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Children's Restoration Network

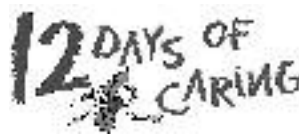
Fall 2008

# Helping Hand

To Contributors and Friends in Our Community: A Report of Progress and Plans

## 12 Days of Caring 2008

By Jim Cox



www.childrn.org

It's hard to believe but another yearend and the Holiday Season are rapidly approaching. Santa's tuning up his sleigh,



the elves are working overtime, and the reindeer are exercising regularly and eating healthy in preparation for their big day. It's a time of excitement, anticipation and wonder for most children. But for the mothers we work with it is often a time of worry — how can I afford gifts for my children? And the children, "I wonder if Santa is going to remember me this year?" The goal of the 12 Days of Caring is to ensure that the 2,000+ who we work with, some of metro Atlanta's neediest kids have a truly memorable and delightful Christmas.

Beginning the day after Thanksgiving and running through December 20 CRN will be collecting new toys, clothing and gifts for approximately 2,000 kids living in shelters and group homes around metro

continued on page 4



### THANK YOU PUBLIX!!

For the third year in a row Publix Supermarkets will sell Santa Dollars during November and December. Proceeds from the sale will go to fund CRN's New Hope Scholarships. Last year's total was over \$20,000. It's a great stocking stuffer or to send with a Christmas card!! •

## Thanksgiving 2008

By Cliff Kinsey

### Thanksgiving

*For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends,  
For everything Thy goodness sends.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

It is estimated that 8 billion pounds of turkey will be consumed this year, 700 million pounds of cranberries, 1.6 billion pounds of sweet potatoes, 1 billion pounds of pumpkins, 1.8 billion bushels of wheat, and 843,000 tons of snap green beans. That is a massive amount of food. How much of that

food is earmarked free of charge for the people who are truly at the lowest rung of our economic ladder? The people I am referring to are metro-Atlanta's homeless children. The answer as it stands right now is, NONE, except for what we can collectively generate. While some of us reserve delicious HoneyBaked hams and plump juicy stuffed turkeys to get ready for our Thanksgiving Holiday, others will be wondering what's going to happen here in this shelter or group home on Thanksgiving Day. Newcomers to the group home will cringe at the thought of their teachers who tell the class the last day of school before Thanksgiving break to be ready to share or

continued on page 6

### Inside

- Volunteering at CRN is Truly a Privilege** ..... 2
- Back 2 School 2008** ..... 2
- Why Project One on One is Important to Me**..... 3
- Celebrate the Children 2008** ..... 4
- The 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club** ..... 5
- Adopt-a-Shelter** ..... 5
- New Hope Scholarship** .. 6



Our goal at Children's Restoration Network is to see that no child or mother has to spend a night on the street or go to bed hungry.

Alone, we cannot get the job done. Together, we do make a difference.

### Children's Restoration Network

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**Founders:**  
James Cox  
Cliff Kinsey

**Vision:**  
To continually seek to enhance its ability to offer significant resources to homeless children and mothers and make a demonstrable difference in their lives by creating strong partnerships and attaining financial stability.

**Mission:**  
To offer hope and support, enabling children and their mothers to break the cycle of homelessness by empowering them to become part of mainstream society as active, productive citizens through programs and special events designed to address their educational, emotional, and physical needs.

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Children's

Restoration Network

## Volunteer Viewpoint

# Volunteering at CRN is Truly a Privilege

By Miriam Spencer

Having relocated to Roswell from the south of England, because of my husband's job, I found myself missing the students in my class and with more time on my hands than I had been used to! Our three children are of college age and above so there I am an empty nester as well! What to do? I found myself 'Googling' for voluntary tutoring work and thus stumbled upon CRN and Project One on One. I signed up for the program and eventually found myself helping out at Drake House on a Monday night, joining a team of dedicated tutors. Wonderful people, giving up their evenings after a full day of work! Certainly put me to shame!!

