



Brighter Futures

On the Brighter Side


Ohio Family and Children First Initiative
Help Me Grow
Brighter Futures is a Montgomery
County Help Me Grow Nurse Home
Visiting Service

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and Thanks



Volume 1 Issue 1

A Helping Hand, A Brighter Tomorrow

Pregnant at the age of 14, Stephanie North was alone, depressed and confused. She was particularly afraid of her abusive boyfriend (the baby's father), who had repeatedly threatened her. Stephanie also feared she would be a bad mother, something he had repeatedly told her she'd be, and was terrified that the baby would be taken from her.

Today Stephanie is a far cry from that frightened, insecure child she was three years ago. With the help of Brighter Futures, she has blossomed into a courageous young woman, wise beyond her years, who is building a safe, stable and supportive environment in which her child can grow and thrive.

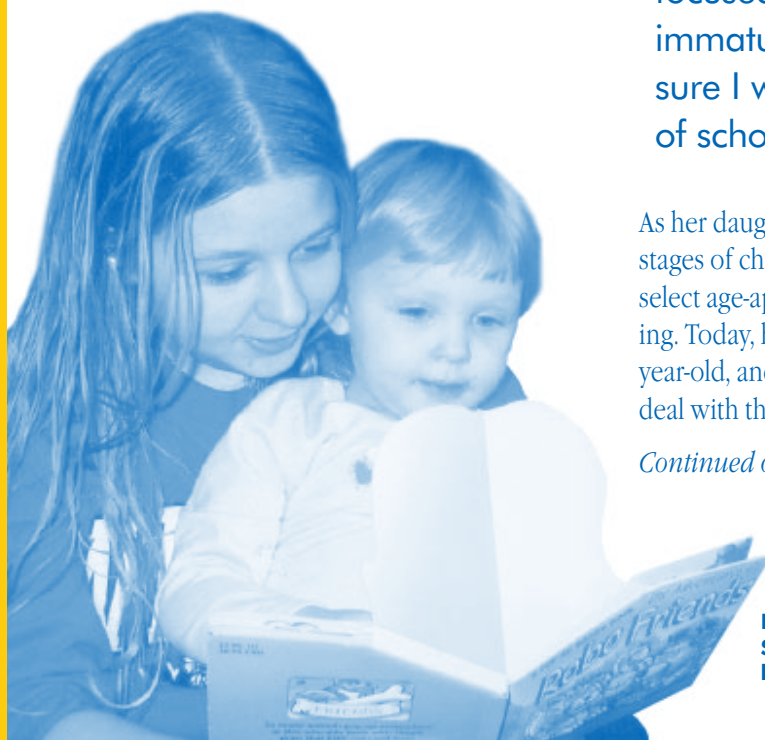
Building Parenting & Life Skills

"Brighter Futures was what I had hoped for and then some," Stephanie recalls. Her Brighter Futures nurse, Patty Martin, and nurse Cynthia Marsee, who filled in when Patty was on leave, "were both absolutely wonderful!" says Stephanie, "and not judgmental in the least." When her daughter was born, Stephanie received a wealth of advice on how to care for the baby. For example, she learned important parenting skills like breastfeeding and proper nutrition for herself and her child.

"If I hadn't had Brighter Futures and Patty in my life, I'd be focused today on a lot of really immature things, and I'm almost sure I would have dropped out of school." - Stephanie North

As her daughter grew, Stephanie learned about the stages of child development, for example, how to select age-appropriate toys and encourage learning. Today, her daughter is a healthy, energetic two-year-old, and Stephanie is learning the best ways to deal with the "terrible twos."

Continued on page 4



**Brighter Futures client
Stephanie North and
her daughter**



A Program of the Greater Dayton
Area Hospital Association

Brighter Futures is a Montgomery County "Help Me Grow" Nurse Home Visiting Service. Pregnant women age 21 or younger who are parenting for the first time and who live in Montgomery County are eligible to enroll.

1111 Edwin C. Moses Blvd.
Dayton, Ohio 45408

Phone: 937-208-MOMS
Fax: 937-208-8373

www.brighter-futures.org

Letter from the Director

As the Director of Brighter Futures, I am delighted to personally welcome you to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter, *On the Brighter Side!* We are very excited to have this new avenue in which to introduce Brighter Futures to the broader community, and to inform, recognize and inspire our existing friends, partners and generous donors.

