

Branching Out

WINTER 2014

What's Coming Up

Project Dress Up

February 1 - March 31

Diaper Derby

March 15 - April 15

Haddonfield

Progressive Dinner

April 25

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Facing Hunger and Mental Illness



This January I was proud to join the Board of Trustees of the Food Bank of South Jersey, which provides food to over 250 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters including the Twin Oaks Food Pantries in Mt. Holly and Berlin. It's sad to think of anyone facing hunger in our community, but the reality is more than 170,000 South Jersey residents do not know where their next meal will come from. That's 1 in 7 people who are food insecure, which means they don't have regular access to enough food for a healthy life.

For many individuals living with a mental illness, food insecurity only adds to their daily challenges. They often face the harsh dilemma of spending what little they have to purchase the medications which keep them mentally stable, or to purchase food. When forced to make tough choices on how to spend a limited income, groceries often fall to the bottom of the list after medication, rent, utilities and heating fuel. In fact, 39% of emergency food clients in NJ report having to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.

Food insecurity also stands in the way of our goal to improve quality of life and increase self-sufficiency. Studies show food insecurity only elevates mood, anxiety, behavioral and substance abuse disorders. Hunger and poor nutrition in children are linked to mental health problems, learning disabilities, childhood obesity and poor education outcomes. By eliminating hunger-related stressors, individuals and families can better concentrate on their treatment and move toward wellness and recovery.

To help meet this need, Twin Oaks established the Mt. Holly Food Pantry in 2007 and the Berlin Food Pantry in 2012. Many of our consumers not only struggle with mental illness but also poverty, homelessness and limited social networks. We found that they lacked transportation to grocery stores and often visited corner stores with more expensive and less nutritious foods. In addition, consumers were unable to visit local food pantries during hours of operation because the schedule conflicted with their behavioral health day programs.

By providing the people we serve with this basic human need, we offer hope to those who already make tough choices every day. With the help of the Food Bank of South Jersey, individuals, corporations, local civic groups, schools and faith based organizations, the Twin Oaks Food Pantries in Mt. Holly and Berlin served an average of 500 families a month in 2013. We distributed 155,700 meals which is the equivalent of 186,840 pounds of food.

Statistics and studies can help us understand the number of people impacted by hunger, but they can't communicate the real pain experienced by families struggling to put food on the table. Community support of local food banks and anti-hunger programs is critical to end this pain. Please remember that every dollar, every bag of food counts. Thank you for your support as we fight to ensure food security for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Respectfully,

Bob Pekar
Chief Executive Officer

New Year, New Ways to Get Involved

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY THIS YEAR?

Partner with Twin Oaks Community Services in 2014 to make a difference!
Here are just a few of the ways you can help:

1 Make a donation online or mail to:

Twin Oaks Community Services
770 Woodlane Road
Attn: Development Office
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060

2 Hold a food drive

with your school, co-workers or family and friends for our Food Pantries in Mt. Holly and Berlin.



3 Become a volunteer at Twin Oaks.



4 Attend a special event like the upcoming Haddonfield Progressive Dinner on April 25, Touch A Truck in September or the Moorestown Progressive Dinner in October.



5 Drop off gently used clothing and household items to the Twin Oaks Thrift Shop located at 697 Haddon Avenue in Collingswood.



6 Donate to one of our upcoming donation drives. Project Dress Up and the Diaper Derby are now accepting donations.



7 Got love? Become a foster parent!



8 Stay connected online. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and visit our blog at www.twinoakscs.org.



To learn more about any of these opportunities, visit www.twinoakscs.org or contact the Development Office at 609-267-5928.

Twin Oaks DIAPER DERBY

March 15 - April 15

Join our race to collect 10,000 diapers and other baby items for families in need!

Unfortunately, many families in Twin Oaks programs cannot afford to pay for necessary baby items. Although safety-net programs such as SNAP and WIC help with the cost of food, they do not cover the cost of diapers. Diapers directly impact a family's ability to thrive and be self-sufficient. Your donation to the Diaper Derby drive will help these families in need!



Cassie's Story

Cassie is a young mother determined to give her young son, Bryson, a better life. She receives therapy through the Twin Oaks Seasons program and is enrolled in parenting classes. Recently, Cassie started taking college courses and works evenings at a local restaurant. The tips she earns as a waitress fluctuate so she often struggles to make ends meet. Diapers from the Diaper Derby will help get Cassie through this difficult time as she works to build a future for her family!

MAKE AN IMPACT:

1. Drop off donations at a Twin Oaks location:

Twin Oaks Mt. Holly Food Pantry
770 Woodlane Road, Suite 16
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060

Twin Oaks Berlin Food Pantry
128 Berlin Cross Keys Road
Berlin, NJ 08009

Twin Oaks Community Services
499 Cooper Landing Road
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Twin Oaks Thrift Shop
697 Haddon Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108

2. Run your OWN Diaper Derby!

Get your co-workers, classmates or community involved.