One thing led to another and I slowly got to know the staff at CRN and learned more about their philosophy and the projects they are involved in and began to realize how much they have achieved over the last 15 years. Wow!! Folding and labeling newsletters somehow led to participating as a committee member for the annual Celebrate the Children Gala. Finally I discovered an area in which I could truly be of some service, mainly because I am fortunate to be at a stage in my life where I have time to offer! One of my first jobs was to produce a video portraying the different projects CRN offers to support homeless children in metro Atlanta. This meant I was able to search through photos taken over the years — so many faces of children so full of potential and hope. Hope, I realized, given to them through the services offered by CRN. I learned about individuals

who had been supported by the Back 2 School program from the age of 10 through to college and could feel the pride for what they are now achieving. I also learned about the many others who, hopefully, may just need the support for short periods of their lives. I guess I was particularly amazed at the number of children involved — I had no idea there were so many who needed such support.

CRN believes that education is the key to breaking the cycle of homelessness and allowing individuals to succeed. In thinking about the children who so need our help I was also able to reflect on my own life and how fortunate I have been. My own parents had a limited education, both leaving school before the age of 16, but I now understand that they too shared CRN's philosophy and although there were times when, as a family, we came close to being without a home, they ensured that each of their six children received a college education.

I am honored to be able to play a small part in CRN's work and privileged to spend time with such wonderful children, staff and volunteers! Although I love tutoring the children I have come to accept that because of travel commitments this is not necessarily the area in which I am of most use, but there are so many other ways in which to help. I recommend volunteering with CRN to anyone who has an hour or two to spare every now and then — just watch out for those e-mails asking for help! •

## Back 2 School 2008

By Jim Cox

Another school year begins with kids headed back to school, some looking forward to it some not. For over 2,000 kids living in metro Atlanta shelters and group homes, they return with new book bags filled with all the supplies needed for school. Our Back 2 School campaign ended successfully as 1,000 kids from local shelters and group homes attended. "My Sister's House" hosted the event, again this year and as always they were a generous and graceful host.

The day included health checkups, cheerleading and athletic physicals,

dental checkups, and a fine all you can eat barbecue. Multitudes of CRN volunteers, and myriads of volunteers from Bank of America, UPS, and United Commercial Bank, made short work of unloading and passing out the book bags and the other manual labor associated with the event. Kim Anderson played the musical hits and led the dancing as the kids worked up their appetites doing the electric and cha-cha slides, the Macarena, and of course that all time favorite, the chicken dance. After three years of being rained on, the day turned out to be a beautiful,



Back 2 School physicals

continued on page 3

# Project One on One

## Why Project One on One is Important to Me

By Ben Minor

When I began working with Children's Restoration Network in August as the Project One on One Coordinator, I knew I was doing more than starting a new job. Project One on One was my opportunity to work with a program that held the same values and ideals that had been a part of my life since I was a kid. Growing up in a family where my mom was a teacher and where every day held the opportunity to leave a positive impact on the lives of those around me taught me to appreciate the power of education and charitable work. In fact, these two guiding forces shaped much of my college career as I spent a good deal of my time volunteering with my community service fraternity or preparing to become a high-school teacher.

While I ended up deciding not to take the teaching route, I don't think it was an accident that I ended up working with a program that gave me the chance to show others how valuable and powerful education can be. To me, a strong education is about more than just following the suggested path of

society or jumping through a few necessary hoops. Education allows us a nearly limitless amount of possibilities for our lives: who we want to be, what we want to think and value, what we want to do with our lives, etc.

For the kids we work with, a strong education affords them the greatest possibility of all: to break the cycle of homelessness, to defy the statistics, and to become anything they wish to be. Project One on One gives us as mentors the chance to help arm these kids with a sense of empowerment. The tools we help them to develop give them confidence from seeing their skills put to use and seeing their talents grow and expand. The challenges we help them overcome give these kids a sense of hope as they see that they can and will persevere to conquer the challenges they face.

