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Northern New Jersey

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 on your mobile device)



- Or, contact Director of Volunteers Pam Cipriano: PCipriano@chsofnj.org
- For other questions, contact Marketing Communications and Funds Development Director Lisa Thibault: LThibault@chsofnj.org



HOV

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For a Child's Sake

9798-798-998

Southern New Jersey

Annual Report 2023-2024 & Newsletter of the Children's Home Society of New Jersey • Winter 2024



Upcoming Events and Drives

April, 2025

Annual Fundraising Event

Stay Tuned for More Information in 2025

May 22, 2025

TEDI's 36th Annual End-of-Year Event

Parker School 820 S Warren Street Trenton, NJ 08611

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Our Partners in Saving Children's Lives & Building Healthy Families

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Memorial and Honor Donations from the Heart

We thank the following caring donors for tribute gifts received between June 1, 2023 and May 31, 2024...

In-Kind Donations

We thank the following caring donors for in-kind gifts received between June 1, 2023 and May 31, 2024...

Location and Contact Information
2024 - 2025 Board of Trustees | 2023 - 2024 Auxiliary Board | Find Us Online

Interactive Kidsbridge Gala Inspires Guests and Raises Support

It was a night to remember! Community partners, board members, staff, students, family and friends packed Stone Terrace in Hamilton to celebrate the social emotional learning program, Kidsbridge, in the 17th Annual Kidsbridge/CHSofNJ...

We are greater than the sum of us! TASK & WIC Combine Forces

This fall, a new partnership with the Mercer WIC on Wheels (WOW) Mobile Clinic, operated by The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ), was launched. WIC, which is shorthand for the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program...

Students Steal the Show at TEDI Fall Fundraiser

On a magical evening filled with rhythm and grace, our community came together for the annual Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) Fall Fundraiser. The event, held at the iconic Grounds for Sculpture, was a resounding success, raising funds...

10th Annual Wenonah Turkey Trot Helps Families Opt
Outside on Black Friday for a Good Cause

This year's Wenonah Turkey Trot broke attendance records with more than 200 registered to walk and run to raise funds for CHSofNJ! This joyful community event, held the morning after Thanksgiving, has become a cherished holiday tradition...

Hope and Fun on Tap
Those attending our first "Brewing Hope" event this fall had a great time relaxing, socializing, meeting children's book author Tom Tracy, carving

pumpkins and listening to the live band "Stay Tuned"...

Back to School Gets an A Plus!

A huge shout out to the countless individuals and the school, church and community groups who supported our students by providing them with all the supplies they need to succeed this school year!..

CHSofNJ CEO Pressma Addresses
Statewide WIC Conference

Donna Pressma, CHSofNJ CEO & President, presented a speech at the statewide WIC 50th Anniversary Conference sponsored by the NJ Department of Health....



Farewell Words from Donna: A Heartfelt Goodbye

The Chinese have a saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words." Similarly, a story may be worth a thousand speeches. So, instead of making opening remarks, I am going to tell you a short story... and then I'm going to show you some pictures.

On his death bed, a philosopher was granted a glimpse of heaven and hell. First he visited hell. In hell, he found an unusual and appalling sight. All around were tables laden with delicious foods. The kings could not have feasted better, but the people in hell were starved and emaciated. They were gaunt and walked feebly and sadly.

Strangest of all, everyone walked with arms stiffly extended, each hand bound to the end of a pole. Sticking out from the ends of the poles were forks, but since their hands were bound straight ahead, they could not bring the food to their mouths. And so, with the most plentiful of food on all sides, the people in hell were starving.

The philosopher was then taken to heaven. There, he saw a similar sight! There were tables laden with delicious foods. The people in heaven, too, were walking with arms stiffly extended, each hand holding the end of a pole, and sticking out from the ends of the poles were forks. But there was a remarkable difference. The people in heaven looked well fed, healthy, lively, and happy.

The visitor could not contain his curiosity. Why, he asked, was there such a difference between the people in heaven and the people in hell? In heaven, he realized, the people had learned to feed each other.

carry on what you have started.

He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations...

the fate of humanity is in his hands."

This story is fitting today as we speak about all our volunteerism, nurturing and taking care of our community's children. The Children's Home Society of New Jersey is a living example of volunteerism at its best.



