



HomeSafe Preventing | Protecting | Preparing

HAPPENINGS

OUR MISSION: Creating safer, more productive lives for infants, children, young adults and families

FALL 2020

HOMESAFE DONORS - THE GUARDIAN ANGELS OF BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY MAGIC

Birthdays and holidays can be a tough time for a child living in foster care. The fear of your birthday passing without a cake and presents is very real for these children. The same is true for the holidays: Will Santa remember me?

Fortunately for the children at HomeSafe, there are real life guardian angels in our community who ensure that every child knows the excitement of birthdays and joy of the holidays.

For the past three years, Kindness Shared Happiness Squared (KSHS) has been providing birthday and holiday gifts for the 20 children living at HomeSafe's West Palm Beach campus. KSHS also provides HomeSafe with goodies throughout the year that our staff distribute as rewards for good behavior. This year, KSHS chose to extend birthday giving to the children at ALL HomeSafe campuses – 44 children in total! KSHS also provides funding to HomeSafe at Christmas so direct care staff can take the children to the movies after their morning of opening gifts.

KSHS remains engaged with HomeSafe children throughout the year as well through their Pets with a Purpose program.



Prior to the pandemic, four of our Libra Girls North clients visited the agency's farm each month to partake in therapeutic activities with the animals. The outing is a favorite for

the girls, who can't wait for the in-person visits to start again.

Other angels watch over the children of HomeSafe as well.

Continued on back cover

As we head into the holiday season, we want to recognize the following donors whose thoughtfulness over the years has created holiday memories for the children and young adults at HomeSafe: Greater West Palm Beach Women's Club, Unity School in Delray Beach, Harcourt M. & Virginia W. Sylvester Foundation, Town of Palm Beach United Way, Junior League of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach County Emergency Nurses Association, Hibiscus Quilters Club, Terri & Jim Eggers, JFK Medical Center & Cancer Center Rehab Department, United Way of Palm Beach County, and Spirit of Giving Network, as well as the generous employees of the Boca Raton Resort & Club, Oasis, Northern Trust, the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser's Office, and Novation.

WHAT'S INSIDE: DONOR SPOTLIGHT | POND PLACE | HOLIDAY APPEAL | HEALTHY BEGINNINGS | SAFETYNET

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His Father's Wisdom Fuels **Steve Bernstein's** Limitless Drive to Give Back

There are thoughtful donors and deeply invested benefactors ... and then there is Steve Bernstein. While he is undoubtedly among the most generous donors in HomeSafe's 42-year history, Steve's greatest gift is his passionate volunteerism. From the day Steve first came to HomeSafe to visit with the young children in the residential program, nearly 23 years ago, the life of one altruist and the trajectory of one organization were forever changed.

Steve remembers the day clearly.

"I was touring the place and saw that each child had a small footlocker at the foot of their bed. I was struck by the realization that all of their belongings fit in this tiny space. I had so much. I could do more."

He was born in the Bronx, New York, to a middle-class family. His father, a World War II veteran and a lifelong mentor to Steve, instilled in his family the values of integrity, hard work and community. At age 12, Steve got his first job delivering the New York Post. After obtaining a University of Florida business degree, then working briefly for a telecommunications company, Steve launched Steve Bernstein & Associates (SBA Communications) from his basement using credit card advances as start-up capital.

Today, Boca Raton-based SBA Communications is a \$35 billion public company. In 2003, Steve stepped down as CEO to pursue his philanthropic interests, but kept his position as Chairman of the



Steve with a Pond Place client

Board. He established the Steven E. Bernstein Family Foundation in 2006.

The impact of Steve's philanthropy is evident throughout HomeSafe. He has served on the Board of Directors for 20 years, including five as President. Each year, Steve leads the Board effort to provide holiday bonuses to all 152 of HomeSafe's employees.

Steve has chaired HomeSafe's largest annual fundraiser, The Classic Rock & Roll Party, for the past two years and again for 2021. His Foundation is an annual Diamond Sponsor, and his impassioned *Call to the Heart* appeal from the stage inspires attendees to donate more than \$125,000 each year.

HomeSafe's Bernstein Family Foundation Campus, the therapeutic residential program for boys in Boca Raton, and the Bernstein Independent Living Campus for young adults transitioning out of foster care, also known as Pond Place, are named in recognition of Steve's extraordinary philanthropy. Both Steve and his Foundation are founding members of

HomeSafe's major giving society, the *Guardian Society*. He has also engaged his personal and professional networks to make hundreds of thousands of dollars in new gifts. What's more, Steve became a mentor to Jeff, a dynamic young man who spent his entire childhood in foster care and is ready to make his way in the world after completing his education and transitioning out of Pond Place.

