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For more information please visit [www.CHSOFNJ.com](http://www.CHSOFNJ.com).

Return Service Requested

## The TEDI Fall Fundraiser is back and in person!

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

Grounds For Sculpture  
Hamilton, NJ

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.



Please remember our CHSofNJ children in your estate planning.  
This is a critical way we have raised funds since 1894.

Summer Newsletter 2022

# For a **Child's** Sake



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At a June ribbon-cutting ceremony, The Children's Home Society of New Jersey Head Start program proudly announced...

Saving Children's Lives and Building Healthy Families Since 1894



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# Recent Events Happening at The Children's Home Society of New Jersey







Large group photo, left to right: Isaac Dorsey, Executive Director of Head Start at CHSofNJ; New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy; Steve Eisenberg; Janet Shapiro Eisenberg; Sophie Eisenberg; and Harold Shapiro.

## Early Childhood Center Dedicated to Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro MSW, PhD, Expands Equity in Education



Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro

comprehensive services for 45 expectant mothers and home-based home visiting services for 102 families with a newborn or toddler to age three.

Vivian B. Shapiro, MSW, PhD has been a pioneer in the pediatric mental health field. Not only a published author, including “Ghosts in the Nursery,” Dr. Shapiro spent her career studying and revolutionizing the understanding of childhood mental health development. Recognizing her lifetime of research that had influenced the nation, the CHSofNJ Board of Trustees listened to her strong recommendation to support applying for the agency’s first Early Head Start Home Based program. CHSofNJ won that award in 2010 and the organization’s Early Head Start services from pregnancy through age three have been growing ever since. Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro’s

At a June ribbon-cutting ceremony, The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey Head Start program proudly announced the opening of its newest early childhood services center named the Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro MSW, PhD Early Childhood Center. It will provide instructional and developmental opportunities for 80 Trenton infants and toddlers,

understanding of the bonding, the touch, the nurturing support will help to create better futures for thousands of Greater Trenton area babies and toddlers.

This Early Childhood Center fills a childcare service void for diverse, lower-income infants, toddlers and parents in the Greater Trenton area. While offering quality educational care to infants and toddlers, Early Head Start provides pivotal access to developmental health and well-being in a child’s life. Isaac Dorsey, Executive Director of Head Start at CHSofNJ said “It is the best investment we can make as a society to ensure that these vulnerable children are set up for success. When children are provided high-quality, caring, comprehensive early education, including a mental health specialist, special needs consultant and nutritionist, research shows they are better equipped to excel in every capacity later in life.” In remarks made during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new center, Isaac added, [“As a former Head Start student myself, I am a living demonstration of the benefits of Head Start.”](#)

The ceremony drew 100 attendees including Princeton University President Emeritus Dr. Harold T. Shapiro, spouse of Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro for whom the new center is named, as well as their daughters Janet, Karen and Marilyn, and granddaughter Sophie Eisenberg. Dr. Janet Shapiro Eisenberg, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College spoke about her mother’s legacy on behalf of the family. According to CHSofNJ CEO Donna Pressma, [“The critical pregnancy care and comprehensive early childhood learning and care we are providing through Early Head Start would not have been possible without the articulate advocacy of our former Trustee, Dr. Vivian Shapiro who helped the Board to understand this amazing program in 2014.”](#)

Also present were New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, Hamilton Township Mayor Jeff Martin and Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora.

[“I am proud to call The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey a trusted partner of Nurture NJ, our state’s initiative to make New Jersey the safest, most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby,”](#) said First Lady Murphy.

Nurture NJ is her signature movement that has improved childbirth services, making New Jersey a national model.





**Maritza I. Raimundi-Petroski** Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement at The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

## CHSofNJ Vice President Honored with National Changemaker Award

Maritza I. Raimundi-Petroski, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement at The Children's Home Society of New Jersey, was nominated by The Burke Foundation to receive the 2021 Changemaker Award. The award is given to only 50 individuals across the country and it highlights the services they've provided in their communities amidst COVID-19.

