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⊕ THE CENTER FOUNDATION ⊕  
**Mentoring for Success**

# Annual Report 2013 – 2014

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*The Center Foundation empowers women, teenage parents, and their families  
through mentoring, education, and support*



## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This last year for The Center Foundation (TCF). It was one of change as we continued to provide our unique and holistic mentoring to women in difficult life transitions through our WomenCare program and completed our 12th year serving teen parents with caring adult and college student mentors in our Young Parents Support Network (YPSN). YPSN has expanded its reach over the years to serve students in the school districts of Chester-Upland, Upper Darby, Pennwood, Southeast Delco, Academy Park, Ridley, and Philadelphia, and Achievement House Cyber Charter School.



We welcomed a new Program Manager for YPSN - Christina Stevens replacing Rachel Schendler, who had managed our teen mentoring programs since 2007. Christina was familiar with YPSN from her time with us in the U.S. Department of Labor *Young Parents Demonstration Program* in 2009-2012, in which TCF was one of thirteen organizations. The transition period was ably overseen by TCF Program Director Jane Todd, with the help of Widener social work intern Ann Demkin.

We completed the third year of a three-year cycle of funding from the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey to assist disadvantaged youth to graduate from high school, college and career ready. Despite our challenges YPSN met or exceeded its goals, with 100% of seniors graduating high school, 100% of out-of-school youth enrolling in school or Job Corps or a GED program and 100% of teens in grades 6-11 being promoted to the next grade. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row 100% of our seniors graduated high school without having another child. In WomenCare our clients also enjoyed significant success, with over 71% of those in the program 6 months or more finding jobs, or better jobs, or completing an associate's degree.

The Center Foundation continues to count each person we work with as individual and special, having her own unique dreams and goals of self-fulfillment. Their matches with volunteer mentors are also individual and special relationships of sharing experience.

2013-2104 was a year in which the investment of our community in our work yielded an outstanding return in human terms in improving quality of life for women, teens and families in Delaware County. Many thanks to the individuals and organizations who have enabled TCF to maintain and enhance its programs through their gifts of time, caring, talent, and resources.

Especially I thank the many volunteer mentors who have over the years given hundreds of hours in their busy lives. I know the experience has enriched them as well. One said, *[a]lthough I have volunteered to support women, teens and children in the past, this was one of the most interactive mentoring partnerships I've had... It was a blessing to see how we could work together on (her) academic goals and, equally importantly, find time for the two of us just to share joys and hurdles in life - reassuring each other that all challenges can not only be shared but conquered...* Another reflected *"[i]t is a joy to be able to help another person feel better about themselves and encourage them to keep on keeping on. The experience of being a mentor is so rewarding...."*

I hope you enjoy reading our annual report. I also hope you'll consider or continue being part of the work that lies ahead, so that like the women and teen parents we serve, TCF will go from strength to strength in the coming years. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan K. Jewell".

## EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS CONTINUED..

### *Winter Carnival ~*



In March of 2014 The Center Foundation held its annual Carnival for the 16<sup>th</sup> year in a row! It was a beautiful day and the Media Borough Community Center was packed with close to 90 participants and their families and friends.

Guests gathered to play exciting carnival games like bean bag toss, basketball and balloon darts. Entertaining Clowns from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) delighted guests with balloon animals and face painting; and the always popular moonbounce was a huge hit once again. While many children bounced out their energy, other guests filled up on yummy carnival fare like hotdogs, popcorn and cotton candy. There was something for everyone at this fun event and a great time was had by all!

Carnival was a huge success, thanks in large part to our sponsors, Reformation Lutheran Church, Dr. Jeffrey Price, DMD., Media Monthly Meeting, and Sporting Gentleman. It was also generously supported by Media-Providence Friends School, Linvilla Orchards, Desert Rose, and the Penncrest Optomists Club.



## EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

### *Holiday from the Heart ~*

The Center Foundation (TCF) held its annual Holiday from the Heart Celebration at the Media Borough Hall on December 19th. Participants from TCF's two unique mentoring programs gathered for an evening of holiday cheer and were especially thrilled when Santa Claus stopped in for a visit!

In 2013, twenty families were adopted by caring community members Holiday from the Heart.

