

# hephzibah heartbeat

NEWS FROM HEPHZIBAH CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

Helping children thrive and families flourish since 1897

SPRING 2014

## Dear Friend of Hephzibah,

RECENTLY, A YOUNG MAN WHO FOUND a **safe haven and a place to heal** at Hephzibah more than a decade ago returned to pay us a visit.

He was excited to see his old bedroom and surprised to find his portrait still hanging in our hallway. We reminisced about his Hephzibah years and traded memories about his going-away party on the day that he left to start a new life with a loving foster family.

Today, he is a college graduate, a young professional and living proof of the impact that caring foster parents can have on the children they welcome into their hearts and homes.

Often, in our national conversations about foster care, we define foster children by the neglect they endured or the hardships they suffered.

But we must not let their past define their future.

With consistent support and nurturing care, foster children can rise above their early hardships to build productive, successful and fulfilling lives.

Just ask a former foster child like NFL star quarterback Daunte Culpepper, who credits much of his success to the love and support of his foster mom, Emma Culpepper.

Or Peter Murphy, a grateful former Hephzibah foster child who has made a career out of helping other traumatized children heal as a child care worker at our Diagnostic Treatment Center.

Or Lita Heise, another former resident whose life was transformed by the love of Hephzibah foster parents Ray and Lynn Heise. I hope you'll take a moment to read her story on page 14.

Over the years, our "Hephzibah alumni"—buoyed by the love of their foster and adoptive families—have gone on to become chefs, corporate executives, poets and writers, musicians, teachers, truck drivers, nurses, social workers and more.

Yet too many children—nationwide and right here at Hephzibah Home—are still waiting for loving foster families to turn the next chapter of their childhood into a happy one.

As you read our Spring 2014 newsletter, I hope you'll consider where you are in your own life journey and ask yourself if you can help a child in need through foster care.

With gratitude for all that you do for Hephzibah's kids,



Mary Anne Brown  
Executive Director

P.S. To learn more about becoming a Hephzibah foster parent, read our **Foster Care FAQs** column on page six, visit us online at [hephzibahhome.org](http://hephzibahhome.org) or contact our Foster Care Team at 708.649.7140 or [cspearman@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:cspearman@hephzibahhome.org).



## upcoming events

MAY  
**26**

### 14th Annual Memorial Day Hoof It for Hephzibah Run/Walk

**Monday, May 26**

8 a.m. — 5K Run/Walk

9:30 a.m. — Kids' run and dash

Newton Park, Glen Ellyn

Sign up at [hoofit4hephzibah.com](http://hoofit4hephzibah.com).

JULY  
**tba**

### 6th Annual Chicago Auxiliary Dodgeball Tournament July 2014

North Avenue Beach

Date and time to be announced

All proceeds benefit Hephzibah.

AUGUST  
**23**

### Donut Day Saturday, August 23

Oak Park Farmer's Market

460 Lake Street, Oak Park

All proceeds benefit Hephzibah  
Foster Care.

SEPT  
**6**

### Oak Park Auxiliary Board Bake Sale

**Saturday, September 6**

Oak Park Farmer's Market

460 Lake Street, Oak Park

All proceeds benefit Hephzibah.

SEPT  
**10**

### 13th Annual GE Charity Golf Classic

**Wednesday, September 10**

Cantigny Golf Range, Wheaton

All proceeds benefit Hephzibah.

For more information about upcoming events, contact Molly Philosophos at 708.649.7158 or [mphilosophos@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:mphilosophos@hephzibahhome.org)



# A Glittering Gala on a Snowy Night

*A caring community steps out during a winter storm to support children in need*

WHAT'S A LITTLE SNOW and cold when there are kids who need us? That seemed to be the sentiment of the **350 loyal and hardy Hephzibah supporters** who braved a winter weather advisory on March 1 to attend our **2014 Heart of Gold Ball**.

