



**EASTERN CHRISTIAN
CHILDREN'S RETREAT**
MORE THAN A HOME

OUTREACH

< A publication of Eastern Christian Children's Retreat, a non-profit organization, providing residential programs and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities >



Recognizing the ECCR Staff



The ECCR staff has been nothing short of amazing during the COVID-19 pandemic. But that is nothing new. They are a dedicated, committed group of people who put the resident's needs first and provide an exceptional level of care.

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Fighting Coronavirus feels like fighting a war...a war that has brought us together.

by Felipe Valle'ly, HR Manager

At ECCR, we believe in unity, teamwork, passion, compassion, and family. We have turned the negative implications of Coronavirus into blessings by challenging our team to stay connected and supportive of one another. This moment has provided a chance to define an organizational "us." A moment in which we can all hold each other accountable to remain healthy and vigilant. At ECCR we don't only provide Christian health services to our residents, but we make sure we are providing all the tools and skills our team needs in order to succeed in their career, and personal life. Because our leaders have been very proactive at placing guidelines and procedures in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we have been able to continue with our regular working hours, and continue to grow our team of passionate individuals looking to serve God and the community. Together, we continue to fight, pray and work together in order to create a brighter future for everyone around us.

★ Recognizing the ECCR Staff

(continued from page 1)

Many activities and special programs have run over the past few months as a way to thank our staff for all they continue to do.

A Meal Train was a way for the community to recognize the hard work of our staff. Coordinated by former ECCR CEO, Jayne Press, this program gave community members the opportunity send meals for the staff member twice a week. With 14 locations and over 250 staff members this was no small undertaking. It was amazing to see companies, family members and supporters join in and thank our staff. Whether it was catered meals from local eateries, home cooked meals or gift cards, our staff appreciated it.

Some other morale boosting event that we have had include the ice cream truck visiting all of our locations. Nothing better than a cold treat on a hot day. Food Truck Friday with a visit from the food truck was a delicious way to end the week. A Drum Circle was a great way to reduce tension, anxiety and stress. All staff members were given a new #ECCRStrong shirt that was worn on ECCR Spirit Day.

You might have seen the #ECCRStrong logo on signs around the community too. Another way to recognize the dedication and hard work of our staff. Thank you to Sharon Robleza for designing the logo.



We've all learned about ourselves during this pandemic. What we've learned about the ECCR staff is what we already knew. They are dedicated, loving, professional, committed and a family. Thank you for all you do!





ECCR Spirit Day



Food Truck Friday



Meal Train

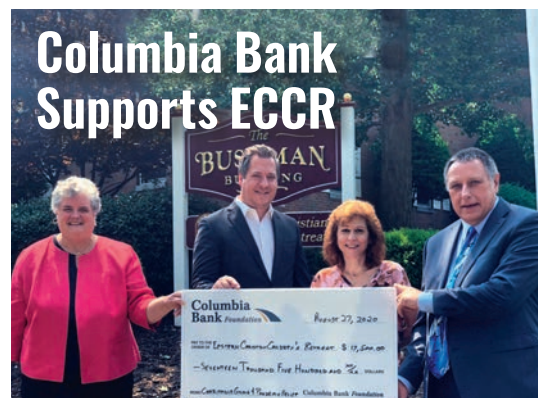
Curbside Pick Up Dinner Fundraisers

We had a fantastic response to our two Curbside Pick-Up Dinner Fundraisers.

In June we held our first event at Aldo's in Wyckoff. Participants simply drove up and their meal was brought to the car for them. Aldo's never disappoints, the meals were delicious.

In August we hosted the second event at Blue Moon Mexican Café in Wyckoff. Diners visited our table to pick up their dinners. There was even an option to stay and eat in the outside area. It was difficult to choose from the variety of menu choices. All were delicious.

A special thank you to both Aldo's and Blue Moon for supporting ECCR.



▲ I-r: Julie Holland, Daryl Rogers, Laura Lupica and Ray Santhouse

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic the Columbia Bank Foundation offered a grant opportunity for relief funds. According to Julie Holland, Foundation Executive Director, "The Columbia Bank Foundation has provided \$600,000 in pandemic relief funds in NJ." ECCR is grateful for the continued support of the Columbia Bank Foundation. These grant funds have made a significant impact on ECCR and have enabled us to obtain necessary supplies to effectively keep our residents and staff safe and healthy.



Ice Cream!



