

HOMEtown News

The Official Newsletter of the House of Mercy and Encouragement

Spring 2018



From the Director

Do you believe in miracles? I do. Albert Einstein said, "There are only two ways to live your life: as though nothing is a **miracle**, or as though everything is a **miracle**." I choose to believe in the second way to live my life, "as if everything is a miracle." I suppose I believe in miracles because I believe in God. Where there is love, there is God because "God is love." (1 John 4:8). I believe love, in and of itself, is a miracle. I see it everyday in the people I meet through the House Of Mercy and Encouragement. I see it in the love poured out from our relative caregivers especially our **great**-grandparents who are raising their great-grandchildren. One is 90+ years old and more loving and patient than I could ever hope to be. I see it in a child who was unable to speak but is now speaking, one who was unable to walk but is now walking through prayer and the diligent and patient care of their families. I see a miracle in an autistic child who smiled enthusiastically at playing a drum that was graciously donated by another individual who supports our work at the House Of Mercy and Encouragement. I see miracles in our dedicated tutors who try every means possible to help our struggling children to read or write or finish projects for school that would otherwise be too overwhelming for them and their parents. I see love and miracles in all our staff whether it be answering anxious parents' questions on the phone about our services and how we can help their family, or by consoling or comforting those consumed by grief, depression, anxiety or any number of conditions or circumstances during counseling sessions.



We have just completed our tenth year of services for children and families. I am looking forward to the year 2018 to see the many miracles that can occur through love. Thank you, to each and every one, who help to manifest these miracles through your gift of prayers, financial support, in-kind donations, and volunteer hours. May you be blessed knowing that you are creating miracles every day.

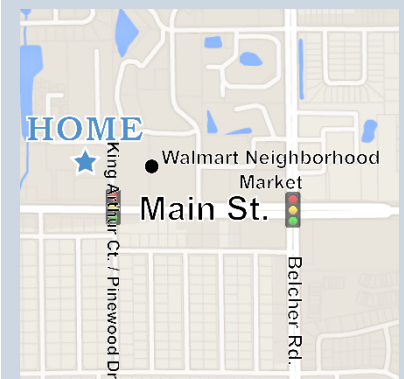
In His Peace,
Dolores



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Thank you!



A SPECIAL THANKS to the PINELLAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – FAITH MISSION GRANT

We are so blessed to have in our county the Pinellas Community Foundation who has been serving Pinellas County for nearly a half-century supporting more than 130 charitable agencies. Through PCF, HOME has been granted **\$5,000 for scholarships** for those in need through the Faith Mission Grant. It is specifically for those children who would otherwise not be able to receive counseling or tutoring services due to financial hardship. Thank you, Dan Borba and Allen Mortimer, for your hard work in helping to obtain this grant.



THANK YOU, SAFETY HARBOR KIWANIS CLUB!

We have a new look in our play room and we owe it to the Safety Harbor Kiwanis. They graciously donated **\$1,000** to give our play room a face lift. We were able to purchase a beautiful new kitchen set by Childcraft including a refrigerator, kitchen sink, stove and dishwasher along with a few amenities like a mixer, blender and microwave. The children are having a blast and we are thrilled to have a solid, safe and reliable housekeeping area for play therapy! Allen and Dolores were able to attend one of the meetings along with one of our board members, Dan Borba. We were impressed by the club's hospitality and the warmth and friendliness of each of its members. Thank you for extending your friendship and lending a helping hand to HOME.



2017 FUNDRAISER A GREAT SUCCESS!

Our November fundraiser "Ten Years of Helping" was a phenomenal success due to the hard work of our volunteers and to the outpouring of generosity from all of our family, friends and community partners. A little over \$18,000 was raised for the benefit of our community and the children and families who are struggling with emotional, mental, and behavioral health challenges. A special thanks to Stacy Dennison, Chairperson and all who helped in this effort including Kathy Ostrom, HOME board member, Lindsay Celidonio, HOME administrative assistant, Adelaida Cruz, friend of HOME, and the many individuals who helped to set up, clean up and who worked during the function to help it run smoothly so everyone else could have a good time. Our deepest and heartfelt thanks to all of you!

My Story

Michael and his parents were referred to H.O.M.E after Michael was experiencing meltdowns several times per week at school along with aggression, self-harm, and difficulty functioning at school with teachers and peers. Michael quickly responded to a combination of play therapy, art therapy, sand tray therapy and behavior modification interventions. Michael was receiving poor marks and e-mails from his teachers weekly upon beginning therapy. After twelve weeks of counseling, Michael's father and mother reported "drastic improvement" at home and his teachers reported significant improvement at school. Throughout counseling, Michael has learned to regulate his emotions and implement coping skills in various settings. Additionally, his self-esteem increased dramatically as he began expressing his emotions and needs.

Michael's therapist also noticed substantial change. For example, transitions during and at the end of counseling were most difficult for Michael, but after implementing behavior modification techniques and using a timer, Michael began taking responsibility for his time in his counseling sessions often cleaning up and preparing to leave before the timer rang. Michael has also learned about appropriate boundaries and social functioning, which has helped him make friends and enjoy being around children at school. Michael's continued success in counseling has been incredible to witness and we are so proud of all of his hard work and growth.

"My Story" is a true story written by a therapist, parent, or guardian who found help, inspiration or support through HOME. Our deepest gratitude to the author!

TO KNOW US IS TO LOVE US! HOME AUXILIARY

Our numbers are growing. Our services are growing. So is our workload! That's where you can help. One year ago we started an auxiliary to help us with our many ongoing needs. The volunteers help with maintaining the library, helping with mailouts, maintaining our Giving Tree, fundraising and many of the miscellaneous duties to help keep us going. If you are interested in helping and having fun at the same time, call Sharyn Gildea at 424-7855 or ask Lindsay at the front desk.



HOW MANY HAVE WE HELPED IN 2017?

We have helped 289 families from January through December 2017 which is a **25% increase** in the number of families served over the same amount of time in 2016! We have had a **17% increase** in the number of children attending groups, totaling 115 children. Our tutoring session have increased from 73 in 2016 to 179 in 2017 a whopping **145% increase**. HOME has also seen a **26% increase** in the number of adults served, from 84 to 106 and a **25% increase** in the number of children served, from 205 to 257, over our numbers from last year. [Thank you to our very dedicated therapists, teachers and tutors for all their hard work!](#)

Do you know someone who needs help?

Help us spread the word of the vital work we do at HOME for children and families who are impacted by mental, emotional, behavioral or educational challenges. Tell your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, church members, and everyone you meet about HOME. We will do our best to help provide the services they need or help them navigate the system to find the support they are looking for.

If you don't see your insurance please contact us. We also offer a sliding fee scale and scholarships. Please call for more details.

BayCare • Cigna • Humana (Lifesynch)
MHNet Behavioral Health • New Directions
Tricare • ValueOptions • Vocational Rehab

Currently a Provider for:

Need Help??

Our vision is to compassionately serve as a resource for those children and families who are affected by mental health, learning, emotional, or behavioral issues. We are a faith-based provider who believes in the God given dignity of every child and family. All families are treated with respect and kindness.

HOME is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping children and families.

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*play therapy, counseling, tutoring
help for children and families*

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