

Documentary and Film Screening Give Local Youth a Platform

Earlier this year, Seven13 films and PEI Kids partnered to produce a documentary film, *PEI Kids: Generation Change*. The film, moderated by Adrienne Bankert, ABC News National Correspondent, and taped at the Sam Naples Community Center in Trenton, interviews adjudicated and at-risk Trenton-area youth focusing on how they would solve current problems in their community such as violence, and building positive relationships with law enforcement and local government.

The film featured participants in PEI Kids' Juvenile Intervention programs which work with first-and second-time juvenile offenders, and youth at-risk of juvenile justice involvement, helping them change the trajectory of their lives. Program Coordinator, Rob Fiorello says of the project, "I welcome opportunities that give our youth a platform to share their voice and tell their story." Executive Director Roz Dashiell explains, "It is important that our young people have a seat at the table for these discussions because with their insight, we can start to consider the appropriate point of entry to bring healing around some of the issues that fracture our community."

Seven13 films creates projects that provide positive messages and ignite discussions on social issues. "This project is important on several levels," said Lee Kolinsky, co-owner of seven13 films. "It recognizes the challenges of youth who want to make a positive impact in their neighborhood, reveals the daily perception of their environments and seeks to offer insight on how the community can get involved."

PEI Kids: Generation Change premiered on April 2nd at the Garden State Film Festival (GSFF) in Atlantic City, NJ, and won PEI Kids the Broader



Vision Award for doing work "dedicated to the greater good." The premier was followed by a local screening/town-hall meeting on June 28th at the AMC Hamilton 24 Theater with the goal of starting a community dialogue about how best to support our youth and help them achieve. The town hall/screening was followed by a Q&A session with a panel of youth featured in the film, and was attended by nearly 200 community members including representatives from the (Trenton) Mayor's office, Mercer County Dept. of Human Services, the Prosecutor's Office, faith-based leaders, juvenile probation, and other community stakeholders interested in hearing from young people and understanding their perspective.

A key point made by youth during the Q&A was their need for more adult support without judgement. One youth shared his personal struggle of needing to work to earn money while attending high school and the negative impact it had on his grades. He expressed a need for greater flexibility for youth dealing with such circumstances. Others expressed a desire for more after-school programming, community-based activities and safer communities. Many shared their hopes for the future which included professional careers, marriage and family.

Correspondent Adrienne Bankert explained of the project, "Working on this project was a gift. It was definitely a learning lesson for the youth, and for me. At the end of the day we all just want to be heard and appreciated."

The official trailer for PEI Kids: Generation Change, can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6wTcvdFlcw>



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Summer Fun: Tips for Keeping Kids Safe

Kids are going to fall, crash, slip and tumble. But there are little things we can do to ensure that kids avoid the more serious injuries. Here are a few safety tips for keeping their summer injury-free.

Grilling is one of our favorite summer traditions. It's often at the center of family gatherings, summer celebrations, outings and weekend fun. Remember this grilling safety tip to keep kids' safe.

- Keep children and pets away from the grill area by declaring a three-foot "kid-free zone" around the grill.

Kids love water. Learning to swim is a right of passage and a great way to stay cool in summer. Whether at a public pool, beach, lake or in your own backyard, make sure that kids know water safety rules. Here are a few tips to keep them safe:

- Make sure kids learn how to swim and develop water survival skills like floating or treading water, and swimming 25 yards to exit the water.
- Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool. They need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather.
- Know what to do in an emergency. CPR and basic water rescue skills may help you save a child's life.



Summer is the time for outdoor fun, and biking is a great activity for kids to do on their own, with friends, or as part of family fun. Be sure to exercise these bike safety rules with your kids:

- All bicyclists should wear a properly-fitted helmet.
- Children should ride on the sidewalk, bike pathways or bicycle lanes, when available.
- Teach children to use hand signals and follow the rules of the road.
- Reflectors on their clothes and bike makes kids more visible during dusk, night and early morning rides.

Kids are on the move in all sorts of ways. Skaters, skateboarders, and scooters should exercise safety rules too. Keep these tips in mind:

- Children should ride on smooth, dry surfaces in well-lit areas away from traffic.
- In addition to a properly-fitted helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards are recommended for skaters and skate boarders.

For more tips and ideas for keeping kids safe through all sorts of summer fun, visit www.safekids.org.