Donna C. Pressma, President & CEO The Children's Home Society of New Jersey 1986-2024.

A private not-for-profit agency, the state government, the county government, 700 community and corporate volunteers, local schools, business community members, and caring donors, all who make up our remarkable partners for our effective services. These challenging times can bring out the best of all of us.

Thank you from our hearts,

Donna Pressma CEO & President



Left to right: Micah Parker, daughter Parker and husband Jeff at the CHSofNJ Annual Gala April 6 2024.

Acknowledging 38 Years of Service

After 38 years as CEO and President, Donna C. Pressma stepped down from The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ) on December 31, 2024. Her passion for serving at-risk children and families remains strong, and we expect that she will continue this work in the future.

Donna generously credits her colleagues' collaboration in the agency's expansion since she took the reins in 1986. She started with a staff of 14 and a \$900,000 annual budget that has grown into a diverse, statewide organization with 376 staff members and 700 volunteers impacting nearly 100,000 lives annually.

CHSofNJ expanded from 5 program services in 1986 to 40 community-based programs today, including our renowned adoption and post-adoption counseling services, innovative maternal and child health programs, and school-based youth development.

Thanks to partners like Meta Griffith and Dr. Vivian B. Shapiro, the agency developed transformative services for young children and families, including Trenton Early Head Start and the Shapiro Early Childhood Center.

Our agency's work in kinship care, pioneered during the AIDS epidemic, is now a national model for child welfare reform. We've partnered with over 48 foundations and numerous corporations, securing vital funding and volunteer support. Working with Capital Health, we've created a holistic approach to maternal and child health.

As Donna passes the torch to incoming CEO, Julie Dees, I'm confident that CHSofNJ will continue to thrive under her capable leadership together with the dedicated Board and employees who will build on this legacy. We are grateful to Donna for 38 years as a leader and innovator of CHSofNJ.

Sincerely,

Micah Parker
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Discover the Impact of The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

A not-for-profit agency, CHSofNJ is a catalyst for creating child-centered, family-focused, diverse communities through a comprehensive continuum of prevention and support services. Our inclusive programs for children and families support child welfare (including abuse and neglect prevention and treatment, adoption, kinship support, and more): early childhood and parent education: clinical and behavioral health services; schoolbased youth development; and maternal-child health programming and support from pregnancy through labor/delivery and postnatal care. We proudly sponsor federal WIC, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and Head Start/Early Head Start programs in Trenton. In all that we do, we strive to operate through a trauma-informed lens and be guided by our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion values.

What makes us unique? CHSofNJ's culture since 1894 is to listen to the children and families we serve. We help families decide what they want to achieve, and we support them in attaining the goals they set for themselves. We provide access to skills, knowledge, and resources to empower families and inform life choices. We evaluate our outcomes and adapt our programming and services as needed to best meet the ever-evolving needs of the community we serve.

In 2023-2024, nearly 300 highly-trained staff members, 21 dedicated Board members and 16 Honorary Board members, 24 passionate Auxiliary Board members and 12 Associate Auxiliary members, and 700 caring volunteers went the extra mile every day to provide statewide services from 11 locations in support of CHSofNJ's mission: saving children's lives and building healthy families. If you would like to join our nationally-recognized team to help families and communities throughout New Jersey & Eastern Pennsylvania thrive, visit chsofnj.org/employment or chsofnj.org/volunteer.

US Congressional Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman visits CHSofNJ to commemorate National Midwifery Week

In October, CHSofNJ hosted a "Listening Session" in Trenton on maternal child health, focusing on the partnership between midwives, community doulas and community health workers to improve birth and health outcomes for women, (especially marginalized women and birthing people). In honor of National Midwifery Week, US Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12, representing parts of Mercer, Somerset and Middlesex Counties), introduced a Congressional resolution recognizing the important role of certified midwives as medical providers who provide patient-centered care in delivering babies. Then, Congresswoman Watson Coleman gathered with a local midwife, CHSofNJ doulas, and community health workers to hear about their experiences supporting women.





CHSofNJ CEO, Donna C. Pressma; Armonie Pierre-Jacques of NJ Health Care Quality Institute; CHSofNJ Maternal Child Health Staff Doulas, AMAR Doula Mom & Baby; and Congresswoman Watson Coleman.

