

# HOMELESS HEALTH INITIATIVE

*Providing Healthcare,  
Hope and Inspiration*

## 2023 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



Children's Hospital  
of Philadelphia®



## HOMELESS HEALTH INITIATIVE (HHI) STAFF

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## SHELTER PARTNERS

### HHI PHILADELPHIA

HopePHL

Lutheran Settlement House/Jane Addams Place

Red Cross House

RHD Woodstock Family Center

Salvation Army Red Shield Family Residence

Women Against Abuse

### HHI NEW JERSEY

HomeFront Family Preservation Center

### HHI PA SUBURBS

Bucks County: A Woman's Place,  
YWCA/Haven House

Chester County: Community,  
Youth and Women's Alliance Inc.,  
Friends Association, St. Mary's Franciscan  
Shelter for Homeless Families

Delaware County: Mother's Home

Montgomery County: Salvation Army

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## *Dear Supporters and Friends,*



Last year was another year of record help needed and offered to families experiencing homelessness. In 2023, across Homeless Health Initiative (HHI) regions, we saw program growth and development and also program loss in Philadelphia. Even with all of the growth, HHI lost a Philadelphia shelter partner in Families Forward Philadelphia, at their request. With the departure of Families Forward Philadelphia, a new shelter partner emerged: Resources for Human Development's Woodstock Family Center. Also in Philadelphia, HopePHL lost its contract to continue serving families and then a fire at the shelter known as Gloria's Place further disrupted the lives of families there. In the suburbs, a wonderful new partnership has developed with St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families in Phoenixville and new contacts were made with A Woman's Place, a domestic violence shelter in Doylestown.

Participation of CHOP employees in support of suburban shelters rose in 2023. In fact, a recurring theme of 2023 was greater collective action through volunteerism, engagement and meeting the requested needs of families whose concrete needs rose during the year. The culmination of the year's efforts came when CHOP volunteers stepped in to assist families affected by the fire at HopePHL. It has been wonderful to watch the spirit of giving show up in such a transformative way through HHI.

In the pages that follow, you will learn more about HHI's contributions during the year. We at HHI are incredibly grateful to CHOP, our shelter partners and families, stakeholders, volunteers, donors and all of those who served throughout the year. We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2024.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen M. Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Karen M. Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW  
HHI Program Leader*

# HHI IN PHILLY: PROGRAMMING

## CHOP NIGHT

Thank you to the 296 incredible CHOP Night volunteers who came out to a total of 20 different shelter visits, providing free, high-quality, compassionate care to 136 children. Our medical team cared for 107 children and our dental team cared for 113 children. Families receive valuable services during CHOP Night clinics. While these services are important, the HHI team is also committed to ensuring that each family is well-connected to care in their community for ongoing, meaningful support. Keep reading to learn how our medical and dental volunteers observed concerning symptoms and supported patients with the appropriate and necessary follow-up to improve their health outcomes.

### CHOP Night: Medical

After a long hiatus because of COVID-19, we were all looking forward to resuming CHOP Night visits to the various HHI shelters this year. In past years volunteering with CHOP HHI, I have seen several cases where this unique access point to care has helped ensure that children living in shelter settings with medical needs will not fall through the cracks. This winter I saw how much of an impact these visits can have for a specific child and family. Recently, CHOP residents and I had the opportunity to meet a delightful 8-year-old boy, “J,” who has complicated medical issues (cerebral palsy, epilepsy, ketotic hypoglycemia,



precocious puberty). We were able to facilitate the diagnosis of an important medical condition and follow him through regular CHOP Night visits to the shelter where he was living with his mother.

The first time I met “J” and his mother “T” at the shelter, his mom was concerned that he had increased seizure frequency, among other issues. After performing a comprehensive physical exam and medical/social/family history, I strongly suspected that “J” has a condition called neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), which is a cancer predisposition syndrome. After talking to his mother and reviewing his medical chart, we noted that he had seen many specialists but did not yet have a unifying diagnosis. While his mother had done an exceptional job coordinating all of his health issues despite living in the shelter setting, it was a lot to navigate for any parent.

Because children with NF1 can develop tumors that cause the type of issues this patient was experiencing, we reached out to CHOP Genetics and CHOP’s multidisciplinary NF1 program. These teams were immediately helpful — they re-reviewed this patient’s prior genetic testing and imaging and were able to definitively diagnose the patient with NF1. He was then quickly plugged into the multidisciplinary NF1 clinic where his care will be globally coordinated and where he can be regularly monitored for his increased risk of malignancy. His mom is glad that he now has a unifying diagnosis and that his multiple specialist visits can be coordinated for the same day/clinic where possible. Moreover, his mom was also diagnosed with NF1, which helps her manage her own care.

This experience is a good reminder that although HHI volunteer physicians’ role is not to replace primary care or specialty care, we play an important role in helping families in shelter settings address basic urgent care needs to decrease emergency department utilization, and in helping them better navigate health systems and access care. It has been a joy to see “J” and “T” on subsequent visits to the shelter, and the HHI social work team continues to support J’s follow-up and connection to care at CHOP.

— *Yang Ding, MD, Attending Physician, Division of Oncology; Instructor, University of Pennsylvania; and HHI Volunteer Attending*

# HHI IN PHILLY: PROGRAMMING

*continued*

## CHOP Night: Dental

Having the opportunity to work together with the dental students and to educate children and their families at CHOP Night has been very rewarding. Even with limited supplies and resources, a basic clinical exam and a friendly discussion gives these families an opportunity to learn and ask questions about their children's oral health.