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MISSION STATEMENT

PEI Kids is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a safe environment for all children. PEI Kids works with the child, family, and caregiver to provide prevention, intervention, and advocacy programs relating to personal safety, sexual abuse, and the overall well-being of the child.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!



Scan the QR code
image above or visit
www.peikids.org

POSTINGS

Summer 2017 Newsletter

A Message from PEI Kids' Executive Director

It is amazing what one can find on the internet these days. Recently, in my search for education resources, I came across a digitally preserved issue of the Trenton Board of Education's Annual Report ...from the year 1914. It was compelling reading – particularly to see the central role that local schools played in the community then, as they still do today. It was somewhat

disheartening, however, to see that many of the concerns of 1914 remain issues that our communities and educational system struggle with today...that too many children leave school without graduating; that after leaving school they are find themselves unable to achieve in the economic and social conditions in which they find themselves; and that many reforms in school curricula are enthusiastically proposed, and in turn, condemned with equal assurance as short time later. Sound familiar?

However, repeated disappointments over the failure of each innovation to prove the panacea do not excuse us from being responsive to meet the challenges of each new generation, investing time and resources to address these difficult issues in a solution-oriented way, and



Roslyn E. Dashiell
Executive Director

challenging ourselves to bring fresh thinking to these enduring adversities.

School is a social institution and society is larger and more complex than ever. As a result, all of our community organizations and institutions are in constant need of readjustment. One of the more fulfilling experiences of my summer has been participating on Trenton's Superintendent's

Transition Team. It was thoroughly inspiring to have the privilege of working with such a diverse and talented group of professionals committed to the noble cause of helping our young people achieve. I am encouraged that our community has the talent, creativity, and mission-driven sense of purpose to bring solutions to some of these pressing issues.

Preparing our young people to be self-sufficient, well-adjusted, productive citizens is an ongoing endeavor and is the work of a good many of us. If I can share a lesson from my experience serving on the Superintendent's Transition Team, it's that agreement on one unifying principle is a great start for helping us make progress on some of these intractable issues and keeping us focused on a common vision.

Thank you to the following organizations, sponsors and donors that have provided recent funding* for our programs and operations!

Anonymous, Arbonne Charitable Foundation, Athenahealth, The Bartlett Family Foundation, Thomas & Francesca Bartlett, Bloomberg, L.P., Borden Perlman Salisbury & Kelly, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Capital Health, Christine's Hope for Kids, Church & Dwight EGF, City of Trenton CDBG, Community Foundation of NJ - Mercer Fund, Customers Bank, David Mathey Foundation, Delectabell Management, Inc., Fennelly Associates, Fred C. Rummel Foundation, The Fund for Women & Girls (PACF), Hill Wallack, Horvath & Giacin, Investors Bank, Investors Foundation Inc., Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., Karma Foundation, Lawrence Township Community Foundation, M&T Bank, Merancas Foundation, NJM Insurance Group, Nottingham Insurance, PNC Bank, PNC Foundation, Prevent Child Abuse NJ, Princeton Area Community Foundation, PSEG Foundation, Roma Bank Community Foundation, State of NJ – Dept. of Children & Families, State of NJ – Victim Assistance Grant Program, Szaferman, Lakind, Blumstein & Blader, Team Toyota of Princeton, TJX Foundation, The Tuchman Foundation, Tyler Foundation, Nicholas & Michelle Ventura, Ventura Wealth Management

*Contributions over \$1,000 received January 15, 2017 to July 31, 2017

Creativity Abounds in Crisis Intervention



Counseling and Support Group clients planted pinwheels representing their pledge of safety.

PEI Kids' Crisis Intervention for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse program has been serving children through therapeutic counseling and support since 1987. Over the years, we have expanded and enhanced our counseling services to address emerging trends and needs. As part of our commitment to provide ongoing support for child victims and their families, we provide regular support-group meetings – including our Mother/Daughter Support Group and our Sibling Support Groups. In May, we launched our new Teen Peer Support Group to help adolescent girls transition safely and successfully to adulthood. (See sidebar, *"New Teen Support Group Helps Girls Achieve."*)

In addition to launching the Teen Peer Support Group, the staff of our Crisis Intervention department has been busy offering creative activities, outings, and experiences for all support group participants. Thanks to a donation from AMC Charitable Foundation, we were provided with 50 movie passes so that participants in our Mother/Daughter Support Group could enjoy a bonding experience together. They went to see Beauty and the Beast, a movie which both generations – mothers and daughters – enjoyed. The group also enjoyed a first-ever paint party hosted at PEI Kids. Lead by a professional artist, moms painted lovely tropical scenes and their daughters painted the Disney Minion character. We extend a special thanks to Rosemary Sudnik at Corks & Canvas in Lawrenceville for coordinating this fun activity for participants of the Mother/Daughter Support Group.