CHSofNJ CEO Donna C. Pressma said, "As 20-year partners with Capital Health and now Penn Medicine Princeton Health midwives and OB/GYN staff, we proudly support Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman's resolution honoring the life-saving partnership for diverse pregnant and postpartum mothers who work with certified midwives and doulas. Every day, we witness certified midwives' and doulas' caring, trained services obtaining significantly healthier, full-term childbirths, full-weight births, and fewer babies born with a lifetime of support needs for diverse pregnant mothers. U.S. Congresswoman Watson Coleman has spent her entire career as a remarkable national leader, advocating and successfully securing attention and funding for critical resources that improve the life outcomes for our nation's mothers and their children, especially for diverse mothers, children and youth."



Julie Dees, MBA, LPC.

In her own words. Julie shared:

A New Era Begins: Julie Dees Appointed CEO of CHSofNJ, Succeeding Donna Pressma

The Board of Trustees of CHSofNJ is thrilled to announce a new chapter in our history with the appointment of Julie Dees, MBA, LPC, as our new CEO, effective January 6, 2025.

Julie left her role as the CEO of Family Service Association of Bucks County, where she led 30 programs serving 40,000 participants in community-based, outpatient, and residential settings for families and children. During her tenure, Julie championed innovative solutions to address behavioral health, integrated care, family well-being, and systemic challenges. Her passion for mission-driven work aligns seamlessly with CHSofNJ's focus on empowering families and children to thrive.

66 I chose CHSofNJ because its mission deeply resonates with my personal and professional values. Both of my nieces are adopted, which gives me a profound connection to the transformative work CHSofNJ does every day. I am inspired by this organization's proactive approach to tackling societal challenges—intervening early in a child's life to set them on a path to success. This vision, to address intractable problems before they take root, is one I am excited to roll up my sleeves and work toward."

Julie's personal life also reflects her dedication to building strong, supportive communities. A proud mother of two adult children, Julie is married to her wife, Jessica, with whom she shares a joyful home. Together, they care for their two beloved dogs—a rescue pup and a black Labrador. Julie loves spending time at the Jersey Shore and takes every opportunity to enjoy the beach, hunt for sea glass, and take long sandy walks. On weekends, she also enjoys running, baking, golfing, exploring the world of wine, and creating lasting memories with family and friends.

Board Chair Micah Parker said, "Donna Pressma's visionary leadership over the past 38 years has transformed CHSofNJ into a beacon of hope and support for countless families. Donna has continued to lead our agency through growth and the CEO search process with unlimited energy and wisdom, and her work to build CHSofNJ will never be forgotten."

He added, "On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our 350 employees, we look forward to working with Julie and know she will lead us into a bright and sustainable future for the families and individuals we serve."

Julie Dees concluded, "I am honored to join CHSofNJ and look forward to building on Donna's incredible legacy. Together, we will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of families and individuals in our community."

We are confident that under Julie's leadership, CHSofNJ will continue to thrive and serve our communities with excellence.

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey's comprehensive family of services comprises <u>six core service areas</u>.

Our support and prevention services are thoughtfully designed and data-informed to support CHSofNJ's mission since 1894: Saving Children's Lives and Building Healthy Families!

73,278 Lives Touched in FY 2023-2024

CHSofNJ's Core Services Areas & Programs and Services:

Community & Family Support

59,051 Individuals Supported

Heritage North Family Success Center Heritage South Family Success Center Anchor Family Success Center State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)

Ocean County Child Care Resource & Referral

Child Welfare

Abuse & Neglect Prevention and Treatment; Child Permanency

1,610 Individuals Supported

Birth Parent Counseling
Domestic Infant Adoption
Post Adoption Background and Search
Infant Foster Care
Intensive Services Program
Kinship Wraparound

Maternal-Child Health

10,504 Individuals Supported

CUNA

AMAR Community Doula
Safer Childbirth Cities
Pregnancy Testing
Early Childhood Services
Central Intake - Monmouth & Ocean
Healthy Women, Healthy Families
Mercer County Women, Infants and
Children (WIC)

Clinical & Behavioral Health

227 Individuals Supported

Pre-Post Adoption Counseling Services
Ocean Reunification Program
Ocean Therapeutic Visitation
Violent Crime Compensation Board (VCCB)
Counseling
Childhood Separation & Loss

