



HOME FOR CHILDREN

...Because Every Child Deserves a Childhood

TIE LINE

Newsletter

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Fall/Winter 2007 - 2008

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / CEO

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! A lot of exciting things have happened over the past several months at Astor that I am delighted to share with you in this edition of our newsletter. The holiday season is always quite busy here, and this past holiday season was no exception. I would like to thank all of our donors, volunteers and staff whose efforts made it possible for our children and their families to enjoy the simple pleasures of the season through their kindness and generosity. Highlighted in this edition of the newsletter are examples of how the community came out to support our children and their families; from Dutchess County to the Bronx!

We continuously strive to be a world class organization by achieving excellence. I am

pleased to share examples of how our work is focused on meeting this vision through our leadership and partnerships; and through the critical contributions of our donors, and our high quality staff. Together we are all working toward this goal, to ensure that our children and families get the best possible services available!

Over the past several months, we sponsored and/or co-sponsored many conferences, trainings, and symposiums that address critical issues (i.e., mental health, early childhood, etc.). These events were attended by hundreds of individuals regionally. Our staff members in the Bronx have enhanced a mandate by taking a more critical look at cultural diversity and sensitivity, and throughout our agency, staff members

are receiving awards and leading national efforts.

Each and every gift makes a difference in the lives of our children and families. There are many ways in which to give. The outpour of condolences and donations we received in memory of Mrs. Jean Hogan Hickey, have led us in this issue to highlight how gifts in memory are a wonderful way to leave a lasting legacy for your loved ones.

Thank you for your continued support as we create hope and develop strength in children and families!

Best Regards,

James McGuirk, Ph.D.
Executive Director/CEO

OUR MISSION

The Astor Home for Children promotes the emotional well being of children, youth and families through leadership in the development and provision of preventive and treatment-oriented behavioral health services and early childhood education.

ASTOR'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

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OCTOBER 13, 2007

ASTOR CO-SPONSORS CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES
LIVING WITH MENTAL DISORDERS

OCTOBER 23, 2007

ASTOR SPONSORS SYMPOSIUM
ON "ENGAGING FAMILIES OF
YOUNG CHILDREN"



OCTOBER 23, 2007

ASTOR PARTNERS WITH
JUVENILE DETENTION
ASSOCIATION OF NYS TO
HOLD CONFERENCE ON
YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

NOVEMBER 7, 2007

ASTOR HOLDS TRAINING ON CHILD AND
ADOLESCENT NEEDS AND STRENGTHS
(CANS)

DECEMBER 7, 2007

ASTOR PARTNERS WITH LOCAL
AGENCIES TO HOLD CONFERENCE ON THE
PREVENTION OF CHILD ARSON



2007 - 2008

ASTOR HAS PARTNERED
WITH VASSAR BROTHERS
MEDICAL CENTER ON
NUTRITIONAL HEALTH TO
PILOT A SERIES OF
MONTHLY WORKSHOPS
FOR FAMILIES CALLED
"HEALTHY HABITS"

SELF PORTRAITS DONE BY CHILDREN IN OUR RHINEBECK RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

MEMORIAL GIFTS

GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

Losing a loved one is always very difficult. Remembering that person, and making a donation in their honor can be bitter sweet. We want you to know that donations in memory of your loved ones

are greatly appreciated, and are a fitting memorial for lives well lived. We appreciate your compassion, kindness and generosity. Here are some examples of the impact these types of donations are making on our children.

DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF MRS. JEAN HOGAN HICKEY

The Lawrence F. Hickey Center for Child Development in the Bronx, NY, received an outpour of donations in honor of the late Mrs. Jean Hogan Hickey, who passed away in August 2007. Individuals from all over the the country, who were touched in some way by the late Mrs. Hickey's legacy, sent checks, cards

and letters of condolence to her husband, Mr. Lawrence F. Hickey, to support the Lawrence F. Hickey Center for Child Development in the Bronx. The Center is a therapeutic nursery program for emotionally disturbed preschoolers. In memory of Mrs. Hickey, a bicycle path for the children will be built.

DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF HEATHER LEE CAMARA

Astor's Early Childhood Program in Poughkeepsie, NY received a large donation of toys and safety equipment in memory of the late Heather Lee Camara. On September 27, 2008, the extended family (grandparents, siblings, and friends) of Heather Lee Camara presented the children with gifts of tricycles, wagons and helmets. The Mattes/Camara family lost

Heather to an ATV accident over Memorial Day weekend in 2006. Heather's family and friends have established the Heather Lee Camara Memorial Fund in order to honor Heather's memory. "We wanted to put the money where Heather would want it to go, and Heather loved children" said Kathy Mattes, Heather's mother.



KATHY MATTES GIVES A WAGON RIDE TO ONE OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ASTOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS IN THE COMMUNITY!