Administered by The Institute for Nonprofit Practice, Maritza and 49 other recipients were honored at the 2021 Changemaker Awards held during The Art of Leading for Good: Shining a Light on Changemakers this February. Honorees were recognized for supporting their neighbors and communities, leading their teams, demonstrating remarkable service, courage, and generosity while confronting unprecedented adversity over the past two years.

Maritza leads the Maternal Child Health (MCH) services that CHS provides throughout our communities, with a more significant footprint in Mercer, Monmouth, and Ocean Counties. Despite the pandemic's challenges, her leadership contributed to the success of programs like AMAR, a community-based doula program that trains doulas who provide perinatal and postnatal care to pregnant Latina women. Throughout the years, she has worked closely with her dedicated staff to introduce and expand programs at the agency. Two such programs she innovated are Body & Soul and CUNA, to insure healthy childbirth. Body and Soul is a holistic prenatal health program for Black pregnant women that focuses on

a lifestyle that promotes culturally-sensitive harmony between the mind, body, and soul. CUNA offers linguistically and culturally appropriate prenatal health, education, and support for at-risk and isolated Latina pregnant women, birth fathers, and their families.

Under Maritza's leadership, her committed staff have made a lasting impact. Maritza believes in a life of service and encourages her team to strive for progress rather than perfection because learning is lifelong. When asked how MCH services provide help and hope, Maritza replied, **"When you are genuine about your desire to help others, the community rallies around you and shares their strength with you."**

Maritza Raimundi-Petroski has worked in the nonprofit sector for 25 years. As the only New Jersey recipient to receive the 2021 Changemakers Award, Maritza said that she **"is both honored and humbled to represent The Children's Home Society of New Jersey, my staff and the families we serve."**

To learn more about The Institute for Nonprofit Practice and the Changemaker Awards, visit [www.nonprofitpractice.org](http://www.nonprofitpractice.org).







**Bruno Cellucci** NEW Chief Financial Officer

## CHSofNJ Appoints New Chief Financial Officer

CHSofNJ is delighted to announce the appointment of our new Chief Financial Officer, Bruno Cellucci, CPA. Bruno brings over 14 years of experience in leadership roles in non-profit and corporate finance environments, including contributing to the growth of Catholic Charities of Trenton in becoming a \$40MM organization. Some of his best qualities include his passion for serving at-risk children and families, his leadership style by example and the fact that he rolls up his sleeves to get the job done with his team. Bruno earned a BBA in Accounting from Temple University, having graduated Magna Cum Laude. He is a member of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants, a member of Beta Gamma Sigma and a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society. Over his career, Bruno has directed, managed, and developed financial strategies and operations with successful outcomes. He looks forward to building on the agency's meaningful relationships with critical stakeholders in Mental Health, Education, Disabilities, and Senior Services, among others. Bruno's professional growth is a testament to his competence and skill and we are excited he has rolled up his sleeves and joined CHSofNJ!



**Michael Roseborough** NEW Program Administrator for the CHSofNJ Positive Impact 21st Century Community Learning Centers

## Positive Impact 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Gets New Director

CHSofNJ is excited to announce our new Program Administrator for the CHSofNJ Positive Impact 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Michael Roseborough! Mike has been a passionate mentor and advocate for youth for more than 15 years. He received an MBA in Nonprofit Management from Springfield College, and a BA in African American Studies, with a Minor in Communications from Northeastern University. As Project Director for Princeton YMCA, Program Director of a Boys & Girls Club, and Program Director for Neighborhood and Community Services, he oversaw a \$3 Million grant-funded budget, the operation of an after-school and summer program with more than 400 participants, and over 30 staff, all the while increasing enrollment and garnering sustainable collaborators. Mike comes with years of progressive experience working with at-risk children and youth at several community centers in New Jersey and Virginia. He understands the social and emotional needs of young people. His most recent work allowed him the opportunity to advocate for minority students in the Princeton Schools by implementing resources to help them feel more at home. Mike is very mission-driven. He has mentored, coached, and developed young people throughout his career. His greatest satisfaction comes from making a positive difference in a young person's life. Mike joined our CHSofNJ team in June.

