

VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

Year-End 2021 Newsletter

Aging-out programs become safety net for V & P youth

Everyone needs a safety net, especially youth who are aging out of foster care and going to live independently.

Visions and Pathways helps youth before they age out to better ensure positive outcomes. At least six months before discharge, Case Managers schedule intensive individual sessions to talk about housing, employment, education assistance, and financial literacy such as budgeting, banking, and insurance purchases. To augment the one-on-one counseling, using corporate partners and volunteers Visions and Pathways hosts workshops about health education, STD/pregnancy prevention, entering into a lease, and other topics.

But Visions and Pathways' role doesn't end the day a youth ages out. After discharge, Visions and Pathways provides mentoring and case management so that graduates of the program don't slip through the cracks.

Often, V & P counselors work with those aged out to maintain medical or mental health appointments. "If this means assisting them with transportation, Visions and Pathways will take them," noted Jennifer Amaya, Visions and Pathways' Director of Outreach and Prevention. "However, we also work with programs like Ride Wise to assist

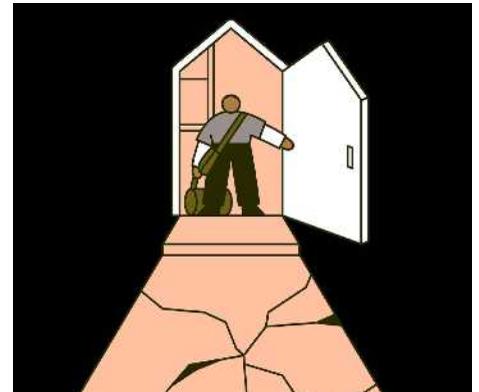
them in learning bus routes."

Aging-out programs are run under the Visions and Pathways highly developed Prosperity independent skills program. "Prosperity is the centerpiece of our community-based services for youth who will age out," said Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker.

According to Walker, Prosperity's goal is to increase each youth's level of empowerment and self-sufficiency. "The program's success is measured through client progress notes, individualized service plans, and program participation reports from case managers," he noted. "School reports and quarterly evaluations are also used to measure clients' success, in addition to the Casey Life Skills assessment tool. "

Ultimately, Walker said, Prosperity helps decrease the probability of long-term dependence on public assistance, illegal drug use, incarceration, and other detrimental life experiences.

Aging out at Visions and Pathways doesn't necessarily mean that young adults leaving the program are sent out into the community with no place to live. While housing is limited for youth over 21, the organization does have several locations for young adults. Its Loving Care Home program in Plainfield provides



AGING OUT of foster care can be a minefield, but Visions and Pathways works with youth to prepare them for independent living.

housing for females 18-24. "This helps keep youth with their peers and gives them the support needed for their age group," noted Amaya.

The agency owns two properties in Bridgewater, Bridge House I, a two-bedroom home, and Bridge House II, a two-bedroom condominium, where young adults 18 years of age can reside. An expansion to 10 units is planned for Bridge House I.

The organization also has rental "scatter-site" units it calls Village Houses, also providing homes for young adults who have aged out of foster care.

Other young adults who choose to live outside the Visions and Pathways' arms or go back home can take advantage of another agency aging-out program called Transitions. Transitions focuses on stable housing, career counseling, and employment, offering young adults age appropriate support and wrap-around services.

Walker said those who have aged out don't have to cut ties with the organization. Visions and Pathways makes available its Wellness Program with its access to the arts, recreation, fitness, nutrition, and faith or spirituality-based programming. Its new Intensive In-Community counseling program (IIC) is also a resource.

"These components encourage learning, improve mental and physical health, and foster an appreciation of the arts," noted Walker. "Within the context of faith and spirituality, it allows our youth who have aged out an opportunity to continue to explore what may best interest them."

Class on how to build a better robot sponsored by Arman Roy Foundation

As part of its pledge to sponsor S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) classes for Visions and Pathways' youth, the Arman Roy Foundation sponsored a week of robotics classes in July. Using Legos, the youth built robots and applied technology that allowed the robots to move.

The classes were held in the new Arman Roy Technology Center at Brahma House. The Roy Foundation recently underwrote a project to upgrade the room and equip it with computers, smart boards, and a 3-D printer.

The robotics class was led by instructors from the Montclair Learning Center in Montclair, New Jersey.