As you may know, our 19 specially-trained nurses work closely with hundreds of young mothers and their families, improving not only the parents' lives but brightening the future of their children as well. Over the years of providing services to these young women and their children, our nurses become far more than traditional caregivers. Not surprisingly, they build strong, personal relationships with their clients and families, becoming advocates, role models, mentors and friends.

This unique bond and the exceptional efforts of the nursing team make our program truly a community treasure. In fact, I am incredibly proud and pleased to inform you that six of our nurses were honored with awards for outstanding service in 2003. Tammy Ballard, Jennifer Jones and Tonya Elam were presented with Nurse Excellence Awards from Good Samaritan Hospital and Sherie Carpenter, Pam Henry and Polly Morgan were honored with Nursing Excellence Awards from Miami Valley Hospital. They were nominated by their peers and competitively selected from a pool of hundreds of nurses throughout each hospital.

Despite the dedication and hard work of our staff, the need for our services today is greater than ever before. There are more than 800 teen births per year in Montgomery County, yet we can only serve 230 new clients. Many of these young moms desperately need our support. Please consider helping to brighten the future of these parents and children in our community by sending a tax-deductible contribution to Brighter Futures today.

Once again, I hope you enjoy our first issue of *On the Brighter Side*. Please let us know what you think of the newsletter and what you'd like to read about in future issues by calling Kristen Hill at (937) 208-5119. Thank you very much for your support and commitment to Brighter Futures families.

Sincerely,



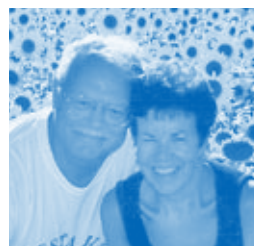
Pam Albers

Director, Brighter Futures

palbers@brighter-futures.org

Staff Profile: Patty Martin

Patty Martin has been with Brighter Futures longer than any other nurse, and it's probably because she has the most energy. Patty not only knows how to motivate her clients, she motivates other nurses as well. At a recent "talent show" of Brighter Futures staff, Patty's "talent" was blasting the theme song from "Footloose," while clapping her hands and dancing wildly on top of chairs - inspiring the rest of the room to join her.



**Brighter Futures nurse
Patty Martin and her
husband, Bob**

Patty has been with Brighter Futures since it began 16 years ago. Her eyes light up when she describes the passion she has for the program's mission and the compassion she has for her clients. "The most wonderful thing

is to find the part of loveliness that is within my clients," she says, "and that's where I start. You go from there and work your way up. This is strength-based. It's spiritual."

Though highly rewarding, the job has not been without its challenges, Patty explains. "When a client has lived a violent life and that is all she knows how to pass on to her child, then the challenge is breaking the cycle of violence," she says. "I show her how she can find the strength, the positive in the child, the same way I help my clients find the strength and the beauty in themselves. I try to model it for them."

Her greatest successes come from hearing clients say 'I can do that!' and take ownership of their lives. Says Patty, "that sense of empowerment and sense of responsibility that a client will take in her life, it is a wonderful thing to see."

Patty has bright expectations for the future of Brighter Futures. "I can't see it getting any better," she says with a laugh. "Teamwork is the key, and we have an incredible team of nurses."

Announcements & Events

thanks!

Brighter Futures Partners with March of Dimes

On April 24, a motivated team consisting of 20 Brighter Futures staff and family members and two dogs walked in the 34th annual March of Dimes WalkAmerica. This nationwide walk, the biggest fundraiser for the March of Dimes, supports lifesaving research and innovative programs that save babies from prematurity, birth defects and other infant health problems. The mission is complementary to the work and goals of Brighter Futures.

With the rise of premature birth as a major and growing threat to hundreds of thousands of babies nationally and nearly a thousand each year in Montgomery County, the March of Dimes and Brighter Futures make defeating prematurity a priority. Today, 1 in 8 babies is born prematurely. Many of these infants die and others face lifelong disability.

The local Montgomery County WalkAmerica took place on a gorgeous Saturday morning at Yankee Trace in Centerville. Every Brighter Futures team member completed the walk, including nurse Shatawn Aniton, pregnant and due to give birth within days.