One of my most meaningful experiences with the HHI program came when I saw one child who had three other siblings. Mom looked like her hands were quite full as they were running around the room. I asked questions about the children's diets and oral hygiene routines, and encouraged Mom to make nighttime brushing a group activity with all of the kids and their new toothbrushes. I also asked her to limit sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and switch to water when possible. On clinical exam, this patient had cavities on her front teeth that did not appear like the typical dark holes one might notice on the back teeth. On the child's gums was an abscess with a draining fistula, or what we describe as a "pimple on the gums," indicating an infection that has spread through the nerve of the tooth. Mom had not seen this "pimple," so we told her that the tooth was sick and should be evaluated in a dental clinic as soon as possible to avoid increased pain or swelling in the area. We provided Mom with a list of local dental providers in the area, including Penn Dental Medicine, and recommended she follow up with a dentist for treatment.

A few days later at Penn Dental Medicine, I had the opportunity to see this same family again for this child's emergency/new patient exam and was relieved to find out that Mom was able to make a plan to get the necessary treatment to prevent her child's infection from getting any worse. Sometimes a toothache may not seem like a big deal, but a dental infection can spread quickly, causing increased pain or discomfort which could result in children not sleeping or eating well. It is important to address these issues in a timely manner before things progress and become more serious. I was so happy to see that the child (and her siblings) were able to establish a new dental home and will be able to receive the care they will need.

— Alexandria Farrell, DMD, Pediatric Dental Resident, and HHI Dental Resident Leader

## WOODSTOCK FAMILY CENTER

In 2023, Families Forward Philadelphia advised HHI that they no longer required CHOP Night services, opening space for us to form a new shelter partnership with Resources for Human Development's Woodstock Family Center shelter. Since September, our team has provided CHOP Night clinics and donations to support the many families living at Woodstock. We are grateful for collaboration with their dedicated staff and their commitment to supporting the health and well-being of families at Woodstock.

In September, HHI had an opportunity to reconnect and collaborate with former colleague and CHOP



*Pictured left to right: Mary Jo Gumbel, RN, CHOP Center for Healthcare Quality & Analytics; Molly Mahon, RN, CHOP NICU; Melissa Johnson, MSW, HHI; and Sophia Figgs-Riley, BSN-RN, MPH, Woodstock Family Center*

nurse Sophia Figgs-Riley, BSN-RN, MPH, at Woodstock Family Center for their first CHOP Night. Sophia is the community health nurse at Woodstock, serving up to 200 parents and children. When HHI arrives for CHOP Night, preparation begins with transforming Woodstock's cafeteria into a health clinic that will host CHOP nurses, physicians, pediatric residents and dental fellows. Sophia is an expert multitasker, assisting with set-up and responding to dozens of questions from families with an unwavering calm and warmth that defines all her interactions with families and colleagues.

Sophia cultivated her passion for community health through CHOP's Allies program and also completed her Master of Public Health. These experiences equipped her with a solid foundation to deliver

# HHI IN PHILLY: PROGRAMMING

*continued*

compassionate care to families experiencing homelessness. In addition to Sophia's training, she credits her calm, warm and confident demeanor to growing up in North Philadelphia, where she was raised to "work with what I had." She emphasizes that this connects to community health because "the demand always outweighs the resources." This mindset allows Sophia to thrive within formidable circumstances. Sophia conceptualizes her experience at Woodstock, saying, "If these walls could talk, there would be stories of horror, hope and resilience." Her training, background and adaptability provide opportunities to lay a healing foundation for families to access the healthcare they need. She is both a healthcare provider and an informal counselor for her patients.

HHI is fortunate to partner with Sophia at Woodstock because of her breadth of community health knowledge, her passion for residents in the shelter, and her deep understanding of the connection between access to quality healthcare and childhood development. CHOP doctors and nurses benefit from Sophia's resourcefulness and skill in understanding the intersection of organization and compassionate care for children who may be accessing healthcare after trauma or a long break in healthcare.

Thank you, Sophia, for all you do for families at Woodstock and working collaboratively with CHOP to provide healthcare access to families experiencing homelessness!

Thanks, also, to CHOP's Digital and Technology Services team for supporting HHI's technology needs during CHOP Night.

## SPARK

### Safe Physical Activity & Recreation for Kids

HHI emphasizes a trauma-informed approach to fitness programming for children that is necessary for growth and development, and that also encourages an interest in exercise and sport. During Safe Physical Activity & Recreation for Kids (SPARK), volunteers encourage children to celebrate their uniqueness as each youth chooses a movement that represents their mood, favorite animal or sport during warm-up. Additionally, children are empowered to identify volunteers preemptively that they can go to for help, ensuring they are well supported during SPARK activities. Volunteers are eager to provide one-on-one assistance, enhancing children's confidence if they need a break and providing encouragement to re-enter SPARK activities when children are ready.

Children often self-sort by age group, with older youth playing sports such as basketball and flag football while younger children play animal tag, balloon basketball and duck-duck-goose. The structure of SPARK allows parents a brief respite to take care of the needs of their families and themselves while their children are safe, engaged and having fun. SPARK provides a valuable outlet for physical activity but also creates a sense of joy and community among children and their families.