ASSEMBLING A ROBOT from parts, using a computer, a Visions and Pathways youth learned about the S.T.E.A.M. curriculum during a week-long course at the new Arman Roy Technology Center at Brahma House. The Arman Roy Foundation underwrote the creation of the technology center and paid all costs for the robotics course.

Interns enliven summer for employees and residents

The summer of 2021 was the first time Visions and Pathways has had summer interns, and the benefits to the organization were enormous.

Five interns came through a \$12,000 New Jersey Department of Labor grant that sends local high-school and college-age students to non-profits for eight weeks in the summer. The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) selected the five interns, ages 16 to 22, and followed up to help them transition to the world of work.

Two interns worked for residential services, two worked in the administrative offices, and one worked in the maintenance department.

Gerard Pasco from Bridgewater, New Jersey, the youngest intern at 16 years old, said working at Visions and Pathways was his first job. He acted as a receptionist and assisted Clinical Case Manager Elizabeth Williams.

He enjoyed the internship, but most of all Gerard said he liked meeting new people. He also said he found he liked working rather than loafing for the summer. "I realized the hard work that you have to put into a job," said Gerard, who hopes to study engineering.

Aaliyah Williams from Somerset, New Jersey, a 22-year-old undergraduate at Rutgers' Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, spent her summer internship working with resident advisors.

She helped organize the pantries and the recreation rooms, interacted with Nutrition Coordinator Tammy Woodward, and helped prepare meals. "The experience was very fruitful for me," said Aaliyah, who spent her second summer with SYEP.

Her favorite part of the internship was "interacting with staff" and helping to mentor



SUMMER INTERNS and the Visions and Pathways staff they worked for took a photo together at the end of a successful summer. From left are: Tiffany Parchment, Case Management, Tammy Woodward, nutritionist, Elizabeth Williams, Clinical Case Manager, and interns Kelvin Cheng, Gerard Pasco, Smyan Chinnam, Kylah Rohan, and Aaliyah Williams. At far right is Cynthia Ramsey, Program Manager.

youth in the program.

All five interns were very professional, reported Visions and Pathways Director of Administration Zoila Gonzalez. "They came to work on time, ready to go ahead, and they were eager to take on every assignment we asked them to do," said Gonzalez. "They added so much to the work we do here."

Visions & Pathways staff was thrilled to be involved in the SYEP program. "Our Summer Youth employees were very focused and willing to help us," commented Program Manager Cynthia M. Ramsey. "They were positive and

organized."

Clinical Case Manager Elizabeth Williams noted, "The interns took initiative, had great follow-through, and were supportive in supporting case managers clerically."

Gifty Boateng, Assistant Director of Residential Services, added, "Our Summer Youth were a great support to Residential Services. They displayed professionalism, punctuality, and were very reliable. They were always motivated and ready to assist with any task that was presented to them administratively."

Visions and Pathways is looking to get a grant from the state again next year to hire interns.

Become a fairy godmother (or father); Join Visions and Pathways' e-Helpers

All over New Jersey there are some good people who don't need the limelight but who enjoy making life easier for Visions and Pathways youth.

Perhaps they don't have the time to volunteer, but they have become part of the e-Helper network, a "good deeds" program where supporters contribute for youths' specific needs, such as books for school. These are extras that unfortunately are not in Visions and Pathways' budget to provide.

Over the years 419 e-Helpers have participated in the program, but now Visions and Pathways is looking for additional e-Helpers as its population grows.

"We call our e-Helpers our anonymous angels," said Development Associate Adriana Gonzalez.

Recently, she reported, three youths showed a need to take driving lessons, which cost \$300 per person. Visions and Pathways posted the

request for driving lessons on the website, thereby activating the e-Helper network.

Gonzalez said it wasn't long before an e-Helper stepped up to contribute \$900 for the lessons.

Other e-Helpers have paid for the homeless teens to go to their high school proms, join an intramural basketball team, or purchase dress shoes required for a job. "E-Helpers share our belief that Visions and Pathways' youth deserve the same opportunities as their peers who live at home," stated Gonzalez.

To help make a difference in the life of a resident, just give the organization your email address (agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org), and the organization will let you know when a specific need arises. E-Helpers can donate online or mail a check.

"It's quick and easy, and you'll know you did something special for a child," said Gonzalez.