Clad in sleek tuxedos and elegant evening gowns — with just a few telltale snow crystals in their hair — they joined their fellow revelers in the Bridgeport Art Center's dramatic Skyline Loft for a night of cocktails, live and silent auctions, dinner and dancing to the music of The Becca Kaufman Orchestra.

The soaring event space — with its skylight running the length of the ballroom, floor-to-ceiling windows and panoramic view of Chicago's skyline — provided the perfect backdrop to the evening's festivities.

"What a fabulous night this was," enthuses Hephzibah Executive Director Mary Anne Brown. "It was exactly what we all needed to shake off the winter doldrums. This is a crowd that likes to party, and we raised more than \$230,000 for Hephzibah's kids while having the time of our lives. Everyone loved the new venue. We are considering hosting the event at The Bridgeport Art Center again next year."

Brown also raved about the evening's menu, which was served up by Paramount Events.

"Jodi Fyfe — a member of our Oak Park Auxiliary — and her catering staff at Paramount did a wonderful job," she notes. "Everyone felt very well taken care of and the food was absolutely exquisite."

During the evening, Hephzibah's Board of Directors honored the **Hinsdale Junior Woman's Club** with the **2014 Heart of Gold Award** for the club's extraordinary generosity and enthusiastic service to Hephzibah. During the past two years, this energetic group of nearly 200 women has raised more than \$350,000 for educational enrichment programming and organized scores of service projects to enhance the lives of the children living in our group homes.

Volunteers **Brian Druley and Susan Stark** received the **2014 Heart of the Home Award** for their efforts to bring more technology into the lives of the children living in our group homes. Over the past two years, these big-hearted IT professionals have formed a Children's Technology Committee, created a Technology Room with computers and servers donated by their employers and recruited a team of technology mentors to provide one-on-one tech tutoring for our kids.

In one of the night's most emotional moments, Board President Eric Sorensen presented **Lifetime Achievement Awards** to Daycare Director

**Jan Maxson** and Director of Operations **Rudi Vanderburg** — two veteran employees who have dedicated nearly four decades to the advancement of Hephzibah's mission. The pair received a standing ovation for their unparalleled contributions to Hephzibah and their unwavering commitment to children and families in need. ♥

*Members of the Hinsdale Junior Woman's Club with Hephzibah Executive Director Mary Anne Brown (far right)*





*Our Heart of Gold auction raised more than \$43,000 this year, thanks to the generosity of the individuals, businesses, corporations, organizations and foundations listed below.*

## HEART OF GOLD TABLE SPONSORS

*We are deeply grateful to the following Heart of Gold sponsors for underwriting our gala expenses:*

### SILVER SPONSORS

Hephzibah Foundation  
McDonald's Corporation  
US Bank

### BRONZE SPONSORS

Anonymous  
Sidley Austin

### TABLE SPONSORS

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Apollo Theater Chicago  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Aque  
Mr. and Mrs. Allen Arnett  
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The Battaglia Family  
Mr. Mark Battrell  
Becca Kaufman Orchestra  
Ms. Barbara Best  
Biolum Glass, Artist Bryan Northup  
Ms. Barbara Boscoe  
Mr. Leonard Brown and Ms. Rudi Vanderburg  
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Ms. Francesca DeBiase  
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Hulen Landscape Contractors  
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Ms. Diane King  
Robert and Melissa Kowalski  
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Ms. Jayme Landers  
Jeff and Greta Landis

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Southwest Airlines Charitable Giving  
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Stamm  
Starship Subs  
STATE Restaurant and Cafe  
Systech Information Services, Inc.  
Mr. and Mrs. James Taglia  
Mr. and Mrs. Byron F. Taylor  
Mr. Kevin Schwartz and Ms. Rachael Telleen  
The Blue Jean Bar  
The Container Store  
The Dailey Method  
The Fox Bowl  
The Kids Table  
The Language and Music School  
The Printing Store  
The Tennis and Fitness Centre  
The United Center  
The Village Links Golf Course  
The Wine Cellar  
The Yoga Center  
Todd & Holland Tea Merchant's  
Mr. and Mrs. Lance Tortorici  
Triton College Cernan Space Center  
The Victorian Resort Bed & Breakfast  
Mr. James G. Walters  
Wells Street Popcorn  
Mr. Mark Wilson and Mr. Bryan Northup  
Mr. and Mrs. James Woywod  
WXRT-FM 93.1  
Zanies Comedy Nite Club  
Dr. and Mrs. Jeff Zawacki



