

# *A Helping Hand*

To Friends and Contributors: A Report on Progress and Plans

*Restoring life's possibilities to Metro Atlanta's homeless children and mothers since 1993*

## **Tee-ing Up for Children's Classic Golf Tournament**

**By Ben Minor**



With the recent arctic temperatures and biting winds, it may seem like winter is going to last forever; but spring is just around the corner. And with the rising temperatures and nature reawakening comes another great Spring pastime: CRN's annual Children's Classic Golf Tournament.

For the fourth year running, Children's Restoration Network will host our Children's Classic Golf Tournament on **Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**, and we are excited to announce that we will be returning to the Laurel Springs Golf Course in Suwanee this year. This Jack Nicklaus designed, par-71 private Club Corps course offers participants in the Children's Classic the opportunity to play at one of Georgia's most beautiful and exclusive courses: a true bucket-list item for any lover of the great game.



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**SAVE the DATE!**

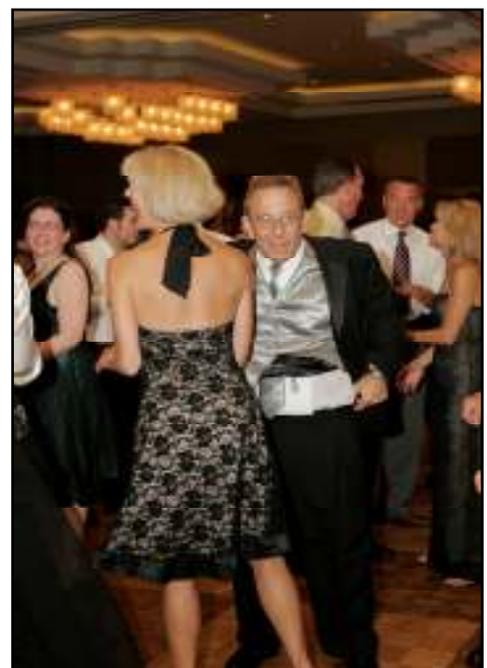
CELEBRATE  
THE CHILDREN

July, 25<sup>th</sup> - Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead

Dinner, Dance, and Auction

Music by The Blast Band

Visit [www.ChildRN.org](http://www.ChildRN.org) to reserve your seats or call 770-649-7117.



By Gabrielle Persaud

For children living in group homes and homeless shelters throughout Metro Atlanta, the significance of having an academic mentor is so much more than meets the eye. Academic mentors in Project One on One dedicate a minimum of an hour and a half per week for at least one semester. They spend quality time with the children we serve, often being the only time that these children have the individual attention of an adult who cares. The majority of the children that CRN serves have been the victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment. Being removed from these painful situations also means being removed from their school, friends, neighbors, and a lifestyle they were familiar with. They are then placed in a modern-day orphanage with other children that have been through similar situations.



For children that have already suffered through traumatic events in their lives, building their confidence and self-esteem by giving them a dependable schedule of individual attention is absolutely crucial in their journey of transitioning into a new lifestyle that will lead them to becoming self-sufficient, productive, and happy citizens. For example, a tutor at a local homeless shelter played a crucial role in assisting the child they were tutoring by simply noticing that he needed glasses. This ten year-old little boy had never worn glasses before and was falling behind in all of his classes merely because he couldn't see what he was being taught which only confused him more. The staff that oversees the shelter's tutoring sessions are in constant awe of the change in attitude toward school work and overall productiveness of the children after witnessing their tutors plant seeds of ambitious goals into the children's minds. For the first time in Project One on One's history at a group home in North Atlanta, every single child that was being tutored by an academic mentor passed all their classes!

Although we have countless success stories of academic mentors being the only familiar face attending milestones including graduations and birthdays, we are in more of a demand for tutors than ever before. We would love to be able to meet the needs of more children throughout Metro Atlanta as we are currently operating in 28 homeless shelters and group homes, but we simply do not have the manpower to expand yet. If you or someone you know would like to simply be a friend that cares about the academic success of one child, please email [MentorCoordinator@ChildRN.org](mailto:MentorCoordinator@ChildRN.org) to get started.

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### Volunteer Viewpoint

By Ingrid, Isabel, & Lacy Ott

I can't remember a time when I didn't volunteer somewhere. I grew up spending Saturdays tending the grounds or buildings at my church and school. I am drawn to service, and can't imagine my life without allocating time and resources to helping others. It truly makes me happy. I've read that this trait is a form of narcissism, and I can believe it! When I am able to step in and help another person, I feel like a bona fide super hero. I've worked with a lot of organizations, and they are not all created equally. Have you ever heard the phrase "you have to kiss a lot of toads to find the prince?" It applies to charities as well as potential boyfriends.

That's one of the reasons I love working with CRN, and eagerly look forward to the Christmas wrapping party. CRN is special. You can tell that magic happens there just by the simple dedication of everyone involved, and their sincere gratitude for each contribution. My daughters love to "shop" for the lists of children, absolutely thrilled when they can find the specifically requested items. They love to guess at the personal style of each kid, and are certain that they've nailed each outfit they put together. I think we have wrapped 500 basketballs over the years – and that is a challenge!