In 2023, HHI continued to offer monthly SPARK sessions to children living at Lutheran Settlement House (LSH)/Jane Addams Place. HHI was also excited to bring SPARK back to HopePHL's Gloria's Place in October. Unfortunately, it was short-lived at Gloria's Place due to the shelter closure, but our talented volunteers had a blast getting to know the children there for a few months.

#### SPARK Stats for 2023

**Gloria's Place:** 4 sessions, 21 children participated, 9 volunteers participated

**LSH/Jane Addams Place:** 8 sessions, 34 children participated, 5 volunteers participated

# HHI IN PHILLY: PROGRAMMING

*continued*

## YES

### Wellness Sundays

In 2023, HHI continued to provide important health and wellness programming to HopePHL’s Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) by incorporating a family-style breakfast and introducing recreational activities such as ping pong, relay races and volleyball alongside the continued implementation of the seven-minute workout. The introduction of new avenues of engagement produced significant strides in fostering a sense of community and strengthening relationships among youth and volunteers. Providing a healthy breakfast played a pivotal role in creating a community atmosphere, generating discussion around school, careers and issues that have created challenges for the youth. CHOP volunteers have been able to offer support and encouragement to youth, particularly those expressing interest in medical and social work professions, sharing valuable insights into applications and coursework.

Multiple avenues of engagement coupled with emphasizing choice have bolstered participation, resulting in strong bonds between youth and volunteers. Showcasing youth character strengths has remained the cornerstone of YES programming. This has continued to evolve, with youth often enhancing discussions by connecting positive attributes that have been recognized with experiences both inside and outside of YES. Closing exercises allow adolescents to reflect on moments that have enhanced their capacity to draw resources from limited means and the joy found in positive, healthy peer interaction.



*Sharifah Garvin, RN, left, and Tatiana Zassick, RN, right, both from CHOP’s Adolescent Initiative Clinic, facilitated a fun and informative sexual health session for the teens living at YES.*

<h3>YES Stats for 2023</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 sessions</li> <li>• 50 youth participated</li> <li>• 29 volunteers participated</li> </ul>	

HHI concluded 2023 with a winter celebration that started with a selection of winter-themed pajama pants and a breakfast of Belgian waffles, fresh fruit and a variety of frittatas. CHOP volunteers and youth decorated a Christmas tree and engaged in winter-themed crafts, showcasing the youth’s artistic talents and their enjoyment of exploring their creative side. This activity provided an opportunity for peer support and positive recognition while also reinforcing a sense of community. Fostering community spirit is an important component of HHI’s function at YES and plays a significant role in our ability to deliver relevant, safe and suitable programming for youth experiencing housing instability.

Thank you to all our committed volunteers, especially our medical volunteers — Jonathan Pletcher, MD, and Tatiana Zassick, RN — who show up consistently and help guide healthcare connections for youth living at YES. And special thanks to HHI social work intern, Michelle McKeon, MS, CNS, LDN, for her remarkable dedication to creating a safe space filled with compassion and nourishment for the minds and bodies of young people, volunteers and staff.

# HHI IN PHILLY: PROGRAMMING

## MENSTRUAL HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE

During a CHOP Night at an HHI partner shelter, a CHOP pediatrician learned a teenage patient would miss school because she did not have access to adequate period supplies; she was experiencing period poverty. This patient inspired what would eventually become the Menstrual Health Equity Initiative (MHEI). With colleagues, and in collaboration with HHI, a team (including resident physicians, social workers, CHOP faculty and dedicated community volunteers) responded to the community-identified need by distributing “period packs” of menstrual supplies, including pads and tampons, to local shelters. Each pack includes enough products for a typical menstrual cycle, as well as a QR code that links to a survey for shelter residents to fill out and provide feedback to the team. Of those surveys completed, all respondents reported that the period packs are helpful and 96% expressed that period packs allow them to attend school, work or job interviews. The period packs are available to any shelter resident who menstruates, and the packs come in a variety of different formats to accommodate for needs and preferences in product choice. As of the end of 2023, MHEI has provided free products for more than 7,000 periods at 12 shelters/ transitional housing sites in Philadelphia, New Jersey and Bucks County.

Shelter staff have shared that the initiative has brought “comfort and ease” to shelter residents and fits well with the shelter model of “hospitality, uniqueness and customer service.” MHEI has positioned itself to advocate for increased awareness surrounding period poverty and improved access within the community.



*The MHEI team assembling period packs to be delivered. From left to right: Penn medical students Sanam Kavari and Grace Wu, and MHEI resident leaders Mathavi Sankar, MD, and B'Lane Daly, MD.*



# HHI IN NEW JERSEY: GROWING, DEVELOPING AND THRIVING

## HEALTH MATTERS:

### Weekly Health Education Workshops

Every Thursday, families at HomeFront, which is near Trenton, N.J., join expert community healthcare professionals and HHI volunteers to learn about key health topics in a fun format with lots of Q and A, games and family engagement. Relaxing arts and crafts accompany every session; healthy food demonstrations and snacks are frequent positive reinforcers; health-related items like dental kits, workbooks, art supplies, journals and period packs are given away at the end of every class. Children of all ages are welcome and engage in developmental play with our volunteers and social work interns, so their parents can focus on learning.

Needs assessments and evaluations of all participants offer opportunities for input and program quality improvement. The relationships built between families, staff and community health partners allow for long-term health and resources connections, improved trust and understanding, and social and health justice.

