



**Providence
Center** 

A Ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Fall 2016

Rising Above the Trauma

Providence Center was interviewed for an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer about life expectancy rates in Philadelphia. In Fairhill, life expectancy is less than in Iraq or Syria.

Violent crime alone doesn't explain this disparity. The article explores the impact of toxic stress and trauma on children, and how traumatic events in childhood can lead to life-long health impacts, including heart disease and diabetes.

All of the children we serve have been exposed to violence. Aisha, a 12 year old who has been in our program for four years, spoke about how nervous she feels playing outside with her younger siblings because if something happened, a stray bullet, "it's going to have me thinking it's my fault."

If you need someone watching out for you, you could do worse than Aisha. She is strong and we are excited to watch her grow as a leader. But she is 12, and she shouldn't be bearing this burden. She should be able to just be a kid.

At Providence Center, children learn to manage their stress, talk through their feelings, and solve their problems non-violently. Our children won't be defined by statistics. Our children will be defined by their unique selves, by the dignity of their individual lives, by the grace and the promise that is in each one of them. ♦



Aisha, on the right, with Nathan at the Peace Walk

Our Mission

Committed to North Philadelphia's Fairhill community since 1993, Providence Center offers education programming for children, youth, and adults. Our mission is to educate people to have the power and spirit to transform their lives and community.

Our Programs

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- "Power" After School
- Teen Leaders
- Summer Leadership Academy

ADULT EDUCATION

- English Language Classes
- Individual ESL Tutoring

FAITH AND FAMILY

- Prayer Group
- Women's Retreats

A Transformational Gift



Teen Leader Vee reads with Joseph

We are excited to announce that the Society of the Holy Child Jesus has committed \$100,000 to Providence Center's capital campaign! This gift is possible because of a bequest which the Sisters have received.

For so many, including many of you reading this, a Holy Child education has been transformational. It has taught people how to think, how to be creative, how to live a good life, and how to "be the self that God wants you to be." It has helped to protect the sacredness of childhood and lifted up what is unique and good in each person. Providence Center serves as an example of how this educational mission can be extended to economically poor communities that cannot

sustain the larger institutions of the church. Indeed, the students in these communities, like the one served by Providence Center, are perhaps most in need of the transformational promise of a Holy Child education. We are grateful for this gift and humbled to continue the Society's legacy in our new building. ♦

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***We'll be moving
to our new building
in Early 2017!***

The Summer Leadership Academy

In Providence Center's Summer Leadership Academy, high school students develop their personal leadership style, learn how to be role models for younger children, and prepare for college. The six week program also included trips to St. Francis Inn, Philabundance, and Youth United for Change so the teens could learn how to serve their community. Here is what some of our students had to say about the experience:

"I believe I'm very different than I was six weeks ago. I now feel like I have the skills to solve any problem, it's just practicing how and when to use them." Sophia

"I want to do more for my community and help the homeless." Victor



Above and below: The teens serving at the St. Francis Inn soup kitchen.



Sophia gets a lesson from World Team Tennis during a college visit to Villanova.

"I learned new skills to help people in tough situations." Dante

"We can be leaders to kids by showing them how much giving back to the community means and that they can achieve any of their dreams through hard work." Krystal



The Best Way to Spend Your Free Time, by Melody Regino

It was the first day of my vacation and I had a 12:00 appointment at the Providence Center's Summer Leadership Academy. While many would say having lunch with teenagers is no way to start a vacation, those folks don't know Savannah, Victor, Krystal, Dante, Alex, and Sophia. They were an eclectic group of eager extroverts, pensive introverts, and dedicated young leaders alike. We spent the hour discussing the Providence Center Board, my role as a member, and what it means to be a young professional. They asked poignant questions, shared their future ambitions, and talked about the challenges that come with being responsible for children after the school day. We discussed how to create firm boundaries, while also being empathic and warm. An hour flew by and I wasn't ready to leave. I wanted to hear more about the engaging activities they planned for their students and learn more about their unique perspectives as teen leaders. Spending time with the talented teens and experiencing the dynamic leadership of Maura Bernt, Director of Youth Programs, was truly the best way to start my vacation. It reenergized my work as a board member and it reaffirmed my commitment to this amazing organization. ♦



Melody Regino serves on Providence Center's Board of Directors. She is Dean of Lower School and Executive Director of the Horizons program at Greene Street Friends School. Here she is, lower left, with students from the Summer Leadership Institute.

Meet Savannah, an Inspirational Leader

Savannah is a senior at Edison high school, and this is her second year as a Teen Leader with Providence Center. She brings joy and energy to the young children in our Kindergarten to third grade classroom. Her face lights up when she talks about the kids: "Seeing that they really look up to me and care about what I say, it makes me feel like I'm important. I know I can be important to someone else." Savannah was a critical support to one Kindergartener who came to us without any pre-school. "She didn't know how to spell her name. She didn't know how to identify her ABCs. I helped her with her homework; I helped her practice every day to spell her name; I helped her with her ABCs; I helped her to learn how to count. It brought me so much joy and happiness."



Above: Savannah and Nathan at the Rosemont College Halloween Party.

Below: With Samaiyah and sidewalk chalk
Left: Bonding with Iryana



Working with the children has also helped Savannah as she is finishing high school. "I've taught myself techniques and ways to be patient. Helping the little kids with homework, breaking it down in little steps, that actually helped me. If I can teach them to break it down, let me break down my own homework. Teaching them actually taught me."

Now, Savannah is preparing to go to college, and she wants a career working with children as a pediatrician or case worker. As a Teen Leader, Savannah has learned to believe in her future. "I used to think *I'm just going to go work and go to school*, I didn't have plans for myself. Now, I set goals for myself, I have plans, I have lists, I know what I'm looking forward to doing. I'm looking forward to pushing myself to

accomplish what I want. Now, I believe in myself. Now, I'm certain about what I want. Now, I know I can do it. I'm going to do it.



"If you have a mindset that you want to help and give back, this job is *the job*. We help, and we give back, and we receive. It is just, good. I want people to know that Providence is really a life changer. I grew as a person. I grew as a student. I grew as a daughter. I really grew." ♦

You Can Make a Difference!

Please join with us to make Providence Center's building a safe and joyful home for children, teens and adults. Because of your support, children learn to believe in their futures, teens become role models and go to college, and adults gain the skills and confidence to build better lives for themselves and the children who depend on them. Thank you!

- * Donate online with your credit card: ProvidenceCenterSHCJ.org/donate
- * Sign up online to become a monthly donor
- * Ask your employer to match your gift
- * Consider a bequest to Providence Center
- * Invite us to come and speak, or visit us. We'd love to meet you! ♦



Teen Leader Isaiah bonding with Angel, a student he mentors.

Volunteer with Us!

Volunteer on your own or bring your family, co-workers, or parish!
There are many ways you can make a difference!

- * We need reading buddies for the kids! Come and read books with the kids after school.
- * We need tutors after school to help kids with their homework.
- * We need help in our office with data entry and mailings.
- * Let us know if you have a trade or skill you'd like to contribute, such as computer maintenance, carpentry, plumbing, etc.



You can also volunteer to help us collect school supplies or raise funds for our programs. Contact us for ideas!

To volunteer, contact:
info@providencecentershcj.org



Help Us Spread the Word!

Invite us to speak at your parish or community group! If you would like to arrange a presentation, contact David Chiles: dchiles@providencecentershcj.org



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