



Third Street Alliance for Women & Children provides a safe and healthy space for women, children, and families to live, learn, and thrive.

Winter 2018

Cooking Up New Lessons

Snack time is an educational experience for students in our Learning Center.

Through “Cooking with Miss Chrissy” lessons, Chrissy McGary, our cook, has expanded her reach from the kitchen into the classrooms — one snack at a time.

“It’s important for the kids to learn to do simple things in the kitchen because doing simple things prepares them for the future,” Chrissy said.

Preparing a snack for the day involves many learning tools such as scientific thinking, math skills, sequencing and understanding health and wellness.

“Cooking lends itself to hands-on, meaningful and delicious learning,” said Director of the Learning Center, Nancy Frederick. *“Our students are more likely to try new and healthy foods if they partake in the preparation process. Working with our students to develop healthy eating patterns allows them to make good food choices.”*

Miss Chrissy joins monthly Pre-K Counts classroom parent engagement sessions and demonstrates simple and healthy food preparation to parents and students. During a session with parents, one mom expressed amazement as she watched her daughter eat whole wheat bread, a food item not usually eaten at home.

Miss Chrissy often joins the K-Ready classroom in the afternoon for snack time demonstrations. She teaches students simple recipes that can be made using inexpensive ingredients found in most homes.

After setting up ingredients, Miss Chrissy teaches step-by-step how to make the snack. For young children, simple tasks can include spreading peanut butter on a graham cracker or counting out the number of raisins, or the pieces of whole wheat bread they may need for a cutout sandwich. The children do most, if not all, of the preparation and



Pre-K Counts students show off their reindeer sandwiches.

are proud to show off their accomplishments. They are more than ready to eat their creations.

Miss Chrissy was inspired to provide classroom cooking instruction by her childhood dream to learn to cook.

“I thought it would be great to give other children that opportunity,” she said. *“These skills are taught in the classroom and are now integrated cooking lessons. I hope they will be integrated into the children’s future so that they become knowledgeable about healthy cooking and healthy eating.”*

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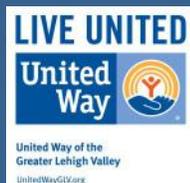
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Partnering with United Way
of the Greater Lehigh Valley



Thank you for supporting
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A Note From the Executive Director's Desk

Partnering To Keep Healthy Goals

A few years ago, when we were developing our new mission statement, we had a series of conversations about our values, our vision for the community, and how we would make that vision a reality. Health and safety were organizing principles in those discussions, and ultimately became the foundation for our mission statement.

Today we remain committed to being a healthy space for the women, children and families we serve. Most things we do at Third Street Alliance are grounded in partnerships and collaborations, and this is especially true for our health programming.

In this issue of our newsletter you'll find stories about how we deliver on our commitment to health and you'll learn about some of our staff and community partners who are involved in providing healthy choices to our program participants.

Rising To The Challenge

With the help of the TEACH Pennsylvania program, Learning Center teacher Tanya Falero is headed back to school to obtain her bachelor's degree in education.

The TEACH program works with early childhood education providers and colleges to offer scholarship programs and support for child care workers to obtain higher-level degrees.

Going back to school for a bachelor's degree has been a goal for Tanya for some time, but the financial burden would have been too much for her family.

"I couldn't afford it if it wasn't for this program," she said.

Tanya will be choosing a college or online program to take classes. The TEACH program allows for her to take up to 9 credits a semester and Tanya hopes to finish her degree within three to four years. Achieving the degree won't come without its challenges for Tanya, though.

"It's going to be different. It's a different world since I got my associate's degree," she said. *"I want to show my son you can get a higher degree no matter what age you are. And I always told my grandmother I'd go back and get it."*

Through her time with the agency, Tanya has shown a passion for leading a classroom and is sensitive to the needs of her students and their personalities when teaching, according to Nancy Frederick, Director of The Learning Center.

"Our students, families, her colleagues and the program will benefit in the long run from her action to further her education. The degree will open up some new possibilities for her, along with her desire to lead and to grow professionally," Nancy said.



Teaching Life-Long Healthy Habits

Moravian College nursing students talk health at TSA

We're grateful for the group of nursing students from Moravian College who are spreading their knowledge across all the programs at Third Street Alliance.

Their agenda—maintaining a healthy lifestyle at any age—is well received by our children, families and seniors.

After researching our agency and our clients, the students assess interventions that might benefit the clients at TSA.

For the past three semesters, a group of students from the Helen D. Breidegam School of Nursing have visited the programs each week to talk about subjects ranging from staying hydrated in the summer to keeping up hygiene.

Students offer their skills to help the seniors at TSA learn more about staying healthy. Discussions covered topics such as depression and anxiety, medications and their side effects, as well as getting vitamins and hydration from fruits, vegetables and other healthy food items. The seniors learned how to manage stress through yoga and other relaxation techniques.

"The seniors paid attention and appreciated the nurses coming in and talking with them," said Mahpareh Fakhraie, director of the adult day care.

In the Pre-K Counts program, the nursing students did a presentation with parents on sugar

content in juice, soda and energy drinks by providing a baggie of sugar along with the beverage.