Hephzibah Big Sibling Program



Hephzibah Donut Day Fundraiser

# wish

## Celebrating Hephzibah's Everyday Heroes

Our mission would not be possible without the enthusiastic support of the **volunteers** who give

generously of their time, skills and talents to make the world a better place for children and families. Every spring, during National Volunteer Week, we pause to express our gratitude to these everyday heroes at our annual **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**. Thirty volunteers joined us at our 2014 dinner in April to share an evening of camaraderie and communion with their fellow Good Samaritans, get to know our staff and view ReMoved, a short film that shines a light on America's foster care system and the desperate need for compassionate and committed foster parents. ♥



Hephzibah Community Garden Project

Hephzibah Technology Mentoring Program



Interested in joining the ranks of Hephzibah's Everyday Heroes? To find out more, please contact Kerry Logan at [klogan@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:klogan@hephzibahhome.org) or 708.649.7122.



## Help Hephzibah's kids find their inner fish.

OUR KIDS ARE READY for high dives and hijinks at the Ridgeland Commons pool. **Here's what they need** to take the plunge:

- ♥ **Girls' swimsuits and cover-ups** (new tankini or one-piece swimsuits only)
  - Sizes needed:
  - Size 8 (4 suits)
  - Size 10 (6 suits)
  - Size 12 (1 suit)
  - Size 14/16 (2 suits)
- ♥ **Boys' swimsuits and swim shirts** (all swimsuits must be new)
  - Sizes needed:
  - Size 6 (3 suits)
  - Size 8 (7 suits)
  - Size 10 (1 suit)
  - Size 14/16 (1 suit)
- ♥ **Pool Flip-flops** (new or like new)
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys' sizes needed:</li> <li>12.5 Youth (1 child)</li> <li>13 Youth (3 children)</li> <li>2 Youth (1 child)</li> <li>2.5 Youth (2 children)</li> <li>3 Youth (4 children)</li> <li>8 Men's (1 child)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls' sizes needed:</li> <li>2 Youth (5 children)</li> <li>3 Youth (3 children)</li> <li>4 Youth (2 children)</li> <li>4.5 Youth (1 child)</li> <li>6 Women's (1 child)</li> <li>7.5 Women's (1 child)</li> <li>8 Women's (1 child)</li> </ul>
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- ♥ Large **swim towels** and youth **swimming goggles** for 26 children
- ♥ **Water toys** (sprinklers, water balloons, noodles, soft foam balls for pool games)  
No water guns, please!

# list

## Passports to adventure needed.

AFTER BEING cooped up for months during one of the worst winters on record, our kids are eager to expand their horizons. Can you provide their passports to adventure in the form of **free passes** or **free admission** to these or other fun destinations?

- Extreme Trampoline
- Forest Park Pool
- Great America
- Lamb's Farm
- Shedd Aquarium
- Wonderworks Children's Museum



## More summer wishes:

- ♥ Children's shirts and shorts (new or gently used)
- ♥ Bike/Skate helmets (youth and adult sizes only; no toddler sizes)
- ♥ MP3 music players
- ♥ Two Mac laptops
- ♥ DVD player

If you have the means or the connections to make any of these wishes come true, please contact Deb Poe at 708.649.7157 or [dpoe@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:dpoe@hephzibahhome.org). Thank you for caring about our kids!

View our full wish list at [www.hephzibahhome.org/wishlist](http://www.hephzibahhome.org/wishlist).



*Students from Trinity High School recently prepared a Sunday Supper for the children at Hephzibah Home.*

## Serve a Sunday Supper at Hephzibah Home

NURTURING A CHILD WITH FOOD is a tradition that spans centuries, cultures and continents. Now you can help nurture the **traumatized children living at Hephzibah Home** by participating in our **Sunday Supper program**.

