

Mercy Matters

A Publication of Mercy Home for Children
Spring & Summer Vol 34 Issue 1



Gallery in the Garden Inspires

At Mercy Home, we want our residents to soar in every aspect of their lives. Our annual **Gallery in the Garden** celebrates the creative side of our residents and offers a chance for neighbors, staff, and gifted individuals to mix and demonstrate their interests and talents.

This year was a wonderful showcase of diverse talent. It was the perfect night for a garden party as live jazz sailed through the evening air and artists from Mercy Home and the local community came together to exhibit their work. Almost 100 people walked through Mercy Home's garden to enjoy the festive atmosphere and support our **Creative Arts Therapy** and **Plant-Grow-Give** urban farm program.

The evening featured paintings from our very own James Rosa from Warren Residence and the photography of Jahlel Goodwin from Littlejohn Residence

(continued)



Mercy Home's Gifted Artists

Jahlel Goodwin from Littlejohn Residence has been shooting photographs for one year. His work has gained popularity for its sensitivity and attention to detail, particularly his interest in buildings and structures.

James Rosa from Warren Residence has used painting to express his interests in faces and expressions.

Both participate in our **Gifted Artists Program** which provides art therapy for our residents who have an artistic inclination. We currently have 17 artists that participate. The work is presented at gallery events.

In 2012, Mercy Home partnered with the Pratt Institute to create the **Gallery in the Garden** to showcase the talent of our resident artists and their graduate students.



Gallery in the Garden

from Littlejohn Residence. They exhibited alongside of some Brooklyn's most talented artists from the Pratt Institute and the local community: Kurler Warner, Tonia Herrero, Michael Myers, Liz Gatling, Jen Signet, Jennifer Milbouer, Megan Howard, Niloofar Alishahi, Crystal Chen, Dena Rothman, Courtney Astrid and Cici Ramirez.

Set in the historic 19th century walled courtyard, the grounds of Mercy Home provide a peaceful sanctuary to busy Brooklyn streets. Lifting through the evening air was the music of Ayako Shirasaki, an accomplished pianist, accompanied by David Kelly on drums and Noriko Ueda on stand-up bass. Wine was donated by Karin Torres at Corkscrew Wines. Johnny's Selected Seeds donated a raffle basket of seeds and gardening supplies.

The event was organized by the Emerging Leaders of Mercy (ELM), a group of young professionals in the private sector who make Mercy Home the charity of their choice. This event helped us raise over \$1,600.

