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## Community L.I.N.K.

LEARNING  
INFORMATION  
NEWS  
KNOWLEDGE

Spring 2015

## Expressive Therapy

Where words fail, art can help express deep feelings.

**"Art Therapy...  
made me realize  
I had a voice, and  
it is loud and it  
will be heard."**

*Above photo: Our Seaford House youth residents were each asked to illustrate their vision of home. Students at The Jefferson School then compiled these works into a mural that is on display at Seaford House for future residents to enjoy.*

To learn more about Seaford House, visit: [cffde.org/services/SupportingTeens/seafordhouse](http://cffde.org/services/SupportingTeens/seafordhouse)

Pablo Picasso said, "Art washes from the soul, the dust of everyday life." At Seaford House, they've taken that phrase quite literally, thanks to a generous donor who wanted to help. In 2013, Expressive Therapy was introduced into the regimen of care there. Seaford House is CFF's residential and outpatient center for youth with a primary mental health diagnosis. These children arrive, suffering from trauma caused by emotional and sexual abuse, abandonment, violence, neglect and other mistreatment. As a result, their feelings of shame, guilt, rage, and isolation make it very difficult for them to discuss what's happened to them. Often, adolescents have no words available to express their deep feelings.

Expressive Therapy is the umbrella discipline that includes art, music, and dance/movement therapies. Participants create something that is unique to them and is a tangible element in the process of healing. Over time, throughout sessions, clients can see their healing process through the progression of their work. A study of children and adolescents who were at risk for long term behavioral problems suggested that art therapy contributed to the decrease of severity in 23 of 24 behaviors and allowed for a stronger relationship with the therapist. (*Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 27(3) pp. 108-118 AATA, Inc. 2010*) Like art, music therapy is nonthreatening and encourages self-awareness. Music is important to youth; it's constantly accessible and for most, enjoyable. They often find that the lyrics mirror what they are experiencing or feeling. "Depressed adolescents listening to music experienced a significant decrease in stress hormone (cortisol) levels. Field, T., Martinez, A., Nawrocki, T. Piekens, J., Fox, N. A., & Schanberg, S. (1998). Music shifts frontal EEG in depressed adolescents. *Adolescence, 33*(129), 109-116.

The youth at Seaford House are seen in Individual Art Therapy, in Trauma Groups, and in spontaneous, Focused-Need Art Therapy Sessions to tackle the most debilitating of their symptoms and make a meaningful plan forward. Most days, numerous kids ask to be seen individually that day for Art Therapy. The program is an important acute intervention to keep the kids on track and process needs they have in the moment. One 15-year old resident at Seaford House shared his feelings about Expressive Therapy, "I think Art Therapy has helped me a lot. It allowed me to realize that all the traumatic experiences I was involved in, was not my fault. It made me realize I had a voice, and it is loud and it will be heard. It made me realize I am not alone. I am not the only one going through hurtful things."

Expressive Therapy uses the creative process of making art to improve a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This process can help people resolve issues, develop and manage behaviors and feelings, and improve self-esteem and awareness. Studies have shown that through art, dance, and music, teens can communicate more easily those thoughts and feelings that are too difficult or too complicated to verbalize. "The artistic expressions of an adolescent can also convey messages to the therapist that the youth has been forbidden to verbalize...the adolescent has been trained by the perpetrator not to tell, but no one told him or her not to draw." (*Western Journal of Medicine -http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1071468*)

When we asked one of our residents his feelings about Expressive Therapy, he said, "It is going good and if it wasn't for the trauma treatment, I don't know where I would be today."

# Oberod 5K TRAIL RUN

In Memory of Art Connolly



## children & FAMILIES first RUN FEST

One Day, Two Runs - All for a Great Cause!  
Benefitting Children & Families First

Join us for our 2nd Annual Oberod 5K Trail Run/Walk followed by the Splatter Dash™.

Do one or do both - either way YOU'RE helping kids in Delaware.

# OCTOBER 11, 2015

at the Oberod Estate | 400 Burnt Mill Road | Wilmington

For more details, times and to register,  
visit: [bitly.com/RunFest15](http://bitly.com/RunFest15)

# SAVE THE DATE

for these upcoming Sussex County events.

Santa Speedo  
December 12 | Starboard, Dewey Beach, DE  
A Taste for Art of Southern Delaware  
October 3 | Indy Hall at Independence, Millsboro, DE

## OUR MISSION

Children & Families First helps children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood. We use proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish.

**It's not just our name, it's our promise** Children & Families First strengthens Delaware families by delivering an innovative and effective continuum of community-based social services. In existence for more than 130 years, CFF builds the foundation for strong communities with child-centered and family-focused programs.

## OUR VISION

Communities where children are nurtured and safe, individuals are valued, and families are strong.

