

WEDNESDAYS WITH LINDSAY

Abby is a tough teenager. She had to be, growing up in the inner city. In middle school she was hanging out on the streets, getting in fights and failing most of her classes. Her elderly grandmother whom she lived with, was constantly worried about her and even filed multiple “children requiring assistance” petitions to get help.

Lindsay Beatrice was Abby's clinical social worker from The Home. Their plan was for Lindsay to pick Abby up from school every Wednesday. Abby did her best to try to avoid the appointment. Lindsay remained patient and consistent. “Some of



our kids have complex lives. If you want to see true progress our work needs to go deeper.” After a full year, Abby finally opened up and it was obvious why she had such trouble trusting adults. Her father committed suicide when she was young, and her mother lost custody of Abby and her sister because of substance abuse. Abby's grandmother was elderly and from a different culture, she wasn't prepared to parent a teen.

For seven years, Abby continued to meet with Lindsay, referring

“Some of our kids have complex lives. If you want to see true progress our work needs to go deeper.”

to their time together as their “coffee date.” Lindsay didn't care what Abby wanted to call their therapy sessions if they were making progress. “With her [Lindsay's] help, I gained more insight and I learned more about myself,” wrote Abby. There were ups and down during the seven years such as Abby excelling in a new art program but then not getting into the vocational high school she so desperately wanted to attend. Lindsay was always there to guide her. With Lindsay's help, Abby wrote letters, gathered additional references, and re-interviewed at her dream school. She was accepted for second semester and went on to be class vice president and a member of several sports teams.

Unfortunately, high school wasn't an easy ride for Abby. She and her sister were removed from their grandmother's care and were shuffled through the system. A call came that would forever change Abby's life – her mom had overdosed. “I had lost my mother to the same thing she lost us to: drugs. She could not fight her demons anymore, and neither could I.”

Never missing a Wednesday “coffee date,” Lindsay continued to be Abby's rock. Abby made it through this difficult time. She was able to be placed in kinship foster care with an older cousin and his wife. Along with Lindsay, they encouraged Abby to work hard and shoot for the moon.

This fall, Abby started college and is majoring in exercise science. She is interested in becoming a physical therapist. Her younger sister is being raised in a group home and Abby is her only parental figure. Abby credits Lindsay's consistency for her success, “she was my savior when I needed saving.” ■

From the President



Dear friends,

One of the reasons I enjoy our Fall Newsletter is because it highlights all the holiday events we have coming up... our annual Gingerbread House Decorating Competition, Stuff-a-Truck, and our Big Wishes Gift Drive! This year we'll also

be adding an evening at the Winterlights festival courtesy of our friends at The Trustees of Reservations. I hope you can join us for one or all these holiday gatherings that benefit the work we do here at The Home.

In this Newsletter you will also find mention of, and a link to, an op-ed I was pleased to have published recently in The Boston Globe. The piece, entitled "MIT, Harvard owe a debt to victims of child sex trafficking," dealt with the realities of trafficking and called for those institutions who benefited from their relationships with the disgraced and now deceased financier and convicted sex offender, Jeffrey Epstein, to open their hearts to his victims and those of countless others like him.

It's fitting to mention this now as sex trafficking is even more prevalent around the holidays. But there is always hope when care is available and given.

We take great pride in our mission, especially where it states "We never give up on children. And we don't let children give up on themselves." In the article, I tell the story of Stacey, now eleven. After being trafficked for several years, she was cared for at The Home for four years as we helped her process and learn to cope with the harm inflicted on her. When we began to work with Stacey, she understandably had no trust or faith in adults and their ability to keep her safe. Although she will still face a lifetime of challenges, because of the care she received at The Home, she is doing well and will spend the holidays in the care of a loving family where she finally feels safe, and with whom she has started to rebuild her life.

That work and those results happened because of the commitment you show to The Home and the communities we serve, not just during the holidays, but year-round. I know we ask a lot of you, but your ongoing generosity never ceases to amaze me. You inspire us to do the jobs that we do. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lesli Suggs

NEW PRINCIPAL LEADING THE WAY AT SEC

In traditional schools, the bell rings and students pick up their books and bags and head to their next class. But not always at The Home's Southeast Campus in Plymouth. Not only are there no bells, as they can be triggering for students with special needs, two of the classrooms don't move to new classes at all.

Sean Clark, Southeast Campus' new principal created two 'Intensive Learning Center' classrooms for students who struggle with transitions. Kids come to Southeast Campus, a special education school, with behavioral and emotional struggles in addition to their special education needs.

"Finding and maintaining focus takes a lot of support for our kids," said Clark who had observed this for years as a teacher on campus. He noticed students were taking 10 to 15 minutes to settle into class, then getting antsy and anxious in the last 10 minutes thinking about the next class. Now, in the Intensive Learning Center classroom, students can start and end the day in the same room with the teachers rotating in and out. Students still get breaks outside of the classroom to attend their 'special periods' like gym, art, and vocational studies. "This way our kids get more learning time and experience less dysregulation [the inability to control or regulate emotional responses to provocative situations], the principal shared.

