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## Mark Your 2007 Calendars For These Upcoming Special Events!

**BERKS COUNTY PARROTHEAD CLUB - CABIN FEVER FESTIVAL**  
Date and location TBA- Stay tuned!

**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY BRUNCH**  
Date and location TBA - Check our next newsletter and website!

**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY, OUR 5th ANNIVERSARY!**  
Monday, May 7th – Sovereign Performing Arts Center

**NATIONAL PENN BANK GOLF OUTING, 10th ANNUAL**  
to benefit Opportunity House  
Monday, June 4th - Berkleigh Country Club

**BRIDGES\* "OPPORTUNITY TO RIDE" CYCLE FUNDRAISER**  
Details TBA.

**HELP WANTED!**

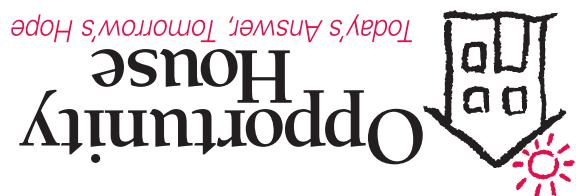
Opportunity House is looking for volunteers who want to contribute to their community for our Special Event programs. If you can serve on a committee to help with event pre-planning or volunteer several hours on the event day, we want to hear from you! Join us in 2007 as a Committee member or Special Events volunteer.

**TO APPLY, CALL 610.374.4696, EXT. 231 or email: sstalnecker@opphouse.org**

*\*Bridges is the "young at heart" volunteer leadership arm of Opportunity House. The committee's goal is to help build the agency for a secure future and work on special projects and fundraising. For more information on time and location of meetings, please call 610.374.4696, ext. 231 or email: sstalnecker@opphouse.org*

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# Opportunity House

Today's Answer, Tomorrow's Hope



Fall 2006

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Volume 4, Issue 3

### Message From The President

It's difficult to believe that ten years has passed since the opening of the Second Street Learning Center. My son Jeremy was among the first group of children enrolled at the center, and he is now in the 9th grade!

Little did we know when we first opened in October 1996 with eighteen pre-school children and three staff, the powerful impact the center would have on the community. The opening of the center has not only helped change the lives of the thousands of children who have come and gone over the past decade, but it

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Modesto D. Fiume, President

## Second Street Learning Center - A Decade Of Serving The Community

When Second Street Learning Center opened its doors ten years ago, VP of Childcare, Vickie Moll, and two staff members could not have predicted the success that this valuable asset would have at both Opportunity House and in the community. There were 18 children enrolled at Second Street Learning Center in 1996.

Fast forward to 2006 – today there are 325 - 340 children, ages six weeks

through school age, enrolled at Second Street Learning Center, with over 70 employees, some of whom are shelter residents. It is the only childcare center to be recognized by the State of Pennsylvania as a 24-hour per day, 7 day a week program. The Learning Center provides programs in reading readiness, pre-math, computer programs, outdoor play, art projects, science and nature studies, and a before-and-after school enrichment program. Special needs children can attend the learning center. There is also a tutoring program available for homework assistance.

During the summer, and on school holidays, Second Street is just as busy as during the school year. Children can attend Olive's programs, swim at the pool, attend South Mountain YMCA camp, borrow a book from the library, and go on field trips, which are very

popular with the children – past field trips have included Nolde Forest, French Creek, The Reading Public Museum, Goggleworks, The Berks County Historical Society, and the Wyomissing Art Institute. This past summer, Courtney Richter was the Artist in Residence at the learning center, and the children held their own art show, featuring the style of Keith Haring's artwork.

But the learning center is more than a "daycare provider" and a place where children learn. Rather, all learning center activities and programs are designed to meet the needs of each individual child AND family. Transportation to and from school is provided, making it easier for families to be employed, and not have the worries of picking up children from school.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks are all provided for the children, depending on the time of day they attend Second Street Learning Center. Babies are rocked and cuddled, and put in their cribs for naps or even sleep time. Children get bedtime stories read to them, and then get tucked in for the night, if their parent's work schedule requires them to work various work shifts. Rates for attendance at Second Street Learning Center are based on family income (sliding fee), and if that changes due to job change or unemployment, so does the fee. "We must



Courtney Richter, with kids from 2nd Street Learning Center at the August Keith Haring exhibit. Courtney is a student at Wellesley College, and served as an Artistic Resident at Opportunity House this past summer.

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## Message From The President

(Continued from front cover)

also spearheaded an organizational shift that changed the face of a neighborhood, and helped to improve the quality of life for residents throughout the city of Reading and Berks County.

The success of the center reinforced the notion that the Reading Emergency Shelter should expand its scope of services to identify the root causes of homelessness, and provide opportunities for homeless individuals and families to turn their lives around. As we grew, we realized our programs could also assist our neighbors who, although not homeless, struggled with many of the problems our clients faced. It led to a

successful \$3 million capital campaign, a new building, additional services, new partnerships, and ultimately, a name change.