'Best Of' holiday auction to feature gourmet baskets of goods and services

Do you want to give a Christmas gift of the best restaurant meals, goods, and services a local town has to offer? New this year is a fundraising auction where Visions and Pathways will offer coveted gift baskets filled with restaurant coupons, merchandise, and gift certificates from businesses grouped by towns in Somerset, Middlesex, and Morris counties.

Volunteers said they wanted to put on a holiday auction with a "different" kind of theme and came up with the idea of "Best Of" local communities.

The auction will be virtual, running from Nov. 3 to 7. Find more information about the "Best Of" auction on the visionsandpathways.org.

Intensive In-Community Counseling program provides for youth from Visions and Pathways to get behavioral therapy at home

Under a new program, a behavioral health counselor at Visions and Pathways can provide counseling services for youth in their homes.

Known as Intensive In-Community Counseling (IIC), clinicians work closely with youth and their families in the community to achieve goals focusing on the counselee's restorative functioning.

Because the services are conveniently provided in the home or other locations that are comfortable to the youth, IIC helps destigmatize mental health counseling.

Visions and Pathways is currently serving clients in Somerset and Mercer Counties but intends to expand.

Katie Huber, director of behavioral health for Visions and Pathways, said this new connection preserves a youth's home life and prevents or reduces the need for higher intensity behavioral health or substance use treatment. She said it can also prevent or reduce the risk for inpatient

“Counseling enabled the youth to become reacclimated to the home and family environment.”

--- Katie Huber, Visions and Pathways' director of behavioral health

hospitalizations.

Visions and Pathways therapist Brianna Petrone has provided IIC services to youth who were residing at Visions and Pathways and have transitioned home with their families. During the pandemic, treatment has been both in person and via telehealth but it will eventually be all in-person.

“In one case, Brianna was able to support both

the youth and family with their adjustment,” reported Huber. “She was able to facilitate family sessions to ensure the youth and the family both felt heard and supported. The counseling enabled the youth to become reacclimated to the home and family environment.”

Huber said Visions and Pathways is currently recruiting for a bilingual LSW clinician in order to provide more services to more clients, some of whom may never have lived at Visions and Pathways residences.

The IIC program is one more way Visions and Pathways is extending its community reach. “IIC allows us to reach many new youth in the community who do not need or qualify for out-of-home residential placement,” Huber stated. “Having the ability to offer behavioral health services to youth in the community as well as those who reside at Visions and Pathways will allow us to help more youth and families in need and continue our mission.”

Magic Money scholarship honors memory of Kristina Walker

Kristina Walker, the 25-year-old daughter of Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker, died in a tragic motorcycle accident in Crown Heights, Brooklyn this summer.

Visions and Pathways is honoring her memory through a new scholarship, called “Magic Money.”

The scholarship gets its name because of the severe trauma to Walker's head, facial identification was not possible, and her father was able to perform the identification through a tattoo on her shoulder with the word “Magic.” Because he often playfully teased her about her tattoos and piercings, this was quite ironic. The word was written in the handwriting of Kristina's mother, who had passed away three years earlier.

The new scholarship is open to women earning undergraduate degrees. Applicants for Magic Money do not have to be clients of Visions and Pathways. Priority will be given to women who have experienced domestic violence.

A survivor of domestic violence herself, Walker's life course was impacted by domestic



Kristina Walker

violence, and she was devoted to empowering women. At the time of her death, Walker, a graduate of Pace University with a degree in biology, was assistant manager at Westville Restaurant in Brooklyn, New York. Born in Brooklyn, she was raised in Green Brook, New Jersey.

Visions and Pathways officials said the purpose of the new scholarship “is to be transformative.” Academic excellence is not a factor.

Donations are being collected to help fund the new scholarship. Please send to Visions and Pathways, 49 Brahma Ave, Bridgewater, NJ 08807 or donate through the organization website, <https://visionsandpathways.org/donate>.

Summertime is scholarship time at Visions and Pathways, and at a gathering in June youth receiving scholarships were honored.

The Sharing Joy Scholarships, named for former Board member Joy Mathiowdis, who died in 2020, went to Stephanie Arias, Ashton Hewitt, Kia McAlary, and Deilin Aleyda Perez Calles.