Two Sundays a month, groups of up to 15 people can sign up to prepare a meal and serve it to the children at Hephzibah Home. Your group can be an organized faith or community organization, students from a high school or scout group or something more informal — such as a group of friends or the members of your book club.

Groups can choose their own kid-friendly menu or ask us and we'll be glad to offer suggestions. We ask that you bring an already prepared dinner to Hephzibah Home. Our kitchen may be used for setup and to heat pre-cooked dishes, but it's easiest when groups bring food that is ready to serve.

If your group is interested in providing a Sunday Supper, we'd be thrilled to hear from you. For more information, please contact Kerry Logan at [klogan@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:klogan@hephzibahhome.org) or 708.649.7122. ♥

# Foster Care FAQs

**How long does it take to become a Hephzibah foster parent?**

Three to six months.

**Do I have to be married to be a foster parent?**

No. Many of our foster parents are single, widowed or divorced.

**How much does it cost to become a foster parent?**

There is no cost involved. Hephzibah offers all foster parent training and support free of charge. If you adopt a foster child, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services will cover your adoption costs.

**How do I start the process?**

Just give us a call at 708.649.7140. A Family Assessment Specialist will contact you to schedule a home visit, discuss your motivation for fostering and tell you about the specific requirements of our Foster Care Program. If you are good match for our program and you decide to proceed, subsequent steps include a home study, a background check and foster parent training sessions.

**What if I start the process and change my mind?**

Foster parenting is very rewarding, but it can also be challenging. During the training process, you may come to the conclusion that it's not a good fit for your family. Our Foster Care Team will help you sort through your concerns and determine which course of action is best for you. We will be there to support you, regardless of your decision.

**Have other questions?**

Please contact our Foster Care Team at [cspearman@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:cspearman@hephzibahhome.org) or 708.649.7140.

## Hephzibah Home is where my heart is

*Former group homes resident Lita Heise looks back at her Hephzibah years*

THE YEARS THAT LED LITA HEISE TO HEPHZIBAH HOME weren't happy ones by any measure. When she first walked up the steps of the venerable Oak Park children's residence in 1996, she was frightened, confused and just shy of her fourth birthday.

"There was a lot of abuse in my household," she recalls today. "My biological mother was dealing with severe depression and an abusive husband. She was only 22 years old and she was clueless about taking care of a kid, so I was pretty much taking care of myself by the time I was two."

Heise's first impression of Hephzibah remains vividly etched in her memory. "I was just overwhelmed," she remembers.

"I didn't understand what was happening to me. The only thing I could focus on was this enormous stuffed panda in the corner of the main room. I had never seen a stuffed animal that size, so I saw it as a big protector. I told myself, 'If anyone bad comes in, that big bear will protect us all.'"

Heise soon learned that she didn't need the big bear to protect her at Hephzibah. She slowly relaxed and began to heal in the first structured, nurturing and predictable environment she'd ever known. By 2002, Lita was living with Hephzibah foster parents Ray and Lynn Heise, who adopted her in 2005.

"I was so happy to be living with them," says Heise. "They made me feel that I was worth loving. When my hormones kicked in and I became the child from hell, they told me that they were not going to give up on me — and they never have. They are the best possible parents I could ever ask for."

Now an articulate and personable 22-year-old, the self-described bibliophile is holding down a job that she loves at a bookstore in Chicago's north suburbs and living on her own. From this vantage point, she sees her arrival at Hephzibah as the moment when everything changed and a better future became possible.