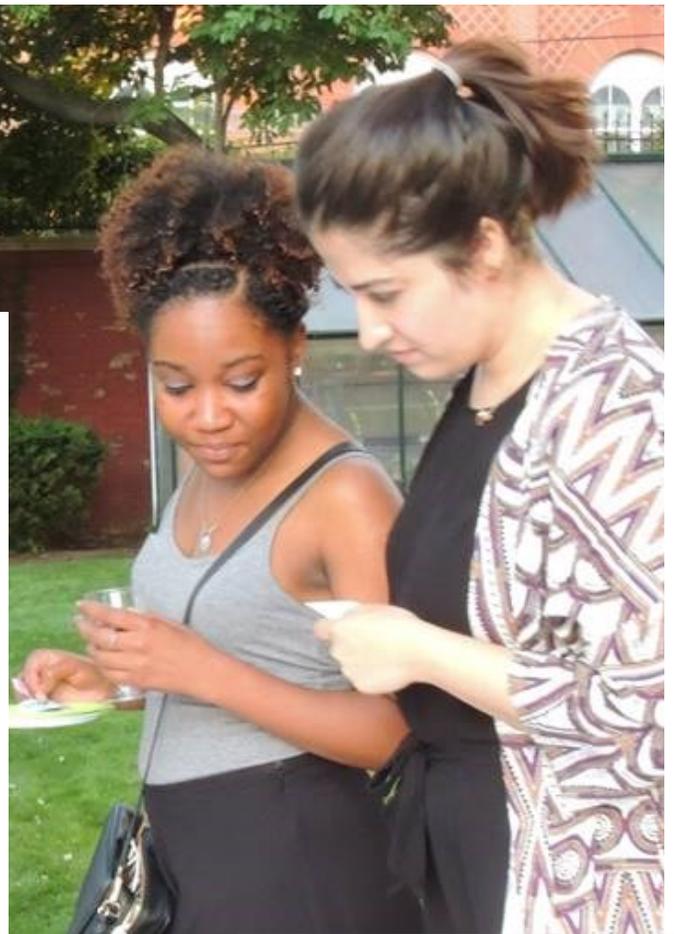


Photo: Jahlel Godwin



Mercy Home seeks to make a lasting impact on the lives of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and support their low-income families. Under a new executive director, Mercy Home is elevating innovative programs that promote life skills, life long.

Mercy Home's new Executive Director, Janice Aris, was the featured profile in the National Catholic Reporter by Sister Camille D'Arienzo on May 24, 2016. When asked how she started working in the field, Janice stated that "it started when I was a teen member for "Sing out Queens" which ministered to developmentally disabled children through song in residential campus settings." "I am fulfilled in my work and my family knows that in doing this work, I am at my best."



Melodic Soul and Peace of Heart Join Forces

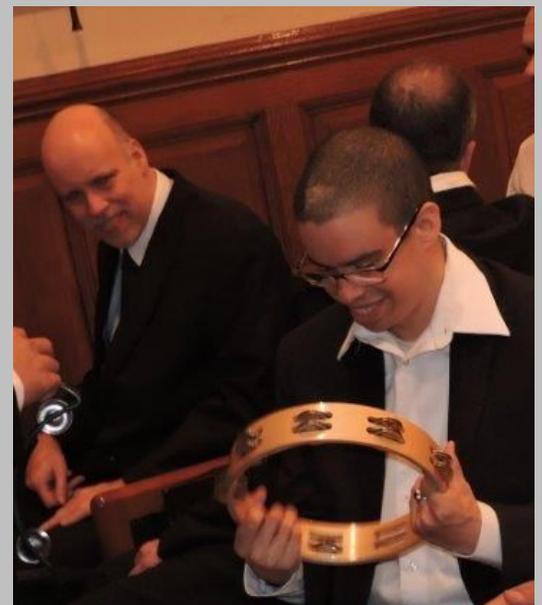
On April 27th, Mercy Home's beautiful chapel resounded with encores during a private concert featuring staff and our gifted residents in partnership with the Peace of Heart Choir. This is the second year of the collaboration organized by Mercy Home's performance band, **Melodic Soul**.

One of the magical things about this unique musical collaboration is the opportunity to bring people from all walks of life together for an enjoyable evening of music. About 150 people came together to celebrate community and harmony through music.

Mercy Home has had a musical group for residents for more than three decades. Today's band regularly features about 15 individuals who write and compose music and perform in concerts. The Musical Director is Anna Palumbo, a licensed board certified music therapist.

The Peace of Heart Choir was founded shortly after the 9/11 tragedies.

The concert was organized by Joseph's Residence Direct Support Professional, Michael-Anne Catelinet, and Miguel Torres-Castro, Director of Support Programs. Jahlel Goodwin from Littlejohn Residence took photographs and Respite Worker Octavia Vaughn shot video of the event.



Staff Appreciation Day



Spring is a special season at Mercy Home. Every year at this time we honor and celebrate the spirit of Mercy embodied in our staff as they elevate our values and mission. Their work is vital to creating programs of quality and distinction that promote life skills, life long.

This year's Staff Appreciation Day on May 26th highlighted the contributions of unique and committed individuals who are strengthening and expanding our innovative programs.

Marvin Duncan, Parrish Hill, and Kyle Peele received the Catherine McAuley Award for their exemplary work in the **Plant-Grow-Give (PGG)** program. Their contributions demonstrate core values of respect, trust, teamwork, care, and compassion

After the awards Mercy Home celebrated with a traditional feast from Ludwig's.



Fund the Fifteen!