“Each year, there are so many in our area who help make the holidays special for a child or a whole family,” says James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO of The Astor Home. “This year, we had an overwhelming response to the ‘adoption’ program, and we were able to provide

IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

More than 1,000 children and families in the Hudson Valley had a brighter holiday season this year, thanks to the numerous individuals, schools, youth groups, churches and businesses who participated in our Holiday Adopt-A-Family program.

The community gave support in so many ways. Gifts were collected everywhere, from churches, malls and workplace toy drives to private holiday parties where guests chose specific Astor children to give for. Many companies and individuals adopted specific children and their entire families, donating toys, home goods and other much-needed items!

to 100 more families than ever before. It truly shows how much Dutchess County and the Hudson Valley care about children and families. We at Astor truly appreciate the community’s generous and continued support, especially during the holiday season”.

IN THE BRONX

This past holiday season the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) once again provided each child in Astor’s Day Treatment Program in the Bronx, with an individualized, wrapped holiday present that was distributed at each site by Santa. For the past eight years members of the MTA union have been providing our kids with gifts through their Toys for Tots program. Santa and his cadre of elves visited each of Astor’s three sites delivering over 175 presents. After the gift distribution the children thanked Santa and the elves and everyone shared juice, cookies and a song or two. This is a very exciting day for the children. We are very thankful to the MTA for their continued support!

BRONX CLINIC PROGRAMS TAKE CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AT ASTOR TO A NEW LEVEL

Astor is committed to cultural diversity and sensitivity and to meeting the needs of all our clients. In February 2007, Astor assigned February as Cultural Sensitivity Month; when staff in each program area may set aside time to focus and assess how this issue is being addressed. Some program areas spent time reviewing articles and books and then engaging in discussions. Here is an example how one group in the Bronx programs took this mandate to a higher level...

The clinical staff of the Bronx outpatient clinic programs developed a successful series of focused discussions on the topic of cultural sensitivity. This series emerged out of the narrative therapy readings that June Helme, LCSW-R, Clinical Director of the Tilden Clinic, presented last February. June was particularly attuned to We Are Making History Now by Vanessa McAdams-Mahmoud, published in The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work (2002 No. 2). This work makes use of African American slave narratives in the collaborative therapy of young black college women in order to support and sustain their efforts to disengage

from and stand against oppression in their own lives. Similarly, June also chose to read Puerto Rican folks tales that stimulate therapeutic multigenerational conversations. June shared these articles with staff who agreed to meet and discuss their reactions to the articles. This experience launched a cultural diversity series. Staff members were so impressed by the messages conveyed in these articles that they agreed to continue meeting. The series has now become a very popular and important forum for the clinical staff that continues to expand and provide opportunities for growth and understanding. As a result, the Highbridge clinical, preventative services program and office staff have now joined the series. One member said “I’m thankful for the opportunity for dialogue about culture on a group level, with regularity. Many of us have taken emotional risks in our sharing during these discussions, which seems to be key in taking our dialogue past generic observations about ‘the culturally different’ and on to the real struggles we face in negotiating our identities in the therapy room.” This series has now begun its second year as Astor continues making history!

EMPLOYEE NEWS

STAFF RECOGNITION DINNER

On October 4, 2007, Astor held its Annual Staff Recognition Dinner. Over 400 staff, family members and Board members, attended this annual event to recognize, thank and honor staff for their high level of commitment and dedication to the children and families that we serve. This year we had a record number of staff celebrating employment milestones: 30 Years (2); 25 Years (3); 20 Years (6); 15 Years (10); 10 Years (19); 5 Years (43). "October's Recognition Dinner is a great time to applaud each other's commitments and accomplishments. Thanks for a great night!" said Grace Cadell, Center Director, Astor Early Childhood Program, Wingdale.



THOMAS HESSLER (LEFT) AND STEVE HOLZMAN (RIGHT)
CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

ASTOR EMPLOYEE RECEIVES SHAKER AWARD

Danielle Suzanne McClinton, Assistant Child Care Director, The Astor Home for Children Residential Programs, was recognized by the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce as a recipient of The 3rd Annual Forty Under 40 Shaker Awards. These awards are given to forty individuals under the age of 40 who are committed to shaping the region making it a better place for everyone.

"We are all very proud of Danielle, who is dedicated and committed to the children, families and the community we serve and who always goes the extra mile to ensure they are getting the best possible service. The Shaker Award is a fitting way to honor Danielle," says James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children.

"I feel real honored and blessed to be recognized for what I believe is my calling in life, to do whatever I can to serve and support kids, families and the



DANIELLE SUAZZANE MCCLINTON AT THE SHAKER AWARDS CEREMONY

community; something I have been doing all my life," said Danielle upon receiving the Shaker Award. Danielle, her family, colleagues and friends were all there to watch her receive her award during the recognition dinner where over 700 people gathered to congratulate the award recipients.

Danielle came to Astor over 10 years ago as a childcare worker. Because of her dedication and focus on the needs of the children, she was soon made an Assistant Childcare Supervisor, promoted to Supervisor and now is the Assistant Childcare Director. Danielle loves being in direct contact with the children in her care. There are so many examples of Danielle's commitment to her work; it is not just a job for her, they are all her children. On a recent

day in February, Danielle was on vacation. Upon hearing that one of her children was having a problem, Danielle immediately came into the office in order to be there when that child needed her. Danielle's dedication and commitment is an example of our high quality staff.

