

# Little Flower NEWSLETTER

A Publication for Friends of Little Flower Children and Family Services of NY

Spring 2017

## Foster Parent Spotlight



May is designated as Foster Care Month and it also celebrates mothers. It is only fitting that we share with you a little about one of our inspiring and dedicated foster mothers, Cynthia

Patterson. She provides what most mothers do to their children and are celebrated for on Mother's Day --- love, shelter, care and safety and has done so to almost over 100 children in the Foster Care system.

Cynthia was born in South Carolina and at the age of 7, her family – mother, three brothers and four sisters – moved to Brooklyn. Her mother set an example of compassion and caring from a very early age. Cynthia and her sister would bring home friends who were living in unstable environments, and hide them under their beds – until their mother discovered them talking at night! Instead of chiding them, she simply made her home a safe haven for any and all childhood friends, and eventually nieces and nephews, who needed security, clean clothes, food and rest. It is in this way that her mother came to be a foster parent with Little Flower and remained so for many years.

In 1992, when Cynthia was in her 30s, her mother encouraged her to become a foster parent too – Cynthia was already opening her home to her own son's friends in the same way her mother had, out of kindness and an awareness of the need those friends had. Cynthia has been a foster parent with Little Flower now for twenty-five years and during that time she has provided shelter and guidance, love and comfort to nearly 100 children in the spirit of Little Flower's vision. She never misses a visit, faithfully bringing children to all medical, mental health, court and other necessary appointments.

"It's very painful when they go back home but I learned that that's what happens and you have to let go." Which is why her goal is always to help the child get back home and to support their parents to get themselves together. She encourages family visits and keeping parents informed of their successes and news, involving them in decision making and ensuring they maintain



a parental role in their children's lives. For Cynthia, achieving the goal of returning a child to their family is very rewarding.

She has only warm and positive feelings and memories of Little Flower's staff and what they all

experience together. Director of foster care Madna Aubry attests that "she is more than just an asset to us; she is part of our tapestry – our history."

In 2004, after deciding to take a break from fostering, she was pulled back almost immediately. She was introduced to three siblings who were in a particularly bad circumstance – they had been neglected, and were huddled in a little bundle like they had been taking care of themselves for a long time. She could not refuse them; took them home, bathed and clothed them, began the steady work of watching over and caring for them. At a court appearance one year later, their birth mother attested that she was in a bad way, and would relinquish her rights – but only if Cynthia herself would adopt them. Cynthia was so moved that she agreed, and just about 3 months later she adopted another child. All her children have flourished; as students and as working adults, they have always done her proud.

**"I love being a foster parent. It's a rough road but it is one I would take over and over again...I wouldn't give it up for anything in the world."**

## Message from the Chief Executive Officer - Corinne Hammons



Dear Friends,

Spring is in the air and I am looking forward to the flowers blooming and longer days. This time each year Little Flower celebrates our staff, history, and all those who make a difference in the lives of our kids, adults and their families. Two of my favorite events occur during this season and both focus on celebrating the past while looking toward the future.

In April, we celebrated Founders Day, an annual celebration of our Founder, Msgr. Quinn's vision for a better life for the children in his Brooklyn Parish. The event recognizes staff anniversary milestones and is celebrated in each of our four main locations: Brooklyn, Queens, Hauppauge and Wading River. We acknowledged anniversaries from five years to 40 years and held a special reception for those celebrating 25 or more years of service. During the celebrations we discussed what has changed and what new programs and initiatives they are most excited about.

We also celebrated our history and mission at the Msgr. John T. Fagan Awards at the end of April. This event brings together the best of who and what Little Flower is for a night of fun and laughter. It is one of our largest fundraisers of the year and recognizes members of the community who give of themselves to continue Msgr. Quinn's and Fagan's vision for improved outcomes for the children and adults with developmental disabilities in our care. Our honorees, MaryLiz Manning Kade, Jean Sam, and Cynthia Patterson have made a direct impact on the lives of our clients and their families; and through the combined effort of everyone in the room that night and throughout the year, Little Flower can have a positive influence on so many lives in so many ways.

We wish we could include every nuance of every program and happening at Little Flower but I hope you get a sense from the articles within that Little Flower is a community. A community of staff, board members, donors, elected representatives, corporations, friends, clients and caregivers – as the old saying goes "It takes a village." Thank you all for being part of that village!

