families can't just hope and wait. They need to use our program as a tool to make the changes that will better their lives."

To remove obstacles that would otherwise prevent our clients from receiving clinical services, SafetyNet relies on trained and certified volunteers to serve meals to clients' children before the group therapy sessions, which are held two evenings a week in Lake Worth. In addition, the volunteers provide free child care to children under the age of six while their parents attend their groups. Clients without transportation or driver's licenses are provided taxi services to and from their therapy sessions.

Key funding for the program is generously provided by the Town of Palm Beach United Way, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), and several other funders. Unexpectedly, approximately \$44,000 from Palm Beach County was cut this year due to a change in the county's funding priorities.

This loss has the program scrambling for new sources of revenue.

To learn more, visit our website at [HelpHomeSafe.org](http://HelpHomeSafe.org) or contact Brian McCarey at (561) 383-9800 x1240.



*Joanna, a teen client in the SafetyNet program, received a Barry Krischer Scholarship from the Domestic Violence Council of Palm Beach County. The \$750 will be used for college expenses at Palm Beach State College. Joanna received the award based on an essay she wrote about her personal challenges in confronting family violence. Here she is pictured with SafetyNet Supervisor Brian McCarey.*

## Consider HomeSafe this Holiday Season

As 2018 comes to a close, we want to thank all of our donors and supporters for your generous contributions, both monetary and in-kind, throughout the year. Thanks to you, infants, children, young adults and families in our community received the help they needed to live safer, more productive lives.

During December, we hope you will keep HomeSafe in mind as you make your holiday and end-of-the-year contributions.



- **Want to help provide holiday gifts for the children in our group homes and domestic violence program? Call Cheré at (561) 383-9842 to find out how you can help.**
- **Monetary donations allow our much-needed services to continue. Donations must be postmarked or made online at [HelpHomeSafe.org](http://HelpHomeSafe.org) before midnight on December 31 to count for 2018. A donation envelope is enclosed.**
- **Support HomeSafe by naming us as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance or IRA, and be sure to let us know so we can thank you.**



**HomeSafe**

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Saturday, February 2

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