**Recent Events Happening at The Children's Home Society of New Jersey**





## Caring for the Caregivers

In honor of Grandparents' Month last September, our Kinship Navigator Program held a picnic for Kinship caregivers. The Kinship Picnic was held at Mercer County Park and was attended by the kinship Director, Dolores Bryant, staff, 15 kin caregivers and CHSofNJ President and CEO, Donna Pressma. The Kinship Navigator program helps grandparents and other relatives who have undertaken the responsibility of raising their kin children find resources for medical coverage, housing, child care, educational issues, legal issues, financial support and family support.

Are you interested in hearing more about the Kinship Navigator program?

We currently provide Kinship Navigator services in Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Hunterdon, Somerset, Ocean and Union counties.

For more information on the Kinship program please call 1-800-396-4518.

## Accompanying Others on Their Journey: Volunteer is New Mother's Uber Hero

When Avalina gave birth to her son Jorge, she experienced both joy and apprehension. Jorge was born with hydrocephalus, a condition resulting in excess fluids surrounding the brain and requiring surgery. To provide surgical intervention and aftercare, he was transferred to a specialized Childrens' Hospital 30 miles away from his parent's home. The couple didn't own a car and her husband, who works as a landscaper couldn't afford to take unpaid time off, so Avalina paid \$100 for one Uber ride to and from the hospital. **"This just broke my heart,"** said CHSofNJ doula, Tania Tapia, Early Head Start, Pregnant Womens' Program in Trenton. **"I reached out to find help for this couple because they couldn't afford Uber and needed to see their son at the hospital and meet with Jorge's doctors regarding his care."**

When Emad at Agape Community Services heard about Avalina's plight, he didn't hesitate to come forward with a solution.

**"I simply did what I felt called to do,"** said Emad. **"We are here to help each other."**



**Since I wasn't especially busy at the time, I was happy to help by driving Avalina to and from the hospital to be with her son."** For weeks, Emad picked up Avalina each morning and drove to the hospital and each afternoon, he drove her back home. Despite the multiple unknowns she faced – going home each day without her baby, worrying about his condition and when he could safely be discharged – Avalina could count on Emad. He made it possible for her to hold and bond with her baby. And when the happy moment finally came for Jorge's discharge from the hospital, Emad was there with an infant car seat, ready to take him home with his mother by his side.

Tania reflects back on this act of kindness: **"Emad's compassionate response to Avalina is a reminder that sometimes, the greatest gift we can offer others is giving of ourselves, our time and our willingness to walk along with them on their journey."**

Interested in volunteering? Contact Pam Cipriano, [PCipriano@chsofnj.org](mailto:PCipriano@chsofnj.org).



## Becoming a Mother... CHSofNJ and our Family's Loving Adoption Story

Searching options to start our family. After years of trying to get pregnant, which included a round of infertility treatments, we began to look at alternatives. This was 1989 and adoption was not talked about as freely. It was considered controversial and inspired some negative publicity. However, we were determined to find a way.

We looked at various options for a modest means African-American couple. I came across Children's Home Society (CHSofNJ). After reading about the organization, its platform and beliefs, their integrity and process, I felt moved to contact them.

We began our adoption path after initial consultations. It was at this time I found out...I was pregnant!! Imagine, after all of this time, as soon as our attention was turned to adoption, the pregnancy stress was lifted and voila! So, after long thought and prayer, we decided to put the adoption on hold. Several weeks later, we learned the pregnancy was tubal and needed to be terminated. It took several months to recover from the physical and more importantly, the emotional loss.

After time passed, we reached out to restart our adoption with The Children's Home Society of New Jersey. Before long, we were on our way. Our caseworker had a child in mind and I let my job know that in a short time, I would need six weeks off. At that time, adoptive parents were not granted maternity leave. So, I took four weeks paid time off plus two unpaid weeks because I wanted the same maternity time as any other mother! As we waited for the final steps, a coworker came to me with an envelope. She said it was a newsletter ad for a baby available for adoption. I stopped her well-meaning efforts and declined. I explained that our caseworker had a baby for us and that I didn't want another baby's image in my mind when we meet intended our child. She understood and put the envelope away.

