

Donors Make a World of Difference

THANK YOU to the companies and foundations that have made generous contributions this year to help support Somerset Home and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

2014 Donors List

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 Wells Fargo
 Zeus Industrial Products, Inc.

The Impact of Your Giving

In 2014, 558 youth* were touched by the services of Somerset Home. Here is an at-a-glance overview of the lives that were impacted throughout the year because of your support:

- Brahma House Group Home/Shelter: 36
- Bridge House Supportive-Housing Program: 8
- Pathways Independent Living Skills Program: 17
- My Place Transitional-Living Program: 10
- Passages Transitional-Living Program: 16
- Whitney House Transitional-Living Program: 9
- Street Smart: 462

On behalf of the Board, staff, and clients of Somerset Home, **THANK YOU to our donors, volunteers, supporters, and friends for making this possible.**

**as of September 2014*

Removing Language Barriers – Somerset Home Increases Number of Bilingual Staff

Somerset Home recognized the importance of removing language barriers when providing services for homeless and runaway youth. This year, the agency increased the percentage of English/Spanish bilingual staff by 400%.

“Studies show an increase in the number of runaway and homeless youth who are Latino, so this is a significant and important change for Somerset Home,” said David Walker, executive director. “Our number of bilingual staff has increased and our percentage of Latino clients has more than quadrupled. We are proud of this accomplishment and know we are going in the right direction.”

With the expansion of Somerset Home’s Street Smart street outreach program, Jennifer Amaya, Street Smart outreach coordinator has seen firsthand how important it is to be able to communicate with Spanish-speaking clients. “Over the past few months, we have seen many youth from Morris County and the majority of them were new Latino immigrants,” said Amaya. “Many youth we see are trying to overcome language problems so they can get help. I speak Spanish fluently as do several of the other Street Smart outreach counselors so we are glad we can be there for support and to communicate with these youth.”

Street Smart is a street outreach program aimed to help keep youth, ages 13 to 21, off the street, to prevent exploitation of high-risk youth, and combat human trafficking. Services include food and clothing, job and educational counseling, HIV/AIDS information, and access to a crisis-intervention or transitional living program. This year Street Smart expanded its programs and now has satellite offices in Bridgewater, East Orange, Morristown, and Hackensack and serves seven central and northern NJ counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset, and Union).



Street Smart outreach worker Jessica Revolorio helps a client



Each One Reach One – Helping Homeless Youth Help Themselves and Others

Somerset Home’s Behavioral Health Department developed four new programs this year to enhance the services for residents: Peer Mediation, Journey to Manhood, Lotus, and Skittles. The Peer Mediation Program was launched over the summer to train mediators to assist in the resolution of conflicts that arise among residents. The mediators have had many successful interventions and feedback has been positive.

“Journey to Manhood” is a mentoring program that engages young men – residents and non-residents of Somerset Home. The female mentorship group called “Lotus” is in development. Volunteers and mentors have been secured and activities are planned for its launch soon.

The Behavioral Health Department launched another group, Skittles, to support to the LGBTQI2-S population. The group is growing and is anticipated to meet much success. In addition, cultural sensitivity groups focusing on the LGBTQI2-S population were conducted for residents and staff.



Donations such as the gift from Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation to the Pathways program help enhance services to Somerset Home clients



Education Coordinator Expands to Serve All Residents

This year, Somerset Home expanded the education coordinator position. The education coordinator, Rene Baez, is now a full-time year-round employee as opposed to being a contracted position just for the school year. Historically, the education coordinator only provided educational instruction for Brahma House residents. Now the education coordinator provides tutoring services to residents in all programs of the agency. Plus, educational services are available throughout the school year and the summer.

“Expanding the education coordinator position was not only a smart decision but a much needed one that has been very successful,” said Marshall Christie, director of residential services. “Having Rene in the summer allowed for a smoother transition into the school year.”

With the expanded role, the education coordinator also assists with life skills instruction in the areas of secondary education opportunities and scholarships.



The Art of Expression: The Arts & Recreation Department Continues to Grow

Somerset Home expanded its Arts and Recreation program this year to be available for every youth involved with a Somerset Home program. Since the expansion, the program has been going strong.

“For youth at Somerset Home, it is important for them to have an avenue where they can express their feelings of anger, abandonment, frustration, and loss to help them deal with trauma they have faced, said Lisa Nocera, director of behavioral health. “By developing new skills, our clients build self-esteem and confidence.”

According to the National Arts Education public campaign, children involved in arts education:

- Improve their overall academic performance.
- Are likely to have higher test scores than those with little to no involvement.
- Develop skills needed by the 21st century workforce: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, team work and more.
- Learn to be more tolerant and open.
- Stay engaged in school and are less likely to drop out.

The Arts & Recreation program had numerous fun trips which included: baseball games, beach trips, Great Adventure, hiking, Dorney Park, ropes courses, zoos, museums, and youth based conferences. A therapeutic dance group was also started and the youth-produced publication, #Catchthetea, has completed three issues to date.