As much as he supports HomeSafe, Steve Bernstein's capacity for giving doesn't end there. It has also touched recipients of the George Snow Scholarship Fund, clients of Florence Fuller Child Development Center, and Boca Helping Hands, as well as patients at Boca Raton Regional Hospital. Yet he prefers to give quietly. When asked what makes him happiest, Steve responds, "My awesome daughter [a mental health counselor] and my beautiful new granddaughter." He adds, "And, long beach walks."

Steve Bernstein – a holiday miracle, all year long.

The First Client to Move into **Pond Place** on the Path to Success

Jeff spent his entire life living in private and group foster homes. When he was 19, he was living with a foster parent, but due to some difficulties in the household, he moved out. Thanks to advocates from Best Foot Forward, an organization providing academic support and guidance for local foster youth, Jeff was referred to HomeSafe's newly constructed Pond Place Independent Living Program. He would be the first resident.

Pond Place provides safe, affordable housing for young adults who have aged out of foster care and are continuing their education beyond high school. In addition to safe housing, Pond Place residents are afforded wraparound services including academic and therapeutic support and life skills training. Residents are also encouraged to hone their interpersonal skills and develop healthy relationships with peers and mentors.

For three years, Jeff thrived at Pond Place, attending Palm Beach State College and working various jobs. He was introduced to longtime HomeSafe board member and benefactor, Steve Bernstein. The two men quickly bonded. Steve, an accomplished entrepreneur, began mentoring Jeff and encouraging his personal interests and professional pursuits.

While Jeff appreciated the housing and services Pond Place offered, he grew tired of following the community rules and attending meetings with other residents. He wanted to live life his own way and, in 2019, Jeff left the program.



Jeff and his mentor, Steve.

After a few months of being on his own, Jeff realized just how much he benefitted from the supportive community at Pond Place and asked to return to the program. Steve continued to believe in Jeff's potential and encouraged him to fully commit to the program this time around.

company. Having completed his education and recently turning 23, Jeff relocated from Pond Place into a private residence.

Best Foot Forward recently hosted a surprise graduation party for Jeff at HomeSafe's Lake Worth Campus.

“Pond Place gave me the opportunity to move forward and to focus on my education,” said Jeff. “This program has been a big help to me.”

Now in the right frame of mind, Jeff began working closely with Pond Place Program Supervisor Kehan Rahming to create a plan to meet his personal and academic goals. His hard work paid off when, just this summer, Jeff earned his HVAC certification and secured an excellent job with a local air conditioning

Many people from Jeff's support system were there, including a surprise FaceTime call from his longtime mentor and friend, Steve Bernstein.

“Pond Place gave me the opportunity to move forward and to focus on my education,” said Jeff. “This program has been a big help to me.”

Miracles Really Do Exist for a Deserving

With blond hair and blue eyes, Mark* seemed angelic. In reality, he was sad, angry, and lonely. Mark had experienced numerous horrors at home in his short life: violence, substance abuse and drug abuse. Most tragically, when he was only 7, both his mother and the man who lived with them died by suicide within two days of each other. He was orphaned – or so he thought.

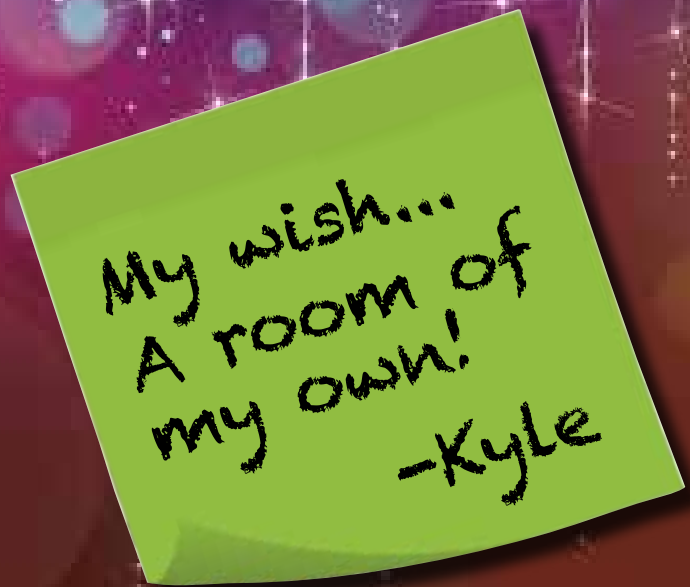
Mark carried a great burden of trauma with him when he arrived at HomeSafe's Sylvester Family Campus in January 2019, the day before his ninth birthday. He had been removed from his home in 2015, but neither a foster home nor the home of an aunt was a good fit. Fueled by rage, he was "acting out" physically and sexually, and was hospitalized multiple times under Florida's Baker Act for threatening to kill himself or others. He was referred to our Libra Boys program because it would provide the intensive therapy services he needed to process his feelings, develop better coping skills, and start healing.

