

theOrchards

The Quarterly Magazine of Orchards Children's Services

Winter 2015

*Commitment,
Compassion,
Community.*

Orchards
CHILDREN'S SERVICES



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Our electronic
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includes
interactive
links.

theOrchards

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Orchards-Childrens-Services/187642772800>



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Commitment, Compassion, Community Leadership in the 21st Century



Michael Williams
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dianna Ronan
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Over fifty years ago, Orchards Children's Services was started by small group from the National Council of Jewish Women who were concerned about the future of children and were committed to creating change. This seed planted half a century ago blossomed into what is recognized as the premiere child and family service agency in Michigan. Today, as society faces new challenges, the following quote by [Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#) bests sums up Orchards idea of compassion, "Compassion is not just feeling with someone, but seeking to change the situation. Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action!"

The Orchards Children's Services Family Tree has spread far and wide; our employees, management team, board of directors and countless supporters are all committed, compassionate people. The effort each person contributes to our work provides the leadership necessary to cause effective change in our communities. We know our success is due to the commitment and compassion of those that support us.

Today we want to thank every member of the Orchards Children's Services Family; because of you we are able to meet the needs of our children, youth and families. In the inspiring words of a remarkable young woman, "[How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.](#)" ([Anne Frank](#))



Artistic fun at the Orchards
Annual Holiday Party!

To see the video, please go to
<https://vimeo.com/114672971>



Celebrating the Season!

If only we could spread the Holiday season over a couple of months! Being able to keep the joy and the spirit of the season alive for the children and families we serve is priceless. At Orchards, we like to savor the moment and enjoy the holiday. On December 14, 2014, we did just that. Santa, Mrs. Claus and the elves arrived at the Orchards' Annual Holiday Party at the Southfield Pavilion to get the party started. Kicking off the holiday season, the fun-filled event provided families with face painting, cookie decorating, arts and crafts and balloon animals designed by a clown. With some extra Santa's helpers (aka the Youth Board and holiday committee) everything fell into place.

During the festivities, former Southfield Mayor and currently elected Congresswoman, Brenda Lawrence, was awarded the Champions for Children Award by CEO, Michael E. Williams. Congresswoman Lawrence has been a long-time supporter of Orchards and we wish her luck in her new position in Washington D.C.

After enjoying lunch in a room decorated in red and green, families were able to spend time together on the dance floor with entertainment provided by StarTrax or by being silly in a photo booth with costumes fit for a queen! Capping off the afternoon with a visit to Santa and Mrs. Claus, each child left with goodies galore in hopes that St. Nick would soon return with some more!

Detroit Free Press



For the sixth year in a row, Orchards Children's Services is honored to receive the coveted Detroit Free Press Top Workplaces Award. This year, Orchards placed 35th out of 129 companies and organizations in Michigan that were recognized. We were the only social service agency ranked.

These companies have been recognized as Top Workplaces based solely on surveys about the workplace completed by their employees. According to the Free Press, Top Workplaces are not only better places to work but are more likely to be successful than peer organizations.

For more information, please go to

<http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/top-workplaces/2014/11/15/top-workplaces-midsize-companies/19037797/>





President and CEO Michael Williams and nine staff members represented Orchards and our commitment to education by attending the 2014 Fostering Futures Charitable Benefit on September 25th. The Fostering Futures Scholarship and Charitable Fund, established by the Michigan Education Trust, provides scholarships to young adults who have been served by foster care and are enrolled in a Michigan degree-granting college or university. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, in 2013 the Orchards Scholarship Program was established enabling us to sponsor five foster care youth as they work toward a college degree. Most of our students were also awarded funds from the Fostering Futures Scholarship, eliminating their need to apply for student loans.

The event raised over \$220,000 for eligible students to put towards their tuition, fees, room and board, books, and supplies. The goal of the Fostering Futures Scholarship is to fill the gap for students where other grants or scholarships have left

an unmet need. We are pleased that Michael Williams has joined the Fostering Futures planning committee to ensure that students from foster care have access to educational and financial aid opportunities.

According to a recent study (Casey Family Programs 2011), 70 percent of teens who emancipate from foster care in Michigan report that they want to attend college, but fewer than 10 percent of those who graduate high school actually enroll in college and only 3 percent graduate from college. "Young people who are in foster care have gone through so much in their short lives. Fostering Futures is about Michigan assisting some of our most vulnerable young people with educational expenses, so that they can have better futures," says Maura Corrigan, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services and co-host of the 2014 Fostering Futures Benefit.

Do you know a student who has experienced foster care? Spread the word about the Fostering Futures Scholarship and learn more about the application process at www.fosteringfutures-mi.com.

For more information, please go to:
www.fosteringfuturesmichigan.com/library/fostering-futures-scholarship.

Above: Mattie Lee, Nicole Krause, Melissa Stadwick, Kelsey Wisotsky, Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan, DHS Chief Deputy Director Duane Berger, Erin Biddinger, Hannah Cohen, and Rhiannon Pniewski



FOSTER CARE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

A Compass for New Foster Parents

One of the largest barriers to providing foster care for children and youth is the difficulty prospective foster parents experience moving from their initial contact with a social worker to actually becoming a licensed foster parent. To increase the likelihood that the licensing process will be successful, on October 1, 2014, Orchards Children's Services began providing formal support to potential foster parents and relatives through their state-wide Foster Care Navigator Program.