Families & Children Enhancing Emotional Success (FACES)

Trauma Treament for Victims of Domestic Violence

Enlightenment Peer2Peer

Head Start & Early Head Start

644 Individuals Supported

Head Start Center-Based Early Head Start Center-Based Early Head Start Home-Based Early Head Start Pregnancy Services

School-Based Youth Development

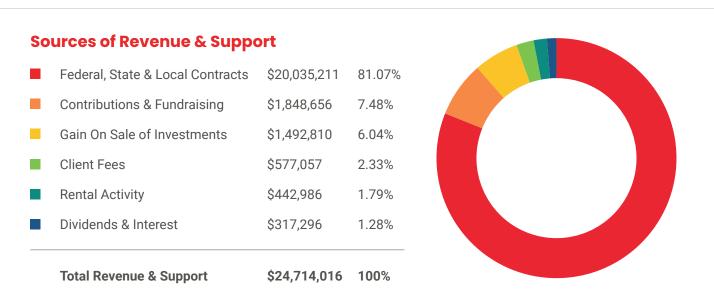
1,242 Individuals Supported

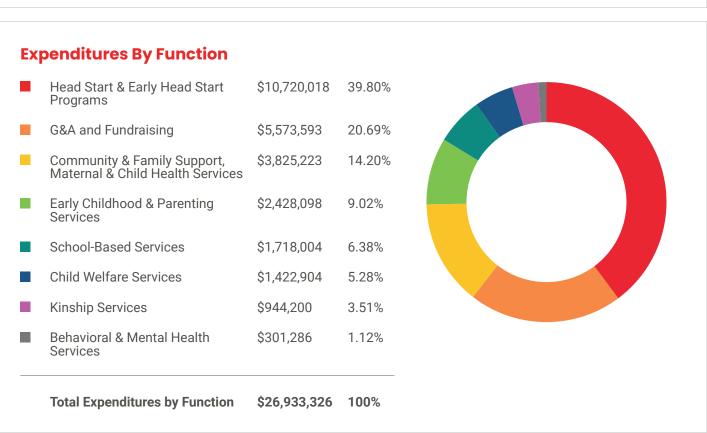
Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI)
21st Century Community Learning Centers/
Positive Impact
Kidsbridge

Wrapping Up Our Year's Finances: A Final Look

Fiscal Year Ended May 31, 2024

The operating budget of CHSofNJ relies on funding from federal, state, and county government grants and private contributions, with a major portion of the budget coming from collaborative partnerships with several New Jersey state agencies. Although the funds we receive from these government grants are our mainstay, private dollars acquired through additional fundraising efforts are necessary to supplement grants in order to provide the level of quality and the intensity of services that are critical to achieve successful outcomes that save children's lives and build healthy families.





*NOTICE - UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT | The numbers presented in this report reflect CHSofNJ's unaudited financial statement for fiscal year 2023-2024. CHSofNJ's annual audit is conducted by CohnReznick, Independent Certified Public Accountants. Investment advisors for CHSofNJ are T. Rowe Price Associates. If you would like to view our final audited financial statement, calendared to be completed this winter, please contact CHSofNJ's Chief Financial Officer, Bruno Cellucci, at (609) 695-6274.

Our Partners in Saving Children's Lives & Building Healthy Families

We thank the following Fiscal Year 2023-24 donors for their lifetime contributions to CHSofNJ and/or TEDI (cumulative as of May 31, 2024). Major Donors with \$10,000+ in lifetime contributions are included regardless of their last gift date

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\$100.000-\$249.999

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\$75.000-\$99.999

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A Kidsbridge student shares how the program made a positive difference in his life with an enthusiastic guest at the Kidsbridge/CHSofNJ Gala in September.

Interactive Kidsbridge Gala Inspires Guests and Raises Support

It was a night to remember! Community partners, board members, staff, students, family and friends packed Stone Terrace in Hamilton to celebrate the social emotional learning program, Kidsbridge, in the 17th Annual Kidsbridge/CHSofNJ Humanitarian event! Honorees were recognized for their humanitarian initiatives and included Natalie Tung of HomeWorks Trenton; Fal Pandya and Marc Citron of the Hindu Jewish Coalition; Sandra Toussaint of United Way of Greater Mercer County; and Ross Wishnick of Send Hunger Packing. Also recognized were the newest generation of activists and advocates, our youth Upstanders!

