A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the holiday film It’s a Wonderful Life, the words of Clarence the angel—“No man is a failure who has friends”—are appropriate for TwoCor’s spring newsletter. TwoCor is increasing its friends as it builds strong relationships between at-risk youth and caring adults.

The second annual Old North End Holiday Home Tour, held in December, raised over $14,000 for the purchase of a dump trailer for TwoCor’s community work projects. Over 60 friends volunteered as tour guides, and four couples opened their homes to the community. Our friends on the steering committee organized the event. KRCC, The Independent, and The Gazette provided publicity. Numerous businesses chipped in with sponsorships, including Dr. Elliot J. Cohn, M.D., Urological Associates; P.C.; Reardon Partners at The Platinum Group Realtors; Jayne of All Trades, Inc.; The Hermes Team at ReMax Properties; 2Win! Global, LLC; and Joe Clement at ReMax Properties.

New and old friends volunteered to teach the woodshop and bike learning labs. The woodshop builds custom cutting boards using donated exotic woods. Liz and Tom White made a generous donation to get the bike learning lab up and running. Featured in this issue of the newsletter, the lab teaches bike maintenance and safety. If you are interested in donating a bike or volunteering to help train our youth, please contact us.

With the program for young women growing and milder weather around the corner, TwoCor is seeking friends to hire our work crews at their home, business, or church. TwoCor loves doing those clean-up jobs that others find get harder and harder to accomplish each spring or summer. So give us a call at 719.471.6916 or visit our web site at www.twocor.org to request a free, no obligation bid for your projects.

George Bailey, the hero in It’s a Wonderful Life, epitomized a “pay it forward” attitude. We are humbled by and grateful for the many individuals, businesses, and church groups that partner with us to pay forward the blessings that they have received and to make our youth’s lives more wonderful!

Peace be with you,

James L. Hinkle, M.Div., LCSW
Executive Director

Staff and young women take a break during the automotive learning lab. To learn how you can volunteer or make a donation to help our youth become self-sufficient, please call 719.471.6916.

...so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:4
Trauma’s Impact on the Brain

Most youth at TwoCor experience trauma caused by multiple adverse childhood experiences, such as abandonment, abuse, and neglect. Toxic stress caused by trauma can have a long-term, negative impact on the neurophysiology of the developing brain. Changes in Neurophysiology

The primary changes to brain neurophysiology caused by toxic stress include the over activation of the fear response (fight, flight or freeze) and the over stimulation of stress hormones. These changes lead to the suppression of executive functioning and the depletion of hormones that calm and relax the individual.

Toxic stress can also alter the youth’s physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development. Youth who are affected demonstrate hyperactivity, underactivity, lack of emotional self-control, hyper-vigilance, inability to learn, problems with fine motor control skills, perception, thinking, and memory.

In a brain exposed to toxic stress, the frontal region of the neo-cortex, which is associated with executive functioning skills, such as planning, complex thinking, and the ability to pay attention, is underdeveloped.

Trauma-Informed Care

Our work training helps develop brain areas that are impacted by trauma. First, we focus on helping youth feel safe and valued. Once they feel secure and can accept instruction, we focus on development of fine motor skills and hand eye coordination through detailed work, such as sanding and painting. Consistent and regular instruction on work expectations and rewards for meeting those expectations reinforce patterns of thinking and behavior that strengthen executive functioning skills.

Putting the Wheels Back On

Lack of transportation is a major reason why youth cannot access TwoCor services or keep a job. TwoCor’s most recent learning lab teaches youth bike maintenance while building a sense of personal responsibility for getting to work.

Bikes are donated to the program or purchased inexpensively at thrift stores. Youth who successfully complete the program learn to maintain their bikes, and can earn a bike for their own use based on effort and attitude in the learning lab.

For $250 you can sponsor a youth in an art, bike, woodshop, or automotive learning lab.

Instruction focuses on basic tasks, such as fixing flat tires, adjusting the seat, and lubing moving parts. The emphasis is on using the proper tools for the job, as well as cleaning, maintaining, and properly storing tools, provides valuable practice for later on when youth move into the community work projects.

Volunteer Jim Snyder and TwoCor Board President Doug May teach the course with assistance from TwoCor staff.

"Some of our students own bikes but no longer use them. They can’t afford the bike shop costs when they get a flat or the brakes fail,” according to Doug. “It’s empowering for them to realize that they can accomplish more than they think is possible, fix their own bikes, and take another step toward self-sufficiency.”

Getting A Jump on Spring Cleanup Projects

Spring is here finally! It’s time to think about raking up the dead leaves and branches, building new gardens, mending fences, and cleaning out the garage. Let TwoCor take the hassle out of these and other odd jobs around your home, church, or business. Call us at 471-6916 for a free, no obligation quote on your project.

Youth are learning about bicycle repair, cleaning and maintenance: proper use of tools; and bike safety. They earn a bike for their own use based on effort and attitude in the learning lab.

We invite you to donate your vehicles, properties, and gently used items to TwoCor. To make a donation or special gift to TwoCor, please call us at 471-6916. Our needs include:

- Volunteers to prepare a home-cooked meal
- Pottery supplies: clay tools, books, buckets, sponges, texture tools, slab roller, pug mill, wedging table, pottery wheel, and bats
- Opportunity to visit a potter’s studio
- Unused gift cards
- Bikes, bike parts, and helmets

Please Help with Our Needs

TwoCor youth in the community work projects stain the market stand at Venetucci Farm.

A Big Thumbs Up To…

Challon, a former intern, is working full-time at C&C Sand and Stone and continues to earn more responsibility.

Teen Internship Program Gains Momentum

Members of the Teen Internship Program (TIP) business consortium met in March. Present was Larry Martinez, the new liaison between the Fostering Hope Foundation, which supports foster families, TwoCor, and participating businesses. Larry has over 20 years of experience working with youth in juvenile detention and foster care and will provide on-going support to the TwoCor youth and supervisors in the program.

The liaison will find appropriate opportunities for youth to become acculturated to work and help employers determine appropriate consequences when the youth stumble. “It’s a mistake to treat our youth as if they aren’t different from youth from stable home environments,” stated Nick Colarelli, President of Fostering Hope. “But it is also a mistake to assume that they can’t meet expectations.”

Michael Wright of Signature Homes, who has worked with a TwoCor intern for three months, commented, “I am impressed with Tyler’s willingness to listen, learn, and work. With the right coaching, he has the potential to go far in this industry.”

Partners in Action