



## Ways to Get Involved

Want to learn more about ways to get involved in helping our community?

1. Scan the QR Code below  
*(using the camera feature of your mobile device)*



2. Or, contact Director of Volunteers Pam Cipriano: [PCipriano@chsofnj.org](mailto:PCipriano@chsofnj.org)
3. For other questions, contact Marketing Communications and Funds Development Director Lisa Thibault: [LThibault@chsofnj.org](mailto:LThibault@chsofnj.org)



The newsletter was produced by the CHSofNJ Marketing Communications and Funds Development Department and D2 Creative.

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

# For a Child's Sake

A Newsletter of the Children's Home Society of New Jersey • Summer Issue 2024

## Upcoming Events and Drives

July 15, 2024 - September 15, 2024

### Back to School Drive

September 12, 2024

### Kidsbridge 17th Annual Humanitarian Awards Celebration

September 21, 2024

### WIC 50th Anniversary Celebration and Community Health Fair

November 13, 2024

### TEDI Fall Fundraiser

For more information please visit [www.CHSofNJ.org](http://www.CHSofNJ.org).

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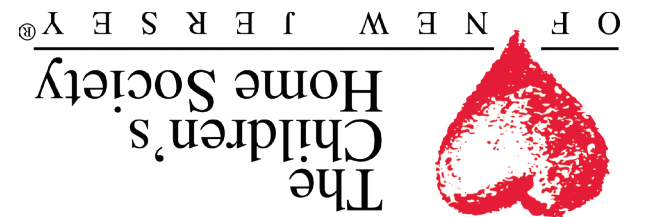
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"I am one of the lucky ones," gala honoree Debbie Harry raises her award after acknowledging the role played by CHSofNJ in placing her with a loving family while emcee Wakisha Bailey, Adoption Services Director Valerie Fiorentino and Marketing Communications Director Lisa Thibault cheer her on.

## One Way or Another

Annual Gala Celebrates 130 Years of Saving Children's Lives and Building Healthy Families

It was a night to remember!

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# Feature Story...

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## One Way or Another

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Updated information can be found at [chsofnj.org](http://chsofnj.org)

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





Guests peruse auction items while catching up with old friends and making new ones during the gala cocktail hour. This year's annual gala recognized the agency's 130-year history and was held at the Hyatt Regency Princeton on Saturday, April 6th.

## One Way or Another

### Annual Gala Celebrates 130 Years of Saving Children's Lives and Building Healthy Families

More than 200 friends comprised of Board members, donors, and our business and community partners, all turned up at 6pm on April 6th, elegantly attired and happy to connect again in support of CHSofNJ. For an evening honoring the cornerstones of CHSofNJ—adoption and supporting the well-being of birth parents and newborns—the mood was both joyful and reflective. Debbie Harry, lead singer for the band Blondie, candidly shared her experience as an adoptee in search of familial connections but grateful for being chosen by a loving couple. James Burke, President and Chairman of the Burke Foundation, spoke about his vision of providing every child with a strong foundation in the first 1,000 days of life. Thanks to longtime Board member Jenn Pizi's connection, the event had an experienced and engaged Master of Ceremonies in CBS News reporter, Wakisha Bailey. It was a busy evening featuring a Silent and Live Auction and was capped off with dancing to the amazing playlist of Barcelona, one of the most popular event bands in the greater Philadelphia area.

Proof that you can do well while doing "good," this fun evening generated close to \$100,000 net revenue for the agency! A huge thanks to the leadership of gala committee chair and Board chair, Micah Parker, co-chair John Martorana, Crystal Moore, Jenn Pizi, and the entire committee: Beth Ferraino, Keva Westray, Lisa Thibault, Karen Courtney, Valerie Fiorentino, Pam Cipriano, Jessica Morello, and Ariana Bartolomea. In addition to personally supporting the gala, our Board members used their influence and their personal and business connections to engage new supporters.

We are also grateful to the generous support of **AvalonBay Communities**, the gala's presenting sponsor, **Alliant**, the **Burke Foundation**, **Bloomberg**, **Capital Health**, **Colonial Security Systems**, **D2 Creative**, **EBE**, **Knorex**, **LetterHub**, **Mercer General Works**, **Monge Capital**, **NJM Insurance Group**, **Oxford Communications**, **PNC Bank**, **Rue Insurance**, **Stark & Stark**, **T.Rowe Price**, **USA Architects**, **Wegman's**, and **WikiWorks**.



Gala honorees **James Burke** and **Debbie Harry** both brought the agency's mission and impact to life through their remarks and personal experiences.



After the live auction, the lights dimmed and Barcelona's impressive repertoire brought guests to their feet, filling the dance floor.



CHSofNJ President & CEO **Donna C. Pressma** accompanied Board & Gala Committee Chair **Micah Parker** in welcoming guests and kicking off the evening.