Sincerely,

*Corinne Hammons*

Corinne Hammons  
Chief Executive Officer

## Little Flower Goes Blue for Child Abuse Prevention

To help raise awareness about the work being done to prevent child abuse and neglect, Little Flower staff, at all four main locations, dressed in blue to support Wear Blue Day on April 5th. The NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) designated April 5th as Wear Blue Day to bring attention to this issue.

We thank our staff who work tirelessly every day to help ensure the safety and well-being of the children and families in our care.



## Our Kids

### Jr. Iron Chef

On Saturday, March 19th, Little Flower chefs Russell, Gianna and Alex competed against ten other high school teams in the **Cornell Cooperative's Annual JR. Iron Chef competition.**

For the second year in a row, the Little Flower team took first place with their winning dish of lentil, quinoa and kale broth bowls. The teens' competence and skills helped them maintain a winning record. The youth were also awarded the Suffolk Apple Award, which was presented to the top three chefs and the Professionalism Award – our chefs were the only ones in chef coats!

Congratulations to our young chefs for a job well done!



### PYA Ice-Capades

The young adults in the Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) program took a break from their daily routine to enjoy a little winter fun on the ice. For some in the group this was their first time ice-skating, making the experience a daunting but thrilling one. But still they pressed on, not missing a second of just being a teenager enjoying the best of winter in NYC.

Looking for ways to get to know our teens while sharing in their experiences? Consider chaperoning a PYA trip! Contact Maureen Fox at: [foxm@lfchild.org](mailto:foxm@lfchild.org) to find out about upcoming trips and requirements.

## Our Residents

### Essex Place Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Front, L-R: Assemblyman Edward Ra;  
Little Flower CEO, Corinne Hammons;  
Assemblyman Charles Lavine

On Wednesday, April 12th, Little Flower celebrated the opening of a new Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) in Valley Stream, NY with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Essex Place accommodates four males from the Bernard Fineson Center, which recently closed, allowing for minimal disruptions in the care of these individuals.

Little Flower had the honor of hosting *Assemblyman Charles Lavine* and *Assemblyman Edward Ra* as well as officials from the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the landlord of the home, and the residents and their families.

"This is an exciting beginning for Little Flower as it is our first home in Nassau County. We've provided services to families in the county, but this will be our first physical location here. It signifies the increasing need for programs and services for our growing population of adults with developmental disabilities" said Chief Executive Officer, Corinne Hammons.

Staff will provide a nurturing, goal oriented and safe environment for these men, which is even more critical as this will be the first time they will be residing in the community. In addition to residential services, the residents will receive assistance and supervision in community integration, nutrition and their overall health. They will also regularly attend a day habilitation program within the community.

# Community Spirit

## My Creperie

Little Flower is very fortunate to have such caring and generous neighbors. Mr. & Mrs. Nasta, owners of *My Creperie* in Wading River have shown tremendous kindness to the youth on our campus by hosting monthly birthday lunches. Groups of our kids have been treated to delicious sandwiches or delectable crepes as part of their birthday treat.

Thank you for reminding them how sweet they are on their special day!



# Kids Helping Kids

## Gravity Cares Cheerleader Visit

During the holidays, the youth in the Residential Treatment Center received a special and exciting visit from a group of cheerleaders of the *Gravity Cares* group.

The girls came to the campus as part of their group's outreach project and performed a routine for our kids. Since their visit coincided with the holidays, they also brought with them Christmas presents. Both groups were able to spend quality time together, getting to know each other better over lunch.



## Starbucks Earth Day Volunteer Project

It wasn't only the Earth that felt the love on Wednesday, April 19th – Little Flower felt it too! Thank you to volunteers from the various East End Starbucks that came out to share their Earth Day celebrations with us by beautifying parts of the Msgr. John T. Fagan campus through planting flowers. We appreciate their efforts to better and protect our planet and will do our best to keep their hard work blooming!

## Berner Middle School's Builders Club

Berner Middle School's Builders Club in Massapequa, NY is a community-based service club of over 25 7th and 8th graders that is part of the Kiwanis of Massapequa.

This past winter the students participated in an annual no-sew blankets activity, in which the students made fleece blankets that are cut and tied together. The Berner group made 20 blankets with the intention of helping those in the community who may be in need of a little warmth during the winter.



A sub-committee of the club identified and selected local organizations that would receive the blankets. They researched a variety of organizations across Long Island and after looking at our website, they decided to support us because of our dedication to families and children.