"This activity not only made sense to our pre-kindergarten students, but it struck home with many of our parents, including one of whom was drinking an energy drink at the time," said Nancy Frederick, director of The Learning Center.

The work that the students do at TSA is part of senior-year nursing coursework that allows students to put their knowledge into practice. Students apply nursing knowledge and interventions for vulnerable populations who are often challenged by acute and chronic changes in physical and mental health.

Dr. Beth Gotwals, associate professor of nursing, says the students benefit from their involvement in projects and programs that impact the health and wellness of the families at TSA.

"They use all the roles of the nurse: practitioner, educator, coordinator, advocate and researcher in the context of the clients," said Gotwals.

"This opportunity was such a fulfilling experience; to be able to work in this environment and make a difference in another person's life," said students Nicole Reichert, Caitlin Shoener and Ashley Sternberg of their time at TSA.



Above left: The nursing students read to the Pre-K Counts class, teaching them the importance of sleep. **Above right:** A student dishes out healthy food items that help keep them hydrated for the seniors in the adult day care.

Making a Healthy Start

Imagine a time when you've had to work while suffering with a cold or another sickness. It becomes tough trying to concentrate or be at your best.

For many women and families, health issues fall to the wayside when dealing with a housing crisis. But with proper attention to health concerns, things can come together and families begin to heal both physically and emotionally.

Easton Hospital has teamed up with TSA to assist our families to make health a priority during a resident's time in the shelter.

Janice Thomas, director of Homeless Services, has made it a priority for new residents to seek out health and wellness care when they enter the program.

"It's important for our families to focus on their health because it is usually the first thing to go unattended," she said. "If the residents are not whole – mentally and physically – it's almost impossible for them to be whole financially. It's all tied together."

When hospital staff visits the shelter residents, the time is used to teach the women topics such as hypertension and high blood pressure, diabetes, and sexual and reproductive health. Sometimes screenings are done on the spot and the programs become eye-opening for the residents.

"It's never a feel good moment, and the ladies are scared to death that they are going to find out something they didn't want to know," Janice said.

One of those women was former resident Shirley. During one particular screening, she was told that she had extremely high blood pressure. But thanks to the doctors, Shirley was able to connect with local physicians to receive treatment.

"I was new to the area and I wasn't familiar with the doctors," she said. "Everyone was cooperative and helpful."

TSA is a safe space for women to get back on their feet, but being homeless is very stressful. There is a lot to accomplish and to think about while in the shelter program on top of dealing with family issues and work, Shirley said.

"When the doctors came in they explained how stress affects us and how our situation can be stressful on our bodies. They also talked about what we can do to alleviate it or even handle the stress better. They really helped me out," Shirley said. "It helps to have a different focus, and we were told that this isn't your end, this is a beginning, and it's up to you to make a healthy change."



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Thank you for supporting Third Street Alliance for Women & Children in 2017!



Good Deeds Creates Ripples With Lasting Impact

In late 2016 Amber, a young woman involved with the Northampton County Drug Court had a choice: come to Third Street Alliance and work hard to turn her life around, or spend time in County prison. She made the sensible choice and came to live with us in our Bridge Program.

Our Bridge Program provides a small number of women and their children with stable housing for up to 18 months. During that time they participate in supportive counseling, pre- and post- employment monitoring, educational and life-skill training. According to Janice Thomas, Director of Homeless Services, Amber thrived in our program. She met the court-mandated expectations related to drug counseling, she was actively engaged in our program - financial literacy, life skills, and she obtained a job at Pizza Hut.

Amber lived with us for 16 months; she worked hard in our program and at her job. Her hard work paid off when she was promoted to assistant manager at work. She was finally earning enough money to afford her own apartment so she moved out.

She had one final commitment in order to graduate from drug court: a community service project. With the blessing of her manager, Amber decided to do a fundraiser at Pizza Hut with Third Street Alliance as the beneficiary. The week before Christmas she came in to see Janice - her fundraiser was so successful she raised \$400 for the Alliance.

But Amber's story doesn't end there. In the week between Christmas and New Year's a couple who were unfamiliar with our work came in to donate items to TSA. They had many questions about our work and in the course of talking about how women in our program have been able to change their lives, we shared Amber's story. They were so inspired they decided on the spot to MATCH her fundraising and offered to match again, up to \$500, if Amber decides to do another fundraiser for TSA.

Amber maintains a strong connection to our program, and continues to attend NA. Today she is the NA sponsor for two women residing at Third Street Alliance.

One woman found the inspiration to turn her life around here at the Mansion with a Mission. Now she's inspiring others.



Left, Janice Thomas, Director of Homeless Services, thanks Amber, former shelter resident, for holding a fundraiser for TSA.



Join Us!

March 24

6:00—10:00 p.m.

Third Street Alliance for Women & Children

Join us for an exciting and charitable night to raise funds for our programs through raffles, silent and live and Fund-A-Need auctions! Tickets on sale online now, \$100 per person

Sponsorships available!

For more event information:
www.thirdstreetalliance.org/bistro