"I want to make something very clear," she states. "I had an amazing childhood. I would not trade my experiences at Hephzibah for anything in the world. I met so many wonderful people there, including my adoptive parents, Lynn and Ray. I still go back regularly to visit and update Mary Anne Brown and the rest of the staff on what I'm doing. I always tell them, 'Hey, you guys did a great job raising me — and look at me now!'" ♥



*"I had an amazing childhood. I would not trade my experiences at Hephzibah for anything in the world."*

LITA HEISE

# Movin' On

*A champion of foster care retires after 34 years*

**DAVIDA WILLIAMS** KNOWS ALL ABOUT TRANSITIONS. For 34 years, she helped hundreds of children heal from harrowing histories of neglect and abuse. In her role as a foster parent specialist—a position she held for nearly half that time—she trained thousands of foster parents to help these traumatized children learn to love and trust again.

Social work, as most in the field will tell you, is not a nine to five job. For Williams, it was a 24/7 commitment. Every Hephzibah foster family has a story about her reassuring presence at all hours of the day or night as they weathered the inevitable storms of parenting children who had lived in unspeakable squalor, witnessed terrifying violence, endured heartbreaking abuse and more.

A 1978 graduate of Illinois Benedictine College (with a bachelor's degree in psychology and literature), Williams was steered to Hephzibah by her mother, who suggested that she apply for a job with the agency's Day Care program. She was hired on the spot and continued to work for Hephzibah while she pursued her master's degree in social work at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. After earning her degree, she began working as a foster care social worker at Hephzibah, a position that evolved into her life's work.

Williams, who endured her own childhood horrors with an abusive alcoholic father, was 100 percent committed to the children and foster parents who looked to her for guidance and support. A gentle soul who regenerated by gardening when a particularly egregious case of child abuse left her feeling dispirited and depleted, she loved celebrating the happy milestones—birthdays, graduations and, especially, adoptions—with her Hephzibah foster families. A week or so after every visit or special occasion, her foster families would receive a brightly colored envelope in the mail with an encouraging message and a stack of snapshots documenting the day.

Many Hephzibah foster parents will tell you that Williams is the reason that their placements succeeded.

"Davida was the heart and soul of our foster care experience," says one foster parent.

"She nurtured us so that we, in turn, could nurture the children in our care." ♥

*Hephzibah Foster Care specialist Davida Williams and her 14-year-old great nephew, Henry Krause, play **Movin' On**, a board game she created to help traumatized children develop the life skills they need to move on from residential treatment and succeed in a family setting.*



Feeling overwhelmed by family problems? We're here to help.

WE'RE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED for our award-winning residential, foster care, adoption and Day Care programs. But many people are not aware

of our **Family Support Program**—a low-profile program that has had a big impact on local households for more than 20 years. Last year, the **Family Support Program** served **38 families and 86 children**

with crisis intervention services, respite care, funding for family necessities in times of critical need, parenting skills training, information and referrals, coordination of service providers, consultations and assessments for families in need.

If you're struggling with family problems, you don't have to struggle alone. If you or someone you know is in need, please contact us at 708.649.7140 or [kpilditch@hephzibahhome.org](mailto:kpilditch@hephzibahhome.org).

“When a family is in crisis, it can be difficult to think clearly about what the options are. That's where we come in.”

KIMM PILDITCH, LCSW  
Hephzibah Family Support Program Manager

“Davida was the heart and soul of our foster care experience. She nurtured us so that we, in turn, could nurture the children in our care.”

— A HEPHZIBAH FOSTER PARENT

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*Executive Director*

- Mary Anne Brown

# Spring 2014

To make a correction to your mailing address, or if you are receiving duplicates of this newsletter, please contact Barb Krause at bkrause@hephzibahhome.org or 708.649.7140. *Thank you!*

## Almost Famous

More than 260 children lit up the stage with music, dance and comedy performances at our 38th annual Day Care Talent Show on Saturday, March 15.



*Thanks for the memories: In a poignant post-performance tribute (above), our Day Care staff presented a bouquet of flowers to Day Care Director Jan Maxson, who is retiring in 2014 after 38 years of service to Oak Park children and families.*



### DAY CARE STATS

**445**

Number of **children enrolled** in Hephzibah's award-winning Day Care program

**18%**

Percentage of Day Care children living in **single-parent households**

**12%**

Percentage of Day Care **families eligible for reduced day care fees** through our sliding scale program