In celebration of Child Abuse Prevention Month, all of our support group participants were invited to take a pledge of safety in April and plant a blue pinwheel, representing their safety pledge, in the garden area outside PEI Kids' offices. This Pinwheel Garden will stand in front of our building through fall, and each time the wind blows it will serve as a reminder of the resilient spirit of a girl who is on a journey of healing. Mothers, daughters and teens interested in attending one of our support groups may contact Lisa Arnold, Support Group Coordinator at lnarnold@peikids.org or by calling 609-695-3739.

New Teen Support Group Helps Girls Achieve

This spring, PEI Kids launched a new teen peer support group, *Helping Girls Achieve*. Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Princeton Area Community Foundation's (PACF) Fund for Women & Girls, PEI Kids has been able to offer specialized education, support and development designed to help girls who have been victims, or who are at-risk of sexual abuse, make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood. Executive Director, Roz Dashiell, explains, "Victims of child sexual abuse have specific risks and vulnerabilities, and we want to ensure that these risk factors do not become stumbling blocks as the girls encounter new freedom and social situations such as college, the workplace, or living independently."

The eight-week support group program requires a commitment from participants to attend regularly, give and receive support, and maintain confidentiality. "Some of the sessions were very emotional for the girls," explained Dr. Juanita Johnson-Brooks, Clinical Director. "They shared their fears and hopes and experienced significant emotional breakthrough individually and as a group, in the process of sharing their experiences and giving and receiving support."

Helping Girls Achieve is a collaborative effort that addresses specific sexual health and education needs of at-risk girls. Goals of the program include giving each girl a sense of self-direction over their lives and safety, increasing their hope for the future, and providing them with education and resources to support healthy decision-making. Current and planned presenters include Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, Planned Parenthood, Mercer County College's Title IX Office, medical and healthcare professionals, and others addressing topics such as healthy dating relationships, online safety, STD prevention and self-care, campus and workplace safety, and healthy decision-making.

The second cohort of Helping Girls Achieve began on Wednesday, July 26th and began with a graduation ceremony for the pilot group of ten girls. The graduating girls took the opportunity to share their thoughts on the program with the new, incoming group. The final teen support group for 2017 is slated to begin in October. If you know of a high-school-age girl who may be interested in participating *Helping Girls Achieve*, please contact Clinical Director, Dr. Brooks, or Support Group Coordinator, Lisa Nelson, at 609-695-3739



Girls take a pledge of safety during one of the first Teen Peer Support Group sessions.

PEI KIDS' DINNER & AUCTION OFFERS ONE-OF-A-KIND EXPERIENCES

PEI Kids' 26th annual live auction offered unique entertainment packages and experiences thanks to the support of generous and creative donors



ABC National News Correspondent, Adrienne Bankert, with Lawrenceville Mayor David Maffei

In the warm night air on Friday, April 28th, over 150 guests, friends, supporters and dignitaries gathered at Greenacres Country Club in Lawrenceville for PEI Kids' 26th Annual Dinner & Auction. Volunteers from Bloomberg LP arrived early to help set up for the event which included a packed agenda that opened with a touching invocation by Dr. Juanita Johnson-Brooks followed by a warm welcome from Lawrenceville Mayor David Maffei. A highlight of the evening's program was a special presentation of the documentary, "PEI Kids: Generation Change," the award-winning film which features youth in PEI Kids' Juvenile Intervention programs. This year's dinner and live auction were emceed by celebrity guest host, Adrienne Bankert, ABC National News Correspondent, who was also featured as moderator in the documentary.

"With the support of over 30 sponsors, the spring Dinner & Auction is PEI Kids' biggest fundraising effort of the year and generates an important share of the agency's operating and program revenue for its child abuse prevention and intervention programs," said Roz Dashiell, Executive Director. The theme of this year's event was Field of Dreams... Raising Hope, which Dashiell explains "is a testament to our success connecting with so many young people over the years to restore their hope and help them pursue their dreams."