## Help Portrait Picture Day

Foster youth and their families, both birth families and foster families, in the Queens office were treated to a complimentary picture day provided by volunteer photographers from the Help Portrait group.

The professionals turned our conference room into a photo studio with onsite printing. The photographers captured special moments for the families and kids and provided them with prints to take home and frame!



## Thank You to Our Elected Officials

We'd like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the many legislators who took the time to meet our staff in Albany and in their local offices to discuss the needs of the children and adults in our care.

We'd also like to thank Legislator *Sarah Anker*, Legislator *Thomas Croci* and *Riverhead Town Supervisor, Sean Walters*, for spending part of their day with our staff and residents touring the Msgr. Fagan campus learning more about our history, programs and services and who we serve. We look forward to welcoming others in the coming months.



L-R: VP, External Relations and Communications, Maureen Fox; Legislator Sarah Anker; VP, Residential Services, RTC, Michelle Segretto; CEO, Corinne Hammons

## Holiday In Kind Donors

Thank You! When we count our blessings, we think of friends like you. This past holiday season was a special and bright one for those we serve thanks to the generosity and support of so many! We appreciate all of you and thank you for thinking of our children, families and developmentally disabled adults!

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 Ms. Mary Wider  
 Ms. Sally Wolfe



## Recent Events



### Weekend of Giving

From Thursday, December 1st through Sunday, December 4th, Little Flower was surrounded with love and holiday cheer during our *Weekend of Giving*. From the **Champions for Charity** shopping event at Americana Manhasset and its kick off at Fendi, sponsored by Harper's BAZAAR; the **Tree Lighting and Cookie Swap; Holiday Party** for our foster youth and their families and the **30th Long Island Harley Owners Group Annual Toy Run**, it was a weekend filled with fun, love and the true meaning of the holiday season!

We'd like to thank everyone who participated, whether as a donor, shopper, volunteer, guest, staff, those in our care and friends and family. You all definitely brought the holiday cheer and truly made it a *weekend of giving!*



### 2017 Monsignor John T. Fagan Awards

Thursday, April 27th, we gathered together at Manhattan Penthouse for the **2017 Msgr. John T. Fagan Awards** and celebrated Little Flower's 87 years of serving those in need and to recognize the important work done by our honorees. The evening was sponsored in part by **Joseph P. Day Realty Corporation, Robert & Tara Griffith, Michael & Kathryn Rafferty, Celtic General Contractors and Changing Our World, Inc.**

Little Flower and our *Honorary Chairs*, award winning actress and star of *Devious Maids*, **Susan Lucci** and her husband, **Helmut Huber** and *Co-Chairs*, **John Manning** and **Kathryn Rafferty** were very fortunate to honor **MaryLiz Manning Kade**, lifelong supporter and champion of Little Flower, with the **Humanitarian Award** and **Cynthia Patterson**, and **Jean Sam**, two of our inspiring caregivers with **Msgr. John T. Fagan Service Awards**.

Little Flower Chief Executive Officer, Corinne Hammons, said, "The Msgr. John T. Fagan Awards create and allow us to share in this incredible moment together. We have the good fortune to be able to thank three people who had made an impact on real lives in New York - through philanthropy, through direct services, through advocacy."

It was truly a remarkable evening, filled with love and dedication to those in our care. To see photos from the event, please visit: [littleflowerny.org/events/msgr-john-t-fagan-awards](http://littleflowerny.org/events/msgr-john-t-fagan-awards).





*Children and Family  
Services of New York*

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## SAVE THE DATE

Monday, September 18, 2017, **ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC**

Engineers Country Club, Roslyn, New York

*Honoring: David Einbinder, First Development Corporation*

For information on sponsorships and foursomes, contact Lucia Gajda at: 718-875-3500 ext. 5022  
or at: [gajdal@lfchild.org](mailto:gajdal@lfchild.org).

Friday, December 1, 2017, **3RD ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING**

Monsignor John T. Fagan Campus, Wading River, New York

Check our website and Facebook page for details in the coming months.

*Help Make a Difference in the Lives of those We Serve*

*If you would like to make a donation, please make checks payable to:*

*Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York*

*Kindly mail to: Little Flower, Development Office, 2450 North Wading River Road, NY 11792*

*Donations can also be made online at: [www.littleflowerny.org/donate](http://www.littleflowerny.org/donate)*