Nurse-Family Partnership National Forum

On March 11, in Washington, DC, Brighter Futures nurses, along with leading advocates and well known contributors in the area of maternal and infant health, gathered with Dr. David Olds, founder of the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), and Dr. Ann Jones, NFP national director, to celebrate the program's successes throughout the country. Congressional hosts and speakers at the event included Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Senator Arlen Specter, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

At the event, nurse home-visitors Polly Morgan and Denise Robinson represented Brighter Futures, Montgomery County's own Nurse-Family Partnership-based organization and a part of Help Me Grow. Morgan was thrilled about the support and enthusiasm shared at the Washington, DC NFP Forum. "This is the program to change society," she said. "You help a young mom to love herself and raise her child to follow a new pattern. What happened in DC convinced me that there are many other (important) people in big places who believe that."



The Brighter Futures crew was all smiles on WalkAmerica day, raising much-needed funds for the March of Dimes

Donors Brighten the Holidays for Families

The holiday season for families in need is often a stressful time, particularly for parents who experience guilt along with the many burdens of poverty. Explains Brighter Futures

Nurse Home Visitor Polly Morgan, RN, "[Our families] often cannot afford even the simple necessities, not to mention gifts or a nice holiday." But thanks to the generosity and concern of more than a dozen community businesses, churches, individuals and non-profits, many Brighter Futures families received surprises that brightened their holidays.

The following generous donors responded to our request for donations: **GE Card Services** (which alone sponsored 20 families), **Hannah's Treasure Chest** (which also sponsored at least 25-30 families - we lost count!), **Miami Valley Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital, Epiphany Lutheran Church, St. Luke Church, Freeman and Henderson, DDS, Holly Thomas and her Cub Scout Troop, Christ Child Society, GDAHA, Karissa Zartman, Darryl Hagans, Nona Rutledge, National City Mortgage Company,** and **Christ United Methodist Church Women**, which also sent us a generous monetary donation.

In addition, **Cynthia Turner** and her co-workers at **National City Mortgage Company** adopted a Brighter Futures family for Thanksgiving, providing a young client, her newborn and her family of eight (all living in one small DMHA apartment) with a complete Thanksgiving meal. They even included an infant care package for mom and baby. The family, according to their nurse, Teresa Smith (who delivered the meal and package on Thanksgiving day), was absolutely thrilled. Without the support of National City Mortgage, this family would have gone hungry on Thanksgiving.

On behalf of Brighter Futures and the over 700 families we serve, thank you to our special holiday donors for your generosity, kindness and compassion. It is by remembering these young pregnant and parenting women and their infants that you truly exemplify the spirit of giving, community and dedicated service to others.

A Helping Hand, A Brighter Tomorrow continued...

"If I hadn't had Brighter Futures, I'd be focused today on a lot of really immature things, and I'm almost sure I would have dropped out of school," says Stephanie. "Patty insisted I stay in school and do well." In June, Stephanie received her high school diploma from Wayne High School. She hopes to continue her education by going to Sinclair Community College's nursing program or to a technical college.

Brighter Futures nursing care also involves being there to lend a hand and a shoulder during some of life's most difficult challenges. For example, when her grandfather died, Stephanie needed someone close to her who understood this difficult time in life, and Cynthia was her nurse during that time. Stephanie recalls, "I was always able to talk to Cynthia in a way I couldn't talk to my family about how I felt. She was so understanding."

Access to Care & Compassion

The Brighter Futures program was particularly convenient for Stephanie because initially she didn't have a driver's license. "I couldn't get to the other programs for teen moms because I was under 16 and I couldn't drive, so with Brighter Futures it really helps out a lot that the nurse comes to your home," she explains.

A part of the mission of the Brighter Futures program is to help young women identify their strengths despite the many obstacles they have encountered. Patty, by Stephanie's account, motivated and encouraged her to utilize these strengths - most obviously with her parenting skills, her education and her resourcefulness. Today, thanks to her nurses' help, Stephanie says she doesn't focus so much on the things she can't change. "Instead I focus more on long-term goals. My heart's desire is to graduate, go to college, have a career and be independent," she says. Clearly, the future for Stephanie North and her daughter now looks very bright indeed.

For more information or to request services, please call Starting Point Central Site at (937)237-0123 or Brighter Futures at (937) 208-MOMS (6667).

To make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit our Web site at www.brighter-futures.org or call (937) 208-MOMS (6667).

Please visit our new Web site at www.brighter-futures.org



1111 Edwin C. Moses Boulevard
Dayton, Ohio 45408

www.brighter-futures.org

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