Today, as Opportunity House looks to the future and continues to address emerging social issues, I can't help but look back to that October morning ten years ago, when a small group of children sat in a circle singing songs and clapping hands, unaware that they were paving the way for many more children to follow, and helping to change the vision and perception of an organization and a neighborhood.

## New Pension Law Provides For Charity

A federal law was enacted this past August which allows Individual Retirement Account (IRA) owners to share their retirement savings by giving directly to charity - without first counting it as income and paying income tax.

In 2006 and 2007, holders of traditional and Roth IRAs who are at least 70 1/2 years old can make direct charitable transfers up to \$100,000 per year to their favorite charity (ies).

## Please Answer Our Call...

The annual Opportunity House holiday card will be mailed out to all donors prior to Thanksgiving. As follow up to the mailing this year's annual telefunding campaign will kick off in the early evening on Tuesday, November 28, continuing on November 29 and 30th. Board members and other volunteer leadership from Opportunity House will be calling donors (who have been randomly selected) to request their support in this year's Annual Campaign. Dollars raised from our campaign support shelter and housing programs at Opportunity House. Sincere thanks are extended in advance to the volunteers who are calling and our friends who answer "the call."

*From the staff and clients at OH, we wish everyone happy, warm and peaceful holidays!*



## On Saturday, August 26 (all Berks County Boscov's Department Stores held "Celebrate the Children" Day.

Dollars were raised by the sale of "Buddy Bears", paper bears, and other fun activities in the store. Pipper the Clown entertained families throughout the day.

## Opportunity House Mission Statement

Opportunity House is a multi-service organization... that improves the quality of life for children, adults and families who face various obstacles and supports their efforts to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and well-being.

## Second Street Learning Center - A Decade Of Serving The Community

(Continued from front cover)

be very flexible, understanding, and respectful of the individual needs of our families using the learning center," said Vickie Moll. "Our families have many different schedules, and some face many challenges," she added.

Of course, the success of the Second Street Learning Center would not be possible without the dedicated staff and employees, and organizations such as The United Way, who was largely responsible for the financial start up

of the Second Street Learning Center. The United Way and other organizations such as SEI of Oaks, Pennsylvania and The Junior League of Reading, PA, Inc. continue to be involved with financial and volunteer support.

What adds to the Second Street Learning Center is the perseverance of Vickie Moll to continue to grow its many programs. Her staff summed it all up - "she has the vision, and she doesn't let go of it!"



**This past summer, Penn National Gaming donated \$15,000 to Opportunity House. We sincerely thank them for their very generous donation.**

(From l to r)  
Karin Ashford, Director Legal & Business Affairs;  
Robert Ippolito, Vice President Secretary/Treasurer;  
Christina Reisinger, Director of Risk Management;  
Lorri Oziri - VP Development, Opportunity House;  
Eric Schippers, Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Relations; Amanda Garber, Manager of Public Affairs; Michael Randazzo, Corporate Director of Purchasing

## Yellow Submarine Owners give Second Street a "Thumbs Up"

Dave and Loretta Thomas, owners of Yellow Submarine sandwich shop in West Reading, never knew about Second Street Learning Center until they received a letter in the mail four years ago describing the many programs, and announcing an open registration. At that time, Dave was just opening his first Yellow Submarine shop, and Loretta was working at another restaurant, with varying shift schedules. Their son, Dylan, was five years old, and they had newborn twins, Natasha and Julian. Their dilemma was not unlike other Berks County residents - they both were working very long hours, but needed affordable, nurturing child care for a preschooler, and infants. They looked at Second Street Learning Center, and knew it was the right place for their children to be while they were working.

Soon after the children began attending Second Street Learning

Center, Loretta joined Dave at Yellow Submarine full time (they both run the business now), and just like any other start up business, income was not steady. "Second Street Learning Center adjusted our child care costs at that time "said Dave. He added, "without this child care opportunity (at the learning center), I would not be able to run this business." He also lauds the activities made available to the children, the convenience of being located only five minutes from Yellow Submarine and their residence in West Reading, and of course, the hours that his children can be cared for while he and Loretta operate their business.

Any child ages six weeks to school age can attend the Second Street Learning Center. Parent(s) must be employed to enroll their children, or if they are a shelter resident, they must be attending class or life-skills classes.

## Parrothead Club Offers Cure For Cabin Fever

Need a Change in Attitude? Want a Better Cheeseburger? Want to know "Where's The Party?" These are questions that the Berks County Parrothead Club asks, and we have the answers! **The Parrothead Club has chosen Opportunity House as the recipients of their winter fundraiser - Cabin Fever Festival** that will take place on a Sunday afternoon in late January or early February at a location TBD. Periodically check our website or theirs

(www.berkscountypbc.org) for upcoming details on date, location and ticket sales.

In case you didn't know, the Berks County Parrothead Club is a non-profit organization with the dual purpose of assisting agencies in the community and providing social activities for Jimmy Buffet fans. Parrotheads "Party with a Purpose", and we invite you to join in the fun this winter as we raise funds for Opportunity House.