The HHI NJ team and the families and staff at HomeFront extend a huge THANK YOU to the numerous healthcare volunteers and experts who generously shared valuable time, expertise, health supplies and resources. The sum of all these selfless individuals leads to positive changes in life trajectories!

“

*I learn a lot at Health Matters. I think Health Matters gives you insight to be open to share and ask questions even if you are scared to say what you aren't knowledgeable about.*

– Parent at HomeFront

”

### Featured Health Matters Topics in 2023

- Acute Illnesses
- ADHD/Learning Challenges
- Art and Healing
- Asthma/Allergies
- Autism and Developmental Delays
- Dental Care/Emergencies
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Early Intervention
- Fitness
- Genetics
- Headaches/Migraine
- Health Insurance
- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Nutrition/MyPlate
- Parent Advocacy
- Preventing Lead Poisoning
- Primary Care/Immunizations
- Primary Care vs. Emergency Room
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Smoking Cessation
- Speech Therapy
- Stress Management
- Women's Health
- Yoga



*Temple University volunteer, Erica Pugh, taught stress management, yoga and mindfulness.*

# HHI IN NEW JERSEY: GROWING, DEVELOPING AND THRIVING

*continued*

## Supporting Child Development: NJ Asset Map

Children experiencing homelessness and trauma have exponentially higher rates of developmental delays which can lead to lifelong negative school and health outcomes. Responding to needs articulated by parents and staff around access to diagnosis and resources, CHOP HHI led a two-year project to understand and help families navigate New Jersey healthcare and educational systems. This culminated in the creation of a usable community agency asset map of key NJ healthcare resources (medical, dental, vision and insurance) for families and staff. We invite these community partners — like Early Intervention and the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network — to “Health Education Thursdays” to help build long-term relationships for staff and families. These agencies also learn more about the families they serve and how to improve services and advocacy for them.

HHI led efforts from six leadership fellows with CHOP’s Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program, seven LEND community fellows, and volunteers like Princeton pre-med undergraduate Amy Tao. We also had invaluable help from Janine Greene, Linda Sichel, Jessie Bradley and the HomeFront staff. The HomeFront staff working group continues to help support the many families struggling to diagnose and get therapy and resources for their children while in the shelter environment and beyond.

## Meaningful HomeFront Staff Partnerships

CHOP HHI is grateful to HomeFront staff and leadership for our deep partnership. This allows for trust and successful programming that improves outcomes for many families. Shout out to Linda Sichel and Kelly Bozarth who specialize in Health and Wellness at HomeFront, and Janine Greene and Jessie Bradley who specialize in Child Development. Together, we help families and staff make long-term connections to local primary care, specialists, mental, developmental and behavioral health experts, and school and community resources. We can also help navigate medical and insurance systems. We have created developmental workgroups and health advisory stakeholder meetings that build partnerships and create sustainable changes.

## Support for Undocumented Families in New Jersey

HHI continues to hear heart-wrenching stories of trauma and the critical health needs of families immigrating from all over the world who pass through New Jersey and Philadelphia. In response, volunteer Amy Tao and HHI’s Melissa Bennett created an information guide with insurance, medical, dental and vision resources for immigrants in both English and Spanish. HHI actively participates in National Health Care for the Homeless Council’s Community Conversations to learn and share strategies supporting healthcare delivery for families new to America.



*Parent at SPAN Parent  
Advocacy Conference*

## OUR IMPACT IN ACTION

Developmental delays and autism are on the rise at HomeFront. Parents are worried, don't know where to turn for help, and face challenges getting evaluations and therapeutic care. Health Matters classes offer information, support and connections to care for children, their parents and shelter staff.

# HHI IN NEW JERSEY: GROWING, DEVELOPING AND THRIVING

*continued*

## Health Matters on Developmental Delays and Parent Advocacy: HHI HomeFront Health Education Comes Full Circle

### Parent Struggles and Needs

Moms and dads come to Health Matters class every week with real worries about their young children who have serious developmental delays and behavior issues. Will my child talk and walk like other kids? Why doesn't my child point, make eye contact or hug me? Will my child laugh, learn and make friendships?

Parent "Y" told HHI that when she shared her concerns with her primary doctor, he kept reassuring her to "give it time." But she knew "in her gut" her daughter was different and was committed to learning as much as she could to be the best parent and give her child the support she needed. But finding evaluation and care was hard. Imagine how much harder it is for parents like Y who are experiencing homelessness and face added obstacles to getting evaluations and care. Challenges include being on the move and not having stable addresses or transportation, struggling with other priorities like food and shelter, difficulties with remote evaluations and technology, and overloaded school systems required to do assessments.

### Health Matters: SPAN Parent Advocacy

CHOP HHI's Melissa Bennett and a packed room of HomeFront parents and children welcomed Deepa Srinivasavaradan, Director of NJ Early Child Initiatives and SPAN Parent Advocacy Network. Deepa shared her personal story as a parent of a child with autism and her difficulties navigating systems. She shared opportunities through NJ SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, which offers parents connections with other parents, numerous support groups, and help accessing community resources. HomeFront families openly told their own stories and asked meaningful questions. After class, Deepa worked with individuals helping them customize connections to community agencies.

### SPAN Identified Through HHI LEND Project 2021-2023

SPAN and Deepa were identified as a helpful community partner during a multiyear LEND project, organized by HHI in collaboration with HomeFront staff. Listening to families and staff struggling to access developmental, behavioral and mental health services in NJ, Melissa Bennett coordinated the efforts of seven CHOP LEND fellows over two years to 1) assess needs and 2) identify and meet with key agencies and community partners throughout New Jersey, including SPAN, EI, and Trenton and Ewing School Districts.

