



connections

Providence Connections, Inc.

FALL 2008

www.providenceconnections.org

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contributor choice...

Providence Family Support Center

United Way
Contributor Choice

#1352582

Amelia House

United Way
Contributor Choice

#945178

Backyard Barbeque 2008 Surpasses Goal!



Providence Connections' 2008 Backyard Barbeque raised over \$62,000, surpassing the budgeted goal of \$57,000 gross and netting \$11,000 more than the budgeted net goal.

After many months of careful planning and detailed preparation, June 20, 2008 arrived, and with it came the third annual *Backyard Barbeque*, Providence Connections' primary fundraising event of the year.

"Everyone worked very hard to make the 2008 *Backyard Barbeque* successful, and because of the gracious support of so many friends—both old and new—we did it. We not only achieved our goal; we surpassed it! And we're very grateful to everyone who participated by purchasing a raffle ticket, donating an auction item, attending the event or serving as a volunteer," says Sr. Carolyn Winschel, CDP, PhD, executive director of Providence Connections.

More than 180 people attended this year's *Backyard Barbeque*, which took place at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh on the North Shore for the second year in a row. Guests enjoyed a beautiful early summer evening as they mingled among the museum exhibits making new acquaintances, catching up with old friends and bidding on fabulous silent auction items.

As one newcomer to the event expressed it, "We had a great time meandering through the museum, meeting the staff who work at Providence Connections and taking a chance on all the exciting raffles and auction items. It was a wonderful way to kick off the summer season."



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Message from Sister Carolyn



Dear Friends,

Now that I have completed my first fiscal year as Executive Director of Providence Connections, I have been looking back and reflecting on all that happened over that year, which ended June 30, 2008.

Fiscal 2007-08 had its challenges, but it also provided many rewards. Over the course of the past year, we experienced the departure of several key corporate staff members, financial issues, the crash of our computer system, and the closing of Providence Child Care Center South. Yet we also made many new friends, some of whom became donors, held a very suc-

cessful annual appeal and had an outstanding response to our request for new toys and items to be given as Christmas gifts from our parents to their children. We recruited an additional 25 children for our child care program by adding an extra room and reconfiguring other space, received a Star 2 Rating for our child care facility from Keystone Stars, had a successful state inspection and hosted a very successful *Backyard Barbeque*. We have a gifted Parent Council and a dedicated board and staff, and together we celebrated the major holidays with our families and provided classes for our participating parents and many opportunities for family growth. All of these rewards far surpassed the challenges we faced.

But without the help of our gracious God and so many of you, none of this would have been possible. The Sisters of Divine Providence, who sponsor Providence Connections, have an old community prayer that we recite frequently and that very aptly describes what happened at Providence Connections this past fiscal year: "Providence did provide, Providence does provide, Providence will provide." Daily, God provides in all manner of ways, including sending people our way who are willing and able to help and support us.

In today's culture and economic climate, more families than ever are in need, making Providence Connections' mission to serve families and individuals by providing services to help them meet their needs, strengthen their families and enrich their lives even more vital than ever before.

We depend on our God and our friends to continue to support us and our ministries in this new fiscal year!

Thank you and God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Carolyn Winschel, CDP".

Sr. Carolyn Winschel, CDP, PhD
Executive Director



Our Ministries at a Glance

Providence Family Support Center

Parent Education Program Develops Life Skills for Today

Providence Family Support Center serves families from most of the 14 neighborhoods on Pittsburgh's North Side. Although many parents must attend mandated parenting and anger management education classes to fulfill court orders, there is an ever increasing request for a broad range of classes that focus more specifically on building "life skills." In response to these requests, Providence Family Support Center applied for and received a one-time grant of \$65,000 to fund a Parent Education Program called *Life Skills for Today*.

The anticipated outcomes of the new program include: participants gaining some of the life skills required for obtaining and retaining employment; parents not only meeting child welfare mandates, but also learning the skills necessary for effective parenting so that they can remain or be reunited with their children; strengthening family relationships and exposing children to other cultures and activities.

The new program will be conducted during fall 2008 and spring 2009 and will tentatively include the following classes: *Making Career Choices*, *Becoming an Extraordinary Parent*, *Getting a Grip on Anger*, and *Learning How to Drive*. There are many other possible class topics from *Communication* to *Coping with Difficult People*. The model for the program is based on best practices for adult learners, which means that class participants are a key factor in the education process. Parents will have a chance to share their needs around the class topics, interact with each other and process the knowledge they are receiving through discussion, role playing and home-related activities.

There will be 10 six-week classes, serving 150 adults and 250 children. Meals will be served at each class session and at least

200 individuals will be provided transportation. Gift cards will be awarded to individuals who attend a certain percentage of the classes.