A MESSAGE FROM **The Chief Executive Officer**

Dear Friend of The Retreat,

This is a time like no other in our lives. It's hard to imagine that we are well into the second half of 2020. On one hand, it seems that time has swiftly flown by and on the other, particularly dealing with COVID-19, the year has sluggishly drudged along. But one thing is certain, God has been faithful throughout this year and we can declare with the Psalmist that

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. — PSALM 46:1

Reflecting on the past seven months that I have been at The Retreat, I'm honored to be part of an organization that has faced this COVID crisis with courage and selflessness. It is in times of calamity that heroes are born. Every single department worked together early on, assuring that our residents were in a safe environment and protected from this deadly virus. From pre-shift temperature checks, screening surveys and wearing face masks all day long, ECCR employees have embraced this new way of life. At The Retreat, we are thankful to God that, while not exempt from COVID-19 entering our facilities, residents and employees have been largely spared.

As we look into a future that is filled with uncertainties, the number one priority is to keep our residents and employees safe and protected. At ECCR, cleaning and hygiene protocols remain rigorous throughout our facilities and we continue to practice safety precautions. I am incredibly proud of our staff who come to work every day and put others before themselves as they care for the most vulnerable among us.

Lastly, thank you for the notes, calls and specifically your prayers during this time. The support received from our community has been overwhelming. And as we look to the future, our assurance is that

**The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble;
and he knoweth them that trust in Him. — NAHUM 1:7**

Warm Regards,

Daryl Rogers, CEO



"Navigating Life"

by Pastor Susan Dorward, Chaplain

**I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**

— ISAIAH 41:10

I had recently attended my friend's installation as pastor of a new church. After the ceremony, a reception was being held downstairs in their Fellowship Hall. I was a bit apprehensive. I had noticed a young girl with leg braces- she looked too heavy to carry and wondered how she would get down the stairs.

I watched as this girl navigated to the stairway. The look of mission on her face was noticeable. Then to my delight one by one, she descended the stairs- her mission accomplished! I smiled to myself as I pondered the daring independence of this courageous girl, but I also noticed that several adults were watching as well-ready to step in if need be.

The love and care that was displayed reminded me of our staff at ECCR and how they encourage our residents to navigate life and to accomplish all they can, but we, too, are always ready to extend a helping hand if need be. This was never more apparent than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff went above and beyond to not only care for the residents physically needs, but their emotional and spiritual needs as well.

However, this passage is for all of God's children to know and embrace. The Lord is ready to help His children as they make their way through life with its varied uncertainties and fears. And although we go about our days with a mission to get through them, we know that God is here to hold and help us.

As I thought about this, I also realized that the same could be said about how God has been with ECCR. We, as an organization, have had many fears and uncertainties especially during the last 6 months. We have experienced many changes, including the recent change when Jayne Press retired as our Chief Executive Officer and Daryl Rogers stepped in, but although ECCR will experience whatever life throws our way, we too know and embrace the fact the God will strengthen and help us and God will uphold us as we continue to be Jesus' hands and heart to our friends with special needs.

If you are experiencing hardships or are apprehensive about some circumstances in your life, pray-listen for God's guidance and then move forward knowing that God is always nearby to help you. The peace of Christ be with you today and always.

We asked staff members to share their thoughts about: Working at ECCR During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Shinicka Reed CRESCENT GROUP HOME MANAGER

Things were rough at first, however with dedication and team work we were able to pull through.

Wannatorn Pongpanich LODGE RN

Working at ECCR has always been challenging because our residents require so much more care. So how much more difficult did it get during a global pandemic? Extremely! Nevertheless, I am so incredibly proud of the way ECCR handled the whole situation. I cannot emphasize just one department, because I feel EVERYONE did an amazing job. There was a lot of anticipating needs, troubleshooting, and thinking outside the box. EVERYONE rose to the challenge. Not to say that things did not get frustrating or scary and tensions did run high at times, but all in all, the residents remained safe. Our residents were given the best care possible, they were made to feel secure, and they remained loved. I am proud to be part of the ECCR Family.

Ginny Henderson CASE MANAGER

WEARING MANY HATS

We have all heard the phrase “wearing many hats”! That being said, I googled where this phrase actually came from. Below is where my search took me.....

Where did the phrase “wear many hats” or “wear a lot of different hats” come from?

I don't think it has a single place of origin. I think it comes from a time (not long ago) when everyone wore hats, and many of those hats were specific to a given trade, official position or function. So someone who had several roles would have several hats and would wear the appropriate one for the occasion.

During these tough times dealing with the COVID 19 virus, I reflected on how ECCR employees are truly one big family and coming together as a team! In a ‘typical’ ECCR day, each of us would be fulfilling our responsibilities within our job titles. These past few months have certainly NOT been typical in our facility. Staff have had to be flexible, change roles within their job titles, assist with deliveries to group homes, ‘man’ the lobby to screen employees, leave their families to come to work to care for our residents and much, much more! To me, this is what wearing many hats mean! The staff at ECCR have truly come together to maintain the safety and health of our residents and each other!

DONATIONS *Thank you!*

During the height of the pandemic ECCR sent out word that we needed masks. We were overwhelmed by the kindness of everyone who reached out to us



and donated masks, many handmade.

