

# rainbowkitchen

COMMUNITY SERVICES

NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2014-15

## *Dear Friends,*

I am so pleased to be able to share with you the beautiful thank you letter we received this year from a family we assisted, and I hope it touches your heart as it did ours. This letter describes, far more eloquently than I could, the difference that our efforts - and your support - can make in people's lives. Please be sure to also read the client success story on page 2 for another example of how, with your support, Rainbow Kitchen can help to change lives.

We are fortunate to have a truly dedicated and caring staff here at Rainbow Kitchen, as well as wonderful volunteers, and loyal friends like you who contribute to our efforts in so many ways. We are very grateful for your support, which makes our success possible during this holiday season and throughout the year. On behalf of everyone at Rainbow Kitchen Community Services, I wish you a joyous holiday season and peace, health and happiness in the New Year!

***Donna Little, Executive Director***

**Staff:** Renee Conte, Jim Harvey, Marlene (Pumpkin) Murphy, Barb Peterman, Lori Roadway, Bob Willkomm

**Board of Directors:** Geoff Andrison, President; Tony Thompson, Vice President; Lisa Bush, Treasurer; Jeffrey Sabo, Secretary; Antoinette Cardamone, Terri Deasy, Lonnie Johnson, Carl Maskiewicz, Navin Parmar, Jay Srini, Nick Willocks

## **Our Mission:**

Rainbow Kitchen Community Services is committed to improving the quality of life for low-income families and individuals through programs that address hunger, child nutrition, and supportive services.



*Our oldest and youngest Thanksgiving volunteers, Mimi & Tanya*



*Bruce Springsteen*

## **Thanks Again, Bruce!**

As every Bruce Springsteen fan in Pittsburgh knows, Bruce has been a loyal friend to Rainbow Kitchen for close to 3 decades now, and he encourages his fans to support our efforts as well. When Bruce brought his High Hopes tour to town earlier this year, he offered Rainbow Kitchen a ticket package to auction and invited us to collect donations at the concert. We raised a total of \$17,380 from Bruce's fans and the ticket auction, and also received a generous donation from Bruce Springsteen. Many thanks once again to Bruce Springsteen for his ongoing support of Rainbow Kitchen, to the gracious folks at Consol Energy Center, the volunteers who helped out that night, and to Bruce's amazingly generous fans!

## **Holiday Activities**

The Neighborhood Academy Basketball Team prepared and served their traditional feast on Thanksgiving Day. Our Christmas Day meal will be served by volunteers from the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. Some other ways in which our staff, volunteers and donors helped brighten this holiday season for our neighbors in need:

- ❖ 1,117 adults & children received winter coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and other clothing
- ❖ 461 families benefited from KDKA Turkey Fund
- ❖ 100 families received holiday meal baskets donated by Churchill Wilkins Rotary & CCAC
- ❖ Boyce Student Physical Therapist Assistant Club, and Carnegie Mellon University students
- ❖ 20 families were adopted through Rainbow Kitchen's Adopt-a-Family holiday gift program
- ❖ 165 children from our pantry families and Kids Café will receive holiday gifts, thanks to our friends at M\*Modal, Mastech, Leech Tishman, St. Therese Church, and a very generous funder
- ❖ All of our Thanksgiving and Christmas Day meal guests receive holiday gift bags
- ❖ All of our program participants benefited from the generosity of everyone who contributed to food, toy and toiletry drives for Rainbow Kitchen

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### Programs, Services & Activities

Rainbow Kitchen distributed well over 300,000 lbs. of supplemental groceries and non-food necessities to families in need through our **Food Pantry** program, serving an average of 500 households a month. We provided 16,000 nutritious **Kids Café** dinner meals to hungry low-income children and served an additional 19,000 substantial daily meals through our **Breakfast** program. The **Rainbow Kitchen Farm Stand** provided our community with wholesome affordable, locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, mid-June through early October. Our **Case Management and supportive services** program provided more than 200 households a month with help for immediate/crisis needs, short-term and extended case management.

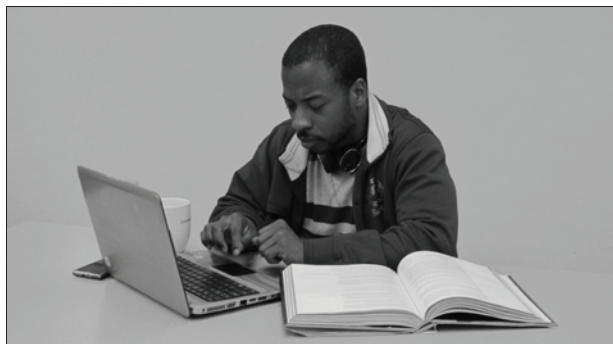
Some of the other outcomes of our supportive services and collaborative efforts this year included:

