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[Astor Services for Children and Families](#) rehabilitates foster children who have experienced severe abuse and trauma. The organization operates as a non-profit organization and receives government funding through the New York State Department of Mental Health and the Department of Children & Family Services which is located in Rhinebeck, New York.

Sonia Barnes-Moorhead, Executive Vice-President of Astor Children's Foundation, explains that the organization accepts foster children who have not been successfully placed with a family. Ironically, many placements have failed as the result of their trauma histories.

Barnes-Moorehead describes the rehabilitative and therapeutic center as the "last stop before hospitalization." Children are often referred by foster care advocates. They live on premises. They receive extensive therapeutic services. These services include art therapy, education, and outdoor sports and activities such as fishing and gardening. Many of these services have been supported by local volunteers.



Barnes-Moorehead emphasizes the positive impact of an involved community to tell the story of an organization and to raise their local profile. Families for Astor has already planned a number of events including a theatrical reading by renowned actors and local residents including Hilarie Burton and Jeffrey Dean Morgan.



Barnes-Moorehead reminds:

“We need the community to help and to enhance what we provide. Because our kids deserve the best – and when they are in our care, they are our children.”

Children range in age from five years old to fourteen years old, with a median stay of eighteen months.

Barnes-Moorehead describes a typical residential case:

“Brothers Anthony and Jacob came to Astor’s residential program after suffering a high degree of trauma in their home. Parental rights were terminated. Their history was marred by neglect and abuse. Fast forward a couple of years – Anthony plays on the Little League baseball team and loves to paint. Jacob donated one of his cars so that ‘another child can also use it.’ These boys have the biggest hearts. It shows what can happen when children in need receive services they need.”



Barnes-Moorehead notes that local communities are extremely well placed to augment existing services and programs.

In an e-mail rallying mom volunteers, local mom and Chair of Families for Astor, Kate Kortbus reminded friends of the importance of acting locally on behalf of children:

“As we walked the halls, I was pretty overwhelmed. Some of the stories were hard to hear but I was able there to see kids in classrooms, in the gym – smiling and laughing. I know how busy everyone is – trust me. I am just feeling at this stage of my life like this world feels so overwhelming. But, if we focus on our community and the good that can come from service to others, maybe we will feel a little less overwhelmed.”

The goal is to enable these children to experience and attain success – and ultimately to find placement in a family.

To make a contribution for the Astor Wishlist or a contribution through PayPal, please visit their complete Wishlist – click and ship.

This is the first in a series Give InKind editorial staff will be writing to highlight the essential work of community-based organizations. The series will focus on the heroes among us – staff at community-based organizations who work to lift others up. They are the unsung heroes. We all know them. Let's celebrate them. Would you like to list the needs of your organization to our free-for-use Wish List? Would you like to nominate an organization for profile? E-mail us at Laura@Giveinkind.com.

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