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## & Adopt a Shelter

By Jim Cox

What a way to close out the year! Thousands of homeless kids living in shelters and group homes woke up Christmas morning realizing that Santa had not forgotten them this year! This would not have been possible without literally thousands of people pitching in to help get the job done. First of all we, want to thank our friends at Siemens, whose employees “adopted” 750 kids this year and made their holiday wishes come true. Siemens was followed by Northside Hospital, which also “adopted” hundreds of kids. Over 60 other companies, churches, schools, clubs, and individuals also did general toy, gift, and clothing drives for CRN.



As Christmas neared, we brought all the donated gifts to an empty store in Roswell for our Wrap Party. The weekend before Christmas volunteers began sorting the gifts by gender, age, and value. After sorting these gifts, “Wish Lists” from the various shelters and group homes with the kids’ names, ages, wishes, and clothing sizes were passed out. Enthusiastic volunteers then began “shopping” for the kids. Each child received several nice gifts, articles of clothing, and a book. We made sure that each child had six gifts to open Christmas morning. The generosity of the people of Metro Atlanta never ceases to amaze me; mp3 players, digital cameras, \$50 dollar gift cards, tall boots, nice winter jackets, fancy cosmetic kits, bicycles, Hawks & Falcons sportswear, and on & on. Between December 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, over 1,000 people volunteered their time, energy, and money to ensure that metro Atlanta’s homeless kids were not forgotten this holiday season.

With the gifts wrapped and personalized for Demarco, Jessica, Juanita, etc., the gifts for all the kids from a particular shelter were bundled together. At many places where the kids were “adopted,” volunteers delivered the gifts and had parties with the kids a few days before Christmas. The kids were allowed to open one of their gifts while they ate pizza and hot wings, made gingerbread houses, or watched a holiday movie and ate popcorn. The rest of the gifts were left under the tree to be opened Christmas morning. For far too many of these kids, this was the first time they had ever really had a Christmas celebration.



Overall 3,000+ homeless kids and another 3,000 underprivileged kids were the beneficiaries of Adopt-A-Shelter and the 12 Days of Caring. This campaign truly expresses and captures the true spirit of Christmas: families and friends working together to help those less fortunate, Christmas music playing in the background, kids with reindeer antlers laughing while “shopping” for just the right gifts for a child their own age. Unless you were there you can never fully understand what it feels like to be a part of this caring, loving community. We hope you’ll join us next year.



# Thanksgiving Food Drive

By Cliff Kinsey

Hunger! Some of us during the week might say, "Oh, I am starving! When is dinner going to be ready?" For others, when they say, "I am starving" that means they have not eaten a meal in quite a long time and are literally starving. For some, the choice of eating the cheapest food money can buy is the difference of eating something and having electricity or gas. For many reading this, it is almost incomprehensible to think that there are children and women with children who literally have little or nothing to eat.

In 2014, we collected and distributed over 100,000 pounds of meat and many thousands of pounds of non-perishable food. When you feed someone, you not only take care of their physical basic needs but you also feed their soul. It lets them know that there are people out there that do care and that they are not forgotten. When we think about feeding children or homeless women with children, it is so much more than food. The hope, love, and support that they receive is equally as important to physical health as it is to their mental health.

Even though we gave out food year-round in 2014, we had a special emphasis on Thanksgiving. Not only are the children not getting meals since school is not in session, but it also creates more of a burden on some of the shelters and group homes to provide all 3 meals a day rather than just dinner since many of these children get breakfast and lunch while in school. For some of the women and children in emergency shelters, it might be the only one or two meals they receive they receive that day.

One of the shelter directors pulled up in her car to pick up the allocated food for her shelter from our Thanksgiving Food Drive. She was overwhelmed by the amount of food that our volunteers were bringing out to her van. She burst into tears and began hugging everyone in sight and thanking them for the food that was loaded up for her to take. While her voice was shaky and tears of joy streamed down her face she told us she could not wait to get back to the shelter because the people there were so "HUNGRY". Yes, this is the reality for many right here in our community. Another shelter director shouted, "Thank God we do not have to eat hot dogs today for lunch and dinner". Other group home directors were also letting us know that stocking up their food pantries would free up other funds in their budget to allow them to do more for the children that they housed.



Special thanks to AJC International, Tina Sorrels, Peter Pawlenko, and Jaime Escamillia for their efforts in personally helping but also for networking to provide the large majority of the meat we give out almost year-round. We also could not operate at this level with the thousands of volunteers that either organized a collection in their office our community or came out to sort and load/unload trucks.