Our hope is that while the adults who participate in the classes will gain a greater sense of self confidence, new life skills, social interaction and connection to other resources, their children will be involved in exercise time and be exposed to other positive activities such as dance, computer and cooking. In keeping with Providence Family Support Center's mission to strengthen families and enrich lives, the overriding goal is to make a long-term impact on the lives of the adults and parents the program serves.

Providence Child Care Center Achieves Keystone STAR 2 Rating

On June 16, 2008, Providence Child Care Center at Providence Family Support Center earned the Keystone STAR 2 designation following an on-site visit from the Keystone Stars program. "We're very pleased to have reached this milestone," says Ann Royster, Director of Children and Youth Programs at Providence Child Care Center. "The STAR 2 rating is the culmination of a lot of hard work and determination on the part of our staff to continuously enhance the learning experience for the children in our care."



Keystone STARS is a continuous quality improvement initiative established by the State of Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning to improve, support and recognize the efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. The Keystone STARS standards are guided by the principle that a quality Early Childhood education program helps children to achieve success. The STAR 2 desig-

nation informs families that the staff at Providence Family Support Child Care Center are committed to providing a quality child care experience.

Teen Program Prepares for Fall

Thanks to a \$2,500 donation from the Junior League of Pittsburgh, a \$3,000 grant from the Sarah Heinz House and \$5,690 from Providence Connections' 2007 Annual Appeal, Providence Family Support Center has been able to hire Alesha Council as the new full-time coordinator of the Teen Program. Alesha's primary responsibility will be to develop the curriculum for the Cultural Leadership Institute II, which will begin when the teens return in October.

"Providence Connections is grateful to everyone who contributed to its 2007 Annual Appeal and for the ongoing support it continues to receive from other local organizations for the Providence Family Support Center Teen Program," says Sr. Carolyn. "Your donations truly are helping to strengthen families and enrich lives on Pittsburgh's North Side. We look forward to unveiling our new curriculum this fall."



Ministries at a Glance - continued on page 4

Providence Child Care Center-South

Center Closes After 24 Fun and Faith-filled Years

The Sisters of Divine Providence have served faithfully both at St. Anne School and Providence Child Care Center-South in Castle Shannon for over 100 years. For the past 24 years, the child care center has offered excellent service to the children and their families.

For these reasons, we are very sorry to announce the closing of Providence Child Care Center-South as of June 30, 2008. Providence Child Care Center-South was one of the three entities under the corporate umbrella of Providence Connections. It is a great loss for Providence Connections, for the parents and children of the Castle Shannon area, and for the staff and the Sisters of Divine Providence who served there faithfully for many years, particularly Sr. Ann Catherine Fuchs and Sr. Louise Angeline. Sr. Louise took on the position of interim director in January 2008 and has served at the center for 11 years. Sr. Ann Catherine has lovingly ministered at the child care center for 19 years. The other Sisters who reside at St. Anne convent also have helped in a variety of ways over the years and we are very grateful to them for their long-term support.

In recognition of their longstanding support, the Sisters of Divine Providence were honored with a proclamation by the Allegheny County Council for the excellent service they have provided over the years at St. Anne Parish and Providence Child Care Center-South. Although Providence Child Care Center-South has closed, the Sisters of Divine Providence remain in the convent at St. Anne Parish and will continue to be involved in the parish just as they have for over 100 years.

Amelia House

Peace is the Way

By Sr. Susan Dale, resident
director of Amelia House

I am a great believer that most things do not become real until they are up close and personal. While I have always been concerned about the existence of abuse, my concern is heightened by the fact that I actually live with the women and children who have been affected by it. As resident director of Amelia House, I experience first-hand the struggle of those who seek the vital aspects of life, of which they often have little knowledge: self-esteem, acceptance, compassion, trust, understanding, safety, comfort, justice and peace. When a woman is caught in the web of domestic violence she struggles to regain these aspects of her life that years of physical, emotional, mental and economic abuse have taken from her.

Peace is not a luxury,
an accidental experience
that we happen to have if
we are lucky. Peace
dwells at the heart of the
matter—the heart of life.

This fact was made clearly evident to me when one woman said, "It's so peaceful here. I have never known this kind of peacefulness in my life." And again when an 8-year-old and I were cleaning up the yard and she said, "My dad screamed at my mom and hit her and I was scared.

I'm not scared here." These words were followed by a hug and I came to realize, through this woman and child, the words of Meister Eckhart: "Each human soul is the footprint of God."