This new service provides support before, during and after the process of becoming a licensed foster parent. All of our Navigators are experienced foster parents and are eager to work with families throughout the licensing process. Additionally, our staff consists of a Relative Specialist and a Native American Outreach Coordinator who have unique skills to work with their assigned population. All of our Navigators provide support, information and referrals in order to assure that potential foster parents have the resources to make the licensing and fostering experience successful.

For more information, please go to
www.fcnp.org



<https://www.facebook.com/fostercarenavigatorprogram>

Helping a Family Succeed

The Tripp Family became clients of Orchards Children's Services' Families First Program of Wayne County in October of 2014. Bertram Tripp and his fiancé, Shatyra Taylor, expanded their family when Mr. Tripp's four children came to live with them. Families First is a 28-day program with follow-up visits that focuses on keeping the family together and eliminating risks in the household that may cause the children to be placed in Foster Care. During their time with the program the Tripp family made great progress. They learned ways to strengthen their relationships with one another



and, through Orchards, attended a Pistons game as part of a bonding exercise. Mr. Tripp and Ms. Taylor learned skills to help them cope with the sudden growth of their family. The two older children, Bryce and Brianna, joined the Youth Board. The entire family attended our holiday party. All four of the children--Bryce, Brianna, Brooklyn and Brent--participated in our Shopping with the Lions Event during the holiday season. Their social worker, Robert Young, is a family "lifesaver" and often provides transportation, ensuring participation in extra events.

All of the Tripp children attend and excel at Chandler Park Academy. Bryce is a 10th grader and maintains a 3.89 grade point average. He is enrolled in all AP classes and is taking college courses through Wayne County Community College. His favorite areas of study are engineering and math. He is a member of the varsity basketball team and plans to join the cross country team in the spring.

Brianna is in the 8th grade and has earned a GPA of 3.9. She enjoys writing stories and journaling and plans on joining the volleyball team. The Youth Board is proving to be an excellent outlet for Brianna's concern for others. She has used her muscles to pack and move Thanksgiving food baskets, worked patiently with younger clients at our crafts tables during the Holiday party and, after her shopping was completed, helped others choose appropriate gifts during the Lions event.

Brooklyn, a 7th grader, has a 4.0 GPA. She enjoys reading and is also great at writing. Brooklyn aspires to go to college, become a police officer, then practice law and finally retire from the federal government as an agent. She is a member of the Detroit Police Explorer program, a program that exposes young adults to the field of law enforcement and participates in a mentoring program with the federal government.

Brent is in the 5th grade and has a 3.7 GPA. He enjoys doing martial arts and would love to practice it. Brent is also an "Explorer" for the Detroit Police.

The commitment and accomplishments of the Tripp family are why Orchards' Families First staff works so hard to keep families together. The opportunities and support that go far beyond what is mandated within state contractual programs are the reasons Orchards Children's Services is a premier child welfare agency.



ORCHARDS WELCOMES BOARD MEMBER

ALEXIS ALAN

“My goal is to help children achieve their potential by recognizing their talent and ability.”

Throughout the years Orchards has managed to attract some of the metropolitan Detroit area's most progressive and innovative leaders to join its board. Therefore, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Alexis Alan to our Board of Directors. Mr. Alan is Divisional Vice President for Quicken Loans where he began his career at the age of nineteen. His rise through the ranks of one of the nation's largest mortgage companies is a testament to his skills and abilities as a progressive leader, mover and shaker.

Alexis virtually grew up with the agency; his Mother, Kimberly Burton, is a former Vice President of Orchards Children's Services. As a result, he is intimately familiar with our culture, history and mission. He began serving in various capacities with Orchards at the age of eight and continued his involvement throughout his childhood and adolescence. During his teens, Alexis worked as an intern under former President and CEO, Deb Dinco, and has remained knowledgeable and passionate about the Orchards.

When asked to define his vision for Orchards Children's Services, Alexis doesn't hesitate, “To help children achieve their potential by recognizing their talents and abilities.”

Mr. Alan is also passionate about the arts and culture. He happily discusses his love of music and the arts. In addition to his cultural interests, he is an advocate for new development and lending strategies. Helping others through micro-lending programs and initiatives, developing progressive partnerships and building viable networks are things Alexis is focused on personally and professionally.

For over fifty years Orchards Children's Services has been a game changer in the lives of children, youth and families. Alexis Alan has been part of the Orchards for most of his life. He has been a part of our past success and will undoubtedly help insure our continued success. The Orchards Children's Services family welcomes Alexis Alan as the newest member of our distinguished board.

AMBASSADORS!

Orchards Calls on Young Professionals

The Ambassadors is an Orchards affiliate group. Our mission is to raise awareness among young professionals of the needs within the Orchards community and show them how their time and talents can create a positive impact.

