

Branching Out

SPRING 2015

What's Coming Up

Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation

Summer 2015

Operation Fill-A-Backpack

August 1 - 21

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Safety: The Path to Increased Engagement

All of us have experienced trauma in some shape or form throughout our lives. This could mean a family member passing away, a relationship ending badly, the loss of a pet or other traumatic experience. Our journeys are filled with little and big bumps in the road. These "bumps" can change the way we take care of ourselves and interact with others.



Every day at Twin Oaks we help children and adults with histories of trauma and acknowledge the role trauma has played in their lives. Trauma can leave one feeling emotionally and physically unsafe, overwhelmed with distrust and fearful of rejection. To help move past these feelings, our number one priority is to engage individuals in the treatment process and provide a compassionate support system in a safe, comforting environment.

When a person feels emotionally and physically safe, they are better able to move toward recovery. The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health offers several tips that we use at Twin Oaks to enhance safety:

- 1 Understand emotional safety.** Emotional safety means feeling accepted; it is the sense that one is safe from emotional attack or harm. It may be difficult for someone who has experienced trauma to find a day-to-day sense of calm and safety even after receiving care.
- 2 Provide a soothing place.** When we provide a calming space, we are telling consumers we care about how they feel and are interested in what happens to them emotionally as well as physically. A soothing space may be as simple as a private room, comfortable chair or colorful mural on the wall to help restore a feeling of calmness.
- 3 Help manage feelings.** Trauma may affect a person's ability to find emotional balance. Survivors may experience a flood of feelings and worries that make it difficult to make decisions, follow plans and tend to responsibilities. Our job is to help activate and engage the thinking processes and work to identify achievable goals which can lead to greater safety and control.

By providing a safe environment for our consumers, they can focus on their wellness and recovery without fear. Once engaged, individuals can begin to participate effectively in their own care, reduce isolation and make healthy choices. Engagement with every consumer provides a hopeful path to success.

Thank you for your support in our continued efforts to break the cycle of disengagement and provide the highest quality clinical services to people facing mental illness in our community.

Respectfully,



Bob Pekar
Chief Executive Officer



Twin Oaks DIAPER DERBY

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped us win our race to collect **10,000 diapers** for our most vulnerable consumers – babies!

One in three families in the United States struggle every day to provide a basic need for their babies – clean and dry diapers. With donations from our generous community, we exceeded our goal and **collected over 15,000 diapers** for families in need like Vanessa's...

Vanessa is excited to meet her newborn daughter when she arrives later this spring, but this time is also filled with uncertainty. At 17, she stills lives at home with her dad and her three siblings. She attends school, works a part time job and saves as much money as she can for when the baby is born. Vanessa's dad is willing to help in any way he can, but the Veteran can barely scrape by raising his four children on his own.

This is not an uncommon struggle for many families in our community. Although safety-net programs such as SNAP and WIC help with the cost of food, they do not cover the cost of diapers. Thankfully, because of your generous donations, Vanessa will receive diapers and other necessary baby items for her little one!

Did you know? The Twin Oaks Food Pantries in Mount Holly and Berlin collect baby items throughout the year. Visit www.twinoakscs.org for more donation ideas.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Performance Food Group

Performance Food Group (PFG) is one of the largest food service distributors in the nation. They market and distribute more than 66,000 products both domestically and in 40 foreign countries. Their reach may be global, but they continue to support locally. Since 2011, the PFG distribution center in Westampton regularly donates a variety of food products to the Twin Oaks Mt. Holly Food Pantry. Over the years, PFG has given our pantry over **1,500 cases of food**. Our Mt. Holly pantry serves over 400 families a month and these donations help meet the growing demand of hunger in South Jersey.

Thanks for everything you do PFG!



PFG gave out ice cream sandwiches at Touch A Truck last September.



Twin Oaks
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Scrapbook



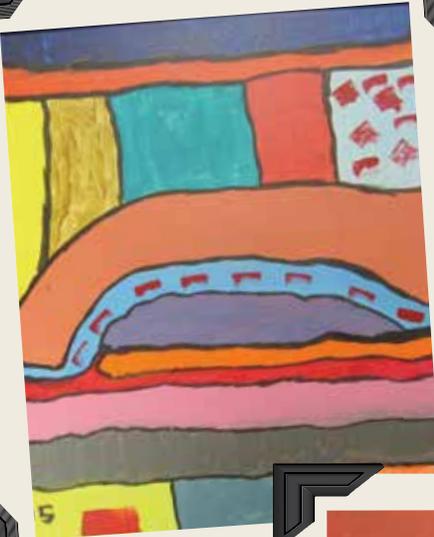
Our littlest donor smiles next to food donations at the Goddard School of Delran.



Princeton House employees pose with a small portion of their food drive donation.



Thank you to Moorestown's newest restaurant, Harvest Seasonal Grill! A portion of the proceeds from their VIP opening event benefited Twin Oaks. Pictured: Twin Oaks CEO, Bob Pekar and Tony Sevick, Chairman, Board of Trustees



Children in Twin Oaks residential programs recently completed beautiful paintings that they will donate to a deserving partner. Learn more in our next newsletter!



Project Dress Up

Make Prom Possible

For two years in a row, you have helped Twin Oaks make prom possible for hundreds of local teens. Last year, one of those teens was **Naarah Wright-Frink**. She wasn't planning on attending her Senior Prom because her family couldn't afford to purchase a gown and accessories. Thanks to Project Dress Up, Naarah was able to attend the prom. She had a wonderful time and describes it as a "once in a lifetime experience."