Meeting our meant to be son. Soon, the call came and we were off to begin our new lives...as parents! I took my time off, bonded with our son and cried when it was time to go back to work.



Years later, I was cleaning out a desk at my office and came across an envelope. There are no words to express my amazement! It was a picture of my son! He was the same baby being promoted for adoption in the newsletter that my co-worker tried to give me! He was meant to be our son. When we brought him home, we were actually given the original of the photo used for the article. A copy of which I was staring at, with the article carefully cut out.

This confirmed what I knew all along...the difficulty getting pregnant; the emotional loss; the delay in the adoption...they all happened for a reason. We were *meant* to be the parents of our son, our beautiful baby boy, whom we dearly love.

It is now 30 years later. Our son made us grandparents 3 years ago. As with any family, there have been challenges along the way. But we have the closest of bonds, brought together by love rather than biology. Throughout his childhood, he would periodically ask me to recite his Meant to Be story and I would do so lovingly.

Do you have a "meant to be" adoption story you want to share?

Email Lisa Thibault, [LThibault@chsofnj.org](mailto:LThibault@chsofnj.org)





## Trenton Education Dance Institute: Students Transform Trenton Thunder Stadium into “Field of Dreams”

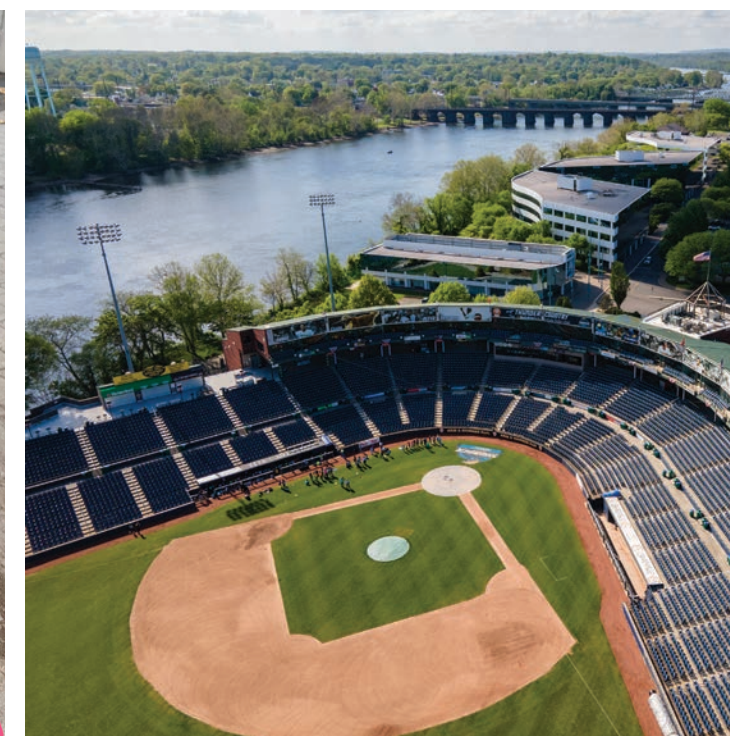
After a challenging, two-year, pandemic-driven hiatus from in-person performances, over 100 Trenton public school students gave their end-of-year performance, “Field of Dreams” at Trenton Thunder Stadium. The event was attended by over 200 enthusiastic families, teachers and fellow students.

Established 33 years ago, the Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) has been bringing this expressive art to life for generations of public school students in the city. *“We now have grandparents who are TEDI alumni coming out to watch their grandchildren perform this year, which is a moving experience for all of us,”* observed Kayla James, TEDI Artistic Director. Accompanied by a live band, led by TEDI Music Director John Williams, the fourth and fifth grade students have worked all year on several original dance numbers.

During the pandemic lockdown, James and Williams continued to engage



Sequoya Bacon-Jones



students in this popular afterschool program via Zoom meetings from their homes and rehearsals. *“Once the students returned to in-person learning, the number of students participating in TEDI skyrocketed,”* said James. Tragically, a 9-year-old TEDI student was killed in a random act of gun violence in her Trenton neighborhood this March, a month before their final dance performance. A memorial to Sequoya Bacon-Jones was included in the performance.