## CORE SERVICES

Healthy Babies | Early Childhood  
Positive Parenting | Supporting Teens  
Family Resources | Workplace  
Older Adults

# Welcome New Board Members!

Children & Families First is pleased to announce the addition of four new members to its Board of Directors. The new members were elected at the agency's March 31, 2015 Annual Meeting.

NEW BOARD

William N. Britton  
Tamara C. DeFer  
Jeffery A. Hayter  
Alison L. Houck  
Jennifer Joseph

## You Shop, Amazon Gives.

Children & Families First is now enrolled in AmazonSmile. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your purchase to CFF whenever you shop with AmazonSmile. Simply go to the URL below, log in, and CFF will automatically receive your donation each time you shop.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-0065731>

**THANK YOU** to the artists, student chefs, purveyors and patrons who made *A Taste for Art* a success! *We had a blast!*

Great food, artists and people came together for a great cause at Young Conway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP!



# Art Can Promote Your Child's Development



Creative expression can benefit children's development. Art-making allows the child to make decisions and develop problem-solving skills. What color should I paint this? How can I make a pig out of construction paper? How can I create a character with an old hat and an apron? These hands-on activities are enjoyable and foster creativity. Creating art can give the child a sense of accomplishment and help to build confidence, which is important throughout life.

Art is a form of communication. Logos are everyday examples of this. People associate images with meanings and this kind of learning begins very early in life. For children who are still mastering language development, trying to talk about art or creating art can provide opportunities to learn language. Toddlers learn the words for shapes and colors and strengthen motor skills by drawing, painting, or sculpting. Eventually, they will be able to describe emotions through color and image.

Engaging in the arts can even help children perform better in school. According to Americans for the Arts, "Students who participate in the arts, both in school and after school, demonstrate improved academic performance and lower dropout rates." Children who are encouraged to think creatively are more likely to be able to "think

outside of the box" later in life, a valuable skill in all professions.

Parents can encourage their children to express themselves creatively by offering opportunities to experiment with art supplies. Working together on an art project can promote communication and build trust. The important part is the experience, not whether it turns out to be a masterpiece.

As MaryAnn F. Kohl, the award-winning author on the topics of children's art and creativity, writes, "It's the process, not the product." Children are naturally creative and by allowing them to experiment, their other skills will flourish.

## 3 Ways to encourage your little artist:

1. Enroll them in a local art program.
2. Art is exploration. Don't expect particular results - let them explore the materials and ideas in their own way.
3. Get involved. Create and have fun with your child! No need to try to teach how to draw - just express yourselves and have fun making art...together!

# Trauma Impacts Everyone

Imagine a young child who is suddenly forced to divide his time between two homes and understand the complexities of why his parents are no longer living together. The familiar routines that once provided stability and a feeling of security have fundamentally changed. Over time, he may adapt, but this experience will have a lasting impact on his life.

Parental separation is just one of ten experiences identified in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente's Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego. The study examines the link between childhood maltreatment and later-life health. The findings indicate that certain experiences increase the likelihood of

developing the leading causes of illness and death and poor quality of life in the United States. A person who experiences at least one ACE is at a greater risk of developing a lifetime of health problems, including anxiety, heart, lung, and liver diseases, and impaired brain development.

Preventing childhood maltreatment and treating people who have one or more ACE is important for the individual and the community. According to the CDC, child maltreatment cost the U.S. \$124 billion in 2008. Children who are abused suffer throughout their lives and are at a higher risk for smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors, delinquency, and low academic achievement. When the costs of health care, loss of productivity, child welfare, criminal justice, and special education are considered, the estimated average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment is \$210,012.

We are implementing the ACE Inventory in a number of programs and incorporating trauma-informed care principles into many of our

services. By applying the findings of the ACE Study, we hope to strengthen efforts to prevent child maltreatment and support the recovery of our participants.

## 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences that can effect later-life health.

1. Household member w/substance abuse problems
2. Parents who are separated or divorced
3. Household member w/mental illness
4. Battered mother/father
5. Criminal behavior in the home
6. Psychological Abuse
7. Physical Abuse
8. Sexual Abuse
9. Emotional Neglect
10. Physical Neglect

To learn more about Adverse Childhood Experiences, visit: [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html)



53%

Babies served by the Nurse-Family Partnership show a 53% reduction in alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use as teenagers.

# Neglected kids in Delaware are more likely to grow up to be substance abusers.

Children & Families First provides programs that can save children from the grip of drug addiction.

Children who experience multiple instances of abuse and neglect are 64% more likely to become addicted to illicit drugs.

With your help, Children & Families First can provide services and programs to children and families who need outside intervention so they can thrive.

70%

70% of adolescents and parents in our Functional Family Therapy program report an improved relationship.

## DONATE

Please consider making a gift to Children & Families First today. You'll be helping kids in Delaware grow up with a better chance of reaching their full potential.

You can use the enclosed giving envelope to mail us your gift, or give online at [cffde.org](http://cffde.org). *Thank You!*