- 300 people received bed pillows donated by Holiday Inn Express Waterfront
- 100 seniors received Commodity Supplemental Food Program's extra monthly food assistance
- 55 households received Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) services
- 50 children received back-to-school backpacks donated by Citizens Bank, filled with school supplies donated by M\*Modal
- 42 children and accompanying adults enjoyed a day of summer fun at Idlewild Park
- 44 families were assisted in applying for SNAP (food stamp) benefits
- 40 mothers in our community joined us for a Mother's Day brunch and enjoyed donated manicures, facials, and gift bags
- 30 seniors gathered together to share a festive dinner and Molly's Trolley holiday lights tour
- 20 individuals received added Medicare benefits and help with medical and prescription needs

Rainbow Kitchen worked in collaboration with a variety of other organizations & initiatives, including:

- Braddock Youth Project, to develop the Homestead Youth Project, which provided summer employment for 15 low-income youth from our community
- Amity Harvest Garden provided work experience opportunities for the teenagers participating in the Homestead Youth Project
- Veterans Healthcare for the Homeless, offers outreach services for veterans twice a month at Rainbow Kitchen
- Walgreens in Homestead provided free flu shots to our clients, and assisted with our holiday gift program
- Adagio Health, offering nutritional classes and information, food tasting, and health-related giveaways for our program participants

## Rainbow Kitchen



### A Case Management Success Story

We proudly congratulate T.B., one of our Case Management clients, who has been selected as the Allegheny County nominee for the 2015 Community Action Association of PA Self-Sufficiency Award. T.B. first came to Rainbow Kitchen last February. He had spent the past 7 years in and out of jail, had recently been released from jail, and was seeking guidance and support to help him turn his life around and become self-sufficient.

T.B. was highly invested in moving on with his life in a positive manner and had a strong determination to access all help and services available to him. He was an excellent candidate for our extended Case Management program\* through which we work with clients over time to support and assist their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. The individuals themselves have a major role in establishing their goals and developing and implementing an action plan. The role of our Case Manager is to provide the appropriate guidance, counseling, information, referrals, and assistance in accessing resources.

T.B.'s goals included obtaining gainful employment, securing affordable housing, returning to college, obtaining health insurance, and maintaining a budget. With hard work and determination, T.B. has come a long way over the past 10 months. He now works full-time at a job with medical benefits and attends ITT Technical Institute full-time, maintaining a 3.33 GPA. He has his own apartment, maintains a household budget and a savings account, and does not receive any public assistance benefits.

T.B. continues to work with our Case Manager as he pursues new goals. He says, "Rainbow Kitchen, and especially my individual appointments with Renee, help to keep me on track and focused to succeed in my goals by providing continual communication, referrals, and supports." His future plans are to graduate in June 2016 and work in the Information Technology field, purchase a vehicle, save money, and ultimately open his own business, write a motivational book, and live his life in a positive manner being the best person he can be.

\*This program is funded in part by a grant provided by the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development through the Allegheny County Dept. of Human Services

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#### Foundation Support

We are grateful for the generous support of:

- ❖ Allegheny County Bar Foundation -  
Attorneys Against Hunger Campaign
- ❖ Anne L. & George H. Clapp  
Charitable and Educational Trust
- ❖ Darden Restaurants Foundation
- ❖ Eat'nPark Hospitality Group
- ❖ Food Lion Charitable Foundations
- ❖ Kenneth D. Frew Foundation
- ❖ Giving2Grow
- ❖ Kennywood Entertainment Cares
- ❖ Massey Charitable Trust
- ❖ McKeesport Hospital Foundation
- ❖ The Park Foundation
- ❖ Hyman & Lillyann G. Parker Foundation
- ❖ The Pittsburgh Foundation & Day of Giving Fund
- ❖ PNC Charitable Trust -  
The H. Glenn Sample Jr. MD Memorial Fund
- ❖ Terry and Janet Serafini Fund  
of The Pittsburgh Foundation
- ❖ Julius L & Libbie B Steinsapir Family Foundation
- ❖ Hilda M. Willis Foundation

#### How You Can Help

Your tax-deductible donation enables Rainbow Kitchen to continue to provide food and other vital assistance to our neighbors in need. You can mail your contribution in the enclosed envelope, or donate online at [www.rainbowkitchen.org](http://www.rainbowkitchen.org).