Our mentors have the opportunity to give these kids an amazing gift: the ability to take charge of their lives and realize just how much control they have over what happens to them. Moreover, as many of our mentors can

attest to, they often get an equally valuable gift: the chance to help shape the lives of these children and learn from them and their experiences.

To me, Project One on One is about the opportunity that is available to all of us. Whether that opportunity is the chance to build our lives the way we dreamed they could be or whether it is the ability to leave a lasting, positive impression on somebody, it is something life-changing. I am thankful that I have the opportunity to help give this chance to countless homeless kids throughout the metro area and to our many dedicated mentors. I hope that you will join me and help me share this powerful experience with more kids and more mentors as Project One on One moves forward and grows.

If you would like more information on how to become a mentor with Project One on One, please email Ben Minor at [ben@childrn.org](mailto:ben@childrn.org) or call Children's Restoration Network at (770) 649-7117. •



[Back 2 School 2008 continued from page 2](#)

partly cloudy kind of day that kept the temperatures pretty mild for early August. And as always, at the end of the day, the kids were handed brand new book bags filled with all necessary school supplies. The smiles and "All rights!!!" when they chose their bags were proof that the kids were excited about their new belongings.



Working up an appetite

Of course this didn't just all fall into place. WSB-TV's Family 2 Family Partners were all heavily involved in making this happen. We were thrilled that Kroger Supermarkets agreed to be a drop off point for the public to drop off their donations of book bags and school supplies. WSB did a great job of promoting the campaign, and as always Northside Hospital had an absolutely amazing collection. Many other companies, including Bank of America, Siemens and iHealth Technologies also did collections and the overall results were awesome: 3,315 new book bags and all the supplies needed to fill them. The Friday and Saturday before the event we brought all the supplies and bags to a central collection and literally hundreds of volunteers helped us sort supplies and then stuff the book bags.



Thanks for all your help UPS

When finished, with the help of UPS volunteers, we loaded them all onto UPS trucks, where they were delivered to "My Sister's House" the next day.

CRN wants to thank everyone and every company involved in this meaningful project. Little things like a new book bag, that are often taken for granted by most children, can really boost the self-esteem and confidence of a child that has had so little. •



# Celebrate the Children 2008

It was the gala of galas for CRN's "Celebrate the Children" annual social event and fundraiser. The event, which was held on July 26th at The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, provided a night of elegance and memories for more than 400 guests. The gala was a tremendous success raising more than \$100,000 to support CRN's Back 2 School Readiness Campaign and New Hope Scholarship Fund.

As always, the cocktail mingle was spent scouting the silent auction that included unique experiences and interesting items for everyone. The live auction had an original artwork, a

week's stay at Tops'l Resort, an autographed guitar and tickets for a Styx concert, and Elton John concert tickets at Caesar's in Vegas. The piece de resistance was a stunning eight-carat tanzanite and diamond ring donated by the Gem Shopping Network. Jocelyn Dorsey again served as live auctioneer and master of ceremonies.

The attendees dined sumptuously on fillet and crab cakes and danced to the live band "A Blast." The auction room was beautifully decorated with balloons and floral arrangements perched atop thirty-inch glass cylinders. Statuesque candelabras filled

with flowers adorned the stage and each dining table featured an ivory candle in a glass cylinder with a gorgeous ring of flowers and greenery.

A moving video was shown depicting some of the children who are beneficiaries of CRN's programs. The video also acknowledged CRN's corporate sponsors. •

**Mark Your Calendars:  
July 16, 2009 — The  
Date for Next Year's  
Celebrate the  
Children Gala!**

## 12 Days of Caring 2008 continued from page 2

Atlanta. All School Box stores, Post Properties leasing offices will be serving as collection sites for the public to drop



Thanks for coming Santa

off their donations. We also urge schools, churches, businesses, clubs, and neighborhoods to do collection drives.

