

# HOMELESS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

Winter 2011 E-Newsletter — Vol. 6 No. 1

## WINNIE SAYS "IT'S ALL ABOUT KIDS!"



### What's happening in the Learning Centers MATTERS, say the moms

My son is three  
he can say his ABCs  
he sings "B-i-n-g-o" and  
"I am special"  
he plays with other children  
he's come a long way  
in just three months



My 5-year-old daughter  
didn't know her ABCs  
didn't know her colors  
couldn't print her name  
but  
in three months  
she has learned all of these  
AND  
my 3-year-old has too

There IS hope through learning!

### The Homeless Education Network - HEN

The HEN connects and advocates with interested parties, facilitates discussions among partners, serves as a catalyst for action, creates effective models, brokers resources, and provides a forum for community discussions – all to create actions ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled, attending, and succeeding in school.

The *Clairton City Schools – Sisters Place Collaborative*, an initiative of the HEN, is a working model of what can be achieved when "all of the players are at the table."

There is improved communication among parents, housing provider staff, and school faculty and staff. Parents are more engaged in their children's education. School staff more effectively identify and service children and youth who are homeless. A targeted literacy program is being implemented, using both school and housing provider resources. A social worker, the homeless liaison, a high school guidance counselor, and a reading specialist provide day-to-day program support.



And who benefits? Everyone!  
But most importantly, the kids.

## HEN PRESENTS –

### Summit II: Collaborations and Models Impacting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

April 8, 2011, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Rivers Club, Downtown Pittsburgh

The Summit will provide an update on the challenges and obstacles facing children and youth who are homeless, addressing those challenges from national, state, and local perspectives.

Collaborations and innovative resources being pioneered in Allegheny County can serve as models for the Commonwealth and the nation.



**What we want for all children:  
That they grow and bloom**

Summit speakers are national experts on homelessness as well as key government, community, social service, and educational leaders. As a catalyst for action, the Summit is expected to lead to significant progress in the identification, enrollment, attendance, and academic success of unstably housed children and youth.

To register for the Summit, call Zach Marsh at 412-562-0154.

## SOME OF THE NUMBERS

It's said that an American child's chances of experiencing homelessness in his or her lifetime is 1 in 50.

"Families with young children now account for 40% of the nation's homeless population and in the course of the year, more than 1.3 million children are homeless." (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty)

"21,749: the number of school buses (seating 44 students per bus) needed to seat the 956,914 homeless children attending public school in America." (Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness)

And from the May 2010 Annie E. Casey Foundation report entitled EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters: ". . . if we don't get dramatically more children on track as proficient readers, the United States will lose a growing and essential proportion of its human capital to poverty, and the price will be paid not only by individual children and families, but by the entire country."

"Among 4<sup>th</sup> graders taking the NAEP reading test in 2009, 83% of low-income families' children were not proficient." AND "It's reasonably accurate to say that a child not at least a 'modestly skilled' reader at the end of third grade is unlikely to graduate from high school."

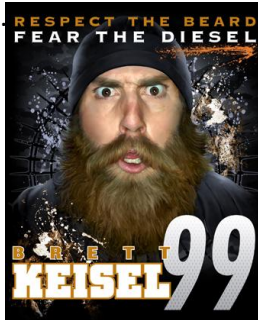
From Catherine Meek, Executive Director of School on Wheels in a 6/30/10 *Huffington Post* article: "California spends \$215,081 for every youth incarcerated . . . and \$7,571 for every student in the public school system." AND "The perseverance, resilience and courage it takes for a homeless student to graduate, whether from elementary, middle, or high school is astonishing. When we spend almost 30 times as much money locking youth up as educating them, how can we say that education matters . . . . Let's make education truly matter."

## Thanks to our community champions for kids:

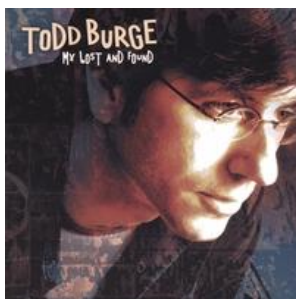
*Project Evolution* raised awareness of HCEF and its mission with a fashion show and fund raiser featuring models, artists, and local personalities at the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre in downtown Pittsburgh.

Proceeds from *Kicks for Kids* presented at the Garfield Artworks raised funds to purchase new shoes and boots for children residing at Sojourner House and Sojourner House MOMS.

Proceeds of Brett Keisel's *Respect the Beard* shirt will benefit HCEF and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.



Sunday, March 20, 3:00, brings a Benefit Concert offered by Todd Burge, Dennis McCurdy, and the *Lonesome No More Band* at the home of a long-time friend of HCEF in Zelienople. Tickets are \$30 per person, \$50 per couple. For directions and to reserve tickets, contact Dennis at [highway62@soominternet.net](mailto:highway62@soominternet.net) or by phone at 724.453.1222. Seating is limited so act soon!



March 20 is also the date of the *Winter Concert for Causes* featuring PSO violinist Louis Lev.

## The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Champions for Children Benefit

The invitations have been mailed. Friends new and old are responding, both with ticket purchases and - when they can't attend - donations.

The Silent and Chinese auction offerings are certain to get your attention and our volunteer table monitors will be happy to answer any question.



The beneficiaries of this benevolence? The children HCEF serves – themselves **CHAMPIONS!**

The highlight of the evening will surely be the presentation of the 2012 Champions for Children Award to Sarah and Brett Keisel and the Linda Dickerson award to Joann Cyganovich, Sojourner House, and Sojourner House MOMS. <http://homelessfund.org/championsbenefit.html>

**Heartfelt thanks to all who have made monetary contributions to HCEF, have made donations in honor or memory of loved ones, have sponsored and attended fund raising events on our behalf, and have mentored the children. In all these ways you have helped make a difference in the lives of children caught up in the uncertainties of homelessness.** <http://homelessfund.org/donate.html>



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**Providing Hope Through Learning**