



hms school news

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy • Founded 1882 • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • Spring 2014

Executive Director's Message

By Diane L. Gallagher, PhD

Mother, father, grandparent, sister, teacher, doctor or student: each of us needs to feel needed. For our students, who often depend on others round-the-clock for even the most basic aspects of daily living, this



is even more imperative. Our students are interested in the world around them and care about their community. Each one has something to give back, although their means of giving varies widely, as it does for students in any school or organization. In this newsletter, you'll read about current and former HMS students Steven Bomze, Christian Matcovich, Brett March and

Amanda Long, and how they have each given of their talents and skills to help others.

As you've read time and again in this column, one of our primary goals is to provide our students with as typical a school experience as possible. Learning the benefits of caring for one's community through volunteerism is part of this. Facilitating community service at HMS takes careful thought, planning and coordination, far more than would be required by our students' able-bodied peers. In the end, the result is the same: a child learns she can have an impact on and help others with needs different from her own.

As we work to build this culture of giving, we are also reaping its rewards. Our graduates regularly return to volunteer at HMS, serving as role models who inspire our students. Each time they show up, they demonstrate the importance of donating one's time and concern to benefit others.

Just like other aspects of our overall education program, empowering our students to give back is surprisingly expensive. Developing opportunities draws upon the skills of our entire village of therapists,

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Giving Back: HMS Students Show Others the Gifts They Have to Offer

By Annie Oberfield



Christian Matcovich, a 19 year-old HMS student, is a Life Scout who wants very much to follow in his big brother's footsteps by becoming an Eagle Scout, the highest rank in scouting. Through his local troop, Christian learned about Operation Christmas Child, a non-profit organization that delivers shoeboxes full of toys, school supplies, personal care items, clothing, and more to children all over the world. Christian was immediately interested in participating as a way to serve families in need. Soon he was pitching his project to every HMS department. He sold fruit and received a grant from Lowes for \$100. He used these funds to shop for supplies for boys and girls ages two to fourteen. All the donations were brought to his church where he helped to coordinate 25 volunteers to pack boxes. While volunteers (including friends, family and HMS staff) prepared boxes for shipping, Christian served as a leader in charge of quality control, making sure all the boxes contained the appropriate materials. Thrilled with his success, Christian collected enough donations to fill 113 boxes that he has tracked as having been shipped as far as Malawi and Rwanda.



Brett March, a 14 year-old HMS student, has found another creative way to give back. After his family's first visit to a Ronald McDonald House in Hershey, PA, they learned about their pop tab collection program that are redeemed for funds that helps offset the House's expenses. So Brett and his family got involved, asking friends and family to save their tabs and to spread the word. Over the past few years they

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Charitable Giving at HMS School: How Your Gifts Bridge the Gap

Erica Cheslock

Thanks to the expertise of dedicated staff, consistent implementation of new technologies, and state-of-the-art residential facility, HMS School (a PA approved private school) is one of the leaders in the nation for serving children with complex needs from cerebral palsy and related neurologically-based disabilities. We have seen countless numbers of students move on to life beyond HMS, taking with them increased independence and self confidence, living lives as adults. A critical piece to the HMS experience is the funding which allows our program to operate and thrive during the regular school year and Extended School Year summer program.

Most students attend HMS School with the agreement and support of their local school districts, because the districts cannot provide the highly focused therapeutic and educational programs needed by students with significant and complex disabilities. The state of Pennsylvania provides funding towards the school program for most PA students, including residential services for those who qualify. The funding that we receive each year from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) supports traditional educational programming, therapies, and nursing support at HMS that directly affect children's participation in learning, but the allocation from the state cannot extend beyond these essential services. That allocation has not changed in five years, despite the fact that we have seen an increase in the number of students seeking enrollment. Tuition payments from out-of-state enrollment and private sources make up the remainder of tuition income for support of our students, and may be the only options for families wishing to enroll

at HMS. As with many private schools, tuition rates, however paid, do not cover all costs that we consider necessary to support the quality of program we provide. In the case of our provision of services to meet the



HMS student Annie uses an iPad with her nurse Roberta while attending the HMS Expressive Arts Fest

increasing needs of our students, HMS contributes a significant and growing portion of that overall cost. Therefore, there is still a nearly \$600,000 funding gap that needs to be covered through individual donor contributions, private, and government grants.

It is critical that HMS is able to cover this short fall in order to continue many of the programs that currently exist. These include many in-school, after-school, weekend, and extended school year activities such as therapeutic horseback riding, Walnut Street Theatre groups, dance/movement therapy, respite care for enrolled students, and recreational field trips. Donor support also allows HMS to offer scholarships to qualifying families for the day and/or residential program through the HMS Scholarship Fund. This fund supports families in

financial need, especially those seeking to enroll their child in the residential program. Because of the existence of this fund, HMS has been able to offer additional services that greatly enhanced opportunities for independence and growth for several students.

The parents' deep appreciation is reflected with these comments: "The tradition of HMS going back to 1882 and the selfless families that helped support the school from its inception through today and beyond is truly remarkable. We would like to thank the entire HMS staff and the board of directors for everything you have done to help our family."

The HMS Scholarship Fund is also supported through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. EITC is a state of Pennsylvania program that allows companies who qualify to donate to an approved scholarship organization, in return for a 90% tax credit. More details about EITC can be found on our website under "Ways to Support HMS."