Hundreds of presents were donated and beautifully wrapped by volunteers in time to be brought home for the holidays. Families received their gifts at the celebration. The evening was a true demonstration of holiday spirit! Holiday from the Heart was sponsored by Media Real Estate, Lotus Farm to Table, and Susquehanna Bank. A number of local businesses and organizations donated their products or services including 320 Market Café, Acme Markets, Desert Rose Restaurant, Giant Food Stores, the Granite Farms Knitters, the Marple Newtown Student Service Club, Starbucks Coffee, and the Strath Haven Interact Club.



### *Healthy Choices Workshop~*



On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 The Center Foundation hosted a three-part workshop devoted to healthy choices in finances, relationships, and eating well on a budget. The Center Foundation held the workshop at Media-Providence Friends School located a few blocks from their office in downtown Media.

Lisa Dumigan, Assistant Relationship Manager from Beneficial Bank and Elizabeth Wintz, author of *The Formerly Destitute Diva Cookbook*, were the guest speakers. Lisa shared important tips on how to start a budget

and save money. Program staff also lead a lively discussion on what makes a healthy relationship. Workshop participants then lunched on homemade chili and sampled a delicious low-calorie tiramisu, created in cooking show style by Elizabeth "Izzi" Wintz, who also shared suggestions about making meals on a budget to feed a family of picky eaters.

## SERVICE STATISTICS

### **WomenCare®**

A total of 62 women received services through the WomenCare mentoring program this year.

There were 19 active WomenCare matches during this fiscal year, with 11 matches started during the year. 6 matches successfully completed their year commitment, 3 were matched 6 months or more and 4 matches have continued into the next fiscal year.

In addition to actively matched participants, 6 WomenCare graduates received ongoing aftercare services as they continued pursuing goals such as finding jobs, housing and meeting their children's needs.

An additional 37 women were referred or contacted The Center Foundation expressing interest in having a mentor. Nine of these women received case management services while they were either waiting for a suitable mentor and/or working on stabilizing their current situations, i.e. homelessness, in order to be able to participate in a mentoring relationship.

Referrals to WomenCare came from many sources, including Head Start, New Choices/ New Options, Legal Help Night with the Women's Resource Center, GED programs at local libraries, the Del. Co. Housing Authority, PathwaysPA and former participants.

The WomenCare partners focused on one or more goals, the main ones being finding a job or getting a better one, getting a GED and locating affordable housing. Of the 9 women who were matched at least 6 months to a year, 5 got jobs or better-paying jobs, 3 moved to better, more affordable housing, one woman received her GED, and another her associate's degree.

Eleven mentors were matched during this year. Mentor trainings were held in August and October, 2013, and January, March and May of 2014. A total of 23 women were trained to be mentors, 9 for WomenCare. Partner Orientations were held in August, October, January and March, preparing 11 women to be matched.

### **Young Parents Support Network**

42 teenage parents received services through the Young Parents Support Network this year.

There were 14 active matches in YPSN during the year, with 3 carried over from the previous year. There were 34 referrals made; 30 came from Project ELECT/TAPP, the state funded teen parenting education program. 4 referrals came from YPSN participants and self-referrals. Of the 19 teens interviewed, 11 were matched with mentors. The remaining 8 could not be matched due to various reasons; unstable living arrangements or lack of parental consent often being a prohibiting factor; in 2 cases a suitable mentor could not be identified. The YPSN program manager continued to work with the teens who are not matched, offering other supportive services such as information referral, advocacy and academic and education support.

Of the 14 matches, 4 completed a year or beyond with their mentors; 7 were matched late in the fiscal year; and the remaining 3 were unable to remain matched because life circumstances changed preventing them from meeting with their mentors. During the fiscal year, 5 participants graduated from high school. All other high school students were promoted to the next grade.

Also important to note, 4 months into the fiscal year, the YPSN program manager left her position to pursue another opportunity. A new YPSN program manager was hired in late December. YPSN outreach efforts resumed in late January, but there was a period of a few crucial months where opportunities were missed resulting in a drop in participation. An increase in participant enrollment and matches were experienced later in the fiscal year.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

### *Helping Women Look Their Best with Wings for Success ~*

Additional support was provided to several program participants who needed suitable clothing to wear at job interviews or on the job after being hired. TCF staff made appointments and accompanied mentees to Wings for Success, a nonprofit located in Fraser, Chester Co., where with the help of volunteer “dressers”, they were fitted with fashionable interview outfits and accessories. One newly hired young woman about to start her very first job needed black pants, white tops and comfortable shoes for her position as a food service employee. She was able to get several complete outfits and was ready to go for her first day on the job!