Visions and Pathways established this fund to honor Mathiowdis, a valued colleague to many at Schering-Plough, Merck, Novartis, and GSK.

Stephanie Arias, a student at Notre Dame University, has made a positive difference in others' lives through numerous volunteer

activities over many years. She also received a Ruth Meissner Memorial Scholarship.

Ashton Hewitt is attending William Paterson University and intends to become a pediatric oncologist. In high school Ashton achieved Honor Roll and National Honor along with athletic awards and volunteering to help others. Ashton also received the AT&T Pioneers Scholarship and a Ruth Meissner Memorial Scholarship.

Kia McAlary has had a dream to apply her artistic abilities to become a special effects artist. She has done very well in school and has developed relationships through her friendly and understanding personality. She also won a Ruth Meissner Memorial Scholarship.

Deilin Perez Calles showed the Scholarship Committee that you can take someone out of her country but can't take motivation and inspiration out of them! Deilin does volunteer work helping others speak English more fluently and by doing so improves their confidence and social relations.

Winner of the Warren Scholarship is Shaggy Del Rosario. He also won a Ruth Meissner Memorial Scholarship.



Photo by Vicki White

WINNER OF one of the Sharing Joy Scholarships is Stephanie Arias (left), a student at Notre Dame University. Doing presenting honors are members of the Visions and Pathways' Scholarship Committee, Joanne Machalaba (center) and Laurie Pellegrino.



Photo by Vicki White

A RUTH MEISSNER Memorial Scholarship went to Ashton Hewitt (center). Presenting the award are Jodi Meissner (left) and Jeffrey Meissner.

Family & Friends Picnic includes health fair

You can make impact: a gift in will or trust



HEALTH FAIR offered at Visions and Pathways' Friends and Family Picnic at Duke Island Park in June attracted many picnickers to its exhibits.

Visions and Pathways held its annual Family and Friends Picnic at Duke Island Park June 12. But this was more than just a picnic.

Visions and Pathways partnered with Zufall Health in Somerville on a health fair open to all picnic goers. This is the first time Visions and Pathways has partnered on an event with Zufall, a non-profit that provides affordable medical, dental and behavioral health services to the community.

Thanks to Shake Shack in Bridgewater for donating hamburgers and Tropicana for beverages.



SHAKE SHACK in Bridgewater donated enough hamburgers to feed everyone at the picnic.

Virtual concert raises \$7,655

"Giving Thanks," a virtual concert and interfaith multicultural celebration of music and dance in June, raised \$7,655 for Visions and Pathways.

This was the second interfaith virtual concert that benefited the organization.

Brenda Price from Star 99.1 radio in Zarephath was the emcee. Among the groups performing were from Temple Sholom in Bridgewater, Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, the Evangel Chapel Worship Team from Bridgewater, Calvary Baptist Church in Morristown, St. Francis Episcopal Church in Dunellen, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville.

Individual performers included Christina Morgan-Diaz, Renee Connell, Buddy Williams, Barbara Dever, Joycelyn Hunt Brian Padilla, Nwaoji Joseph, Elizabeth Alfaro, and Selena Ramirez.

The Giving Thanks concert will return in fall 2022, but it will be in person. Visions and Pathways officials said they are searching for the proper venue for the concert

Interested in helping homeless teens, both now and in the years ahead? A simple, flexible and versatile way to ensure Visions and Pathways can continue our work for years to come is a gift in your will or living trust. Your gift also entitles your estate to an unlimited federal estate tax charitable deduction.

Some of the legacy investments you can make also include:

* **Retirement Plans** – Designate Visions and Pathways to receive part or all of what remains of your retirement plan after your death. Such transfers can be a tax-efficient way of making a gift. For example, heirs may receive as little as 30 percent of a retirement plan from a large estate after estate and income tax, while Visions and Pathways would receive 100 percent of it.

* **Insurance policies** – Designate Visions and Pathways Home Endowment Fund to receive all or part of a life insurance policy. Ask your insurance company for a beneficiary designation form.

We also welcome donations of stock and other securities. To learn more, please contact Visions and Pathways Director of Finance Indumati Patel at 908-526-6605 or ipatel@visionsandpathways.org.

If you include Visions and Pathways in your plans, please use our legal name and Federal Tax ID.