DR. ATHENA DREWES, DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL TRAINING was appointed Secretary for the American Psychological Association, Child and Adolescent Specialist Interest Group

EVENTS CORNER

A SPECIAL THANKS TO SANTA'S HELPERS!

A very big thanks goes out to the staff and volunteers who helped make this year's holiday season a huge success for our children, families and friends. Members of the Recreational Therapy staff, the Facilities Staff, Reception Staff at Rhinebeck and countless others from all of our sites who went the extra mile to help with these events - we couldn't have done it without you!



(ABOVE) PRIZED CHILDREN'S TOY CHEST RAFFLE ITEM, HAND MADE BY EMPLOYEE ALDOLFO FARIAS

(LEFT) SANTA'S HELPERS MELINDA WEISBERG AND ELLIOT MICHEL; ELLIOT WAS OUR OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER AT THIS YEAR'S CRAFT FAIR

ASTOR'S CHILDREN BENEFITED FROM 2ND ANNUAL BICYCLE RIDE



JAMES MCGUIRK, PH.D, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO FLANKED BY PARTICIPANTS IN BARRY'S RIDE FOR CHILDREN

A wonderful time was had by all who attended the second annual Barry's Ride for Children on October 14, 2007. Barry Hagan, a former student of Astor's Residential Programs, and the event host, conducts this annual ride to support the children in the Residential Programs because of the positive experiences he had during his stay, and his desire to give back. "I arrived at the Astor Home when I was seven years old. I remember the kindness and understanding I received during my stay there," says Barry, who knows some of the challenges and difficulties some of our children are experiencing in their lives. James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, Astor, said, "We feel honored that Barry, a former Astor student, is giving back to other children in such a meaningful way. We appreciate Barry's hard work to make this event possible." The ride was a great success thanks to the many participants and sponsors who came out in support of this wonderful event!

EVENTS CORNER

SUGAR PLUM PREVIEW AND ST. NICHOLAS DAY CRAFT FAIR



STUDENT IN RHINEBECK SHOWS OFF HOOLO-HOOP AT THE CRAFT FAIR

On Friday, December 1, 2007, Astor held its Second Annual Sugar Plum Preview in Rhinebeck, NY, where supporters were invited to a reception to celebrate the holiday season and to thank them for their ongoing support of our work. Guests had an opportunity to tour the facility to see the children's wonderful art work. They were also serenaded with Christmas songs by the children's choir, a highlight of the evening! Guests previewed the St. Nicholas Day Craft Fair, where they were able to make purchases. The Craft Fair was opened to the general public on Saturday, December 2, 2007.

The St. Nicholas Day Craft Fair has been a holiday mainstay at Astor for decades! What makes this fair so special is the dedication of the children, staff and volunteers, who work all year to create unique hand-made crafts. There were a variety of kids' art, plants, decorations, wreaths and arrangements, knitted items, ornaments, cards and much more! A wide selection of raffle prizes and theme-based gift baskets were also on display. It was a fun-filled day for shoppers and all to benefit the children we serve.



A STUDENT HELPS JAMES MCGUIRK, PH.D EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO DRAW RAFFLE WINNERS AT THE CRAFT FAIR

Santa was also there to greet and have photos taken!



(LEFT BACK ROW) SR. DOROTHY COPSON, (MIDDLE BACK ROW) SR. ANNA MARIE GOODRICH
(RIGHT BACK ROW) SR. IRENE BRASSAR (FRONT CENTER) SR. MARY THERESA KOBOSINSKI

At this year's fair, we were honored to have a group of Sisters from the Daughters of Charity. They came all the way from Albany to support our effort! Sister Dorothy Copson, who was at Astor in 1953 when the doors opened, was among this group. Sister Dorothy brought heart-felt smiles to those reminiscent of her service at Astor. We all felt honored to be in her presence. We are so grateful to all the Daughters of Charity for all their hard work on behalf of children and families!

DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ **Astor** serves over 6,000 children, adolescents and their families, annually.
- ▶ **Astor** is located in Rhinebeck, NY and in multiple locations throughout the Hudson Valley and in New York City.
- ▶ For over 50 years, **Astor** has offered nationally-acclaimed programs.
- ▶ **Astor** led the creation of the Dutchess County Zero to Three Partnership.
- ▶ **Astor** is credited by the Joint Commission
- ▶ In 2005, **Astor** opened ASTOR at Highbridge, a new children's mental health clinic in the Bronx, NY.
- ▶ **Astor** is recognized as a National School of Excellence by the US Department of Education.
- ▶ **Astor** provides services in early childhood, community-based and residential mental health

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

MAY 9TH, 2008

ANNUAL DINNER

JUNE 19TH, 2008

**STENBERG CUP GOLF
TOURNAMENT**

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