



# HAPPENINGS

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

SUMMER 2024

## Construction Progress Continues at Reimagined Boca Raton Campus

This spring, HomeSafe gathered supporters at the soon-to-be reconfigured and reconstructed Bernstein Family Foundation campus in east Boca Raton. The event honored HomeSafe's Guardian Society donors who have invested significantly in the futures of abused and abandoned children.

Guests toured the Boca construction site and spent time with program leadership, learning how the new strategically designed spaces will positively impact the attitude, mood, behavior and therapeutic outcomes for severely traumatized kids. The new home, which is expected to open late 2024, will create a more welcoming,

safe and predictable environment for our kids and give them a much-needed sense of privacy.

The campus will also be the future site of the Leslie L. Alexander Center for Healthy Beginnings, a dedicated space for HomeSafe's Healthy Beginnings South team to screen, assess and provide support services to approximately 3,300 babies, young children and new mothers each year. Funded by the Children's Services Council and in collaboration with 30 other nonprofits, the Healthy Beginnings team ensures that every young child in Palm Beach County has access to the medical, educational and mental health resources they need to enter

kindergarten at five years old, eager and ready to learn.

Following the tour, guests enjoyed a lovely luncheon and recognition program at a local favorite, Le Sorelle. HomeSafe CEO Matt Ladika expressed his appreciation and excitement for HomeSafe's future, *"HomeSafe will never stop growing, adapting and improving. We'll take a measured approach toward our growth, as we always do, because we know the challenges and opportunities facing us. Thank you for staying with us on this journey, so that we can change the lives of even more children together."*

See pages 6 & 7 for more photos from the Guardian Society event.



**WHAT'S INSIDE: LIFETIME LESSON | FINDING HOPE | GOLF TOURNAMENT | DONOR TOUR OF BOCA CAMPUS**

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## A Lesson to Last a Lifetime

Girls from HomeSafe's Sylvester Family Foundation West campus in West Palm Beach were recently given a lesson that will last them a lifetime. Through her Imagine U program, HomeSafe board president, Tarra Moten, treated 11 girls to dinner at a high-end restaurant. However, this wasn't only an opportunity to dress up and enjoy a fancy meal; it was a glimpse into the world of possibility – showing the girls what hard work and dedication could offer.

As conceived by Mrs. Moten, Imagine U empowers young women to live successfully and independently by instilling confidence, competence and a strong sense of well-being. This multifaceted program is designed to set young women up for success in both their personal and professional lives. Topics covered

include etiquette training, tutorials on makeup and appropriate dress for different settings, networking, stress management, time management, and loving and honoring yourself (identifying your unique gifts, believing in yourself and building healthy relationships).

Throughout the three-hour evening, Elrika Richards, a close friend of Mrs. Moten's and a protocol expert, discussed with the girls the proper behavior and correct use of utensils for each course. While some rules were naturally easy for the girls to

follow, it was obvious others were new. Thanks to hands-on practice and some gentle guidance, the girls acquired the new skills. The girls, staff and other successful women in attendance, shared easy conversation with moments of giggles when it was realized the wrong fork was used or food accidentally landed off the plate.

Mrs. Moten and her guests listened to, and encouraged the girls on school and goals, and shared their excitement for what the future holds for all of them. Following dinner, each girl was asked to tell the group at least one thing they learned from the evening. Most were eager to share at least two. The adults were moved when one of the teenagers told them that she planned to FaceTime her younger brother the next day to get him up to speed. For their willingness to learn, all of the girls were rewarded with gifts donated by Tarra Enterprises and by County Commissioner Mack Bernard's office.



## Finding Love, Hope and Family at HomeSafe

Fifteen-year-old "James" grew up with a violent stepfather who frequently assaulted his mom. Subsequently, he was removed from his home by the Florida Department of Children and Families, and placed in the foster care system. From there, James was moved around to several group homes and shelters, unable to fully process his pain and terror.

Significant childhood trauma can manifest in many ways, and for James, it came out as a quick temper and physical altercations. He had decided at a young age that showing emotion and vulnerability were dangerous, and the only way to keep himself safe was to swing first.

When he first came to HomeSafe, James felt shy and lonely—in his words "like a cub without a mother." Staff welcomed him with open arms. Ms. Lakesha, in particular, discovered his fondness for sushi, and the following day, she surprised him by bringing some home. James found the experience disorienting. "It might be hard to understand, but not everybody is used to experiencing love. To me, the staff's kindness felt foreign and weird. I didn't know that some people could just be genuinely kind."

Over the past year, James has bonded with both HomeSafe staff and his peers. He shares, "They say blood is thicker than water, but mud is thicker than blood. You

don't have to be related to be a family, and that's how I feel here." Program Supervisor, Mr. Derek, has observed James' tough exterior gradually soften. He is proud that James has learned to pause when there is tension with one of the other boys, and how to walk away from a fight. Most importantly, James has gained the skill to reach out to trusted adults when he needs support in processing his negative emotions.

Despite all his progress at HomeSafe, James recently faced a significant setback. He had remained optimistic about reuniting with his mom after her separation from his abusive stepfather. James and his mother began enjoying weekend sleepovers, signaling progress toward their reunion. However, his hopes were dashed when she moved in with a new boyfriend, someone with a criminal record and no intention of stepping into a fatherly role. James recently learned that not only is returning

home to his family not an option, but his two siblings have also been removed and placed into foster care.