Bridgewater Woman's Club selects V&P

The Bridgewater Woman's Club has selected Visions and Pathways this year as one of the charities it supports. The club honored Visions and Pathways a few months ago with a check for \$1,000.

Mary Monaghan, corresponding secretary of the club, said Visions and Pathways was one of the charities selected by the club's Charities Committee because of the "very important service" it provides.

David Walker, Executive Director and CEO of Visions and Pathways, thanked the club and its members for designating Visions and Pathways from among many local charitable organizations. "We are grateful for the Bridgewater Woman's Club's support and look forward to being a part of its giving in the future," noted Walker.



All photos by Ebony Crawford

TWO STAFFS, one from Visions and Pathways and the other from Zufall Health in Somerville, joined forces to put on a well attended Friends and Family Picnic and health fair in June.

Engage with Us

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- @visionsandpathways
- Like our page on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter
- @VisionsandPathwaysNJ
- @StreetSmart_NJ
- Add us on Amazon Smile

Know more about us . . .

Visions and Pathways provides abused, neglected, homeless, and runaway youth with housing, a stable environment, and supportive services that guide them in becoming self-sufficient.

The agency's programs for vulnerable youth include: Brahma House residential crisis intervention program; Passages, My Place and Whitney House residential transitional-living programs; Prosperity independent-living skills education program; Street Smart street outreach program; Transitional Learning Center for in-house education instruction; Bridge House and Village House, supportive-housing for aged-out youth, an Arts and Recreation Program, and the Transitions aftercare Program.

The Loving Care Homes residence for homeless women is our most recent initiative. In addition, V & P has an affiliation agreement with Newark's International Youth Organization (IYO), IYO has served Newark's highest need youth for almost 50 years.

Since 1970, over 11,000 youth have come to seek shelter, food, clothing, and support services.

For more information, visit visionsandpathways.org or contact Executive Director David Walker, Esq. MSW at dwalker@visionsandpathways.org.

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List of donors 2021

THANK YOU to the companies, foundations, and service organizations that have made generous monetary contributions from January 2021 to date* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves. Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation

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2021 Volunteer Groups

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Nu Xi Omega chapter
AmeriCorps
Arman Roy Foundation
Central Jersey Church of Christ
Community Baptist Church of Somerset
Dream Project
Evangel Chapel
Hillsborough High School - Basketball Team
Hillsborough High School - Field Hockey
Janssen
Johnson and Johnson
Junior League of Morristown
Merck
Rutgers University
St. Joseph's Church
ServiceworX
Temple Emanu-El
The Chai Center for Jewish Life

5K Run and Walk held virtually; Event sets record for fundraising

Runners and walkers participating virtually in April in the Visions and Pathways annual 5K event raised \$30,333 for Visions and Pathways, a new record high.

Athletes came from Somerset and Morris Counties and from all over the United States as the virtual nature of the fundraiser over a few days allowed a wider net for participants, who again registered through an online fundraising platform.

Because of the COVID pandemic, this was the second year in a row that the Run/Walk had to be virtual. This year, Visions and Pathways held a raffle and a silent auction to increase

donor participation. There was also a 50-50 co-sponsored by the Kiwanis of Somerset Hills. The winner took home \$1,650.

A big thanks goes to the Run/Walk Committee and its hard-working co-chairs, Veona Martin and Fran Smith.

The next Walk/Run will be Saturday, April 9, and Visions and Pathways is deciding whether to offer it virtual as well as in-person, assuming coronavirus infections have declined considerably. If it is held in person, the event will return to Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey, where the Walk/Run started 24 years ago.

VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

IMPACT KIDS | GET INVOLVED!

"We help kids" find a **vision** and a **path** by giving safe housing, food and support services to at-risk and homeless NJ kids, ages 13+. **And we need your help!**

HOW?

Mentor Kids ● Our residents benefit from life skills, financial literacy, public speaking, cooking, conflict resolution, trades and other professional & life skills

Volunteer ● Paint a room, plant a garden, build benches, and attend events

Connect with us ● 

Operational Services ● Share your skills updating or managing our website, create or support a fundraiser, research/write grant requests, draft a brochure or write a blog. We've never found a professional skill that didn't help our kids!