Kidsbridge merged with CHSofNJ in February, 2023 to add bullying prevention, social-emotional skills, anti-bias and anti-racism programs to our school-based services.



Donna Pressma, Michael Roseborough and Marianne Altrecognize the 2024 Youth UPstanders.



Michael Roseborough and Marianne Alt welcome guests and kick off the evening.

Kidsbridge by the Numbers

From September 2023 to June 2024, Kidsbridge programs served a total 428 PreK-Grade 8 youth. There were 108 sessions held and the following programs were delivered:

- UPstander contact hours
- A Volunteer Event
- Leading with Empathy sessions
- Aspire sessions
- Empathy Focus Groups
- Empathy Project sessions
- Calming with Kidsbridge sessions
- Empathy Book Conversation
- World Labyrith Day Celebration

For more about Kidsbridge or to learn how to bring Kidsbridge to your school, contact School Based Services Director, Mike Roseborough Mroseborough@chsofnj.org.



Prada-Rodriguez learns more about WOW's services from CHSofNJ WOW Clinic Staff Madelin Marmol.

We are greater than the sum of us! TASK & WIC Combine Forces

When TASK launched their food truck in March, one goal was to work with other mobile partners across the area to co-locate, providing access to food as well as other programs and services residents need to thrive.

This fall, a new partnership with the Mercer WIC on Wheels (WOW) Mobile Clinic, operated by The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ), was launched. WIC, which is shorthand for the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, is a program designed to help pregnant women, mothers and caregivers learn about good nutrition to help keep themselves and their families healthy. The CHSofNJ WOW first hit the road in February 2023, and this is their first partnership with another mobile program.

By working together, community members who come to access TASK's signature free meals also have the opportunity to take advantage of WOW's confidential healthcare screenings, nutrition counseling and WIC navigation services.

The connection between the two providers is clear: by providing TASK's nutritious, nourishing meals alongside WOW's consistent, accessible healthcare services, these two organizations can make a greater impact on Trenton families

As TASK Community Meal Site Coordinator Rosa Prada-Rodriguez observed at their first outing together, "TASK and the CHSofNJ mobile WIC are trusted community resources. By working together, we can reach even more people."

CHSofNJ Mercer WIC Director Joan Martin agrees, stating: "We are excited to collaborate with TASK and hope to help many more residents where they live."

TASK and WOW can be found together on the second and fourth Mondays of every month in the parking lot at: 431 Greenwood Avenue, near the Trenton Transit Center.

WIC celebrated its 50th anniversary and shares these stats for its Mercer WIC program, operated by CHSofNJ:

During the reporting period, the program experienced growth in enrollment, participation, and redemption of eWIC benefits. From October 2023 to April 2024, the average enrollment was 9,001, the average participation was approximately 7,438, and the average number of participants redeeming their benefits was 6,834. On average, the redemption rates of benefits were approximately 76% of enrollees and 91% of participants. There were no significant changes in this data compared to the previous year. A recent assessment of the last 5 months of the program year March-September 2024 revealed that our enrollment is now at an average of 9,680, thanks to dedicated supportive staff.

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TEDI by the Numbers FY2024

The Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) delivered programming to Grades 4-8 students in Trenton, New Jersey, during the 2023-2024 school year. The TEDI program provides a warm, nurturing, and fun environment that supports youth development through dance. As students learn basic dance steps and choreography, they practice and develop a variety of related social emotional competencies and skills. It is anticipated that, over time, these skills may be translated to other contexts, promoting wellbeing and academic achievement.

A total of 542 of students were served:

- 215 Grade 4 students, 5 week in-school residency at Parker School
- 194 Grade 5 students, 23-25 week in-school residency at Parker School;
- 30 Grade 5 SWAT students, 12 session afterschool program at Parker School
- 12 Grade 6 Celebration Team Students, 19 session after-school program at Parker School
- 105 Grades 4-6 students, 4 week in-school residency at Grant School
- 16 Grades 7-8 Legacy students, 16 session afterschool program at Dunn School
- All program residencies, with the exception of the program at Grant School, had performance components.
- TEDI held 6 performances/community dance events and reached audiences of over 15,524 individuals
- 92.6% of students indicated that TEDI helped them learn to work well on teams, regardless of who is on the team
- Over 90% of students indicated that TEDI gave them opportunities to be creative and try new things
- Over 90% of students indicated that TEDI taught them to not be afraid to make mistakes and to not give up

To learn more about TEDI or how to bring TEDI to your school, contact Artistic Director Kayla James at **KJames@chsofnj.org**.