## The Auxiliary Board Retires After Six Decades of Dedication to CHSofNJ Families



Auxiliary Board members enjoy a moment of down time before starting the Family Fun Walk at Veterans Park, Hamilton in June 2022.

After 60 years of enthusiastic and caring support, the Auxiliary Board of CHSofNJ has decided it is time to retire its charter. Since its inception in 1963, this dedicated and generous group of women raised nearly \$700,000 that directly benefitted CHSofNJ services! From foster baby showers to beloved annual events including Santa's Wonderland/Brunch with Santa and designer Handbag Bingo, the Auxiliary's members worked hard to bring joy to our families. In addition to fundraising, many also knitted and crocheted baby outfits for our new mothers and delivered presents during our holiday drives. On behalf of our children, families, Board of Trustees, and staff, we will always be grateful for your extraordinary compassion, care, and generosity.

(continued from page 5)



Auxiliary members gather prior to Designer Handbag Bingo, held on May 10 at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Ewing. Front row, left to right: Heidi Musick (with hand on Milly's arm), Milly Diaz, Debbie Musick, Michele Krasny, Lynn Lally, Mary Anne Treacy Ryan. Back row: Ana Benalcazar, Heather Horan, Erika Kishler, Rebecca Mullowney, Amy Devenny.

## In Their Own Words: Auxiliary Members Share their Memories

### Debbie Musick

Auxiliary Board President

"Little did I know when I joined the Auxiliary 35 years ago that I would be asked for a quote upon its closing in 2024. It has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of the 60-year history of this group whose members, past and present, generously supported, worked hard, had fun, and created life-long friendships and families who grew up together and also became involved. I will miss all of it but am so proud to have been a part of this Auxiliary whose goal was simple: to raise funds for the children, families, and programs of CHS—and to help in their mission of Saving Children's Lives & Building Healthy Families!"

### Marilyn Carroll

Founding member of the Auxiliary and member of the Board of Trustees

"This was my life's work with a mission that was so important to me. Members became my friends and we worked hard toward a common goal. It was "all about the babies" and even though there were many changes through the years, the Auxiliary still existed for the same goal."

### Harriet Flynn

Auxiliary Board member

"I can't believe it was 52 years ago that I joined. We did lots of work, but had so much fun and made so many good friends! My kids still talk about going to and working at Brunch with Santa and every once in a while a 60-year-old will remind Santa that she sat on his lap!"

## Adoption is Love

Valerie Fiorentino, Adoption Services Director, and her staff, Aisha Harper and Janine Cook, created a popular annual tradition during the month of Valentine's Day to celebrate "Adoption is Love." This event offers parents the opportunity to connect with each other while children enjoy an afternoon of crafts, games, music, and their favorite snack treats. This year's event was generously supported by longtime Board member Tim Ryan and his wife, Mary Anne, with live music provided by the talented duo Nick Fiorentino and Brook Falls. A big thanks to our Bloomberg volunteers, Pam Cipriano, Dolores Bryant, the adoption team and all who participated in this love-filled event!



CHSofNJ President and CEO Donna C. Pressma, Tim and Mary Anne Ryan, adoption event sponsors, and Janine Cook, Adoption Services manager catch up during Adoption is Love this February.



Adoption Services Director, Valerie Fiorentino, welcomes families and kicks off the fun-filled afternoon, featuring live music performed by Brooke Falls and Nick Fiorentino.



Aaron and Moses, Bank of America employees and HOLA members who coordinated a holiday drive for our families, delivered toys and gifts in early December.

## Delivering Hope and Joy to Families and Children

### Winter 2023 Holiday Drives

The holidays were a flurry of activity and excitement at CHSofNJ and our staff worked hard to make sure no child or family in our community felt forgotten during the season of giving.

Thanks to a generous donation of thousands of toys and educational games from manufacturer Melissa & Doug, as well as from our friends at Bloomberg, Bristol Myers-Squibb, AvalonBay, Oxford Communications, J&J, Fox Rothschild, John Martorana, and Crystal Moore from the CHSofNJ Board, we were able to provide gifts for 1,600 infants, toddlers, children, and teens throughout all of our programs! Our families and children were surprised and excited to be given beautifully wrapped, thoughtfully selected presents during the holidays. Staff at CHSofNJ headquarters even got a surprise visit we will never forget from friends at Minis of Medford, a miniature horse farm and horse therapy center! We are grateful for all of our thoughtful and generous donors, YOU are the best gift of all, reminding us that there are angels in our midst.

## Trenton Education Dance Institute

Since 1989, Trenton Education Dance Institution (TEDI) has provided dance instruction in Trenton middle schools, encouraging confidence, resiliency, cognitive and physical skills, and team building efforts. CHSofNJ is proud to support TEDI and the life-changing outcomes they produce.