On March 11th, with signs proclaiming "Fund the Fifteen," Mercy Home joined demonstrations outside the Governor's Manhattan office in support of a wage increase for Direct Support Professionals (DSP). The DSPs are our frontline workers—the day-to-day caregivers and, frequently, family to our residents.

The "bFair2Direct" campaign, organized by a coalition of agencies, conducted well-attended rallies to demonstrate support for raising the salaries for these dedicated staff.

Core Values Awards

Respect

Jennifer Gilkes

Teamwork

Miguel Torres-Castro

Care & Compassion

Vannessa Brown

Trust

Jennilyn Robertson





Creative Arts Breaks for Summer



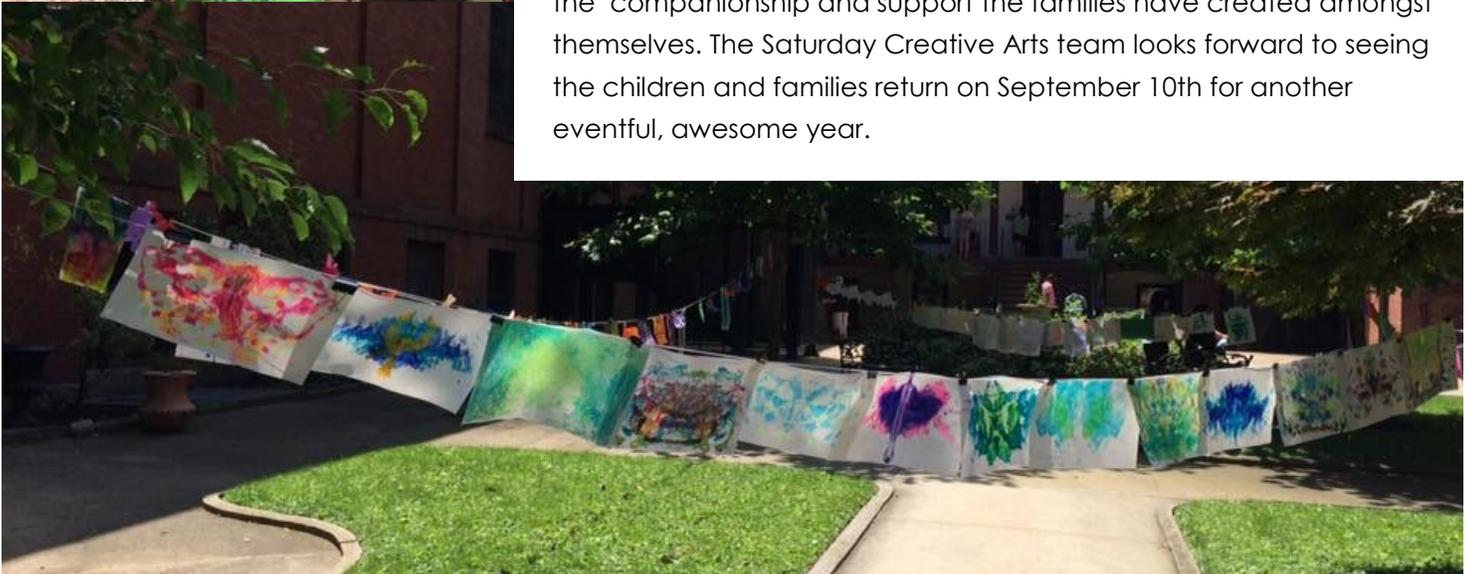
The last day for the **Creative Arts Program** on June 25th was a bittersweet transition to summer. Families and staff mingled with one another and chatted about upcoming summer plans surrounded by artwork that was created throughout the year by the children. The children identified their work and showed it to family members, selecting some to take home for remembrance and reflection.

Everyone gathered around a mini potluck celebration to talk about another great year of progress and growth and discussed possibilities for next term. We were “inspired” this year by the different milestones celebrated—whether it was birthdays or personal achievements, like progress in sessions, a breakthrough in expressing an emotion, being able to adapt to changes, or welcoming back the return of students from years ago.