The first year was hard. Mark didn't trust anyone; he put up a wall by calling the staff derogatory names and using profanity. He also channeled his anger inward -- literally beating himself up. But Mark was surprised in various ways. One was that the staff weren't put off by his misbehavior, but continued to love him because they were so determined to help him.

One breakthrough came after Mark moved from the house where he was assigned, supervised by Ms. Monique, to the other house on campus supervised by Mr. Derek. Ms. Monique's house was being converted from a boys' home to a girls' home. Mark discovered he



Mark and Ms. Stephanie



You can make your donation online at www.helphomesafe.org (please indicate HOLIDAYS in the comment section), or mail your donation to HomeSafe in the pre-addressed envelope included in your newsletter (checks payable to HomeSafe).



MIRACLES REALLY DO EXIST

Boy at HomeSafe

missed Ms. Monique and her team and would visit them daily. Eventually, those visits ended with hugs. Mark was letting himself begin to trust.

As Mark adjusted to Mr. Derek's house, the staff there helped him build his self-esteem and comforted him whenever he could not soothe himself. Earlier this year, after Mark was switched to a new medication, he gradually gained more control and the ability to stop and think before acting out. A new therapist, Ms. Stephanie, became another adult Mark could trust because she spent time with him in "his world," shooting hoops and riding skateboards.

It was Ms. Stephanie who gave Mark the biggest surprise of all. Several months ago, she learned from Mark's treatment team that his records misidentified his biological father. Mark's mother had told him the man who lived with them was his father. The truth was that his real father was still alive and reached out to Mark's case manager, looking to connect with him. After a paternity test provided confirmation, Ms. Stephanie shared the happy news with Mark.

Now, Mark and his dad are working on becoming a family. They've met via Zoom, are participating in therapy

sessions with Ms. Stephanie, and are eager to see each other in person. Mark is excited about the prospect of joining his father in Michigan by Christmas, and enjoying the unexpected gift of a safe, happy home.

The other children in our residential program are not yet ready to leave HomeSafe's care, but it's equally important that they experience the magic of the holidays and warmth of a loving home. After all, HomeSafe is their home.

**Name changed to protect the client.*

**By contributing to HomeSafe this season, you are providing so much more than a donation - you are responding to our clients' collective holiday wish:
A ROOM OF MY OWN!**

Gifts received in response to HomeSafe's 2020 Holiday Appeal will directly support the ongoing construction and renovation of our residential campuses to ensure that every child in our care has a private bedroom and bathroom.

We have already begun to create these new spaces but need YOUR SUPPORT to reach the finish line.

This holiday season, give the gift of comfort - the space to heal.

MOM USES READING TO BUILD A SPECIAL BOND

Astrid has two young children. Her older son receives therapy for speech delays that were not detected when he was younger. She is grateful to have learned about our Healthy Beginnings Growing Smart Program which has been very helpful in guiding her as she watches the development of her baby daughter, Luna. The books, toys and activities that are provided through the program have helped Astrid



PRESS  PAUSE

THE CLASSIC ROCK & ROLL PARTY

NO SHOW CLASSIC 2021

THE CLASSIC ROCK & ROLL PARTY is paused for 2021, but the needs of our children and families are not.

For 17 years, The Classic has gathered 300+ HomeSafe friends and supporters for a vibrant evening of music, gratitude and celebration.

Unfortunately, an in-person event is not possible next year.

So, in the spirit of staying **HOME** and keeping each other **SAFE**, we ask for your support of our **NO SHOW CLASSIC**.