“The recreation trips and group projects have helped our youth improve social skills such as communication, cooperation and conflict management. We are grateful for the financial support our Arts & Recreation program received from the wine tasting event in April, this year’s Run for Runaways, and the companies and individuals that provided tickets to games and activities so we can continue providing these invaluable experiences for our kids,” said Nocera.



Somerset Home staff and residents preparing for this year’s “Run for Runaways” at a fitness session hosted by fitness expert Chesna Cross.

E-Help Helps Meet Immediate Needs of Youth

Through the Somerset Home e-Help program, E-Helpers raised more than \$2,600 this year for homeless and runaway youth. E-Helpers are friends of Somerset Home who share the belief that youth living at Somerset Home deserve the same opportunities as their peers who live at home and have agreed to receive requests when residents are in need of items that will help build their self-esteem and a sense of community.

In the April 2014 e-Help campaign, funds were requested for “Tuxes, Trips, and Tassels” – expenses for graduation, yearbooks, prom, and trips for Somerset Home high school seniors. In June, residents received

assistance for medical insurance, eyeglasses, and a bike to get to work.

For the September campaign, E-Helpers stepped in to raise money for driving lessons for two Passages residents plus eyeglasses, and eye and dental exams for a Brahma House resident.

To sign up to be a Somerset Home E-Helper, visit somersethome.org/change-lives/be-an-e-helper. Somerset Home will email you when a resident has a special request and you can donate online or mail a check. It's quick and easy and a great way to do something special to meet a specific child's need.



Helen Pearly and Charledine Rome presented Executive Director David Walker with a check from the Pieced Together Quilters for the September e-Help campaign.

Special Events Help Raise Awareness and Funds for Somerset Home

40th Anniversary Celebration & Wine Tasting

To celebrate the 40th anniversary, Somerset Home held a wine tasting event in May at Hopewell Valley Vineyards in Pennington. The event raised over \$34,000 for the Arts & Recreation program.

Run for Runaways

Somerset Home hosted its 16th Annual *Run for Runaways* event November 1 at Colonial Park. The 5K Run included a fitness walk, kids' sprints, food, entertainment, and lots of fun. Proceeds benefitted Somerset Home's Arts & Recreation program.

Save the Date for the Tricky Tray Event!

Saturday, April 4, 2015
12-4pm
Hoffman Hall – Chester, NJ



Guests at the 40th Anniversary & Wine Tasting event



Runners at Run for Runaways 2014

Special thanks to all of the sponsors and individuals who helped make these events a success.

Volunteers Make a World of Difference!

Somerset Home would like to thank all of the companies, organizations, houses of worship, and individuals that volunteered their time and services this year to Somerset Home. We salute these volunteer groups:

- **Affinity Federal Credit Union** – year-round volunteer support; financial literacy for Pathways and volunteers at events
- **Aramark** – painting at Bridge House
- **AT&T and the AT&T Pioneers** – year-round volunteer support
- **Firmenich** – painting at Passages
- **Gill St. Bernard School** – planting flowers at Passages
- **Ingredion** – tickets and outing to the Somerset Patriots games; goodie bags and gift cards for residents
- **Merck** – painting at Brahma
- **Nikkia Miller-Blakes and family** – Thanksgiving celebration
- **Volunteers Rutgers Prep** – blanket making project & Halloween
- **Temple Har Shalom** – planting flowers at Whitney House
- **The Children’s Institute** – planting flowers at Brahma



Members of the RRVWC at the Chef's Night event

One organization, Renaissance at Raritan Valley Women’s Club (RRVWC) selected Somerset Home as their charity for the year and hosted various fundraising events to benefit Somerset Home including a Chef’s Night & Auction, Dine to Donate events, Community Walk, and more. “Jennifer Amaya [Street Smart outreach coordinator] spoke in support of Somerset Home at our voting meeting in April and she gave an excellent representation of the work they do with our area’s homeless youth,” said Barbara Hirschman, RRVWC co-chair. “Our members responded with their vote and we were delighted to select Somerset Home to receive the benefits of the RRVWC’s fundraising efforts for our 2014-2015 club year.”



Valued Assets –

Volunteer Profile (*Samieh Franklin*)

Somerset Home does not take for granted the support of volunteers from the community who dedicate their time to help. One volunteer, Samieh Franklin, AT&T Project Manager found out about Somerset Home from a fellow co-worker who was a Somerset Home volunteer and advised her to get involved. “Somerset Home touches my heart,” said Franklin. “I love to mentor and the agency embraces mentoring. The teens are appreciative for our time and it’s wonderful to see their growth. I also grow by watching their motivation regardless of their daily obstacles that I may take for granted every day.”

Franklin likes that the staff at Somerset Home appreciates volunteers. “The staff at Somerset Home always displays their gratitude by providing a volunteer picnic and sending positive letters to all volunteers which is much appreciated.”

When asked about one of her memorable experiences as a volunteer, Franklin said, “my very best experience was when one of the teens told me ‘you really care’. We need to show more teens ‘we care’ so I encourage others to please help in any way you can - financially and/or with your time.”



