

# Branching Out

WINTER 2019

## What's Coming Up

### Project Dress Up

Now-March 15

### Diaper Derby

March 15 - April 15

### Haddonfield

### Progressive Dinner

April 12

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## Finding A Way Home

"There's no place like home." This phrase, repeated by Dorothy as she closes her eyes and clicks her heels in *The Wizard of Oz*, expresses a desiring hope and longing for a safe, comfortable place of warmth and love.

For children and youth, having a place to call "home" is so important to their happiness, peace of mind and healthy development. Too often various risk factors such as poverty, mental illness, physical abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse and addiction increase one's instability and can lead to homelessness. When those factors become too overwhelming, a "home" becomes an elusive will-o'-the wisp.



Oaks provides several services that help create positive "home" environments for children and youth. Ideally, that place is created by the family itself. Counseling services and programs like Keeping Families Together, which provides affordable supportive housing and support services for Burlington County families involved with the child welfare system, is one type of approach to helping families create a healthier home atmosphere of their own. Group homes serve as an alternative when that is not possible.

For adolescents aging out of the children's system of care, the prospect of being on their own can be both fearful and exhilarating. Oaks' Homestretch Program, under the NJ Department of Children and Families, assists young adults, ages 18-21, in making that transition toward independence and self-sufficiency. The goal is to provide them with guidance and access to resources that will build life skills, create financial independence through employment, and develop a network of support that enables success.

While study after study reveals the effect that a child's home environment can have on his or her future life, one thing remains true at any person's age: having a permanent or stable, well-maintained, affordable residence surrounded by caring, nurturing and loving people promotes health, happiness and well-being. That is the essence of "home."

Respectfully,

*Derry Holland*

Derry Holland, LCSW  
Chief Executive Officer

# OAKS EARNS ACCREDITATION

In December, Oaks received exciting news – another set of its programs were accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International, an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. A total of 41 programs representing ten service areas were peer-reviewed by a five-member accreditation committee in October. The team of surveyors were onsite for three days. They reviewed documents, policies and reports. They toured Oaks' residences and facilities. They spoke with staff and interviewed those who use our services.

The report of the surveyors is filled with praise and accolades for Oaks, its staff and services. Reviewers commented on "phenomenal care" and being "delighted to find many 'stars' at every site." They were impressed that the persons served felt "safe and highly engaged"



and that they were living in "beautiful neighborhoods with attractive living environments and personalized rooms."

Leslie Karpf, Chief of Quality and Health Integration, commented of the report, "We are delighted with the outstanding findings, which are a testament to the contributions and efforts of every Oaks employee."

"This accreditation represents a major step forward in Oaks' goals to fulfill its mission by providing the highest level of quality health care and social services to help individuals and families achieve emotional and physical wellness," said CEO Derry Holland.

Accreditation surveyors were onsite in 2017 and spring 2018 for other programs. The accreditation, the highest level possible, is effective for three years before it may be renewed through reaccreditation.

## Learning to Soar with a Nurtured Heart



Throughout the past year, the Children's Residential Team at Oaks has been training all of their employees in the Nurtured Heart Approach. The Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) is a philosophy developed to create healthy relationships in one's life. Originally developed by Howard Glasser in 1992, NHA consists of a set of strategies that assists children in further developing their self-regulation

and has proven effective with children and adults of all ages. The approach focuses on transforming the way youth (and adults) perceive themselves, their caregivers and the world around them. It is being implemented in various settings such as schools, foster homes, families, health care facilities and group homes throughout the world and by our staff and youth in all of our Children's Residential group homes.

This past fall, Oaks Children's Residential Services (CRS) provided a two-day camp experience inspired by NHA philosophies for all youth and staff. The camp not only focused on team-building skills but on building up each youth's perception of him/herself as they tried out new experiences and faced challenges. Said one participant, "At first I was afraid of the big swing, but I did it anyway ... and once I did, it felt great, like I was flying." We are pleased to report that all of our participants flourished!

The NHA can be adapted successfully with adults and children alike. It is an approach that fits nicely with the FISH! Philosophy that is already a part of the culture at Oaks. Similar to the approach Oaks has adopted toward building a Trauma Informed Care culture, the CRS team will continue to provide NHA trainings and activities for all of Oaks programs, employees and management as it moves forward.



*"NHA is such a great way to transform our youth and bring out the best in them - and our staff too." Oaks Staff Member*





# Community Scrapbook

Thank you to everyone who helped us collect food for nearly 2,000 Thanksgiving meals and gifts for over 5,500 vulnerable children, adults and families in our programs! Here is a sampling of images of our generous donors.



Westampton Middle School



RE/MAX Preferred



Masonic Village



South Jersey Supreme Seva Team



Goddard School Medford



Bowman & Company



# DIAPER Derby



JOIN THE RACE!  
MARCH 15 –  
APRIL 15

## Get Involved

### 1. Run your OWN Diaper Derby

Get your co-workers, classmates, community or church involved.

### 2. Donate Items

Drop off to one of several convenient Oaks Integrated Care locations listed at [www.oaksintcare.org](http://www.oaksintcare.org) from now until April 15.