### *Free Monthly Help for Job Seekers ~*

Noting an upsurge of requests from participants needing employment and help with job-search activities, a program was begun in the fall of 2013 to set aside specific days and times each month to offer individual assistance to job seekers. Program staff and student interns worked with participants doing online job applications and updating resumes and cover letters. A group session facilitated by Board member, Robin Otto, from Bryn Mawr Trust, was held one month to discuss and practice interviewing skills.

### *New Experiences Made Possible with Support from Art-Reach ~*

The Center Foundation is a member of Art-Reach, a non-profit organization whose mission is to connect underserved audiences to arts and cultural experiences. Program participants and their mentors attended musical and theatrical events and museums throughout the year at little or no cost, including the Philadelphia Flower Show, Longwood Gardens and a local production of The Nutcracker Ballet.

### *Regional Center for Women in the Arts Sponsors Creative Catalyst Workshop ~*



Every summer TCF offers a workshop just for fun, a way to get in touch with one’s creative side. In August, 2013, artist and former WomenCare participant, Susan Foley-Urban, led a hands-on activity to make a memory box, a place to keep inspirational thoughts, poems and memories. Participants decorated their boxes with cut out pictures and glue, creating one-of-a-kind places to keep notes or special written thoughts. The workshop was part of a series entitled “Empowering Women & Girls through Art”, with supplies and fees paid for by the Regional Center for Women in the Arts, Inc.

Participants often say these workshops are wonderful for reducing stress and for encouraging the women to continue to find outlets of creative expression in their lives.

### *Shanielle Chambers from Chester Work Ready ~*

Shanielle Chambers came to The Center Foundation through the Work Ready Program in her senior year of high school. The Work Ready Program is designed to help youth get work experience and exposure to opportunities that will help you both now and the future. Work Ready also has a paid six-week Summer Program that gives young people ages 14 to 21 the opportunity to learn and earn in corporate or community based-settings.

Shanielle is hoping to study to become a lawyer after high school Her favorite subject in school is Science. While at TCF Shanielle was hoping to gain work experience to develop more skills and learn to speak to others in a professional manner. Shanielle was able to work on a number of administrative skills such as answering telephones and working with a database system. Shanielle also worked with our Program Managers and did research on women’s and children’s shelters in and around Philadelphia.

### *Welcome back Christina Stevens! ~*



Christina Stevens is once again a member of our staff at the Center Foundation, now as our YPSN Program Manager. Christina took over the position in December, 2013 following the departure of Rachel Schendler who went on to explore a new career opportunity. Christina returned to TCF after acting as the Career Navigator for our YP Demo Program which ended in June of 2012.

Christina graduated from New York University with a BA degree in English and went on to work primarily in the field of marketing and later product merchandising for a combined 7 years of experience in business. After several years in the corporate world, Christina decided that she wanted to shift gears to pursue what she described as “a desire to connect with people in a more heartfelt way.”

She then went on to earn her MA in English Education at Temple University and has taught both ESL and Language Arts to culturally diverse young adults. Later she worked with Montgomery County Community College, acting as instructor and job coach in their Youth Work Readiness program, helping young adults build professional skills while participating in various internships both on campus and in their communities. It was during that time that Christina first came to know The Center Foundation, volunteering as a mentor for YPSN.

Now as Program Manager, Christina says she feels so fortunate to be doing work that so closely aligns with her personal values. As someone who was a mentor herself, she says she realizes the impact that mentoring can have, for both the teens and for the mentors, and says that the relationship can be truly transformational for both parties.

## SPOTLIGHT

### *Intern Kelsey Jacoby ~*



Kelsey Jacoby came to The Center Foundation as a junior at Widener University. At Widener, Kelsey was the President of the Commuter Student Association and as such, got to meet lots of different people who commute to Widener each and every day. Kelsey will receive her B.A. in Psychology in May of 2015.