Summer college volunteer Amy Tao assisted Melissa in designing a colorful one-page asset map of community and government agencies and key contacts. This roadmap guides efforts to connect with community partners by inviting them to Health Matters to meet families and staff, and build lasting relationships.

Melissa organized an internal HomeFront workgroup that meets regularly around development, behavior and mental health. Key staff on the team include child champion case managers, health and wellness staff, and child daycare staff.

### Donations

During every Health Matters, parents love doing art and getting giveaways; HHI and HomeFront aim to give "prizes" reinforcing the healthy messaging of the session. On September 21, every family took home books, games and puzzles donated by long-term HHI partner St. Luke's Greek Orthodox Church Women's Philoptochos. We also gave away developmental backpacks created by a dedicated CHOP OT. Volunteers use these toolkits during Health Matters to play with children, giving respite to their parents and allowing them to learn; families keep the developmental backpacks for ongoing fun play and educational stimulation.

# HHI IN NEW JERSEY: GROWING, DEVELOPING AND THRIVING

*continued*

## Parent Leadership

Deepa offered an opportunity for a local Parent Advocacy Conference which occurred in East Windsor on September 30, 2023. Two parents were approved for full scholarships and loved attending workshops, learning about resources, and meeting community agencies, school district and other parents. These HF parents now serve as informal peer leaders, sharing information and resources during Health Matters. Parent “Y” took a job with the Trenton School District so she could better advocate for children like her daughter.

## SPAN Relationship with HomeFront

Deepa met with HomeFront staff after Health Matters to offer resources and connections. She returns to HomeFront periodically to work with parents and be a resource to HomeFront staff.

## Assessing Needs, Creating Partnerships

HHI values the voices and opinions of families, staff and volunteers who participate in programming. Frequent needs assessments and evaluations shape class content and improve program delivery. The relationships built between families, staff and community health partners allow for long-term health and resources connections, improved trust and understanding, and growth in social and health justice.

The HHI NJ team, along with the families and staff at HomeFront, express our extreme gratitude to the many volunteers and experts who generously shared valuable time and healthcare expertise. Your care, efforts and donations of essential supplies and resources continue to generate positive change in our community!



## Thank You!

Our Dedicated Community Partners include CHOP Primary Care, CHOP Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND), Penn Dental, Henry J. Austin Health Center, NJ SNAP Ed, Early Intervention, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), and Occupational Therapy.

# HHI IN NEW JERSEY: GROWING, DEVELOPING AND THRIVING

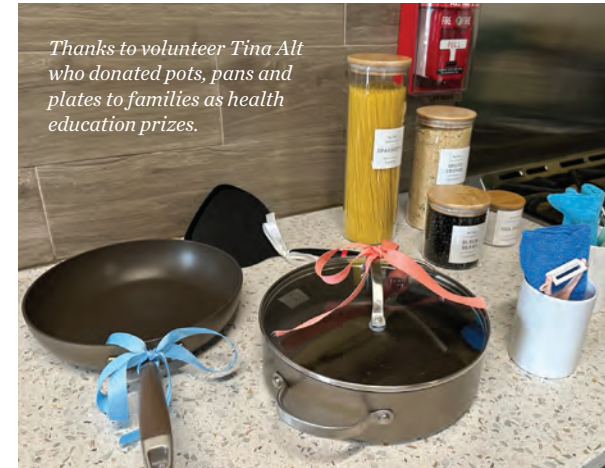
## Gratitude for Generous Donations to HomeFront

In 2023, HHI coordinated a tremendous number of donations from generous local donors wanting to help HomeFront NJ families and staff. Critical health items were donated including specialty and regular baby formula, diapers, monthly period packs, dental kits, thermometers, and skin and hygiene products. Other donations supported efforts to promote development and learning, including children's and adult books, games and puzzles. Finally, many donations brought healing, respite and joy, including fresh flowers, pajamas, art supplies, holiday crafts, pots and pans, kitchenware, women's handbags with personal products, and vegetable seeds.

Many thanks to numerous donors, including St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church, Sharon Baptist Church, Melissa Davis, Yvette Alvarez, Jennifer Caputo and Meredith Asplundh, Matt Bennett, Karen Armas Landau, Deepa Srinivasavaradan, Tina Alt, Hilary Budny, Angella Bock, Vicki Bartek and CHOP Primary Care.



*Thanks to Lora Klein and CHOP Primary Care for collecting much needed formula and diapers for families at HomeFront!*



*Thanks to volunteer Tina Alt who donated pots, pans and plates to families as health education prizes.*



*Thanks to Princeton friends Jen and Meredith for sharing prom flowers with staff and families at HomeFront.*

# HHI IN PA SUBURBS: BEGINNINGS

## BUCKS COUNTY

Karen Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW, continued participation on the YWCA Bucks County Board, and was voted board president in March 2023.

HHI led volunteer participation at the YWCA Bucks County Summer Camp. Volunteers were from CHOP, Temple University and Villanova University.

HHI visited A Woman's Place (AWP) domestic violence shelter in Doylestown and visited the CHOP Primary Care site in Doylestown. We also connected AWP staff with the teams from CHOP's Primary Care sites in Doylestown and HighPoint.