3. Make a monetary donation online at www.twinoakscs.org or by mail to:

770 Woodlane Road
Attn: Development
Mt. Holly, NJ 08060

DONATION IDEAS

Diapers • Toiletries (cream, etc.)
Formula • Baby Food
Bibs/Feeding towels
Bottles • Baby Wipes

QUESTIONS?

Please call the
Development Office at
609-267-5928 or email
keyanna.turner@twinoakscs.org.



ACCEPTING
DONATIONS
NOW - MARCH 31



You can help make prom possible!

Give your dresses a second chance! Donate your gently used formal dresses, purses, shawls, jewelry and shoes to teens in need throughout our community so they can attend their prom in style.

DROP-OFF DETAILS

WHEN:

Monday - Friday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Now - March 31

WHERE:

79 Chestnut Street, Lumberton NJ
770 Woodlane Road, Suite 23, Mount Holly, NJ
128 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ

QUESTIONS?

Visit www.twinoakscs.org or contact
Lisa Lipka or Anne Greenwood at
609-518-5470, lisa.lipka@twinoakscs.org,
anne.greenwood@twinoakscs.org.

    #MakePromPossible

Community Scrapbook



This adorable donation is from the Goddard School of Delran. Each grade collected a different Thanksgiving food item. Thanks everyone!



Twin Oaks consumers pose together at the formal Oasis holiday party. It was an evening full of music, dancing and fun!



Thank you to Dr. Katherine Perez-Rivera, Ph.D. for hosting a spectacular dress event and Thanksgiving food drive for the Twin Oaks Food Pantry in Berlin. A big shout out to the Rowan Chapter of Tau Delta Phi (pictured left) for volunteering at the event!

THANK YOU FOR SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER



Thank you for making the holiday season brighter for children, adults and families in need in Twin Oaks programs! Whether you donated personally, or decided to hold a gift drive with your co-workers, friends or neighbors, please know that every donation made a difference.

Collecting and distributing 8,000 gifts is a BIG undertaking and luckily, GM offered some BIG help! At the height of the drive, GM loaned Twin Oaks an Acadia Denali and a Buick Enclave to transport gifts. The vehicles were spacious and fuel efficient which allowed us to make important gift pick-ups from our generous donors.

Twin Oaks truly appreciates the overwhelming support we received from our surrounding community. Thank you again for making the holiday drive a success!

Caring for a Loved One with Mental Illness

Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS)

When caring for a loved one with a mental illness, families often feel like they have nowhere to turn. Isolation, frustration and fatigue can occur and caretakers forget to take care of themselves.

To assist families facing these issues, Twin Oaks established the Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) program. IFSS helps families

caring for an adult family member with a serious mental illness learn to be supportive in ways that promote wellness, recovery and independence.

The program helps families navigate the mental health system, learn about treatment options, utilize coping strategies, better manage crisis situations and advocate more

effectively. IFSS offers individualized family consultations, psycho-educational groups, referrals to additional services, support groups and respite care.

We know asking for help isn't always easy. If you or someone you know needs assistance, call IFSS today to make an appointment: 856-482-8747.

OVERCOMING HOPELESSNESS - The Greenfield's Story

Mitchell and Janey's son MJ excelled in the classroom and on the football field throughout high school. However, soon after graduation, MJ began to withdraw. Normal teenage mood swings turned into violent outbursts and communication began to dissolve.

After one tumultuous evening, the Greenfields reached out to the Twin Oaks Crisis Screening program. The program helped with the immediate crisis, but the family knew there was a deeper issue. After additional doctor's visits, the Greenfields received the explanation for MJ's changes- schizophrenia.



The diagnosis sent shockwaves through the tight knit family and they struggled to understand the illness and care for MJ while coping with this devastating change. Janey even quit her job to be more available. Feeling overwhelmed and lost, the Greenfields turned to **IFSS** for help.

IFSS began working with the family by offering in-home education about schizophrenia and respite outings for MJ. The weekly sessions gave Mitchell and Janey a much needed break from the 24 hour care they were giving their son. As they struggled to find MJ the right medication and day program, Janey continued to feel helpless.

With staff encouragement, Janey started attending the **IFSS** support groups which she found to be, "honest and eye-opening." Most importantly, she made friends who can relate to her situation more than anyone else. This support network is invaluable to a family who once felt so alone.

Recently, MJ enrolled in the Twin Oaks Berlin Partial Care day program. The Greenfields still have good days and bad days, but with the support, education and respite **IFSS** provides, they now feel stronger than ever.



770 Woodlane Road
Mount Holly, NJ 08060

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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    



Save the Date

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2014



The evening begins with a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception at a beautiful Haddonfield home.

From there, move on to share an intimate dinner with friends prepared by a talented area chef in a local home. Proceeds benefit the Twin Oaks Food Pantries.

For More Information

about hosting a dinner, ticket sales or sponsorships please call the Development Office at 609-267-5928 or visit www.twinoakscs.org.

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