This new series will introduce a few of the special people who bring the mission of CHSofNJ to life, as volunteers, Board members, employees or the parents and children in our programs.

Share your Children’s Home Society of New Jersey story with us by sending it to:  
Lisa Thibault, Communications & Development Director, [lthibault@chsofnj.org](mailto:lthibault@chsofnj.org).

# We Are Family

## How did you first learn of The Children’s Home Society of NJ?

I first heard about The Children’s Home Society of NJ fewer than 8 years ago. My daughter had just been born and I was walking around my neighborhood with her. I encountered a neighbor I had previously not met – she left her house early each morning and returned home late at night. As fate would have it, this elusive neighbor turned out to be Donna Pressma, the CEO of CHSofNJ since 1986! She introduced herself and met my daughter. I explained to her that my husband and I had just adopted her. Donna said “I work for an agency that helps to make families like yours.” And the conversation began...

## What inspired you to get involved?

My parents were my inspiration for getting involved with CHSofNJ. Growing up my father was a pastor and my mother was a regional director for Head Start on Cape Cod. I have many memories of my parents’ dedication to their helping professions and making a difference in underserved communities.

## Who is in your family and are there ways you include them in supporting CHSofNJ?

My immediate family consists of my husband Jeff and our daughter. Our daughter is a very active 8-year-old. She enjoys swimming, tennis, piano, dance, soccer and



Micah Parker, CHSofNJ Board Trustee, Member of the Real Estate and Head Start Committees

horseback riding lessons. We have a saying in our house: “when our daughter is active, she is happy and when she is happy, the entire family is happy.”

Our daughter has attended a local Montessori school since she was six months old. Over the years, I have worked with the parent association and administration at her school to partner with the CHSofNJ Head Start programs. Our efforts to support CHSofNJ include toy drives and holiday gift donations for children in foster and adopted households as well as winter hat, coat and glove drives for Head Start students. I greatly enjoy seeing my daughter participate in these activities because it has helped to open a dialogue with her about the importance of giving back. Since some of my work with CHSofNJ is in the evening, it sometime cuts into time I have with her. She is forgiving of me being on these Zoom calls and says “it’s okay if it helps build Ms. Donna’s school,” referring to the agency’s newest Early Head Start Center, opening this summer.







# Anchor Family Success Center receives NWA Leadership Award

The Anchor Family Success Center of The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey has received the National WIC Association Leadership Award for its work in encouraging mothers to breastfeed their babies and in promoting equitable access to nutritious foods.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Under the leadership of Choresse Blue, Program Administrator (Ocean and Monmouth); Catherine Sandoval, Coordinator and Carolina Moncada of the Early Childhood Services Program, the Anchor Family Success Center, located in Brick Township, Ocean County, coordinated closely with the county WIC program to ensure continuity and safety during the COVID pandemic.

The award, which recognized their extraordinary efforts, was presented at the National WIC Association (NWA) Conference held virtually June 15-17, 2021.

The conference focused on diversity and inclusion with pre-recorded and live presentations through NWA’s virtual conference platform. Attendees were able to access numerous sessions constructed to help expand their professional skills, increase their knowledge and inform them about changes to the WIC program and the challenges it faces.

The Anchor Family Success Center, like its two counterparts located in Trenton, hosts programs such as the development of family success plans, parent education and enriching parent-child activities. It also provides referrals for families needing help with housing services, life skills and economic self-sufficiency and/or job readiness.

### CHSofNJ Leadership

Board Officers 2021-2022		CHSofNJ Administrative Staff	
Chairman of the Board	Jim Shea	President & CEO	Donna C. Pressma
VP of Community Relations	Cordelia Staton	COO	Karen Courtney
VP of Fiscal Affairs (Former Chair)	Tim Ryan	CFO	Bruno Cellucci
VP of Policy	Alan Zulick	Vice President of Trauma Informed Child Welfare Clinical Child Welfare Kinship	Dolores Bryant
VP of Strategic Planning	Kati Chupa	Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement	Maritza Raimundi-Petroski
President & CEO	Donna Pressma		
Treasurer & CFO	Bruno Cellucci		

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