Financial Support ● Financial donations, donations of a car or home, fund a scholarship or legacy /endowment, start a birthday Facebook or GoFundMe fundraiser, do a Memorial donation in lieu of sending flowers, and select Visions & Pathways on Smile.Amazon.com

Become an e-helper ● No time to volunteer and still want to help? Become an e-Helper by giving us your email address and a few times a year, we'll email you when a homeless teenager asks a special request not covered by our budget... Can I go to the prom, join the basketball team, can I get dress shoes for my job? Fulfilling these requests help youth living at Visions and Pathways get the same opportunities as their peers who live at home. E-helpers who can contribute let us know they're either sending a check or donating instantly online. There's no obligation to respond to each request, but every little bit helps. Email Adriana at agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org if you're interested in e-Helping.

You can involve your company too!

Ask us about volunteer days, mentoring, event sponsorship & "Adopt a Charity"!

Join us at Visionsandpathways.org, streetSMARToutreach.org or at our Bridgewater and Morristown locations

SUCCESS STORIES

Matthew

As Matthew's school year concluded in 2020, he found himself needing housing. He contacted Visions and Pathways and was admitted to the program yet preferred to not transition until he graduated from high school. Upon transitioning to Visions and Pathways, Matthew strived to attain employment. Within a few weeks of admission, he obtained a job working in the fast-food industry and then focused on achieving his educational goals.

He applied to Raritan Valley Community College and obtained a second job. As a result of maintaining his strenuous work schedules and attending classes virtually, he withdrew from his fall semester classes. Matthew shifted his focus on becoming financially stable. He found a mentor and traveled to Texas to attend an entrepreneurship conference.

Thereafter, he resigned from his former places of employment and obtained a higher paying job, working full time. Matthew is utilizing his investment skills to focus on stocks and bonds. Throughout his placement, Matthew has maintained a positive outlook no matter what challenge he faced. He has never had any conflicts in the program and has formed long lasting relationships, utilizing his treatment team, residential staff, and family as support. It has been a pleasure to work with Matthew as we anticipate his continual and lifelong success.



S.C.

S.C., a resident at My Place, has been an academic success since arriving at V&P. He is a very intelligent young man who takes pride in his schoolwork. S.C. consistently strives to do his best and engages eloquently with the Journey to Manhood mentoring program. He is as creative as he is intelligent, which is reflective in his thought-provoking poetry.

Due to his hard work and academic excellence, S.C. was offered a part-time job at an IT firm where he can work remotely, compliments of the Arman Roy Foundation. S.C. is a high achiever in whom the Education Department takes great pride.

(continued on next page)

When There is Nowhere Else To Turn . . . We Give Homeless Youth A Home and Hopeful Future

Yes! I/We want to help youth at Visions and Pathways

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Email _____

My/Our gift is in honor of or in memory of:

Please send a notification (without amount) to:
Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____

Your tax-deductible donation provides operation funds for food, clothing, shelter, crisis intervention, counseling, basic education and independent-living skill education.

You can put your money to work immediately by making a secure gift online at www.visionsandpathways.org, or use one of the payments to follow.

YE21

Here's my heartfelt gift of : \$20. \$25. \$50.
 \$75. \$100. \$250. other _____

Check enclosed, payable to Visions and Pathways
 One-time or Monthly gift charged to my credit card
 VISA* MASTERCARD* AMEX*

Amount \$ _____ Exp. Date _____
Card No. _____
Signature _____

Employer's Matching Gift form enclosed.

** A gift of \$250 or more entitles you to a brick in our Walk of Wishes, a garden walkway at Visions and Pathways, as a permanent symbol of your generous support.*

What name or message would you like on your brick?
Up to 3 lines with a total of 15 letters and spaces on each line

SUCCESS STORIES

(continued from previous page)

K.R.

K.R. left a chaotic living situation last January and came to reside at Loving Care Home (LCH) in Plainfield. She came with close to nothing. It took nearly a month to obtain a copy of her identification papers, but K.R. finally received a copy and started working at a local food store. She also hoped to obtain a second part-time position elsewhere.

She stated that soon after coming to Loving Care Home she already felt herself change for the better. Visions and Pathways found her to be a motivated, kind young woman who wanted to get her life back on track. With the help of Loving Care Home, K.R. became motivated to get a job and work toward getting health insurance.