Now a year later, Naarah wants to pay it forward. She had her gown dry cleaned and donated it back to this year's prom dress drive. She wants to help someone else who is in the same position she was last year. Naarah explained it best when she said, "I love to help people to the best of my ability and I know that times can be hard and you might not be able to afford to purchase a dress."

Thank You to everyone who decided to give your dresses a second chance! During the months of April and May teens in need throughout our community will have the opportunity to shop for their prom dresses and accessories. We would like to give a big thank you to Whitesell for donating the amazing space for the shop again this year!



Thank you Dow Jones in Princeton for holding a Project Dress Up donation drive!

#MAKE PROM POSSIBLE

If you or your group would like to hold a donation drive for Twin Oaks, please contact the Development Office at 609-267-5928.



Expanding Roles

Twin Oaks is extremely proud and excited to announce that Derry Holland has been promoted to President and Karen Tanger to Chief Operating Officer. Derry will be second in command to Chief Executive Officer, Bob Pekar. In this new position, Derry will play a larger role in overall agency responsibilities, oversight, and strategic initiatives while maintaining operational accountability. Karen will significantly expand her reach to oversee a portion of our adult programs and continue to manage all of children's services.

Both Derry and Karen have been employees with Twin Oaks for over 25 years. Derry joined in 1986 as an intern for the Family Learning Center and Seasons programs. From there she moved on to supervise several programs for children and adults within the agency and most recently served as Chief Operating Officer of Adult Services. Karen came on board in 1989 and has worked in many areas of children's services including group homes, crisis, partial care, home-based, school-based, foster care and most recently, Chief Operating Officer of Children's Services.

Bob Pekar, CEO, shares, "As we continue to evolve as an organization, it is essential that we remain forward thinking and challenge ourselves at every level. Karen and Derry's strong commitment to our agency and their desire to continue championing our mission is always evident. I am thankful to have their support and greatly appreciate their contributions over the years." Congratulations Derry and Karen!



Congratulations Derry and Karen!

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2015

B4Stage4 Changing the Way We Think About Mental Health

When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention. When people are in the first stage of those diseases, and are beginning to show signs of symptoms, we try immediately to develop a plan of action.

So why aren't we doing the same for individuals who are dealing with a potentially serious mental illness?

Addressing mental health before Stage 4—this year's theme for Mental Health America's May is Mental Health Month—calls attention to the importance of addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying potential underlying diseases, and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health.



American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year.

Mental health conditions should be addressed long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process. By Stage 4, the combination of extreme, prolonged and persistent symptoms often results in development of other health conditions and has the potential to turn into a crisis event like unemployment, hospitalization, homelessness or even incarceration. In the worst cases, untreated mental illnesses can lead to loss of life an average of 25 years early.

Mental illnesses are not only common, they are treatable. There is a wide variety of treatment options for mental illnesses ranging from therapy to medication to peer support. At Twin Oaks, our role remains not just to provide mental health services, but to bring awareness to mental health issues that affect us all.

For more information about our services, call our confidential Access Center: 1-800-963-3377.

Rising UP: Employment Opportunities



The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) shares that for people living with mental illness, work can be a crucial factor that helps promote health, recovery and social inclusion. Unfortunately, 60-80% of people who live with mental illness are unemployed and for people living with the most severe mental illnesses, unemployment can be as high as 90%.

To help meet this great need in our community, Twin Oaks operates a Pre-Vocational Program within our adult partial care services to prepare consumers to enter the work force. Under the supervision and training of job coaches, the consumers develop job skills such as working in a team, handling constructive criticism and following directions. Duties include janitorial services, sorting and distributing mail and working in the Mt. Holly Food Pantry.

In order to be recommended for the Pre-Vocational Program, consumers must first show positive steps toward wellness and recovery. In the spring of 2014, Terri was recommended for the program and has been excelling ever since. Terri turned

to Twin Oaks in the fall of 2012 when her severe depression became too overwhelming. She made great strides the first year and a half at the program and staff recognized her dedication.

Terri's favorite task is working in the food pantry for two hours, twice a week stocking shelves, packing bags and handing out food. She works as part of a team and interacts with Twin Oaks staff, food pantry customers and her fellow co-workers. Terri enjoys helping people and proudly says, "It's not just about filling the bags, it's about making a difference."

Integrating work into the treatment process not only builds job skills, but also increases independence and self-esteem. Before her depression became severe a few years ago, Terri was a self-assured independent worker.

Sadly, her struggles with mental health made her question her own abilities. Terri now says the most beneficial part of working in the Pre-Vocational Program is her renewed self-confidence!



Moving forward we will continue to provide opportunities for job training through the Pre-Vocational Program and connect consumers who are ready to rise up to the next step of competitive employment.



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Twin Oaks Community Services provides behavioral health and social services to vulnerable children, adults and families throughout New Jersey.

If you or someone you know needs our care, please call our confidential point of entry: Access Center 1-800-963-3377

Stay Connected with Twin Oaks www.twinoakscs.org    



Twin Oaks
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Twin Oaks Community Services offers hope to thousands of vulnerable children, adults and families in over 100 behavioral health programs right in your community.

Don't miss YOUR chance to get involved!

- 1 Sponsor a special event!** View sponsorship levels for our Progressive Dinners and Touch A Truck fundraisers at www.twinoakscs.org.
- 2 Donate to an upcoming donation drive.** Recruit your friends, family and co-workers to help!
- 3 Volunteer your time and energy** to a Twin Oaks program, the food pantry or plan a special project!



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