



OF HOME, FAMILY AND FUTURE

March 2009, Update

Dear Friends,

At a time when so many lives are being impacted by economic troubles, it is especially important that we help people who have the character and drive to succeed, but are facing very difficult circumstances. We know that students coming from the foster care system who have the courage to take on college, and families who are emerging from the nightmare of domestic violence have the strength to become true successes – with our help.

Amber (not her real name) was living in a car with her family before entering foster care. Despite the difficulties of the transition, she was able to finish high school and qualify for college at SUNY Pottsdam. Her acceptance into the OHFF program was due to her clear desire to create a strong future for herself. She knows that she has the ability to do it, with some help from people who care. Her first year in college is going well. Although accepting help from adults is difficult, she is beginning to build a good relationship with her mentor and is making progress toward her degree.

Amber is one of four new students and their mentors we have accepted this year into the OHFF Educational Mentoring Program. Our initial partners, The Childrens' Village and Abbott House, continue to be engaged and supportive, and our new partnership with Good Shepherd Services has given us access to many additional students as well as mentors. We strongly believe these kids just need a helping hand to succeed. Our job is to make sure the financial and mentor support is in place.

The Domestic Violence program is also delivering success. One of our first grant recipients is “graduating” from the program. During the past six years she and her two children have grown immeasurably from the state of fear and dependence in which they were, at best, surviving. The mother now holds an assistant manager position at a retailer, and her two children are doing great, both in and out of school. They now have the means and emotional stability to support an independent household – they are actually considering buying a condo. In the eyes of the smallest child, this is how they look today.



We took on a new family this fall in the Safe Passage program, developed uniquely for OHFF by Safe Space (formerly known as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). This mom and her children were able to move from living with the abuser's family to their own apartment in Queens, based on OHFF's rent guarantee to the landlord and a subsidy from OHFF to help pay the rent. The mother, a dialysis technician on Long Island, has been able to put her 6 year old daughter in a better school and her son is in a college prep program. In the words of her caseworker from Safe Space, "the family is 'stable', which may not seem very dramatic to most people, but is truly a miracle for them". The comprehensive support from OHFF, including grants for childcare and assistance with budgeting, makes this mother's hard work toward building a strong family possible.

During these tough economic times, we know that our donors want reassurance that every dollar they give is being managed responsibly. We want to reiterate the charity's financial philosophy.

- There is no paid staff for OHFF. All work done directly for OHFF is done by volunteers, including highly skilled, committed Officers, Directors and Student Mentors who receive no compensation.
- All administrative costs are funded by the founders, Bob and Nancy Schulman. This includes legal, accounting, fundraising, insurance, and mentor and candidate recruitment as well as any costs incurred as a result of working with the agencies who receive the grants. That means that all contributions go directly to the individual program recipients.
- The bulk of the programs funded by OHFF grants are administered through highly respected agencies, including The Children's Village, Good Shepherd Services and Safe Space. The programs are unique within these agencies for their focus on high potential individuals, rather than the broad spectrum of people in need that agencies cover, and the programs are entirely funded by OHFF. The agencies believe strongly enough in these programs that the administration and the day to day disbursements of grant monies are managed by the agencies, with no additional funding from OHFF.
- All the money that has been received from donations but has not yet been given out in grants is held in FDIC insured bank accounts and CD's.

As we move forward, we are very grateful for the help that so many people are offering to the recipients of the OHFF grants. Our partners as well as the mentors and other volunteers have shown that they are willing to put their time, effort and emotional support behind people who have the determination and strength of character to succeed. The women and children who are finally feeling safe and the students who have a whole new world opening in front of them continually show us how grateful they truly are.

Please continue your generous support for these families and students. You can "change the world" for them.

Warmly,
Nancy and Rob Schulman