Our Haven House involvement was limited this year because few children resided there. We hosted a holiday event there with the families.



## CHESTER COUNTY

We were invited to participate on the Community Youth and Women's Alliance (CYWA) Parents as Teachers (PAT) Advisory Board.

We facilitated a joint collaborative in-person meeting between HHI, Friends Association (FA) and CYWA. This collaboration has bridged a connection toward the development of monthly hybrid health education workshops alternating between Coatesville and West Chester. Health education sessions have included women from the CYWA family shelter, Samara House (CYWA recovery house), and FA's NIA House Diversionary Reentry Home for Women. Unhoused families from hotels and motels in West Chester were also invited.

We also continued participation in the monthly Coatesville Area Resource Network (CARN) and Phoenixville Area Resource Network (PARN) meetings.

### CHOP Primary Care Sites in Chester County Support Neighbors in Need

At the request of the Community Youth and Women's Alliance (CYWA) in Coatesville, HHI facilitated multiple toiletry drives at the CHOP Primary Care sites in Coatesville, West Chester, Kennett Square, West Grove and Paoli. Even staff at CHOP's Roberts Center for Pediatric Research on South Street in Philadelphia donated to the effort. The response was incredible, with so many CHOP staff contributing to help their neighbors. Staff at the Chester County sites expressed their excitement at being able to help those in need in their local community – not just in Philadelphia.



In a heartwarming display of community unity and support, the sites collected many toiletries including soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lip balm, shampoo, feminine products and other items that were then delivered to CYWA by HHI Program Leader Karen Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW, and HHI Volunteer Leader Molly Fitzpatrick, RN, from the CHOP Primary Care site in Kennett Square. The staff at CYWA were elated and greatly appreciative in accepting the generous donations. Many thanks to all who stepped up to help those in need.

HHI is committed to improving the well-being of those experiencing homelessness. This is a wonderful example of how the power of community collaboration can make a meaningful impact in our neighbors' lives. Thank you to all CHOP staff and donors for their compassion and generosity. Your kindness inspires us to continue supporting our communities in Philadelphia and in the suburbs.

# HHI IN PA SUBURBS: BEGINNINGS

*continued*

## Celebrating the Fall Season at St. Mary's with Special Craft Fun!

On Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, HHI leaders Karen Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW, and Molly Fitzpatrick, RN, teamed up with long-term HHI community partners Karen Kotapka, Angelique Demetris, Maria Kalisperis, Phyllis Roebas and Sandra Liacouras from the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. Luke in Broomall. Together, they celebrated the fall with mothers at St. Mary's Shelter in Phoenixville. Mothers took time to enjoy themselves and spend time with each other eating, talking and making crafts. They made decoupage shells (à la Martha Stewart!), embellished and beautified notepads, and made beautiful snowflakes to celebrate the advent of winter. Fun was had by all! HHI is incredibly grateful to our friends at St. Luke for the gift of time, craft supplies, and the period products generously donated to the families at St. Mary's.

The HHI team visited the CHOP Primary Care sites in West Chester, Coatesville and Paoli to meet with staff including social workers.



*"Thank you so much for bringing these items and for facilitating a meaningful afternoon with our families. I got a wonderful report from Elizabeth on how everything went. ... Those that attended had a great time. It was so nice everyone was connecting with each other and walked away feeling supported and included in a wider community. I hope the ladies had just as much fun as the families did!"*

*- Elsa Haile, Program Director,  
St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter*

## St. Mary's Health Education Workshops BY THE NUMBERS

TOPIC	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
Child Development	June 26	7 participants
Minority Health and Mental Health	July 8	5 participants
Bullying Prevention	August 28	5 participants
When to Contact Your Family Doctor	Sept. 25	4 participants
Bedtime and Sleep Patterns	Oct. 30	3 participants
Stress Management	Nov. 27	5 participants

## Collaboration at Its Best

Rob Henry, Administrator at the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness, introduced us to colleagues at the Pennsylvania Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) program to share work and discuss potential collaborative opportunities. We met with ECYEH colleagues who in turn made introductions to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families in Phoenixville and to the contact at the hotel/motel in Chester County to build relationships and invite their participation in our health education workshops (HEWs).



*Kate Fay, Executive Director of One House at a Time, and Melissa S. Xanthopoulos, PhD, MS, Psychologist in Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and the CHOP Sleep Center.*

# HHI IN PA SUBURBS: BEGINNINGS

*continued*

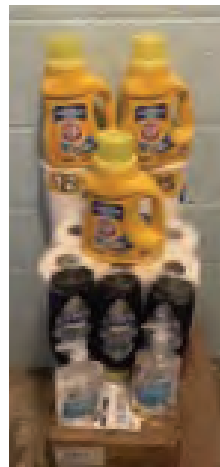
## DELAWARE COUNTY

We resumed monthly HEWs at Mother's Home residential shelter. They were facilitated by Neonatology fellows Daria Murosko, MD, MPH, and Lindsay Gilmore, MD, and supported by the HHI team. An average of five women participated in each session. Topics included learning through play and exploring language, yoga and meditation, getting ready for fall, and skin rashes.

Staff from CHOP Primary Care (PC) sites in Drexel Hill, Media, Broomall and Springfield offered donations of cleaning supplies to individuals at Mother's Home. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our PC sites to help our neighborhood shelters.