As the new principal, Clark is focused on creating a strong sense of community on campus. All meals are served family style. Each student has an age appropriate responsibility such as watering the flower beds or picking up litter. The intention of community and responsibility is for students to respect themselves and their school. Their guiding mantra is "I am important in my community. We accept and respect everyone beginning with ourselves."



Sean Clark Southeast Campus' new Principal

WHAT'S BEST FOR NOAH

Noah's life was a constant rollercoaster. In his three short years, Noah had cycled in and out of the child welfare system being removed and reunified from his mom three times. The Department of Children and Families decided it would be best for him to be adopted because of his mother's consistent struggle with substance abuse.

Around the same time, Barry and Don came to The Home's adoption team. They had two adopted sons age 5 and 6 at home and were ready for a new addition. Barry and Don helped both of their older children maintain healthy connections with their biological families. Leah, an adoption social worker at The Home, knew Noah would be a great fit with Barry, Don and their boys.

Noah assimilated well but continued to need interventions and support. At the first family visit, Noah's mom was very defensive and apprehensive with the new family. Don and Barry did not let that get to them. They sat and talked to her with no judgement and reminded her they were all there for the same purpose: to ensure Noah grew up happy and healthy. "They learned invaluable information about Noah's story from the biological family visits," Leah shared.

Noah, now four, is flourishing. He is loved and supported by a blend of his adoptive and biological families.

The monthly family visits continued. Don and Barry ensured Noah never missed one. Even when Don was offered a job opportunity in Maryland resulting in a move for the whole family. Don or Barry would fly back to Massachusetts once a month for Noah to visit his mom. They continued to work with their social worker at The Home through video chat, monthly visits, and text messages.

Noah was still in Don and Barry's care as a pre-adoptive placement while they waited for a judge to officially terminate parental rights. His mom saw her baby boy thriving with his new brothers and dads. Selflessly, she chose to speed up the process by signing an open adoption agreement with Don and Barry.

Noah, now four, is flourishing. He is loved and supported by a blend of his adoptive and biological families. Like most children who have spent time in the system he still requires mental and behavioral health supports. Every Tuesday Noah and Barry head to play therapy and the little boy continues to heal.



A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Our volunteers and donors help turn hope into reality at The Home. For years, The Home at Walpole campus wanted a high ropes course on its 144 acres. Not only is it a fun outdoor activity, it gives our kids a way to build confidence and safely push their own boundaries. The high ropes course needed funding and intense project management.

Kevin Paicos was looking for a way to give back to The Home. As a young child, Kevin lived at The Home's Knight Children's Center for a few years while his mother got on her feet and built a stabilizing life for them. This was not an unusual practice for single parents in Boston during mid-twentieth century. Using his training as a decorated Green Beret and long-time town manager, Kevin took on project managing the ropes course which turned into a multi-year effort. He worked directly with vendors, The Home's staff, and grant writers to complete it!

Funders for the project included the Yawkey Foundation, The Fuller Foundation, Walmart, and The Schwartz Charitable Foundation, which Kevin helped secure.

The long-awaited course officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 11. The Home dedicated the course to Kevin and Ann Paicos who attended the event with some of their close friends and family. This gift will be used by all our programs for years to come!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Now Through December 21: Keep Kids Warm Coat Drive



The air is getting cooler and many of the children we serve aren't prepared for the changing weather. Please help make a huge impact on a child's life by donating a NEW sweatshirt, fleece, winter coat, or rain jacket. All children and adult sizes are needed.

Donations can be dropped off or mailed to:
The Home for Little Wanderers
10 Guest Street
Boston, MA 02135
Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

December 3: Giving Tuesday

#GIVING TUESDAY

Be part of the world-wide initiative for giving back! Donate to The Home this Giving Tuesday on December 3, which follows the two biggest shopping days of the year – Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Please consider making a donation online at www.thehome.org on December 3, and share your support of The Home on your social media account!

Learn more at thehome.org/givingtuesday

December 3 : Stuff - A - Truck at Legacy Place



Our favorite community event is back! We are teaming up with WCVB-TV, Citizens Bank, Legacy Place, and Boston Interiors for Stuff-A-Truck. Please

help us fill a Boston Interiors' box truck with holiday gifts for the children and families we serve! This event is essential in ensuring every child receives gifts this holiday season!

Suggested donations can be found at thehome.org/bigwishes

December 8: 11th Annual Gingerbread House Decorating Competition

It's the family event you don't want to miss! Our annual Gingerbread House Decorating Competition at Boston's Mandarin Oriental Hotel is fun for the whole family, with a children's band, local celebrities, pastry chefs, giant gingerbread houses and more! Sponsorships start at \$1,500. For more information, please contact Jamille Benson, Director of Special Events, at 617-927-0682.

Learn more: thehome.org/gingerbread

December 8: Winterlights



Join us from 5pm – 9pm for a festive night of beauty and holiday spirit at The Trustees' Winterlights. A donation of a holiday gift for our children and

families will gain you free entry into this gorgeous exhibit of holiday lights.

Suggested donations can be found at thehome.org/winterlights

Extra, Extra Read All About It!

Did you see our President and CEO Lesli Suggs' op-ed "MIT, Harvard owe a debt to victims of child sex trafficking" in the Boston Globe on October 9th? You can still read it at <http://bit.ly/LesliSuggs>