TEDI students followed their performance by responding to questions from the audience and sharing how TEDI has profoundly impacted their lives and perspectives.

## Trenton Education Dance Institute Rocks Grounds for Sculpture

Nearly 200 attended the Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) Fall Fundraiser, held at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, generating resources to keep this impactful program running.

More than 20 popular local restaurants provided tasty samples of their fare and guests enjoyed mingling while perusing Tricky Tray, Wine Pull, and Silent Auction offerings.

In addition to a performance by TEDI students, directed by Kayla James and Moniesha Hayles, a teaser for an upcoming documentary on the history of TEDI was shown by Dan Preston, Telequest. "For 35 years, TEDI has provided so much more than dance instruction to public school students," said Donna C. Pressma, President and CEO of CHSofNJ. She continued, "Students return year after year to the popular after school program because it offers a safe space for trying new things and developing self-confidence and a sense of mastery and accomplishment."

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



TEDI offers a tailored curriculum that challenges students' cognitive and physical capabilities while igniting self-esteem and executive function skills.

The programs include:

- Weekly, in-school classes for 5th graders in two Trenton public middle schools
- After-school SWAT Team (Scholarship for the Willing, Achieving & Talented) program for selected TEDI 5th graders
- Celebration Team Scholarship Program for 6th – 10th grade TEDI alumni
- TEDI Alumni Association for program graduates

If you'd like to learn more about TEDI, contact artistic director Kayla at [kjames@chsofnj.org](mailto:kjames@chsofnj.org).

# CHSofNJ Staff Recognition



**Ria Rodney**, Executive Director of Nurture NJ and **Maritza Raimundi-Petroski**, CHSofNJ VP of Strategic Initiatives for Prevention and Community Engagement recently celebrated the launch of the state's Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority.

Gladis Lopez and Shirly Figueroa served as co-facilitators of the third training for AMAR Community Doulas and their professionalism and dedication made it a complete success. They convey the passion necessary to be an AMAR Doula.

Bravo to our favorite filmmaker, Dan Preston of Telequest! Dan's documentary, "Welcome to Our Garden" was featured at the Trenton Film Festival this spring. The documentary follows a day in the life of students at our Vivian Shapiro Early Childhood Center. The center provides Early Head Start child development as well as resources for parents at no cost for children from infancy to three years.

Maritza I. Raimundi-Petroski, our Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for Prevention and Community Engagement, recently celebrated the launch of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority alongside Ria Rodney, the Executive Director of Nurture NJ. Governor Murphy appointed Maritza as one of the six public board members of this authority.

Ashley Callejas-Floria is all smiles for receiving a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman after successfully completing our HealthConnect One Community Based Doula Training. Ashley, along with 10 more trainees, recently completed 80 hours of training in a period of 20 weeks to become a community-based doula in the City of Trenton.



**Ashley Callejas-Floria** beams as she displays her congressional certificate from Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman.

# Upcoming Events and Dates

Updated information on all of the below can be found at [chsofnj.org](http://chsofnj.org).



**JULY 15 – SEPT 15**

## Virtual Back-to-School Drive 2024

Please visit [www.yougivegoods.com/drive/view/31585](http://www.yougivegoods.com/drive/view/31585) to purchase items for donation!

Contact Moniesha for details: [MHayles@chsofnj.org](mailto:MHayles@chsofnj.org)



**SEPT 12**

## Kidsbridge 17th Annual Humanitarian Awards Celebration

Stone Terrace, Hamilton Township NJ

Contact Pam for details: [PCipriano@chsofnj.org](mailto:PCipriano@chsofnj.org)



**SEPT 21**

## WIC 50th Anniversary Celebration and Community Health Fair

Mercer WIC Office | 10am-3pm  
1440 Parkside Avenue, Ewing NJ

Contact Joan for details: [JMartin@chsofnj.org](mailto:JMartin@chsofnj.org)



**NOV 13**

## TEDI Fall Fundraiser

Stone Terrace, Hamilton Township NJ

Contact Pam for details: [PCipriano@chsofnj.org](mailto:PCipriano@chsofnj.org)

## CHSNJ Leadership

### Board Officers

- Chairman of the Board..... Micah Parker
- VP of Community Relations..... Cordelia Staton
- VP of Fiscal Affairs (Former Chair).....Tim Ryan
- VP of Policy..... Alan Zulick
- VP of Strategic Planning..... Kati Chupa
- President & CEO..... Donna Pressma
- Treasurer & CFO..... Bruno Cellucci

### Administrative Staff

- President & CEO.....Donna C. Pressma
- COO.....Karen Courtney
- CFO..... Bruno Cellucci
- VP of Trauma Informed Child Welfare and Clinical Child Welfare Kinship..... Dolores Bryant
- VP of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement..... Maritza Raimundi-Petroski
- Executive Director of Head Start.....Isaac Dorsey