Mr. Derek was the one who comforted James when he received the devastating news, and he provided a safe environment for him to open up and cry. Because of the team at HomeSafe, James now knows what he deserves—a loving family who will take care of him and provide him with the support that he needs. He is beginning to come to terms with the fact that his mom cannot fulfill that role for him. James is now preparing to transition to a less restrictive group home, one he has lived in before, and he is looking forward to reuniting with some of the staff there.

"When I think about my future, I see myself as successful—as a father, as an uncle, and as a great-great-great grandfather who will live a long and happy life with the people I love."



# GOLF TOURNAMENT HITS FUND-RAISING RECORD

HomeSafe hosted its most successful golf tournament yet on May 20 at the exclusive High Ridge Country Club. The tournament net \$93,000 to help save the lives of thousands of children and families who have endured unimaginable trauma, and will help

prevent future cases of abuse.

We are forever grateful to our tournament ambassadors, Jim MacCutcheon & Fern Schmidt, Patty Larkin, Brooke Qualk, Logan Shalmi of The Atlantic Group of Oppenheimer

& Co., and Phil Engman of Northern Trust, for their hard work and dedication.

**Be sure to join us next year on Monday, May 12 at Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club.**

**Top Row:** Golf Ambassadors Patty Larkin, Logan Shalmi, Fern Schmidt, Jim MacCutcheon, Brooke Qualk, Phil Engman; Men's Division Winners - Phil Lafounttine, Mike DaSilva, Jason Eggers, Jon Daniel; Jeanette Austin, Jayne Malfitano, Michelle Bernardo, Jori Farrell; Kerrie Milligan, Nicko McBrain, Rochelle LeCavalier, Michele Desjardins, Kristine Miller; **Middle Row:** Michael Glennie, John Slavik, Rodney Cunningham; Peter Crocitto, Maeva Adam, Gabriel Adam and Garret Hall - Jr. Foursome from First Tee; Arthur Adler, Richard Zenker, Stu Steckler, Laurence Goldfarb; Andrew Waldman, Kristen Bissett, Ana Waldman, Aric Waldman; Joe Scaggs, Harold Groome, Jonathan Brush, Ted Campbell; **Bottom Row:** Dave Englert, Mike Hahn, Bill Burke; First Place Women's Foursome with Matt Ladika - Genevieve Murphy, Aileen Farrell, Kathleen Long, Lisa Addeo; Lynda Gillespie, Paulette Comparto, Lori Smith, Patty Larkin; Matt Ladika, Kathrell, former HomeSafe client, Steve Bernstein; Jim Schecter and Phil Procacci



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# HomeSafe Donors Gather for Tour and Guardian Society Luncheon

In April, HomeSafe welcomed supporters to our Boca Raton campus to share the impact of their giving and to express our deep appreciation.

Guests toured the construction progress of the new 12-bedroom therapeutic group home for abused and abandoned children

that is slated to open in late 2024. Then, guests enjoyed a private luncheon and recognition program at nearby restaurant, Le Sorelle, to induct HomeSafe's newest Guardian Society donors. During the program, long-standing board member, Steve Bernstein, thanked everyone for their generous support.

*"Because of you, HomeSafe is able to help children that others cannot. It's truly heartwarming to know that all of our donors give expecting nothing in return but the knowledge that they are saving children's lives and giving them the bright futures that they deserve."*



Top Row: Bjarne Borg, Ken and Maggie Rosenberg, Maria Borg; Alex Henderson and Abby Bernstein Henderson

Bottom Row: Scott and Shannon Smith; Steve Bernstein and Lori Keezer; Aggie and Jeff Stoops



Top Row: Lou Ellen Jordan and Tarra Moten; Rex Kirby and Kelly Smallridge; Sean and Victoria Smith

Middle Row: James Conner, Nancy Rickard and Isabelle Paul; Chris and Jayne Malfitano, Jim MacCutcheon

Bottom Row: Matt Ladika and Judith Fletcher; Ward Kellogg and Mike Bruno

For more information about HomeSafe's Guardian Society, visit [www.helphomesafe.org/guardian-society](http://www.helphomesafe.org/guardian-society).

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023/2024

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Guardian Society recognizes individuals, foundations and corporations who have made lifetime gifts of \$50,000 or more.

HomeSafe Celebrates Our Newest Members  
**Joe and Kimberly Scaggs**

For more information about the Guardian Society, please contact Laura Barker, Chief Philanthropy Officer, at (561) 383-9829 or [LauraBarker@helphomesafe.org](mailto:LauraBarker@helphomesafe.org)



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### Featuring Mike DelGuidice

renowned vocalist, singer songwriter and recording artist who has built a national following as a full-time touring member of Billy Joel's Band.

Join HomeSafe for an unforgettable evening with Mike DelGuidice and his band, performing astonishing renditions of some of the biggest names in Classic Rock (including Billy Joel), a few of Mike's eclectic original songs, and much more.



**Saturday,  
January 25, 2025**

#### CELEBRITY HOST

Nicko McBrain, Iron Maiden Drummer

#### PARTY CHAIRMEN

Steve Bernstein | Abby Bernstein-Henderson