### 3. Make a monetary donation

online

or by mail.

## JOIN OUR RACE TO COLLECT 15,000 DIAPERS AND OTHER BABY ITEMS FOR FAMILIES IN NEED!

Many families in Oaks programs cannot afford to pay for necessary baby items. Although safety-net programs such as food stamps 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. Every donation counts! You can help families just like Aleasha's-

Sixteen-year-old Aleasha was helping to care for her ill mother while learning to be a mother herself to her 6-month-old daughter and finish her education. The pressures she faced heightened when her parents were evicted from their home leaving her struggling to find resources. Aleasha turned to Oaks Foster Flex program in need of mentorship. She found the support she needed to move into an independent setting and is now working toward her goal of becoming a caregiver.

**Questions?** Please contact Addy Castellar at 609-267-5928 or [adelise.castellar@oaksintcare.org](mailto:adelise.castellar@oaksintcare.org).

## Donation Ideas

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

\*We cannot accept certain used baby items such as strollers, cribs and car seats due to possible recall. We do not want to put any child in danger.

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

# Youth Transitional Services – Homestretch

Oaks' Homestretch program, under the direction of Anne Greenwood and VP Beth Dunlap, serves adolescents between the ages of 18 and 21. Started about seven years ago, it assists these young people, many of whom have had traumatic experiences, as they transition out of the traditional children's system of care into adulthood and independency. "Our goal is for them to function independently," said Greenwood. "Our challenge is to equip them with the type of resources that will help them to do that – education, financial literacy, employment, life skills, a supportive network."

The program draws upon a pool of youths with different experiences and



situations. Many of them have been receiving services from other agencies. Some come from foster homes. A few may have been homeless and on the streets. Apartment-style transitional housing is provided in which 2 to 3 youths live together. The residences are ideally accessible to public transportation, ample job opportunities, and educational resources. As part of developing their self-reliance, the youth are expected to pay for their living expenses with the exception of the cost of the housing itself and utilities.

A transition plan, developed by the youth with the guidance of a clinical case manager and life skills coach, provides a pathway forward. "Some of

our young people don't have their high school diploma or GED," Greenwood explained. "We help them to do that and, if they desire, to find ways to further their education through college courses or trade programs," she said. Assistance is also provided in securing employment.

Once the adolescents reach the age of 21, they move on, although some transition out sooner. "We've had some great 'success stories.' I am amazed at the resilience and survival skills of some of our youth," Greenwood notes.

For more information, visit [www.oaksintcare.org](http://www.oaksintcare.org) or call 1-800-963-3377.

**GIVE YOUR DRESSES A SECOND CHANCE  
NOW – MARCH 15**



You can **#MakePromPossible** by donating your dresses and accessories so deserving teens in our community can attend their prom in style! We accept donations of formal dresses in good condition of all sizes, colors and styles appropriate for a high school prom. Please also consider donating dress shoes, formal purses, clutches, shawls and jewelry.

**Hold a Dress Drive**

Invite your classmates, co-workers or community to help. We can provide you with a toolkit including collection bins, posters and email templates.

\*This is a great activity for high school students!

**DROP-OFF DETAILS**

**When:**

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
NOW until March 15, 2019.



**Where:**

Oaks Integrated Care Locations  
79 Chestnut Street, Lumberton  
770 Woodlane Road, Suite 23, Mt. Holly  
128 Cross Keys Road, Berlin  
1138 E. Chestnut Avenue, Unit 3A, Vineland  
31 Lexington Avenue, Ewing

**#MakePromPossible**



TD Bank  
1701 Rt. 70 East  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034  
[www.tdbank.com](http://www.tdbank.com)

**DONOR SPOTLIGHT**  
**TD Bank**

TD Bank and the TD Charitable Foundation have been supporters of Oaks Integrated Care for over ten years. While it is not unusual for banks and financial institutions to have strong charitable programs in support of many community organizations and nonprofits, not all of them offer the depth of support that TD has for Oaks. The relationship between TD and Oaks exemplifies the best traditions of "corporate partnership." TD has undertaken collection drives among its employees to help provide food in support of Oaks' Thanksgiving Turkey Drive and backpacks for school students. TD's "WOW!"

Van has been present at Touch A Truck, sharing information about financial management with families, children and adults in a fun, interactive way. And, TD employees have volunteered in our Food Pantry to assist with preparing food items for individuals and families. "We are very appreciative of TD's dedication as a long-time contributing corporate partner," said Derry Holland, Oaks CEO.

**Thank you to TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®, for also being a very generous bank.**



770 Woodlane Road  
Mount Holly, NJ 08060

Nonprofit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 521  
Bellmawr, NJ

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

Stay Connected [www.oaksintcare.org](http://www.oaksintcare.org)

**SAVE THE DATE • FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2019**

tenth annual



Oaks INTEGRATED CARE  
**HADDONFIELD**  
PROGRESSIVE DINNER

For more information about hosting a dinner, ticket sales or sponsorships,  
contact the Development Office at 609-267-5928 or visit [www.oaksintcare.org](http://www.oaksintcare.org).

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