She has now left our residential and Prosperity programs and has paid off the deposit on a room for rent. This is the first time K.R. will have a space all to herself that she will be responsible for. She has already benefited during the time she was at LCH, and officials feel she will accomplish great things in her future.

J.M.

J.M., a 15-year-old who came to the United States as an unaccompanied minor, was admitted to Brahma House in April 2020. During his seven-month stay at Brahma, he worked very hard to maintain good grades, improve his English-speaking abilities, and abide by house rules despite frequent feelings of frustration and sadness thinking that he would “never get out of” Brahma House.

Then J.M. successfully transitioned to My

Place. He has been ecstatic since moving there. J.M. is now more comfortable in the kitchen and has been preparing culturally specific meals, with staff's help, for himself and housemates.

He is looking forward to securing employment, begin saving for his future, and taking full advantage of all the benefits of participating in V&P programs and services. In addition, J.M. is now more receptive to meeting with his support team.

Employee of the Year: Charles Whitehead

Resident Advisor Charles Whitehead has been selected Visions and Pathways' 2021 Employee of the Year.

Not only does he do the duties that's required of his position effectively, but he also goes the extra steps to assist when needed with the other houses, the organization said.

This assistance includes being easily open to picking up other house residents, willingly taking on tasks such as unpacking large food deliveries, being responsible for the general maintenance of all vans, and other extras “with a kindness and sincerity that's appreciated.”

Additionally, his supervisors said Whitehead

is “always in good spirits and willing to learn and improve.” Last but not least, he always makes sure that on his watch the residents are in an environment that's clean and safe.

He is a person whom the residents can always go to for whatever support they need. Congratulations, Charles!!!



Charles Whitehead

Here is the Year-End 2021 issue of your Visions and Pathways newsletter.

Thank you for investing in the future of our youth!

Warren Township students raise funds for Visions and Pathways

An enthusiastic group of middle school students from Warren Township raised funds for Visions and Pathways earlier this year, and because they were being educated remotely the youngsters did the fundraising all virtually. More than \$600 was collected.

Knowing that the COVID 19 health crisis has impacted everyone, the Warren Middle School decided in the spring to help homeless and at-risk kids, and the school's Student

Government Association (SGA) elected to donate to Visions and Pathways specifically.

Some of the middle schoolers involved had helped wrap holiday presents for teens in Visions & Pathways' Holiday Wishes program before and felt that it is a worthy organization. Holiday Wishes involves families taking modest Christmas lists from residents and fulfilling those wishes.

The Warren fund drive was led by last year's eighth grade president Megan Li, vice president Selina Zhan, and treasurer Melinda

Xu. The school parent/teacher organization helped promote the fundraiser, with many of the donations coming from SGA members and their families.

Visions and Pathways officials said they were so pleased to receive the Warren Middle School donation, which they know was an incredible amount of work for the youngsters.

Although fund drive organizers are now in high school, noted advisor Timothy O'Heney, a social studies teacher at the school, he hopes the fundraiser can become an annual event.



WARREN MIDDLE SCHOOL in Warren Township, New Jersey and the leadership of its Student Government Association (SGA) led a virtual fundraising drive for Visions and Pathways in the spring. Top row (from left) are: teacher-advisor Timothy O'Heney and SGA leader from last term Megan Li. Bottom row (from left) are SGA fellow leaders from last term Selina Zhan and Melinda Xu.

Mystery event canceled but on calendar for 2022

Because of flooding caused by Hurricane Ida and increasing worry over the COVID pandemic, Visions and Pathways had to cancel its primary fundraising event of 2021, a Sept. 9 "Roaring Funnies" Murder Mystery event at Royce Brook Country Club.

However, the organization has set a new date, June 2, and hopes everyone who was disappointed by the cancellation will attend. Participants will have the thrill of solving a mystery involving live actors.

Honorees were to have been Atlantic Health along with former Board Chair Nikkia Miller-Blakes, and they will continue to be honored at

the rescheduled event.

It was too late to cancel the needs auction and a silent auction that were part to be of the mystery event, so Visions and Pathways went ahead anyway with these fundraisers. The silent auction will be back in June and will feature art, wine, stays at luxury hotels, handbags, and gift certificates at local stores.

Visions and Pathways is looking for committee members to help plan the Mystery Event. If you are interested in joining please contact Adriana Gonzalez, development associate, agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org.