To bring this mission to life, we volunteer, plan fundraisers, network and host special events that target young professionals who have a passion for helping children in need. All proceeds, including money or collected items, go directly to support Orchards' community outreach programs. Over 250 people attended our November Happy Hour for a Cause and shared in the fun at Blackfinn Ameripub in Royal Oak. We raised over \$1,200, collected over 100 toys and are sure our efforts helped Orchards provide a happier holiday for families.

In 2015 we will continue to raise public awareness, network, and recruit within the young professional community.

If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, please contact Barbara Marcelo at 248-593-1573 or you can friend us on Facebook:

 facebook.com/orchardsambassadors



The Ambassadors have committed themselves to helping the children and families of Orchards as well as spreading the word about Orchards to young professionals.





Giving back and giving thanks went hand in hand as the Detroit D-Line personally donated and handed out 300 turkeys to our children and families a few days prior to Thanksgiving. Ndamukong Suh, Jason Jones, Darryl Tapp, and CJ Mosely came to Orchards with the encouragement of their Defensive Line teammate, George Johnson. George stated, "We cannot forget where we come from, it's an honor and a duty for us to give back." Special thanks to Galen Duncan of the Detroit Lions organization who helped to coordinate the event with the Orchards team.

With funds from the Cindy Estrada Foundation and help from Chris Gallagher, Personnel Manager, the UAW also donated 200 turkeys. Once again, First Presbyterian of Birmingham contributed over 100 baskets of food! Through the coordination of the mass food drive at over 33 locations, the support of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Orchards' Youth Board and the tireless work of our staff, Orchards' families had all of the fixings for a heartwarming Thanksgiving feast. We greatly appreciate our volunteers from Quicken Loans. Special recognition goes to all of the individuals who donated to our food drive and gave their financial support, especially Board Member, and immediate past chair, David Kramer.

To see the video, please go to <https://vimeo.com/114807824>

The Detroit Lions and Community Partners Bring Holiday Joy to Orchards

On December 16th, 118 kids and 40 volunteers boarded the bus to head to the new Detroit Meijer store. Upon arrival, Orchards children were greeted by the Detroit Lions with hi fives and a personal photo shoot which was framed and given to each child. At the back of the store, a pizza party with the Lions, Roary the mascot and the dedicated Meijer staff and leadership ensued. As the clock struck 6PM, the kids were released with an assigned Detroit Lion and shopped using gift cards donated by the Lions and Meijer. This annual event was once again a huge success with Detroit Lion's players that included, among others, Matthew Stafford, Calvin Johnson, Darryl Sapp and Joique Bell. To see footage of this event, go to DetroitLions.com or visit the Orchards Children's Services facebook page.

Orchards is Over-the-Moon

Exceptional



Since 1998, Orchards Children's Services has been accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA). The COA is an international, independent, human service accrediting organization. We are pleased to announce that Orchards has been reaccredited through 2018! The process of accreditation ensures that we meet or exceed the highest standards in the industry. It also supports our message to those we serve in the community that we consistently strive to provide outstanding quality services for children and families.



Reaccreditation at Orchards is a team effort whereby all Board members, staff and volunteers participate in an in-depth self-review of the organization and programs against currently accepted best practice standards. The self-study process takes 12-18 months and culminates with an onsite visit by an evaluation team comprised of industry experts. The onsite reviewers were especially impressed with Orchards' new Southfield location and described our services to children and families as "over-the-moon exceptional". Lisa Finger led our fabulous team through the COA process and we remain humbled by the exceptional services our staff and managers provide to the children and families we serve. Congratulations to all on a job well done!

For more information, please go to www.coanet.org



GENESEE COUNTY
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER



In partnership with our landlord, Professional Center, and Bruce Pollock and Associates Realty, and in association with the City of Flint and Genesee County, we announced the Grand Opening of Orchards Children's Services' new operating facility in downtown Flint. The Genesee Open House occurred on September 18, 2014 celebrating Orchards' wonderful new home at 444 Church Street, in Flint, MI.

Orchards brings 35-40 excited and dedicated staff and volunteers to continue the efforts the city of Flint and Genesee County have made to bring business downtown. We have been greeted warmly by everyone in Flint, including: churches, the fire and police departments, the mayor's office, and government officials.

Our new location gives us easy access to downtown Flint and highways leading to all areas of Genesee County. "We're so incredibly proud to host this event," Michael Williams, a Flint native and president and CEO of Orchards said, "which brings people together and gives our new downtown Flint neighbors an opportunity to see first-hand the amazing work done in this office which serves all of Genesee County. Orchards Family Preservation programs offer services to high-risk families to prevent their children from placement into foster care; our team is so dynamic, over 95% of these children are able to remain at home." Orchards family preservation programs are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist families.



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SOUTHFIELD, MI
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Save the Date!

*Gerald L. Levin
Champions for Children Event*

*Thurs May 7 - 6pm
Colony Club - Detroit
Entertainment-Dinner-Auction
Please call 248-593-1576*

Orchards
CHILDREN'S SERVICES



*Our Lions: Commitment,
Compassion, Community.*