## Career Workshops: Helping Homeless Women Get Back on Their Feet

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By Gabrielle Persaud

Thanks to the incredible influx of volunteers with an expertise in Human Resources, CRN is proud to announce an expansion to our LEAP (Leadership, Employment., Achievement, & Prosperity) Career Workshops! Our Saturday morning workshops focus on creating a one-on-one experience where homeless mothers have an opportunity to create new resumes with the guidance of H.R. professionals that emphasize their greatest qualities while minimizing notions that may lead employers to discriminate against them because of their current living situation. Thanks to our childcare volunteers, the mothers participating in the workshops can have some time that is solely focused on their professional growth without having to entertain their children which they would not have an opportunity to do so otherwise.



In addition, CRN launched our mentorship program where volunteers exchange contact information with the mothers at the shelter and offer additional assistance outside of the workshop as the mothers come across new issues and needs throughout their job search. Because of the time dedicated by our wonderful volunteers, **89% of the mothers that participated in our workshops in fall 2014 successfully found employment and a stable home within months of attending our L.E.AP Career Workshops.**

Due to the success of CRN's Career Workshops last fall, we were able to expand our services to additional homeless shelters. We went from aiding homeless mothers at two homeless shelters with resume and interview preparation to now helping not both homeless mothers and homeless teenagers in four shelters! With this huge expansion, we will now be serving a larger population of homeless mothers and teenagers than ever before. CRN firmly believes that in order to help the children that we serve, we must help their mothers as well. Therefore, we are desperately in need of more H.R. volunteers as well as childcare volunteers that are willing to spend a few hours playing games with the children while their mothers have a golden opportunity to focus on their professional growth and independence. If you would like to volunteer with childcare, resume and/or interview preparation, please e-mail [Gabrielle@ChildRN.org](mailto:Gabrielle@ChildRN.org) to learn how to get started.



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### **Volunteer Viewpoint: (Continued from Page 2)**

We have enjoyed every step of the process, from sorting through the abundance of the early wraps, the treasure hunt near the end, cleanup and even loading pallets of chicken patties onto the trucks for Christmas dinner. How many teenagers excitedly tell people they learned to run a pallet jack on Christmas vacation? Every year, I challenge myself to find a task that needs doing that no one else will touch. One year, I took over the shoes. The room was a complete mess; you couldn't find boys/girls/adults, or even match up pairs. People walked in with their list and turned right around – no one wanted to face it - but there were beautiful, durable shoes that were meant to bless these children.

So, I dug in, started organizing, and when people came to that room I could put just what they needed into their hands. I was so happy thinking of all those children getting good new shoes for Christmas. I've organized clothes, taken out trash, swept the floor and run errands – and felt like I was a valuable part of something important, no matter what my individual contribution. That's what makes volunteering at CRN so rewarding, I think. CRN and their volunteers are motivated by the sincere desire to have a meaningful, personal impact on each child they serve, and the enthusiasm they share is infectious.

## Tee-ing Up for Children's Classic Golf Tournament *(Continued from Page 1)*

Participants in this scramble tournament will begin the day with a 10:00 AM shotgun tee-off and will get to enjoy complimentary drinks along with a light lunch while out on the course. At the conclusion of the round, golfers and sponsors will have the opportunity to enjoy a specially catered awards dinner while learning a little bit more about how their support will help homeless children across Metro Atlanta.

Although the Children's Classic gives our supporters the opportunity to play a majestic course and experience a truly memorable day, the real impact of this tournament will not be seen on the scorecards but rather in the impact it has on the homeless children we serve. Proceeds from the Children's Classic will ultimately go to support our HeadSmart Campaign, which helps more than 5,000 homeless kids receive access to new book bags & school supplies, weekly help from tutors & mentors, and scholarships to attend college or technical school.



So whether you're anxiously awaiting the next chance to break out the clubs or are looking for another way to help get your company's name in front of 70+ movers and shakers in the world of business and finance, we hope that you will consider joining us for the Children's Classic Golf Tournament. Player fees start at \$200 with a Foursome costing \$600, and sponsorship levels start as low as \$250. If you would like more information on the Children's Classic Golf Tournament or to sign up to play or help sponsor this event, please contact Ben Minor at [ben@ChildRN.org](mailto:ben@ChildRN.org) or call the office at 770-649-7117. We hope that you will come out "fore" this truly life-changing event.



### Really Special People:

Marian Andeweg, Judy Bower, Susan Christian, Sally Cottrell, John DeShazer, Jocelyn Dorsey, Valarie Dunn, Sybil Elie, Tony Emanuel, Jaime Escamilla, Janelle Gardner, Erin Grizzle, George Houghtaling, Glynn Jenkins, George Juzdan, Marc Van Kley, Mary Lewis, Mike Luckovich, Joan McCall, Charlie McKinney, Malon Mimms, Rebecca Odom, Margie and Steve Osheroff, Ingrid, Lacy, & Isabel Ott Peter Pawlenko, Shelia Perkins, Cathe Reams, Cleonice Schraibel, Tina Sorrels, Leslie Tran, Tim Vojta,

**For Volunteer email alerts, please send your email address to [Frontdesk@ChildRN.org](mailto:Frontdesk@ChildRN.org)**



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**Restoring life's possibilities to metro Atlanta's homeless children and mothers since 1993**