At Amelia House, our mission statement says: *Rooted in Providence, we desire to make a difference in the lives of women, one at a time, by creating a peaceful, just and safe place where their deepest desires can be fulfilled.* While we strive to help each and every woman and family that comes through Amelia House, we never know for sure if or when we are truly making a difference. Yet, sometimes, through a simple hug or a short note, we are fortunate enough to realize the impact of the peace that Amelia House provides and the life-changing force it can be.

Recently, I received a thank-you note from Children and Youth Services. The note indicated that one family, which had been in several shelters and foster care, had made tremendous progress at Amelia House. They were finally on the road to making a better life in a safer environment.

Peace is not a luxury, an accidental experience that we happen to have if we are lucky. Peace dwells at the heart of the matter—the heart of life. If we can free ourselves from our robot-like habits of predictability and function, we begin to walk differently on the earth and with each other.

Peace calls us beyond ourselves, out of our comfort zones, out of the box, and it encourages us to engage the dream that dwells in our souls. My prayer for you is the same that I offer to the women and children of Amelia House – that you will dwell in Peace today, knowing you are the Beloved of God, wonderfully and beautifully made. Go in peace, child of God.

Sprout Fund Mural Project at Providence Family Support Center

Providence Connections is the enthusiastic recipient of a Sprout Fund-sponsored community mural on the outside of its North Side facility located at 3113 Brighton Road. Awarded to the agency in April, the creative and colorful mural captures all that is good about our Marshall-Shadeland neighborhood and the wonderful people who live, work, and play here.

Following a presentation in late May of mural designs by three competing artists appointed by the Sprout Fund, representatives from the Marshall-Shadeland community selected the final design, which was created by former resident and current North Allegheny Senior High School art teacher, Fran Hawbaker. After completion

and approval of minor design modifications suggested by various neighborhood constituents in mid-June, a Mural Kickoff Celebration was held on Thursday, July 10. That day, Fran and her husband and fellow muralist, Dave Hawbaker, interacted with our 45-plus summer campers, giving each of them the opportunity not only to learn about the mural-creation process, but also to try their hands at painting a small piece of the wall.

A publicly-held Mural Dedication Ceremony will be held this fall. We hope you can join us! For further details, contact Director of Development Kathy Stefani, at 412.766.3860, ext. 324.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

Providence Connections is grateful to the following corporate sponsors who generously supported the 2008 *Backyard Barbeque*. Their enthusiastic involvement was vital to the event's success, and we look forward to working with each of them again in the future.

2008 Backyard Barbeque Event Sponsors

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- Hanlon Electric

Peace Walk for Kenya's Youth Pairs Pittsburgh, Kenya Teens



In early July, Providence Connections' staff persons Ann Royster, Alesha Council, and Kathy Stefani had the opportunity to meet Niecy Dennis, who is the founder of Workforce Development Global Alliance, Inc. The mission of this humanitarian non-profit organization is to utilize global alliances as a means of promoting and fostering economic success and independence for disadvantaged youth in rural areas of Kenya.

As a native of Pittsburgh, Ms. Dennis has successfully recruited Providence Connections

and many other local human services agencies to play a role in the development and implementation of a pilot ePal/eMentorship Program between youth in Pittsburgh and youth in Kenya.

In launching this pilot program, Pittsburgh area youth, including teens from Providence Connections, have been invited to participate in a "Peace Walk for Kenya's Youth". Scheduled for September 25-27, 2008 in Pittsburgh and followed by a similar walk February 27-March 2, 2009 in Kenya,

the Peace Walks are hopefully just the beginning of a long-lasting Pittsburgh/Kenya partnership. Interested Pittsburgh youth will then have the opportunity to receive Peace Ambassador Training beginning in October 2008, with the culmination of this training being 'ePal match-ups' between individual Pittsburgh and Kenyan teens.

Backyard Barbeque 2008 surpasses goal! - continued from page 3

Thirteen items in the *Backyard Barbeque* silent auction included "Angeline Tulips," a beautiful cross-stitch artwork by Sr. Mary Wagner, and two pieces of handcrafted stoneware created by Sr. Charlotte Tolliver, both Sisters of Divine Providence. More than 20 beautifully wrapped baskets made up the raffle and provided guests with a wide array of choices on which they could take a chance. Basket donors included the Providence Connections Board of Directors, employees of Providence Heights, and many other generous individuals and families. The local corporate and business community participated by donating auction items and purchasing sponsorships and program ads.

Prior to the event, Board members, Providence Connections staff and volunteers sold hundreds of raffle tickets to people wanting to win first prize in the



Backyard Barbeque event raffle, which was two tickets to all eight of the Pittsburgh Steeler's 2008-2009 home games. Second prize was tickets for five Pittsburgh Pirates' home games, and third prize was \$200. The winners of the three big prizes were: Dolores Leopardi, first prize; Don Mihelic, second prize and Mary Lou Mitsch, third prize.

