



HomeSafe Happenings

Our Mission: Creating safer, more productive lives for infants, children and families

HomeSafe Goes Back to School

The weeks leading up to the first day of a new school year typically conjure up a mix of excitement and apprehension as families try to make sure their children get off to a good start. There are clothes and supplies to buy, new teachers, schedules and bus routes to get to know, and new morning routines to establish.

At HomeSafe, where 48 children and teens reside in five group care homes across Palm Beach County, back-to-school planning involves all of the above and much more. Our clinical directors, life skills coordinators, and residential staff all work together to ensure our clients also have the right academic, psychological, and emotional supports they need in the classroom in order to have a successful year.



Just some of the many supplies donated by TWS

The starting point for assessing our children's academic needs is examining their school record from the previous year, including their Individual Education Program (IEP) if they are eligible for special education services. "We're asking questions like, were their behavior needs met? Is the school challenging enough?" said Monique Barnett, Program Supervisor for HomeSafe Boys.

Getting a complete picture of a child's academic and social development can be challenging if he or she previously attended school outside of Palm Beach County. Obtaining out-of-county school records can require additional legwork, but once all the pieces are in place, we can determine what kind of school placement is best for each child.

Some children can be served in a traditional academic setting, while an alternative school offering specialized services may be better suited for their needs. A number of our children take the bus to Indian Ridge School in West Palm Beach, which provides a curriculum incorporating therapeutic services for children in grades K-12 with emotional and behavioral disorders. For some high-school age youth, a GED program or vocational

training is the best route. Last year, our clients were enrolled in 18 different schools.

Of course, there is plenty of back-to-school shopping to take care of. Armed with vouchers valued at \$300 for each client in our care, Barnett said she's able to make those dollars stretch as far as possible so that the children have a week's worth of clothing that conforms to the school dress code, as well as active wear for physical education.

Generous donations of backpacks and school supplies not only help our residential clients get ready for the new school year, but also help the children in need that we serve through our SafetyNet Domestic Violence Program and the Healthy Beginnings program. We are grateful for contributions from The Back to School Bash and the Office Depot Foundation, the Greater West Palm Beach Women's Club & First Presbyterian Church of WPB, as well as the employees at Total Warranty Services (TWS).



Residents from our girls' home inspect notebooks



Members of the Greater WPB Women's Club (Left to right) Mary Evelyn Mitchell, Linda Walker, Cheré Brodi (HomeSafe) Suzan Close, Janet Carlson & Cathy Hopkins

Story written by Martha Raffaele, Grants Writer

HomeSafe at Pond Place

Our New Independent Living Housing Program

In July 2015, HomeSafe was excited to announce plans for an Independent Living Housing Program. This would be a new program for the agency, providing safe and affordable housing for clients who have turned 18, and “aged out” of the agency’s residential group care program.

Thanks to the initial funding provided by the Steven E. Bernstein Family Foundation and generous matching support from many individuals, companies and foundations, *HomeSafe at Pond Place* is soon to become a reality!

HomeSafe purchased property in Palm Springs which included 12 one-bedroom, one-bath apartments. To help us get started with the much-needed renovations, the staff of Gables Residential spent an entire day ripping out old flooring, appliances and fixtures from the apartments, sodding the entire property and cleaning out the retention pond. Even the family of geese we inherited when we purchased the property were built a safe place to sleep!

Major renovations to the buildings – electrical, plumbing, flooring, new air conditioning and impact windows, as well as additional landscaping improvements, have slowly but surely taken place over the last year. The property is being transformed into a beautiful place to live, and clients will be moving into apartments with new appliances, new furniture and the basic items needed for independent living. We are proud to announce the first clients will be moved in to their new apartments by the end of September.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held November 16.





*Special Thanks to our Pond Place Donors**

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Your Donations Make a Difference

Your support of HomeSafe goes a long way in helping victims of child abuse and domestic violence. Eighty-seven cents of every dollar you give goes to local programs and services for clients.

There are a variety of ways to support HomeSafe:

- **Name HomeSafe as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance or IRA**
- **Send a check made payable to HomeSafe**
- **Donate online at HelpHomeSafe.org**
- **Purchase tickets and attend our events**

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