*Charlotte Gordon, Mother's Home Program Manager, pictured with HHI's Karen Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW.*



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY

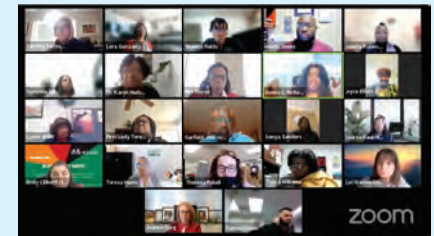
We met with the team at the Salvation Army in Norristown and staff from CHOP's Nicholas and Athena Karabots Primary Care Center in Norristown to facilitate relationship-building and discuss health education workshops. We agreed to offer monthly in-person HEWs. These were pushed back to begin in May 2024.

We continued working on the Your Way Home Advisory Board.

### Videos

HHI's Karen Hudson participated as a panelist for Montgomery County's Black History Month Committee panel discussion about housing, homelessness and food programs.

[Black History Month Panel Discussion: Housing, Homelessness, and Food Programs >](#)



Friends Association hosted a Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Action community dialogue on housing justice in Chester County. Panelists included HHI's Karen Hudson; Bobby Watts, MPH, MS, Chief Executive Officer of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council; and Diana M., a neighbor from the community who shared her lived experience.

[Housing is Healthcare, MLK Day of Action Community Conversation 2023 >](#)





# HHI IN PA SUBURBS: BEGINNINGS

*continued*

## Successful Food Drive at CHOP KOP Benefits Upper Merion Community Cupboard

During the month of November 2023, the CHOP Community Impact Team, led by Tessi Ruiz, collaborated with the team at CHOP's Middleman Family Pavilion in King of Prussia to sponsor a food drive to support neighbors in need. On Nov. 15, during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the HHI team was on-site collecting food donations and bringing attention and awareness to both hunger and homelessness. In a generous display of community collaboration and support, Ivory Leatherberry, Executive Assistant of Operations at CHOP King of Prussia, and HHI team members Karen Hudson and Natalie Paicopolis accepted an extraordinary donation of food supplies and canned goods. The donation was shared by Denise Kohles, Practice Manager at CHOP Primary Care, HighPoint in Chalfont on behalf of the entire practice. We thank all of those that gave during the food drive. Your donations helped the King of Prussia community through supporting the Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard.



## Community Connections

- PARN: April 25 and May 23
- DARN: June 7
- CARN: May 17
- Upper Merion School District: Meeting, April 24
- Community Youth and Women's Alliance Parents as Teachers Advisory Council: Meeting, June 21
- St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter: Visit/tour/meeting, May 12
- HHI Community Advisory Council: Meetings, April 26 and Oct. 25

# HHI SPECIAL EVENTS, AWARDS & TRAININGS

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**March 29, 2023:** HopePHL program fair and meet and greet

**April 2023:** National Volunteer Month

With the Office of Community Impact, the HHI team celebrated volunteers with tabling events across the CHOP Care Network, volunteer spotlights featured on “This Week at CHOP,” and a fun volunteer recognition luncheon.

**June 14, 2023:** Jane Addams Place Summer Fest

HHI Social Work Trainer Melissa Johnson, MSW, shared information about HHI, distributed CHOP giveaways, and participated in an exciting day filled with games, food, music and fun with families and staff.

**Aug. 18, 2023:** Jane Addams Place Back to School Fair

Melissa Johnson, MSW, participated in this event. Thanks to generous donations from CHOP’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) donations drive, we were able to give families new backpacks and school supplies to get the school year started.

**Dec. 14, 2023:** HopePHL Winter Wonderland

## AWARDS

**May 2023** – The HHI team was honored with the Outstanding Health Advocate Award 2023 at the Liberty Bell Gala hosted by Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).



**October 2023** – YWCA Bucks County honored dedicated partner Linda Sichel for her incredible work in health and social justice on behalf of families at HomeFront. Congratulations to Linda!

*Pictured left to right: HHI Program Leader and YWCA Board President Karen Hudson, PhD, MSW, LSW; former HHI volunteer and HomeFront Nurse Leader Linda Sichel, BSN, MPH, winner of the Racial and Social Justice Award at the Bucks County YWCA Salute to Women Gala Event; and HHI Medical Advisor Melissa Ellis Bennett, MD.*

## TRAINING

**Community Pediatrics and Advocacy**

HHI Social Work Trainer Melissa Berrios Johnson, MSW, continues to meet with CHOP residents during their advocacy blocks to share information about family homelessness in Philadelphia and how it impacts clinical care and practice. We are always grateful for the support and coordination of CHOP’s Co-Director of the Community Pediatrics and Advocacy Program, Noreena Lewis, JD.

- **Introduction to Family Homelessness:** 5 sessions attended by 51 interns
- **How to Support Parents Living in Shelter:** 2 sessions attended by 22 second-year residents (PL2s)
- **Reflections on Caring for Families Experiencing Homelessness:** 3 sessions attended by 27 third-year residents (PL3s)

**September 2023: CHOP Night**

Kaitlyn Murphy, MD, Nikki Jaffe, MD, Alex Koutsoubis, MD, and Melissa Johnson, MSW, trained first-year medical students in how to use a developmental lens when engaging in play and activities while children are waiting to be seen at CHOP Night. This is part of the new HHI model for medical student engagement. Now, first-year medical students engage in developmental play with children during CHOP Night; then, in their second year, they shadow residents providing clinical care during CHOP Night. Third- and fourth-year students can provide clinical care, supervised by CHOP Night residents and attendings.