At Widener Kelsey became interested in working in the field of Human Resources in the broader field of Industrial/Organization Psychology. She took a course about I/O Psychology at Widener and fell in love with the topics discussed. Kelsey said that she found it fascinating to help

keep different organizations running while also analyzing different aspects of a workplace, such as how long the workers stay, how much productivity is increasing or decreasing, and so much more that goes on in a small business or a large corporation. During her time at TCF Kelsey assisted Susan Garrison in personnel policy revisions and updates.

Kelsey thanked everyone at The Center Foundation for the chance to complete her internship. Kelsey believes everyone at TCF is dedicated to what they do and want to be able to accomplish everything they set out to achieve.

### *Intern Ann Demkin ~*



Ann Demkin was a senior in Widener University's Social Work Bachelor's degree program when she began her internship with The Center Foundation. She is proud to be a former participant and graduate of the WomenCare Mentoring program.

Ann was excited to do her internship with TCF because she hoped to learn more about the trials and tribulations of what it takes to be a great social worker. Ann's positive attitude and work ethic contributed to the well-being of the clients The Center Foundation serves. She assisted program participants in many employment search activities, and helped parents connect to important resources for themselves and their children. Ann was also very hands on with Center Foundation events and helped in the planning of Holiday from the Heart and Carnival.

Ann successfully completed her year's internship with TCF and graduated from Widener with her BSW degree in May, 2014.

All of us at The Center Foundation are very proud of all that Ann has been able to accomplish!

## Young Parents Support Network

### A Successful Match Story



Shurelle Robinson and Candy McCabe were introduced at their first match meeting in December of 2012. At that time, Shurelle, a senior at Chester high school, was feeling overwhelmed and discouraged because she was unable to manage completing her senior project while caring for her baby. Fortunately, she found the support she needed in her mentor, Candy McCabe, who immediately helped Shurelle get organized and enabled her to come up with a workable strategy for tackling her senior project. Now, almost two years later, Shurelle looks back on that initial experience with the Center Foundation and her mentor as a forerunner to the successes she would not have believed she could experience.

These days Shurelle is still a busy mom and student, now in her third semester at Delaware County Community College, planning to receive her Associate's Degree and become a Medical Assistant. Shurelle's interest in health care is fueled by her desire to help others and she also hopes to be the best possible role model for her daughter, Faith. Her most recent success was being hired by Crozer Medical Center as a dietary aide. She is excited with all that is going on in her life and surprised at her own ability to take it all in stride.

Shurelle's mentor, Candy, is still in regular weekly contact with her. Candy remembers the early days acknowledging that it took time to build their relationship. "It took a while for Shurelle to trust me", Candy admits.

However, with time and commitment, Candy and Shurelle were able to open themselves up to a blossoming friendship, one that they each appreciate in their own ways. At a recent mentor training, Candy shared her experience with the trainees. When asked what she likes about being a mentor, Candy replied that she really knows that what she's doing is important and that it simply makes her feel good inside.



## WomenCare: An Aftercare Story-

### the rewards of hard work and follow-through

Josephine Worthington had a successful match with mentor, Marjorie Hipps. She obtained part time employment doing catering and became energized and hopeful about her potential and her future. Realizing that she wanted a job with more hours and benefits Josephine began working on updating her resume.



In the fall of 2013, staff at The Center Foundation heard about a job opening at the Penn State Extension Service and gave Josephine a call. She came into the office and began the online application to apply for a job as a Nutrition Educator and also developed a cover letter. Several days later she completed the application.

Soon afterwards Josephine received a call asking her to come in for an interview! The interview went well and she was contacted to come in for a second interview. Josephine again came in to The Center Foundation office to prepare for the second interview which involved doing a presentation in front

of a group. Josephine did very well and was offered the job with full time hours and benefits. She began working in January, 2014.

In March she was a presenter at the Hunger Conference held at Widener University. Josephine has completed extensive training in nutrition for her job, both online and at the Penn State main campus. She continues to teach nutrition information to community groups and schools in Delaware County.



Josephine with her former mentor Marjorie Hipps and The Center Foundation's Board Chair, Michael J.J. Campbell, at the recent 20th Anniversary Reunion.

## Special thank to our Donors

The Center Foundation is fortunate to be the beneficiary of support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other organizations. Thank you all for your continued support!

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