Please visit
www.HelpHomeSafe.org/NoShowClassic

communicate more meaningfully with Luna. This was important to Astrid following the difficulties she experienced with her son. Astrid reads to Luna on a daily basis and engages in activities with her to ensure she is learning and developing appropriately. In fact, reading time is Mom and baby's favorite part of the day!

In fact, reading time is Mom and baby's favorite part of the day!



SAFETYNET THERAPISTS HELP ONE FAMILY SUMMON THE COURAGE TO HEAL

Gaudy,* age 41, and her young children were referred to HomeSafe's SafetyNet Program for domestic violence counseling. She had endured a long history of verbal, physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband, Carlos.

The ongoing domestic abuse consisted of extreme jealousy, controlling behaviors and stalking, and culminated with a serious physical assault. Gaudy was severely beaten, had her teeth knocked out, and was threatened with a knife. Carlos's alcohol and drug abuse had spiraled out of control and he was on the run from the police. Ultimately, he was arrested, plead guilty to various charges and was deported back to his native country.

Gaudy found herself struggling with only one income, working nonstop cleaning houses to support her children. Upon arriving at SafetyNet, Gaudy and her children immediately began intensive individual and group therapy services. They rarely missed a session and were committed to learning how to cope and process the trauma they had experienced. They exhibited a strong sense of resilience and were very motivated to begin the healing process.

Gaudy reports that "things are much better now."

SafetyNet therapists connected Gaudy with resources for emergency food, basic needs, and legal advocacy. She also received strength and guidance from other women in her support

group. In time, Gaudy felt empowered to make a change for her family by moving to a safer home environment and learning to better communicate with her kids. Her daughter, Alicia,



age 14, confided in staff that she had a history of self-harming behaviors (cutting) and was able to address this serious issue with her therapist. Junior, age 8, found his sessions to be a valuable tool to learn how to express his repressed feelings of fear and hopelessness.

Gaudy and her children still participate in the program. They engage in therapy sessions via tele-conference which has helped them to cope with their stress exacerbated by COVID-19. Gaudy reports that "things are much better now." The family is on track to successfully graduate the program at the end of the year.

**Name has been changed to protect the client.*

Guardian Society

HomeSafe

Developed to celebrate HomeSafe's most generous benefactors, Guardian Society recognizes individuals, foundations and corporations who have made lifetime gifts of \$50,000 or more.

HomeSafe celebrates



our newest Guardian Society member!



together

To view the list of Guardian Society members or to learn more about HomeSafe's major and legacy giving societies, please visit HelpHomeSafe.org.

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HomeSafe Donors...

continued from front cover

For more than 10 years, Karin and Todd Roesch have contributed gift cards, accompanied by personal notes, to every HomeSafe child on their birthday. They have brought smiles to the faces of hundreds of children over the years.

For five years, Birthday Smiles, Inc. of Palm Beach County founder Tamara Pulosi-Keith has been delivering a birthday package, including a personalized birthday cake, decorations, party supplies and a gift card, to each child at our West Palm Beach campus on their birthday.

Both the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller (OSJ) and the Alternative Motorcycle Club (AMC) host holiday parties for the children in our residential program. The children look forward to the festivities all year long – not only for the sweets and gifts – but to visit with their returning friends from AMC and OSJ.

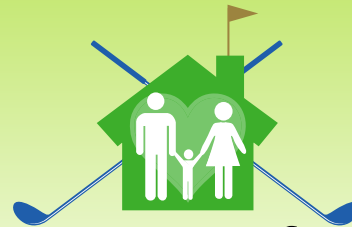
The children from HomeSafe's domestic violence prevention and counseling program, SafetyNet, also benefit from the kindness of others during the holidays. Two longtime friends of HomeSafe, Kristina Saltzman and Bette Parsons, identify community donors willing to "adopt" SafetyNet families and provide hundreds of gifts for children whose lives have been touched by domestic violence. At the annual SafetyNet Holiday Party each year, more than 60 children excitedly tear open the wrapping paper of gifts they never expected to receive.

For more information on how you can help during the holidays, please contact Chéré Brodi at (561) 383-9842 or ChereBrodi@HelpHomeSafe.org



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HomeSafe

Charity
GOLF TOURNAMENT



Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club
Monday, June 7, 2021

\$500 per player
\$2,000 per foursome
Men, women & couples teams invited

Bill Burke, Tournament Chairman
President & Vice Chairman, Paradise Bank



Cathy Zumkehr, Tournament Ambassador

For more information, please call 561-383-9842