**Volunteer Training**

The HHI team oriented new medical resident leaders, dental resident leaders, community nursing advocacy fellows, medical student leaders and dental student leaders: 11 trainings, 47 new volunteers.

# VOLUNTEER LEADERS



A heartfelt thank-you to all the HHI volunteers who make this team work. We couldn't do it without you!

## Medical Resident Leaders

Abrar Alabdulhadi, MD\*  
Roshni Bhat, MD  
B'Lane Daly, MD  
Amy Davis, MD\*  
Katie Kester, MD  
Sarah Kim, MD  
Alexandra Koutsoubis, MD  
Allison Neeson, MD  
Bianca Nfonoyim, MD\*  
Vlad Obsekov, MD  
Theresa Clark Rihn, MD  
Megan Shannon, MD  
Jacqueline Steele, MD

## Medical Student Leaders

Jocelyn Chau  
Sabrina DaSilva  
Rebecca Drachman  
Alec Heidlauf  
Waleed Mujib  
Carlos Rodriguez  
Tavian Sanchez  
Ish Sethi  
Ujahi Shah  
Madhav Subramanian

## Dental Resident Leaders

Joni Cheung, DMD  
Alexandria Farrell, DMD\*  
Caroline Greco, DMD  
Nicole Levine, DMD\*  
Amy Lin, DMD  
Camila Pachon-Posada, DMD\*  
Pooja Patel, DMD  
Shalin Shah, DMD\*

## DMD Student Leaders

Simran Grewal  
Katy King  
Tiffani Knight-Lynch  
Claudia Tang  
Tanaya Williams

## HHI Nurse Leader

Molly Mahon, BSN, RNC-NIC

## Social Work Interns

Jade Askew\*  
Margaret Cox\*  
Michelle McKeon  
Natalie Paicopolis  
Niya Watkins\*

\*Graduated in 2023

# VOLUNTEER LEADERS

*continued*

## HHI COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

This year, the HHI Community Advisory Council (CAC) was established to help HHI think through and deliver on its strategy of work in Philadelphia, Trenton, N.J., and the Pennsylvania suburbs. We would like to name and thank each of our members for the time and commitment they have shown to HHI.

**Jade Askew**, HHI Social Work Intern

**Roshni Bhat**, MD, HHI Pediatric Resident Leader

**Margaret Cox**, HHI Social Work Intern

**JJ Cutuli**, PhD, Research Scientist, Nemours Center for Healthcare Delivery Science

**Kameelah Davis**, parent, former board member at Lutheran Settlement House, Jane Addams resident with lived shelter experience

**Joel Fein**, MD, MPH, CHOP Emergency Medicine, Co-Director, CHOP Center for Violence Prevention

**Fred Gigliotti**, MSW, Director of Emergency & Temporary Housing, Office of Homeless Services

**Ken Ginsberg**, MD, MEd, HHI Founder, CHOP Adolescent Medicine Attending Physician, Covenant House Medical Director

**Katie Kester**, MD, HHI Pediatric Resident Leader

**Noreena Lewis**, JD, Co-director of Community Pediatrics Advocacy Program, CHOP

**Jennifer Lopez**, Executive Director, Friends Association

**Molly Mahon**, RN, BSN, Nurse, CHOP NICU, HHI Nurse Leader

**Chris Major**, MAPP, Associate Director, Corporate Leadership Giving, CHOP

**Bianca Nfonoyim**, MD, HHI Pediatric Resident Leader

**Osarague Osa-Edoh**, JD, Attorney, CHOP's Medical-Legal Partnership, Community Legal Services

**Sally Poliwoda**, MPH, BSN, Clinical Program Director, CHOP Global Health Nurse Fellows

**David Rosenberg**, longtime CHOP supporter and volunteer

**Linda Sichel**, BSN, MPH, wellness nurse, HomeFront

**Guillaume (Gee) Stewart**, MEd, Executive Director, YWCA Bucks County

**Niya Watkins**, HHI Social Work Intern

**Patricia Wilkie-Norris**, RN, CAC Chair, Episcopal Community Services Health & Wellness Program Manager

**Steven Wilmot**, MSW, Associate Vice President of Primary Care, CHOP



# OUR DONORS

## *Thank You!*

### HHI DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

Holman Automotive Group

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Karen Hudson Household

Shalom Kim – Classy Online Donation

MKM Foundation

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Ryan Markel Memorial Fund

CHOP Women's Committee Endowment

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Jamal (Jamel) Barone

William Bertini

Jenna Bundy

Kelly Cann

Lara Clouse

Michael Drnach

Stephanie Gilbert

Melissa Johnson

Laura Kaskey

Kathryn Lundy

Beth Scoma

Samantha Scoma

Stephanie Scoma

Molly Seltzer

Gwyneth Sharer

Beth Thornton

Emily Zander

## WAYS TO GIVE

To volunteer or donate items:  
Visit [chop.edu/hhi](https://chop.edu/hhi) and click on “How You Can Help” in the menu, or email [HHI@chop.edu](mailto:HHI@chop.edu).

To give: Visit [giving.chop.edu](https://giving.chop.edu), click the “Give Today” button, and designate your gift to “Homeless Health Initiative.”

To learn more about how you can help, please contact Meredith Egan at 267-426-6610 or [eganm1@chop.edu](mailto:eganm1@chop.edu).

[chop.edu/hhi](https://chop.edu/hhi)



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