

*Merry Christmas, Season's
Greetings and Happy New
Year from The Henry and
William Evans Home for
Children!*



Dear Friends,

I wonder what the founding board of directors would think of the make-up of our family this year... In 1949, that group (Clarke T. Cooper, Garland Quarles, Charlotte DeHart, Lee Miller, Helen Leigh Smith, Leonard Sirbaugh, Sara Clower and Robert E. Aylor) hired a house mother and placed children with her privately whom they knew needed a safe haven in the community.

This year, for the first time in decades, more than half of our children have been placed privately with us by homeless parents as they work to improve their circumstances while we continue to provide exactly the same service. The rest continue to come to us via local Social Services agencies after traditional family placements have been determined to be inappropriate. For the latter group, ours is the stop that can stop the madness having involved as many as 15 placements before ours.

We've had 20 children move into our home this year, and 14 move out! Our current household consists of 12: 6 boys and 6 girls. (Not counting those in the Lloyd House...) I've changed their names, but let me introduce them briefly before describing a little about our year.



Marty is 16. He has an amazing talent for making videos and uses this to make home movies of our crowd ... much to our delight. Want to know something

you might not have guessed about the Evans Home? We dance! Not a wallflower (at least at home) in the bunch. Marty's movies are full of crazy moves that defy anyone over the age of 30 to even considering attempting.

Cathay is 9. A self-proclaimed "diva," she is a busy little girl. It has been absolutely wonderful watching her transform from a very serious little adult into a more relaxed, fun loving girl using her energy in activities like cheerleading and "Girls on the Run." She still reverts to junior house parent status from time to time, with her hand on hip demand-pants attitude, but it quickly subsides.

Curtis is 14. He loves to play piano and Beyblades. And he's really good at piano. He has a wonderful musical ear and spends lots of time in the library developing his own songs as well as taking private lessons with a teacher from Shenandoah University! You can kind of tell a lot about Curtis' day by his hairstyle; when he looks like he just came out of the surf in Santa Barbara

things may get interesting.

Melvin is 10. He loves sports. Despite his small size and some health issues, he played park league football AND basketball this year... and loved them both! He is another who doesn't hide his feelings. In fact he rather enjoys showing them and his voice goes up. When he gets really upset only the mice can understand him. But his smile is worth the tantrums, which are subsiding as he realizes he doesn't need them.

Kahleeka is 13. She is one of our newest, having moved in in October. She loves animals, especially mini-pigs, and we just happen to have one who visits daily, ready for a lap, usually *her* lap, after school. One of the first things she tried with house parents was making up stories. Not unusual for our gang, when the truth is unspeakable ... but Kahleeka's stories, by comparison to most, were pretty over the top ... until Jaques came back ☺ (and then she just stared.) Funny how things come together.

Jaques is 17. He's back!! (It's a long story, but he's ours and we're his and we're thrilled!)



May is 5. She is a little girl who knows what she thinks about everything (and everyone) that she sees. If she looks your way with her lips pursed and her eyebrows furrowed she's about to share those thoughts out loud. And you, too, will know what she thinks. (She was the first to notice my November beard and not to care for it even a little bit.)

Jacaranda is 8. If there's one you have to look for in the crowd it's this one. When we were at the Air and Space museum she kept walking into people while she was gazing up at the airplanes ... and there were only a dozen or so in the hanger. A fun, happy spirit, she likes to play with the older girls ... but still needs a bedtime story!

Katy is 6. Always ready to smile, and then cry, and then smile again. Did I say she is 6? VERY sensitive. NO ONE expected her to get on the tube behind the wakeboard boat when we were in the Chesapeake Bay last summer ... but she hung on longer than anyone! She and May tried to be Daisies (little Girl Scouts), but even with house dad Mike sitting in and singing his best Daisy songs, they were just too shy ☺.

Dmitri is 9. An awesome athlete, he too played both football and basketball this year. He also fancies himself an expert at Beyblades (and in case you are wondering, those have nothing to do with the trip to the Chesapeake). A warm smile that will melt you deep inside He loves pretty much any activity as long as it involves some degree of competition and a lot of reinforcement. (Who doesn't)



Jacqueline is 12. She has been with us since just before last Christmas. She plays the clarinet beautifully, loves to dance and entertain, and has no appreciation for the rule of 14 before dating at the Evans Home. (Sigh). She loves to read and is our resident bookworm.