Thank you to Sonia Adamo, Kelli Chitty, Pamela DeCuir, Evelyn LaLicate, Roxanne, Masaro, the Salesian Sisters, Horizon Landscape Co, Dorothy Wolfe, Masks by Amy & Friends, Patti Schwartz, Cheryl Simonis, Terri Fabiano and many more.



ECCR received a wonderful donation of 250 face shields from Jersey City Rapid Maker Response Group! We are extremely appreciative of their generosity.

◀ I-r: Kimberly Salles, Development Director, Daryl Rogers, CEO, Laura Lupica, COO



Susan Dorward

CHAPLAIN

It was great to witness the teamwork and comradery—people doing tasks that “weren’t their primary jobs” and doing those tasks with enthusiasm and love. We were truly all in this together!

Cheryl Campbell

HILLSIDE GROUP HOME MANAGER

The sudden impact of the Corona Virus made us aware that there were a lot of changes that had to be put in place. With the concern of staying safe ourselves, we knew we had to keep the residents as safe as possible. As a strong team to begin with, we became stronger. Our priority was to keep the residents active vs being anxious. We provided a variety of activities such as playing air hockey, toss across, tie-dyeing, canvas painting, bracelet making, two birthday parties, and spiritual activities provided by Pastors Susan and Joanne, just to name a few. The staff also participated in the activities. The staff was so appreciative to the “Meal Train”. The generosity and support through the donations of pizza, desserts, Empanadas, full dinners, Wendy’s gift cards, and so much more, was nothing short of AMAZING. And of course the Rise Committee for recognizing all employees as heroes, the hero pins, and the signs, made you feel appreciated and proud. Yes, it has been a little difficult, but ECCR employees are #ECCRSTRONG.

Sharon Romary

RECEPTIONIST

For all ECCR staff working during the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a test of courage. It felt sometimes like being in a war, not in the military sense, but like any war is about – survival, protection and fear. Something we initially knew little about but have used every resource available to struggle through. Employees working together for a common cause. The goal being our safety and most importantly, the safety of residents who have needed more care and protection than ever before.

I have seen staff members stepping up in ways to be completely admired. Doing a job because it has to be done, even though not necessarily in your job description. Changing your hours, changing your responsibilities, trying to dig for solutions and supplies. Staff members using their creativity and resources to come up with solutions, even if not easily found.

I have been deeply moved by the generosity shown by those who continue to support our organization and have provided emotional and financial support beyond belief.

I have developed a great deal of respect for many staff members who I did not know as well as I do now.

You find out what people are really made of.

I am very proud to be a part of “ECCR STRONG”.



Car Parade

What a fun night! A car parade at ECCR to show support for our staff and residents. An uplifting exciting night to say the least. This event was coordinated by ECCR Medical Director, Dr. Gregory Costello. Over 50 classic and antique cars and motorcycles visited ECCR. The group also made a generous donation of PPE to ECCR.





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MORE THAN A HOME

700 Mountain Ave.
Wyckoff, New Jersey 07481

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U.S. Postage

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ECCR Mission Statement

The Eastern Christian Children's Retreat is a private, non-profit organization created to support individuals with a broad range of intellectual and developmental disabilities. The sincere desire of the founders and the Board of Directors is that each resident have the opportunity to achieve personal growth and a meaningful life. Such a life will be ministered to our residents by a caring, skilled and dedicated staff and guided by our Christian calling and principles.

ECCR Vision Statement

Trusting in God, and honoring the Christian commitment of its founders, ECCR will continue to support persons with developmental disabilities throughout all stages of life. To assure that each person shall realize his/her full potential as a child of God and be satisfactorily integrated within society, a variety of resources shall be used including residential care, adult programs and training, social and spiritual nurture and community advocacy.

ECCR Board of Directors

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Julie Westra
Daryl Rogers, *CEO*
Laura Lupica, *COO*

ECCR Locations

Main Campus (*Bushman Building, Holly Lodge, Oak Lodge and Willow Lodge*)
Wyckoff

Belmont House
North Haledon

Crescent Ave House
Allendale

Hamilton House
Allendale

Hawthorne House
Hawthorne

Hillside House
Midland Park

Hilltop House
North Haledon

Goffle Hill House
Hawthorne

Mountain Ave House
Wyckoff

Rockledge House
Hawthorne

Waldwick House
Waldwick

Things to look for...

This year, for the first time, ECCR did not host our annual Beefsteak Dinner and Silent Auction. Due to COVID-19 we made the decision to skip this year to ensure that our supporters are all safe. We hope to bring back this popular event in 2021.

Visit the new ECCR website, www.ECCRetreat.org!

This is a great place to see our latest updates, events, job opportunities and more.

Follow us on:  Eastern Christian Children's Retreat

 ECCRetreat