##### Your tax-deductible contribution of:

**\$30** will support the cost of helping a family in crisis

**\$60** will provide 4 weeks of substantial hot daily meals for a needy low-income individual

**\$100** will ensure a month of nutritious dinner meals for a low-income child at risk of hunger

**\$150** will provide 12 low-income households with a month's supply of supplemental groceries

**\$300** will ensure 3 months of nutritious daily dinner meals for a hungry child

**\$600** will sponsor 4 low-income families in our Food Pantry program for a full year

**\$750** will sponsor a low-income individual in our Breakfast program for a year

**\$1200** will sponsor a hungry low-income child in our Kids Café program for a full year



*Children enjoying a Kids Café meal during the holidays*

### Rainbow Kitchen



*Ginger came to the W.A.R. Against Hunger with the Animal Rescue League, and went home with her new owner, Cassidy Williams*

#### Walk And Ride Against Hunger

Mark your calendar now for the 11th annual Walk And Ride Against Hunger on **Saturday, June 6th**. The W.A.R. Against Hunger is a walk and bicycle-ride event that takes place along the Great Allegheny Passage, starting at the Historic Pump House at the Waterfront in Homestead. The event features a Health & Wellness Expo, offering free health screenings, information and activities. This is Rainbow Kitchen's major annual fundraising event, and a significant source of funding for our programs and services. Details and registration information will be available soon at [www.rainbowkitchen.org](http://www.rainbowkitchen.org).

Many thanks to our 2014 Walk And Ride Against Hunger sponsors:

**Title Sponsor:** UPMC Health Plan

**Platinum:** Comcast, Flying Cork Media

**Gold:** Employees of M\*Modal

**Silver:** 90.5 WESA & 91.3fm WYEP, Epic Systems Corp., WHEMCO Inc.

**Bronze:** FedEx Ground, Pittsburgh Steelers, TJS Financial Services

**T-Shirt:** Fifth Third Bank, PA American Water Co.

**Rest Station:** Advanticom, Inc., Bottom Dollar Food, Decision Resources, Inc., Eat'nPark Hospitality Group, Erie Forge & Steel, Isaly's, Meyer, Unkovic & Scott, O'Toole Printing, Sarris Candies, Seubert & Associates, The Waterfront Shopping Center

**Mile Marker:** ASKO, Dick's Sporting Goods, Elite Heating & Air Conditioning, First Commonwealth Bank, Hefren-Tillotson, Heritage Seubert Financial, Hire Quest Resources, Horovitz Rudoy & Roteman, JRG Advisors, Kerotest Manufacturing Corp., KU Resources, Louis Plung & Co., Rostrum Records, Steel Valley Rotary, United Steelworkers

**To learn how you can support the 2015 W.A.R. Against Hunger**, including information about event sponsorship, program book advertising, donations for our prize drawing, participation in the Health & Wellness Expo, or registration call 412-464-1892 or email [donna.little@rainbowkitchen.org](mailto:donna.little@rainbowkitchen.org).



**[Rainbow Kitchen Client Thank You Letter: "Renee" is our Case Manager, "Pumpkin" is our Outreach Coordinator]**

Dear Renee, Pumpkin and the staff of Rainbow Kitchen.

Thank you isn't enough for us to say for all of your help. Having come from the Homestead /Munhall area all of our lives and knowing about the Rainbow Kitchen I have been familiar with the programs and services you provided to the community but I have never given it a second thought, mainly because I was not in need of them. However when I lost my job of 10 years and struggled to find another one I hit a low point in my life; probably the lowest point I have ever been. I was forced for the first time to rely on someone else to put food on my table, and to help me maintain a stable home for my family. As I sit here writing this letter I swell up with tears to think that there was someone that unconditionally stepped up and put their arms around my family and told us it would be OK. That someone was the staff of the Rainbow Kitchen. I was truly amazed at how understanding everyone was and how much compassion you had towards my family.

I have to admit I was truly embarrassed to turn to the Rainbow Kitchen for help; I was in denial about needing help and felt that I was not someone who visited a food bank, or needed someone else to provide for me. I was not poverty stricken, and I was not the kind of person that went to places like that. However after the first few visits and meetings I was shocked to find out my ideas were completely wrong about the Rainbow Kitchen. I can recall a moment when I was at the pantry and Pumpkin walked up to my wife and hugged her, and then took my two children by the hand and led them to an area in the back, only to emerge minutes later with a bag of goodies for them. Not to mention all the help we have gotten from Renee. I cannot list all of the help and caring she has shown towards our family, she has been there by our side for every step of our journey to getting back on our feet. As for the rest of the staff, if it was not for their big hearts my family may have gone without, and knowing this brings another tear to my eye.

As I hold back tears I sit here and can't believe how much you and your staff don't care if I'm black or white, if I'm a male or a female, or I'm able to work or disabled. They care about everyone that walks through the door. They are not here to judge, or cast beliefs on people they are just here to HELP. Over the past two years my misconceptions have been corrected and I have come to understand why the Rainbow Kitchen has been around for so long, and how much of a vital part of the community it is.

As I sit here and write this I now truly understand and cannot believe the compassion and caring your staff has for their fellow man. Words cannot express the thanks I want to express to you and your staff. Thank you for being there, thank you for taking the time to understand and thank you for HELPING my family.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Renee", is located at the bottom left of the letter. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.