



Todd Ouida Children's Foundation

591 Clarendon Court, River Edge, NJ 07661

www.mybuddytodd.org

★ Thank you! We have distributed over one million dollars in grants! ★

Fall 2015

Our Mission

The Todd Ouida Children's Foundation was established by Todd's family to create a meaningful legacy for Todd, whose life was tragically ended in the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Born out of Todd's own successful struggle with childhood anxiety, the mission of the foundation is to:

- Financially support psychological services for children of families in need and promote mental health initiatives for all children
- Raise awareness and reduce the stigma of anxiety and depression disorders in children, recognizing the need for early intervention
- Provide contact information for those seeking help

The Child Mind Institute (childmind.org) recently reported that "75% of mental illness begins before age 24, and 50% before age 14. Early intervention is vital; without treatment, these children and adolescents are at higher risk for academic failure, alcohol and substance abuse, and even suicide.... The overwhelming sense of stigma and shame often prevents parents from seeking the early intervention their children need, and it's clear our children deserve better."

We thank you for being loyal partners and for keeping Todd's memory alive through each and every child whose life we touch.

Herb and Andrea Ouida

*Amy, Alex, Ashley,
Andrew and Aidan Morik*

*Jordan, Heather,
Christopher and Nicholas Ouida*

Todd Ouida Children's Foundation 3rd and 4th Annual Conferences

Because our newsletter was delayed this year, we have two illuminating conferences at Montclair State University to write about.

The theme of the 2014 conference was *The Power of Formative Experiences: What We Need to Learn and Experience to be Healthy Caregivers*. Keynote speakers were Dr. J Kevin Nugent, founder and director of the Brazelton Institute, Harvard Medical School; Dr. Cynthia Ewell Foster, director of the University Center for the Child and Family at the University of Michigan (and an Ouida Scholar); and Dr. Gerard Costa, director of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University.

At this conference, we instituted the *Todd Ouida Children's Hero Award* for significant contributions and dedication to infant, child and family mental health. There were two presentations of the inaugural award, to Dr. Nathaniel Donson and Dr. Gerard Costa.

The theme of the 2015 conference was *Meeting Infants and Children Where They Are: Mental Health in Homes, Centers and Schools*, and we had an abundance of inspiration from our speakers! Chris Bale, director of the Partnership for Children, UK—home of "Zippy's Friends," a school-based mental health promotion curriculum—crossed the pond to be with us. Dr. John Greden, founder and executive director of the University of Michigan Depression Center, and Dr. Maria Muzik, director of the Women and Infants Program at the U-M Health System (and an Ouida scholar) also joined us. Jake Greenspan, co-founder and co-director of The Floortime Center, and Montclair's own Dr. Gerard Costa rounded out the program.

The 2015 Hero Award was presented to Robert Jones (left), chief executive of Children's Aid and Family Services, who recently retired after nearly 30 years of service to the organization.



Left to right: Kevin Nugent, Cynthia Ewell Foster, Gerard Costa



Left to right: Gerard Costa, Special Guest Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel, Nathaniel Donson



Left to right: John Greden, Chris Bale, Maria Muzik, Jake Greenspan, Gerard Costa



Stories from the Field

A few examples of children being helped through grants from the Todd Ouida Children's Foundation.

CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES: MEDICAL SERVICES AND ADVOCACY CENTER



Denise, a quiet and sensitive seven year old, came to Children's Aid and Family Services deeply wounded as a result of the abuse she suffered as a young child. She lives in one of the agency's group foster homes and receives multiple complementary therapies, including individual, group, family and art therapy. Denise has problems with daytime "wetting" and nighttime bedwetting, and is on medication for this issue. As she has a history of sexual abuse, the Medical Center's staff is mindful of avoiding any invasive medical testing or procedures, to the greatest extent possible. After obtaining a thorough medical history, it was determined that Denise's wetting issue was likely behavioral rather than medical.

The Center's nurse practitioner, who is well-versed in the intricacies of dealing with children with histories of sexual abuse, developed a plan to meet with Denise on a regular basis and provide age-appropriate education regarding strategies to decrease the wetting incidents, which were terribly embarrassing to her. Denise was counseled on ways to manage this problem, and she was given a wristwatch and a plan to go to the bathroom at scheduled intervals. In addition, the nurse practitioner provided education to agency group home staff, who had been extremely frustrated with Denise's wetting problems.