TEDI Artistic Director Kayla James and her students excitedly wait to perform at the Fall Fundraiser, held at the Grounds for Sculpture on November 13th.

Students Steal the Show at TEDI Fall Fundraiser

On a magical evening filled with rhythm and grace, our community came together for the annual Trenton Education Dance Institute (TEDI) Fall Fundraiser. The event, held at the iconic Grounds for Sculpture, was a resounding success, raising funds and positive awareness for TEDI.

Highlights of the evening included a special award recognizing Dr. Lorcha Lewis, Parker Intermediate School Principal, for her longtime support of TEDI, performances by the TEDI students, and brief presentations by many of the students who shared how the program has positively impacted them.

Every year, this event is made possible through the generosity of Richard Bilotti and Crystal Moore. In addition, the event could not have been a success without the support of the following sponsors: Alliant Insurance Group, AvalonBay Communities, Bank of Princeton, Bloomberg, Edward Todd, Eva Alicia Associates, Capital Health, M&T Bank, NJM Insurance Group and Rue Insurance.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year for another unforgettable night of dance and philanthropy!



Runners and walkers from age seven months to 90 years of age braved the unseasonably chilly weather as they started the race, knowing they were supporting a good cause and would return to but chocolate!

10th Annual Wenonah Turkey Trot Helps Families Opt Outside on Black Friday for a Good Cause

This year's Wenonah Turkey Trot broke attendance records with more than 200 registered to walk and run to raise funds for CHSofNJ! This joyful community event, held the morning after Thanksgiving, has become a cherished holiday tradition for runners and walkers of all ages thanks to the dedication of its organizers, longtime Board members Jenn Pizi and Tamar Shelov and with support from the Women's Club of Wenonah. Always a winner in his age category, another longtime Board member, Burt Sutker, placed first!



Left to right: Tamar Shelov and Jenn Pizi, CHSofNJ Board members and Turkey Trot coordinators for a decade.



Longtime Board member Burt Sutker, an avid runner, shows off his latest medal to his granddaughter Sarah and great grandson, Jack.

Hope and Fun on Tap

Those attending our first "Brewing Hope" event this fall had a great time relaxing, socializing, meeting children's book author Tom Tracy, carving pumpkins and listening to the live band "Stay Tuned." Special thanks to Jay and "Stay Tuned," Old Hights Brewing Company, Tom Tracy, Bad Wolf Burger Company and board members Eva Alicia, Crystal Moore and Tim Ryan!



CHSofNJ Board member Crystal Moore (far right) enjoying a night out with friends while supporting a cause that is very close to her heart!



Margaret Walsh, a local teacher and member of the Ladies Ancient Order of the Hibernians, has enthusiastically supported our Back to School drive for many years.

Back to School Gets an A Plus!

A huge shout out to the countless individuals and the school, church and community groups who supported our students by providing them with all the supplies they need to succeed this school year!

How to Make a Difference: **Getting Involved in Your Community**

Scan the QR code for more details or email the contacts listed below.

Director of Volunteers

Pam Cipriano | PCipriano@chsofnj.org | Lisa Thibault | LThibault@chsofnj.org Marketing Communications & Funds Development Director





Left to right: Joan Martin, Mercer WIC director, Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, VP and Donna Pressma, CEO celebrating WIC's accomplishments.



CHSofNJ CEO Pressma Addresses Statewide WIC Conference

Donna Pressma, CHSofNJ CEO & President, presented a speech at the statewide WIC 50th Anniversary Conference sponsored by the NJ Department of Health. She was introduced by Joan Martin, our WIC Program Director and the conference was attended by the entire WIC staff. Six programs were highlighted this year, and our WIC Mercer Program was featured. Joan, Donna and Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, VP Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs and Community Engagement were recognized for their work since 2012.