Dedicated Donors –

Donor Profile (*Margret “Peg” Carton*)

The work for Somerset Home would not be possible without the support of its donors. Donors provide the financial support to help ensure the agency can fulfill its mission of helping homeless and runaway youth. Margret “Peg” Carton is a real estate agent – team leader with the Estate Team (Keller Williams Towne Square Realty) and has been a donor of Somerset Home for many years.

Carton learned about Somerset Home when she was researching different organizations in the area to make an annual donation and found Somerset Home. She liked what she read and decided to make contributions in honor of her clients at Christmas. Carton believes what Somerset Home offers to children with nowhere else to turn is invaluable.

“Somerset Home is saving children’s lives – giving them a place to live and helping with all of the trauma and emotional upheavals they are trying to survive,” said Carton. “I would tell anyone to please...PLEASE donate... there are so many more children and the need keeps growing.”



About Somerset Home

Somerset Home provides abused, neglected and homeless youth with housing, a stable environment, and supportive services that guide them in becoming contributing members of society. Since 1970, over 7,000 runaway, homeless, abused or neglected youth have come to seek shelter, food, clothing, and support services.

Somerset Home's residential programs are located in Bridgewater, New Jersey. There are satellite offices in Hackensack (Bergen County), Morristown (Morris County) and East Orange (Essex County). The satellite offices provide street outreach services to six northern counties (Middlesex, Union, Morris, Bergen, Essex and Hudson).

SHTDC currently provides the following eight programs for youth and families in crisis:

- **Brahma House** - A residential crisis intervention program for 13- to 18-year olds.
- **Pathways** - A non-residential program for youth, ages 14 to 21, to receive independent-living skills education, career counseling and employment preparation through workshops, mentoring groups, retreats and one-on-one support.
- **Passages** - A residential transitional living program for 10 young men and women, ages 16 to 21.
- **Street Smart** - A street outreach program to help keep youth, ages 13 to 21, off of the street, prevent exploitation of high-risk youth, and combat human trafficking. Street Smart has offices in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset, and Union counties.
- **My Place** - A residential transitional living program for five males, ages 18 to 21, who continue to need support services as they "age out" of the foster care system.
- **Whitney House** - A residential transitional living program for five females, ages 18 to 21, who continue to need support services as they "age out" of the foster care system.
- **Bridge House** - A permanent, supportive-housing program for two (2) young adults, 18 years of age and over, who have aged-out of foster care. An expansion to ten (10) units is planned.
- **Transitional Learning Center (TLC)** - A program that ensures youth's educational needs are met.

When there is nowhere else to turn, Somerset Home gives homeless youth a home and a hopeful future.

For more information, visit somersethome.org.



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Community Leaders Join Somerset Home's Advisory Council

This fall, Somerset Home formed an Advisory Council to engage individuals who are committed to Somerset Home's mission and to gain valuable assistance from experts in key fields/industries that are essential to Somerset Home's growth and development. The Advisory Council will serve as a pipeline for potential Board members and provide strategic access to resources and services. Members include:

- **Charisse Allington**, *Unity Bank*
- **Robert L. Caruso**, *Partnership for Drug-Free Kids*
- **Takeena Deas**, *Somerset County Business Partnership*
- **Raymond Fantuzzi**, *Keystone Community Residency, Inc.*
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*Help provide
a hopeful future
for a homeless youth!*

SOMERSET HOME SUCCESS STORIES

Patrick's Story...

Following a presentation at a high school, Street Smart street outreach was approached by a counselor that wanted to refer a student that could benefit from the program's services, Patrick. Patrick is a learning disabled 19 year-old and since the death of his adoptive parents, he had been couch surfing and living with friends.

Street Smart workers went to the school and met with Patrick and his counselor to discuss housing options. Street Smart helped Patrick obtain his vital documents and made sure he had contact information for Street Smart if he ever needed help.

Patrick had a fight with his friends that resulted in them kicking him out of the apartment at 11:00pm. After roaming the streets and unsuccessfully searching for housing, Patrick decided to call Street Smart from a phone at the local Quick Chek. When outreach workers picked him up, he was sitting outside on the curb. The workers bought him something to eat and were able to place him at an age-appropriate shelter. Patrick will remain at the shelter while Street Smart Outreach continues to help him with permanent, long-term housing.



Rachel's Story...

Rachel was originally a resident of Passages, where she resided for approximately a year. Rachel was successful at Passages and graduated to return home to her mother and step-father. Shortly after Rachel returned home, her parents decided to relocate and not take her or her siblings with them. Rachel was again left homeless and alone. She contacted Somerset Home and was placed at Whitney House.

While at Whitney she maintained full-time employment and attended Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) full-time. Rachel saved all of her money and successfully completed her courses at RVCC. She had obtained a vehicle of her own and was ready to move on. Today, Rachel lives in a condo that she shares with another former Somerset Home client and has begun fulfilling her dream of being fully independent.



**DONATE TODAY TO HELP MAKE A
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHER
YOUTH LIKE PATRICK AND RACHEL!**