Donors play a key role in the HMS family atmosphere that has existed since our founding in 1882. We realize that it takes the community, old and new friends, parents, and partners to help continue HMS's impactful work on the lives of every student. Please join us in the mission of educating, nurturing and caring for children with cerebral palsy and other brain injuries with the goal of assisting each individual in achieving his or her maximum potential.

Please contact Erica Cheslock, Development Associate, at 215-222-2566 x205 or echeslock@hmschool.org for more information on how to support HMS School.

Giving Back/From page 1

have donated to each Ronald McDonald House where they have stayed, including New Brunswick, NJ; Hershey, PA; Wilmington, DE and Philadelphia. Brett's HMS teacher, Nancy Barrow, has encouraged her students to collect tabs for over 15 years, with her class hand delivering their tabs to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. As Brett's mom Tracey explains, "Brett's presence has played a great role in spreading the message to everyone we know (who, in turn, has spread the message very far). Just by being who he is, he shows people the kinds of families the Houses benefit. People are inspired by Brett and his story and that inspiration causes action".

Donating artwork through Philadelphia-based Fresh Artists, a non-profit that displays large reproductions of children's artwork in corporate settings, has also given our students the opportunity to donate. Corporations donate to Fresh Artists and the art installations are a thank you gift to its donors. Fresh Artists uses the donations provide art supplies to public schools in under-served areas of Philadelphia. Amanda Long, an HMS alumnae, donated a piece of her art to Fresh Artists that quickly became one of their most popular pieces. That donation alone is responsible for funding 3,250 pints of tempera paint for Philadelphia classrooms. Many other HMS students have donated their artwork to Fresh Artists as well. Recently, a collaborate piece made by current and former students titled *Sunflowers*, was chosen to become

part of a national campaign for Renuzit air freshener. A reproduction of the artwork will appear on Renuzit bottles nationwide, enabling Fresh Artists to provide even more supplies to Philadelphia area public school art programs.

Last November more than 2500 runners turned out for a marathon to benefit Alex's Lemonade Stand, a locally-based nonprofit which raises funds to help fight childhood cancers. Each runner who crossed the finish line received a medal; some received theirs from Steven Bomze, a 19 year-old HMS student who has a history of giving



Christian with all the wrapped and filled shoe boxes he collected for Operation Christmas Child

back. "It is very simple, Steven requires people to assist him daily. It is important that he feels that he is able to help others in any way that he can" his mother Judy says. "However, it is a challenge to find activities where he can be actively involved and feel a sense of meaningful participation."

Many of us don't realize the privilege we have of being able to take part in meaningful community service, of being able to engage in activities that address our community's needs and feel the value of

Staff Highlights

HMS would like to recognize the following employees for their years of service anniversaries:

5 Years

Andrew Barnes | *Building Custodian*
Fallon Cesarini | *Physical Therapist*
Jessica Clay | *Teacher Assistant*
Nancy Hale | *Social Worker*
Ericka Jarrell | *Accounting/Human Resources Assistant*
Alysia Reid | *Teacher Assistant*
Creola Smith | *Feeder*

10 Years

Maurice Holloway | *Building Custodian*

15 Years

Maxine Fussell-Mills | *Feeder*
Marianne Gellert-Jones | *Speech/Language Therapist*
Dawn Rainey | *Assistive Technologist*
Kenya Table | *Certified Nurse Assistant*
Debra Zlotnick | *Physical Therapist*

20 Years

Judy Bonghi | *Human Resources Manager*

30 Years

Charlie Harris | *Recreation Therapist*

35 Years

Val Jorgensen | *Teacher Assistant*

giving back. For our students who depend on the assistance of others, finding ways to give back, using the gifts they have to offer can be an uphill challenge, but with their perseverance, it's also an invaluable experience.



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A publication of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, dedicated to reporting about student life, school programs and important events.

James E. Gowen, II | *President of the Board of Trustees*

Diane Gallagher Ph.D. | *Executive Director*

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HMS School is nonsectarian, admitting/serving students from any locality without regard to race, color, religion, disability [except as limited by PDE program approvals], ancestry, national origin, including limited English proficiency, age [within school ages] or gender.

The Mission of HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy is to educate, nurture, and care for children and youth with motor impairments who may also have other disabilities resulting from brain injury with the goal of assisting each individual in achieving his or her maximum potential. HMS School aims to facilitate independence and improve the quality of life for its students in a safe and secure environment so they can lead fulfilling, stimulating lives in their present and future environments.

Please consider a gift to HMS School through your organization's United Way campaign by designating HMS as the recipient. HMS is #00240 on the donor choice form for the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey and is listed on the UW website, www.uwsepa.org. HMS is also eligible to receive United Way funds from other regions.

Director's Message/From page 1

teachers and nurses and necessitates state-of-the-art technology to allow our students to communicate, participate, make their choices known, and move toward action. As you'll read about in these pages, the cost of providing the full spectrum of services to our students is not met by our tuition income alone. That gap between tuition received and the cost of these services is more than half a million dollars for this fiscal year. The irony that we must rely upon our donors' generosity to enable us to provide our students with the opportunity to give back, does not escape us. Educating the "whole" student requires that we do so.

We do not ask for these funds lightly, rather, we take very seriously the importance of making a place for our students in our community and our society. Our success has the power to change attitudes well beyond our school, and to help people recognize the meaningful contributions that every one of our students can make when we give them the support necessary to bring out their gifts and abilities.

As you read about Steven, Christian, Brett and Amanda, and think about all of our students, we hope you will recognize the value of this undertaking and join hands with us to help us make this possible.