Just one week following the implementation of the plan and staff education, Denise excitedly approached the nurse practitioner proudly exclaiming, "I didn't wet myself!" Aside from having a profound effect on Denise's self-esteem and sense of well being, the nurse practitioner's intervention was crucial to assisting the agency's staff in understanding Denise's unique needs.

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY: SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS



Existing at the intersection of education and health, The Children's Aid Society School-Based Health Centers are considered one of the most effective strategies for delivering high quality, comprehensive and culturally-competent medical and mental health care to students, particularly for adolescent students who can be difficult to reach.

Such was the case for Julia, who learned about the mental health services through a medical visit on site last year, and subsequently referred herself for treatment due to feelings of anxiety and sadness. During treatment, she disclosed a deeply traumatic experience that she had never shared before; the sexual abuse committed by her half-brother. Victims of sexual abuse are often silent sufferers, reluctant to disclose the abuse due to profound feelings of shame and fear of causing chaos

within the family. Yet, without treatment, the consequences are grave. An assessment conducted by her therapist indicated that Julia indeed suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which presented in numerous symptoms including problems sleeping, irritability, trouble concentrating, difficulty trusting others and avoidance of others. Through a strong therapeutic relationship with her social worker, Julia was able to open up, talk about her experience and begin accepting its impact. Further helping her to cope with her PTSD, she pursued outlets for expressing her feelings, including painting, exercising and journaling. Her social worker also supported Julia's mother through psychoeducation, which enabled her to accept the abuse that had occurred, gain a deeper understanding of its impact on Julia and respond in a much more supportive way. While she continues to struggle with her half-brother, Julia and her mother have developed a much closer bond that is playing a critical role in Julia's recovery.

Not surprisingly, the experience also manifested itself in Julia's school performance, and in 11th grade she was at risk of failing her classes. Julia has made tremendous progress. She was promoted to the 12th grade, is doing well in school and personally, and has her sights set on graduation.

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILD PSYCHOANALYSIS



Psychoanalytic treatment helps children and adolescents understand and manage feelings more effectively, recognize and change poor coping strategies, and re-examine negative feelings about themselves and others. The goal of treatment is not simply to overcome immediate troubles but to help each child or adolescent reach his or her full potential in all areas of life and to build a deep, long-lasting strength and resilience.

In instances where a child's or adolescent's unconscious mental activity adversely affects his or her current functioning and ability to progress, psychoanalytic treatment can assist in discovering and mastering inner obstacles and past traumatic experiences.

Brian, a child who was adopted out of foster care, had marked difficulties with managing his feelings and behavior. He was referred for psychoanalytic treatment after a period of behavior therapy that was helpful but did not seem to ameliorate a profound distrust in others and sense of himself as unlovable. This eight-year-old boy had a good deal of difficulty letting his guard down and opening up to his therapist, such that only an intensive treatment seemed likely to provide him with the consistency and safety necessary to enable him to progress toward healthier relationships with others and a more positive sense of self-worth. At last report, although progress was slow, improvements continued to be noted in many areas, most notably his capacity to manage his feelings and behavior, and the development of a more realistic view of himself and the important others in his life.

University of Michigan Todd Ouida Annual Lecture and Clinical Scholar Award

Our annual visit to Michigan has become akin to a family reunion as we are embraced by a wonderful group of Department of Psychiatry and Depression Center professionals and we have the pleasure of catching up with past award recipients.

Dr. Melisa DelBello, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center and Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, presented the 12th annual Todd Ouida lecture at the University of Michigan on October 8, 2014. Her topic, *Treatment of Bipolar Disorder in Children and Adolescents*, drew on her many years of expertise in the field of neurodevelopment and treatment of children and adolescents with mood disorders.

The 2014 Clinical Scholar Award was presented to Elizabeth Koschmann, Ph.D., whose current research projects seek to develop and evaluate a novel model designed to train school-based professionals in cognitive-behavioral theory and skills for the management of student depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

We recently received this update from Elizabeth: *My work to bring CBT into schools has expanded enormously, and we are now building a team that includes several senior faculty who will help the program achieve its full potential. Your generous gift was a critical part of the early phase of the work and enabled us to obtain matching funds from Medicaid. The first few years of a project are most challenging and so I am especially grateful for your support as it helped us reach a new, stronger phase of research and program development.*

And these kind words are from Dr. Gregory Dalack, Chair, Department of Psychiatry, in a note after our visit: *Your consistent presence has established the Todd Ouida Award and Lectureship as one of the pre-eminent events of our academic year. We are honored and humbled to honor Todd's memory and legacy with you.*



Elizabeth Koschmann (left) and
Melisa DelBello

No Health Without Mental Health: No Stigma in Mental Illness

Todd's mom, Andrea, has recently become a member of the River Edge Stigma-Free task force, part of a Bergen County-wide program that aims to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. The program is dedicated to raising awareness of mental illnesses and creating a culture wherein residents who have a mental illness feel supported by their community and neighbors and feel free to seek treatment without fear of stigma. Preliminary plans are to disseminate information and open the dialogue through a speaker series as well as working with the schools and other community organizations. The program was launched at River Edge Day on October 11, 2015.