My daughter Amber is growing up as part of the Mercy Home family. They keep her safe and treat her with care and compassion and express joy in seeing her every week — Michelle Pisani

The families and children we serve look forward to coming to program on Saturdays. It warms our hearts to see the joy on their child’s face coming out of sessions and to witness the companionship and support the families have created amongst themselves. The Saturday Creative Arts team looks forward to seeing the children and families return on September 10th for another eventful, awesome year.





McGivney Makeover

Sometimes the most important lessons we learn come from listening to our residents. Recently, seven volunteers from Crossroads Christian Church in Brooklyn partnered with the women residing at McGivney Residence to transform their bedrooms. When we opened the door of possibility to them, a rainbow flooded in amazing us all.

Artist Stephanie Johnson was charged with morphing pink, orange, and glitter into a feminine design for Kerriane Carpenter and Sandra Ward. Jody Edwards worked with Gina Villani to incorporate her love of family with Nautical, Modern, and Southwestern flair using plum, teal, and silver. Victory Wesp, another resident, has long stated that her favorite color is purple and it would be easy to assume that the walls of her room would be



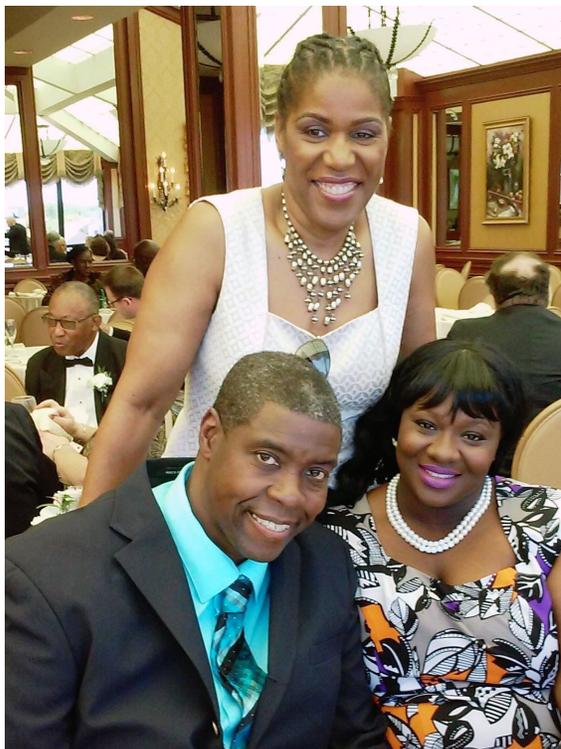
adorned in shades of this hue. But when presented with 25 paint cards each featuring three colors, she surprised us all by choosing aqua.

The unveiling was exciting. After shopping, painting, and arranging, the rooms were ready for viewing. Gina was speechless and hugged her designer, with the sign of friend. Victory sat at her new desk and worked on a puzzle, feeling immediately serene. Sandra and Keri each beamed with amazement, asking “for me?” For all of us, it was a special collaboration: we felt the artists had not only enhanced our residents' living spaces, but enriched their lives.



Plant-Grow-Give (PGG) Flourishes

Hot off of winning Mercy Home's Core Values Award, participants in our **Day Habilitation** program are back to doing what they do best — helping others. PGG started most of the seeds this year in the greenhouse. We soon had an abundance of carrots, tomatoes, hot and sweet peppers, celery, eggplant and lettuce. In just 4 weeks, our urban farmers donated 70 lbs. of vegetables.



Mercy Home was selected as a beneficiary of the Long Island Chapter of the Knights of Columbus & Columbiettes charity drive.

The June 12th, 2016 gala celebrated more than 60 years of partnership with the Knights. Mercy Home's Executive Director, Janice Aris, addressed the gathering to extend heartfelt thanks for their support of our work.

Pictured here with Janice are Colleen Martindale, Frank Keating Residence Manager, and Maurice Edwards, resident at McGivney Residence.

2016 Beach Bucks Raffle

This year, 137 people entered our raffle helping to raise more than \$2,000 to support enrichment services for our residents.