Items needed include NEW toys, gifts, games, books, new clothing, shoes, winter clothing, cosmetics, ethnic dolls, CDs, walkmen, alarm clocks, skateboards, bikes, watches, sports equipment and clothing, jewelry, diaries, mp3 players, and other items.

Traditionally we have collected considerably more than we need for the younger kids and considerably less than we need for the older kids, so

please don't forget the older kids.

Gift cards from Target, Old Navy, Wal\*Mart, etc. are also needed and appreciated.

At the end of the collection, we will bring all the gifts to a central location and hold our annual "Wrap Party". The dates this year are December 18 to the 21. This is truly a fun event, with great food, fellowship, Christmas music and a mountain of gifts to wrap. If you really want to feel the true Spirit of Christmas, this Party is for you. We will have the "wish lists" of the kids in the shelters, and volunteers will be looking through the gifts that have been sorted according to age, gender and value, looking for just the right gift for the child they are picking gifts and wrapping for. Each child will receive 5 or 6 gifts, a stocking and a book. And one of the nice touches is that each gift will be personalized, with the child's name and "from Santa" on the tag.

After the gifts are wrapped, and sorted by shelter or group homes volunteers will deliver the gifts, and many will have parties with the kids they deliver to. Some will be elaborate and some will be small, but each will be a special affair for a child going through the trauma of homelessness. This is

something your family, business, group, etc. can do. Many times volunteers have told us afterward that doing



Santa visits a shelter

this provided them with one of the most memorable and meaningful Christmases they had ever had.

So with your help, 2,000 plus kids are not going to be disappointed that Santa didn't find them, and many mothers will feel relief that their kids were not forgotten. And, at the end of the day you might just feel the warm satisfaction that Santa does at the end of a long night when he's headed back to the North Pole, with his mission accomplished. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!! •

## Really Special People

April Anderson

Tom Burke

Myra Carmen

Melissa Clayton

Mary Converse

Jocelyn Dorsey

Tony Emanuel

Glynn Jenkins

Joanne Johnson

Dr. Kizzie

Dennis Lee

Mike Luckovich

Shirley Mitchell

Ericka Newsome

Margie Osheroff

Steve Osheroff

Gino Payne

Mary Ann Portt

Sandra Raeder

Tasha Reid

Linda Rideaux

Harvey Sims

Betty Smith

Miriam Spencer

Yvonne Steedley

Pat Warner

Wyvonnee Wintlend

Sue Hancock-Wyatt

## The 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club

By Kate Bachman

One of the cornerstones to our many programs is education being the key to breaking the cycle of homelessness. With this being said, we are happy to announce that we are launching a new initiative: the 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club. With this club, we are looking to solidify, enhance, and expand our already established programs that are dedicated to academics: Project One on One, New Hope Scholarship, and Back 2 School. With your assistance, we can help to instill and ingrain in the children whom we serve that receiving a good education is invaluable and has both immediate and long term results that will substantially alter their lives. For the 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club to ensure the longevity of our programs, we are looking for 1,000 people to each donate \$1,000. As Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of



thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Help us be the change that the children living in shelters and group homes all over metro-Atlanta desperately need. We hope you will join the 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club and wear your 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club lapel pin with pride. The lapel pin consists of a house that signifies shelter and security that indicates the longing and dream of every homeless child. The green symbolizes our youth and hopefulness. The yellow symbolizes wealth and prosperity that only a good education can bring. For more information about the 1,000<sup>2</sup> Club, please e-mail either Cliff Kinsey at [Cliff.Kinsey@childrn.org](mailto:Cliff.Kinsey@childrn.org) or Kate Bachman at [Kate@childrn.org](mailto:Kate@childrn.org) or call them at (770) 649-7117. •

## Adopt-a-Shelter

By Kate Bachman

Can you imagine it being holiday time and living in a new, strange place and not knowing anyone? Can you imagine being uprooted from all that is familiar to you and having that replaced with uncertainty and unfamiliarity? Can you imagine not knowing if and when you will see any of your friends? Add to these questions not knowing if you will be remembered on Christmas morning by Santa. This is the sad reality that the 2,000 children living in group homes and homeless shelters across metro-Atlanta face each year. You’re asking how you can help. You can help us make this holiday a memorable one for metro-Atlanta’s homeless children by “Adopting a Shelter.” What does this mean? Our Adopt-a-Shelter means providing children residing in shelters and group homes with their actual holiday wishes as opposed to the shelters and group

homes that do not get adopted where the children will receive age appropriate toys or gifts instead of their actual wishes.