Guests — including many Sisters and Associates of the Sisters of Divine Providence, employees from presenting sponsor Duquesne Light and lead sponsor Acclamation Systems, and families and friends of Providence Connections—enjoyed a casual barbeque meal and delicious hors d'oeuvres by The Common Plea. Penn Brewery donated Penn Pilsner beer, which was served along with lemonade, iced tea, and the *Backyard Barbeque's* new signature drink, "Chill Out."

Volunteers Are Vital at Providence Connections

The wonderful Providence of God has been displayed quite vividly by the many dedicated volunteers who have graced Providence Connections' ministries this past year. The many and varied services that volunteers of all ages and backgrounds provided at Providence Connections, Providence Family Support Center and Providence Child Care Center South have been outstanding and exceeded 3,700 service hours from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

As Providence Connections begins a new fiscal year, we are looking for additional volunteers. We invite you to consider this as

an invitation to help us in our mission to strengthen families and enrich their lives by offering the invaluable gift of your service and time for others. We promise that our families, our staff, and, most of all, you, will be richly rewarded.

Your presence will make a difference here on the North Side of Pittsburgh. Volunteer today! Contact one of the Providence Connections Volunteer Coordinators, Sr. Sandra DeNardis or Sr. Donna Tracy at 412.766.3860, Ext. 325, sdenarids@providenceconnections.org or dtracy@providenceconnections.org.

**“Visibly do I see
in all things
the wonderful
Providence of God”**

Marie de La Roche

The following programs need ongoing volunteer assistance:

- Child Care (infants through age 2)
- Preschool (children ages 3-4)
- After-School Program (children ages 6-12)
- Teen Program (ages 13-18)
- Family Fun Nights (ages 6-12)

Seasonal Holiday Service Projects include:

- Thanksgiving Meal
- Deck the Halls
- Gifts of Providence
- Santa Brunch

Ongoing staff-support opportunities:

- Receptionist
- Large mailings
- Office filing
- Tutoring
- Teaching Music and/or Art



Volunteers—about forty in all—included Sisters and Associates of the Sisters of Divine Providence, employees of the Sisters of Divine Providence and Providence Connections, and members of the event planning committee. No matter what role they played, every hand and heart that participated in this year's event contributed to its outstanding success. The entire event

was a living example of community in action—all for Providence Connections, an agency that ministers to, and with, individuals and families who are in need. From infants of six weeks to parents and grandparents of all ages, Providence Connections is strengthening families and enriching lives one day at a time.

Thank you! Danke Schön! Gamsahamnidad! Gracias! You made our event successful and helped ensure our vital work will continue. We hope to see you again next year!

Life Skills for Today Education Program

Begins Wednesday, August 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Classes offered: Helping Your Child Succeed in School and Living Better with Less

Thanksgiving Celebration

Thursday, November 13, 2008, 6 p.m.

Santa Brunch

Saturday, December 6, 2008, 11 a.m.

Gifts of Providence

Tuesday & Wednesday, December 16-17, 2008, 7 p.m.

Note: Providence Family Support Center will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 27-28 and December 25, 2008 through January 5, 2009.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the events listed above are free and will take place at:

Providence Family Support Center
3113 Brighton Road,
Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

For more information or to register for any of the above, please contact
Family Program Specialist
Cindi Hopson-Smith
at 412.766.6730.

Our Wish List

As a non-profit agency, Providence Connections, Inc. exists only because of the generosity of others. In addition to the income the agency receives from private foundations, government programs and individual donors, the staff relies heavily on contributions of supplies, equipment, toys and other materials to provide education and support services for women, children and families in need. The following are just a few of the items that Providence Connections staff and participating families would appreciate receiving this fall:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Facial tissues | Sauce pots (various sizes) |
| Clorox wipes | Large fry pans |
| Paper towels | Large blue recycling bags |
| Dish towels and cloths | School-age games |
| Dish detergent | Playing cards |
| Laundry detergent | Washable markers |
| Pot holders | Vacuum cleaner |

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www.providenceconnections.org

OUR MISSION

Providence Connections, Inc., sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, is rooted in the congregation's heritage of service and justice. As a lead agency, we provide vision, support and governance to our two ministries that serve families in need.

Providence Connections, Inc. is a public charity under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. We do not sell or trade our mailing list. Please write us at Providence Connections, Inc., 3113 Brighton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 if you do not wish to receive future mailings from Providence Connections.