Left to right: Ellen Busteed, Elizabeth Oudens,
River Edge Public Health Nurse Arlene Faustini, Adrienne Capasso

Charities Supported

A complete list of the charities
we support is available on
our website at
www.mybuddytodd.org

Digital Blasts

Have you seen them? Approximately half of you reading this are also receiving our occasional, brief digital updates. We'd love to include the rest of you, so please be sure to provide your e-mail address(es) on the enclosed card.

Creative Contributions

Knowing of the foundation's connection to the University of Michigan, Betty Buffington and members of her family made generous donations in honor of her grandson Michael Gales' marriage to Abigail Devine. Michael is on staff at the U-M C.S. Mott Children's Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist and Abbey is a nurse anesthetist there.

Ashley Deckler and Justin Moore (right) made a loving gift to Todd's foundation in lieu of wedding favors. Ashley was an early recipient of the Todd Ouida Memorial Scholarship at River Dell High School and we were honored to be guests at her wedding.

Many family members remembered Todd's loving and beloved aunt **Evelyn Tari** (right) with generous gifts to Todd's foundation. Her vibrant spirit lives on in our hearts.

Keri Cohen has made several generous gifts in honor of Nat Donson, for his "continued community and professional outreach, locally and nationally, in his tireless efforts to better the lives of children."

We received many kind donations in memory of Heather's "Aunt Dodo," **Dora Fontanella** (left), who left her family with many memories and stories to tell.

As part of his mitzvah project, Ryan Weitzner helped organize a Mitzvah Mall at his temple, and Todd's foundation was honored to be one of the recipients of the money raised.

For his birthday, Todd's special aunt Lisa di Prima, artist and teacher, volunteered to teach **clay sculpture classes** to three special ed groups "in honor of Todd who overcame personal obstacles to become the sweet wonderful young man he was."

"Shake the Stigma!" was the theme of the discussions at the

Tenaflly elementary schools for the days and weeks leading up to Todd's May 18 birthday. School counselors visited classrooms and initiated discussions about mental illnesses, and **bake sales** on Todd's birthday raised hundreds of dollars for Todd's foundation.

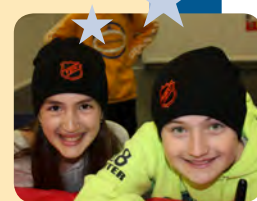
As part of his Mitzvah project, Ethan Lehrfeld organized a bake sale at the Tenaflly Middle School, and his Camp Baco/Che-Na-Wah Bazaar Foundation made a generous gift as well.

Last year (but after our 2014 newsletter was distributed), **Molly Schultz and Mason Paulen** (right) organized an amazing Tenaflly Skate Night to benefit Todd's foundation and the Tenaflly Education Foundation. It was definitely the social event of the season and raised \$2,500 for each organization!

On behalf of Todd's foundation, Roy Wandelmaier and Scholastic Books continue to donate cartons of new children's books to the annual Bergen County Multicultural Family Fun Festival.

We are grateful to BGC Partners for once again including us in their 2014 Charity Day, held on September 11 each year, and appreciate football great **Leonard Marshall** (pictured on right with Joe Klecko) serving as our celebrity ambassador.

Other specially designated donations we greatly appreciate: Brenda Waterhouse in honor of Kristin Bissell; Celia Mendelsohn and Alan Kostelnik in honor of Julia, Charlotte, and Laura Beninati; Patricia Granger in memory of Duane Nishimoto and Kato Jaworski; Ellen and John Franks in memory of Mary Logozzo and Carol Coache; Jane and Connor Blessing in memory of William John Prutting.



Thank You!

With your help we can continue to make a difference. Robert F. Kennedy said: *The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better.* Thank you for making things better for the most vulnerable children in our society.

We appreciate your gift at this time and contributions year-round through www.mybuddytodd.org or checks mailed to:

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