We are looking for civic groups, social groups, churches, neighborhoods, companies and families to Adopt-a-Shelter! We can match you with a shelter or a group home which holds the number of children whom you can comfortably provide gifts, from 5 to 100. You then will receive the kids’ actual wish lists and you can buy their gifts, personally wrap them, and deliver the gifts to the children at your shelter or group home and have a small party with them (or we will do that for you). Help us give the kids in these shelters and group homes a reason to get out of bed on Christmas morning and for them to realize that it is not just another day. For more information about our Adopt-a-Shelter program, please call Kate Bachman at (770) 649-7117. •



# New Hope Scholarship

By Cliff Kinsey

Thirty-three New Hope Scholarships have been awarded since its inception just four years ago and we are very excited to report we are expecting our first college graduate in June 2009. What a difference it has made to the young men and women who have received them. I can tell you that this program is a natural extension of our programs that have addressed educational needs of metro-Atlanta's homeless children for more than a decade. There is little doubt that getting a college education is a HUGE step in breaking the cycle of homelessness. To

qualify for the state of Georgia Hope Scholarship, you must have a 3.0 GPA. For very obvious reasons many of the children living in shelters and group homes are unable to maintain that average. Our New Hope Scholarship is based on desire, determination, and outlook, not solely on GPA's.

Oprah's Big Give 2 Georgia was a huge boost to this program. With the help of WSB-TV and Jocelyn Dorsey, Kroger, Waffle House, Northside Hospital, Scana Energy, and Mike Luckovich, we were able to create an Endowment account for our New Hope

Scholarship program. We also need to recognize the Atlanta Braves players, fans and staff for also taking part in this unique opportunity as well as the Osiason Educational Foundation. There are also many others who gave time and money to this campaign and we wish to thank you! Rest assured that together we are indeed changing lives forever. Really these scholarships are the gifts that just keep on giving, and I believe shape not only the recipients' lives but also future generations. •

## Thanksgiving 2008 continued from page 1

write about their Thanksgiving activities when they return to school. Could you imagine standing up in front of your classmates and telling them you had a PB&J for Thanksgiving? I am sure it would cause a roar of laughs but without our help that could be the reality. In my opinion the very large majority of the shelters and group homes that we work with will do their very best to make it as good as they can for the kids. But with school being out for several days the week of Thanksgiving even the added burden of providing lunch during the week will add to the strain of putting on a feast fit for a king. Our goal this year

sounds simple but without your help we will not reach it. Working with our largest number of children ever we need anyone that can donate a \$10, \$15 or \$20 gift card that can be used to purchase a turkey for children living in a shelter/group home. We would be happy to take actual turkeys too, but we do have limited cold storage space.

We want not only to stuff the kids' bellies on Thanksgiving Day but we want to really fill up the pantries at the shelters and group homes we serve not only with basics but also with the type of food children love to eat. Things like cookies, cakes, snacks that are not carrot sticks, you get the point ...

**How Can You Help:** donate a \$10, \$15 or \$20 gift card, donate an actual turkey, conduct a food drive in your neighborhood office or church, we can provide any signs, boxes, flyers, etc ... In addition to turkey donations we really need any kind of non-perishable food donations. We also need volunteers to help sort the food we collect on November 21, 22, and 23. We also will need people to deliver food and we can always use volunteers to cook and serve on Thanksgiving Day. Please call Cliff Kinsey at (770) 649-7117 to get more information on this year's Thanksgiving Food Drive. •

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