

Intensive Care

The Of Home, Family and Future foundation works on a small scale, with extraordinary results. **By Danielle Beurteaux**

Nancy Schulman vividly remembers the day more than two decades ago when a young therapy client from New York posed an alarming question in the most matter-of-fact way: “If you had to choose, would you be a prostitute or a drug dealer?”

That was early in Schulman’s 15-year career as a social worker and psychologist at various state treatment centers

The foundation currently runs two projects: a residence in Westchester County, New York, for female victims of domestic violence; and a college grant and mentoring program for residents of the Children’s Village Residential Treatment Center in Dobbs Ferry, New York. In both cases, the Schulmans keep the numbers small — providing a home for three women at a time and supporting two to four students through college. The Schulmans take on only motivated individuals, identified through a careful screening process. “We’re trying to take high-potential people and do enough to be transformational,” says Robert Schulman.

At the Of Home residence in Westchester, the Schulmans support women who typically wouldn’t qualify for government funding but are not yet on the road to a sustainable living. During their five years at the home, the women receive help with child care, education and legal fees, and take various life skills workshops.

Working with the Children’s Village, the Schulmans target a handful of bright students from among the 300 boys living at the venerable, 206-year-old institution. All have either been in trouble with the law or victims of abuse, and most have never had an appropriate relationship with a caring adult, says Jeremy Kohomban, TCV president and CEO. Through Of Home, a few graduating high school seniors who have already been accepted into college are connected with volunteer mentors — typically, accomplished professionals — who can help them negotiate the financial and social challenges that come with college life. Of Home, Family and Future writes the check for as much as five years of tuition; the mentor fills in as a parent figure.

For students, a mentor’s support can mean the difference between graduating from college or joining the 90 percent of kids from residential treatment centers who drop out. “We are all products of people who invested in us,” says Kohomban. One Of Home beneficiary, who earned a BA in political science from Binghamton University, part of the State University of New York system, is now completing a master’s in education at New York’s Bank Street College of Education. He will become a fifth-grade teacher in September.

In June, Robert Schulman will step down as Tremont CEO and become president of Rye Investment Management, the firm’s single-manager division. The move, he notes, will allow him more time to focus on the foundation and its pragmatic methods. “We’re not trying to make lives easy,” he says. “We’re trying to make them possible.”

For more information, visit www.ofhomefamilyandfuture.org.



Robert and Nancy Schulman aim to “do enough to be transformational.”

for children, but the query, and its implications, stayed with her. “No matter how good our therapeutic relationship was, so many other elements of their environment — abuse, drugs, violence — negated its effect,” she says. “There was so much we couldn’t do for them.”

Nancy, 61, and her husband, Robert, 60 — CEO of \$9 billion-in-assets Tremont Group Holdings, a fund of hedge funds in Rye, New York — eventually decided to build a new model of intervention. In 2001, working with the Easter Seals organization, they launched Of Home and Family. Three years later they struck out on their own, creating Of Home, Family and Future.

The article above from [Institutional Investor's Alpha](#) features some of the work of Of Home, Family and Future. While most of the article is right on target, there are a few clarifications to keep the record straight:

- The Educational Mentoring Initiative began under the auspices of OHFF 2 years ago. The young man mentioned in the article who became a fifth-grade teacher served as the model and inspiration for the program.
- OHFF gives annual grants of up to \$12,000 through the mentors, to cover all the unexpected expenses that accompany college, e.g. clothes, computers, trips home, etc. OHFF does not pay for college tuition or room and board, which is usually covered by other governmental programs.
- OHFF rents apartments at subsidized rates in a house owned by the charity and helps the selected families by providing grants for services.
- OHFF is, of course, a 501(c)(3) charity, not a foundation. Your contributions are fully tax deductible!