Sam is 8. This kid has found one of his innate talents. A couple of weeks ago there was a community wrestling takedown on a Saturday and our little guy was undefeated. As a result he was invited to participate on a local travel team. (Yeah!) And will be recognized by the school board for this accomplishment!

Billy is 8. He has a particular skill for hunting down bits of bacon dropped en route to the dining room from the kitchen. He also serves as the resident doorbell and bed-buddy for anyone who is home sick. He loves all of his children, and waits patiently for Laura every morning, but Winona is the only one who can make him run into his kennel with one word. (Yes, he's a dog.)

So that's the crew. At the helm (and the heart of the home) are Winona and Mike Powers and Beth Ann and Jack Guthridge. These are our house parents who live here every other week. They prepare every meal, supervise every chore and laundry cycle, help with all homework, rock away every bad dream ... and even let the tooth fairy in when she knocks.

Behind them are Kris Short, Program Manager, and Laura Regan, Program Director. Kris keeps us organized and Laura keeps us legal. We also welcomed a new member to our family, Liz Brenner! Liz is our Administrative Assistant. And, like all of us, she wears many hats. But most importantly, she is the voice you will likely hear when you call!

This year started with a breakfast / pool party in a local hotel after the Holidays! Then a local service club came and helped us *undecorate*, what a cool thing to do. In February we did Valentine's things, and in March we did winter stuff ... plus we got to see the Harlem Ambassadors play, then we went museum hopping in DC during Spring Break.



In April, SU's football and men's Golf teams spent an entire morning moving stuff around for us so we could move into our new storage building that Handley's construction class built for us last year. And we had an improv group called "The Loaf" come in and do a special performance that had our kids in stitches. April also means Pancake Day (sweet), and the beginning of a long-running overhaul of our library and gardens by a Girl Scout troop. Finally, we received the donation and set-up of a greenhouse for one of our residents who wants to be a botanist in the future!

May meant Apple blossom, Prom and a high water usage notice ... lots of volunteers and donations helped us enjoy everything fun about the bloom as always; Bell's had us looking fabulous for the Prom, again as always ... and two plumbers helped repair two ancient leaks to remedy the water issue (as ...).

June brought the last day of school (!), and summer camps, mini-golf, Royals games, a private showing of Despicable Me (courtesy of Hospice), a pool party, and fantastic seats at Orioles AND Nationals Games.

More summer stuff included a National Zoo trip, more summer day camps, the trip to the Chesapeake Bay, Massanutten Water Park, and finally, Hershey Park!! One of our homeless children summed it all up, "This was the best summer ever!"

Fall meant back to the school rhythm and rituals of morning routines and chores, after school homework and reading, family visits ... and week-end fun! Add to that extra-curricular activities, employment by our older kids, scouts, and little league, pretty soon here came Halloween! Now after not having young kids last year, this year was a real treat. The only true challenge was deciding who was old enough to go on the haunted hayrides and who would lose sleep until Christmas if they did.

I haven't begun to chronicle the happenings of our year, just to give you a sense of the cadence. Somewhere in there was an all day trip to Robert Duvall's farm, a bunch of family outings including fishing and splashing in the river, bowling, a dozen birthday parties, two rock concerts ... you get the picture.

Can I share something frustrating? There is a bill in Washington, DC right now by Senator Orin Hatch asking to remove federal funding from group homes because of "...negative outcomes for older youth in care [because of] a continued reliance on group homes. These homes are routinely targeted by [sex] traffickers, and are often warehouses for youth who are rarely, if ever, allowed to engage in healthy age appropriate activities and



social events."

I am sorry, but I get so weary of fighting against this stereotype! Our children are not here because they have done anything wrong and they have, if anything, more exposure to a wide variety of "age appropriate activities and social

events" than many. Thanks to you!

And they are so impressive. Remember the former resident who invited me to her graduation from Medical School last year? Well, this past June her sister (also a former resident), a hard working single mother in Louisiana, invited me to her graduation from college as well. Of course, I went!

It is difficult to describe the profound privilege we adults in the Evans Home feel about the time we share in the lives of these children. They are our heroes. They inspire us by virtue of their perseverance, resilience and their capacity for joy. You are their patrons. Without your support, none of this would be possible.





On behalf of the adults and children and pets of the Evans Home, I thank you once again with all of our hearts, and I wish you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful New Year!!

Sincerely,

Marc

Evans Home Staff: Winona & Mike Powers, Beth Ann & Jack Guthridge, Laura Regan, Kris Short, Liz Brenner, Marc Jaccard.

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