The evening included a special appeal from Adrienne Bankert and Rob Fiorello, Program Coordinator for the agency's Juvenile Intervention programs, followed by the live auction which included several one-of-a-kind items and unique experiences that were arranged and donated by friends and supporters of the agency. The complete listing of live auction items, which brought in over \$11,000 includes:

- Phabulous Phillies -- 6 ground-level box seats with VIP parking at Citizens Bank Park donated by David and Marlene Thompson
- Williamsburg Resort-Condo Vacation - One-week luxury-condo vacation in Williamsburg, VA from an anonymous donor
- Behind Bars! - Behind-the-scenes tour of the Hopewell Valley Police Department including a police ride-along donated by Chief Lance Maloney
- The Bear - Hand-carved wooden bear, a 20-year tradition, donated by George Meyer
- Backstage with Chicago and the Doobie Brothers – 4 concert tickets with VIP seating, plus backstage passes for a personal meet-and-greet/photo opportunity with the band Chicago, with roundtrip chauffeured car service donated by a friend of the band Chicago and A1 Limousine



Winners from PEI Kids' Live Auction enjoy an evening with the band, Chicago

- Gourmet Getaway at The Gables - Weekend get-away at the meticulously-restored Victorian Gables Inn offering the "finest dining at the New Jersey shore," including dinner for two, overnight lodging, beach tags, one-hour massage and steam at Beach House Spa and a gift card to Sweet Haven donated by The Gables Inn and Craig Hubert, Esq.
- Born to Run – Exquisite, original hand-crafted electric guitar donated by Michael Virok of Bordentown Guitar Rescue plus, hardcover limited-edition autographed pictorial from Bruce Springsteen's classic hit album, Born to Run donated by QPSI, Inc.
- St. John original shoulder tote and wallet donated by Nicholas and Michelle Ventura
- One Night Membership at The Legendary Friars Club (NYC) - a priceless experience to be honorary Club member for one night, including drinks and dinner for two, open-mic performances, mingling with famous and rising entertainers, and a tour this legendary home of the "roast" donated by club member, Stephen Beninati
- Broadway Package and NYC Weekend for Four – VIP house seats to the Broadway hit, "Beautiful, the Carole King Musical," followed by a personal backstage tour with veteran actress Liz Larsen, drinks at Joe Allen Restaurant and an overnight stay at the Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel donated by Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel, Mrs. Jennifer Pierson, and Joe Allen Restaurant



PEI Kids' Trustee, Lisa Festa-Hayden (center) enjoys the cocktail reception with Nancy and Gerard Fennelly

Bartlett Family Names, Dedicates PEI Kids' Family Room

At our 26th Annual Dinner & Auction, PEI Kids provided the opportunity for one lucky bidder to dedicate and name our Family Visitation Room. For the third year in a row, PEI Kids' long-time supporters, Tom and Francesca Bartlett, placed the winning bid amidst competitive bidding action during the live auction. The Family Room has been dedicated and named The Rosanna Sturiale Cositore Family Room for the 2017/18 year in honor of Francesca Bartlett's sister who passed away nearly 20 years ago. A plaque hangs at the entrance of the Family Visitation Room to commemorate the space in her honor.

PEI Kids' visitation rooms provide a welcoming, family-friendly space where children in foster care spend quality time with biological family members during their foster-care placement. We provide a safe, nurturing environment where children can visit with parents and siblings, strengthen family bonds, and share in important family milestones and events. "The atmosphere of safety, love and the family nurturing that occurs in this space make it very special. So we are honored to have this room dedicated on behalf of the Bartlett family who has been such a steadfast supporter of our mission over the years," said Executive Director, Roz Dashiell.

In 2016, PEI Kids supervised 1,616 family visits. "My husband, Tom, and I have been involved with the agency for years," explained Fran Bartlett. "We have a deep appreciation for PEI Kids' mission and for the work they do in our community, and I couldn't think of a better opportunity to show our support for the agency and the work being done there," added Mrs. Bartlett. For more information on PEI Kids' Supervised Visitation program, please visit the website at www.peikids.org.



Dedication plaque outside PEI Kids' Family Room honors Rosanna Sturiale Cositore