Thank you to everyone who participated—and a very special thank you to **Michael Carbone** who donated back his winnings and **Mary McManus** who made a \$50 donation.

WINNERS

July 1, 2016

Jane Kohler \$200

July 4, 2016

Micheal Carbone \$25

July 6, 2016

Sister Elizabeth Slattery \$25

July 8

Robert Lohrey \$50

July 11

John Brophy \$25

July 13

Mary Sullivan \$75

July 15

Alice DeSantis \$100

July 18

Ronald Brooks \$50

July 20

Dorothy Kreidemaker \$75

July 22

Rose Flath \$50

July 25

Richard Warren \$50

July 27

Rose Lessler \$25

July 29

Barbara Slattery \$25

Commemoratives January — July 2016

IN MEMORY OF

Kimberly Sentowski

Charles Sentowski
Catherine & Thomas Leonick

William and Ethel Bond

James F. Bond

Rita Shelley

Sister Linda Esposito
Sister Pat Gale
Mary Meloro
Frank & Margaret Barbarino

Mary Catherine Taylor

Mary & John Sullivan

Catherine M. Mayer & Elizabeth Mayer

Katherine Mayer

Yolanda Ortal

Sister Linda Esposito

Richard Brady

Margaret & Richard Brady

Emma Polito

Angela Pionegro
Sister Linda Esposito

Thomas McElhinney

Sister Mary De Pazzi

David Burke

Mary & Dennis Glacken

Jim McElroy

Carmen & Edward Aquilone

IN HONOR OF

Sister Kay Crumlish

Ed & Tina Moore

Jubiliarians

Sister Marie Carolyn

GET WELL WISHES

The Ziegler Family

Florence Policastro

MOTHER'S DAY REMEMBRANCES

Paula & Ed Antonio

We thank the following generous donors who thoughtfully made bequests to Mercy Home:

Barbara Scheele
S J Princi



It is with great sadness that, during the month of August, Mercy Home felt the loss of Stefan Sztukowski, known as Ritchie. He was a long-term worker at Visitation Residence. Herma Mansfield, Program Manager at Visitation, who worked with him for over 20 years said that he was "a very peaceful guy" who "always had something kind to say" to the residents. Mercy Home hosted a mass for Ritchie on August 30th.

MERCY HOME FOR CHILDREN
273 WILLOUGHBY AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11205



WWW.MERCYHOMENY.ORG

Non-Profit Organ.
US Postage
PAID
Brooklyn, NY
Permit No. 979

Upcoming Events

- **First Day Saturday Respite/Creative Arts** — *Saturday, September 10th, 2016.*
- **Family Spirit Day:** a day of celebration for our residents and their friends and family — *Sunday, September 25, 2016.*
- **Annual Cocktail/Dinner Party:** Dyker Beach Golf Course — *Sunday, November 13, 2016.*
- **Holiday Express:** a music celebration for our residents — *Saturday, November 19, 2016.*
- **Annual Luncheon** — *Sunday, April 23, 2017.*

Ways to Support Mercy Home

You can support **Creative Arts Therapy**, **Plant-Grow-Give**, **Melodic Soul**, or our **Gifted Artists Programs** in a variety of ways:

Contributions help improve the quality of life for our residents. Remember a loved one or celebrate a special occasion by making a **tribute gift**.

Double the impact of your gift through your employer's **matching gifts program**.

Appreciated **stock gifts** can reduce your tax liability while providing flexible funding for our programs.

Bequests or Endowments guarantee your charitable legacy and help ensure the future of our programs. Bequests may also help reduce estate taxes.

For additional information, please call our Development Office at **718-832-1075, ext.136** or email dpercey@mercyhomeny.org.

Conferencia Latina!

Miguel Torres-Castro, Mercy Home's Director of Support Programs, gave a presentation on May 10th at the 12th Annual YAI Latino Conference for families of individuals with special needs.



Miguel spoke about the therapeutic impact of the expressive arts on communication and on emotional and social skills.

As an instrumentalist (guitar, trumpet, piano), Miguel utilizes music and the arts to foster socialization, communication and creative self-expression.