



## Autumn 2013 Newsletter

Helping families find peace and hope!

### HOPE Strong

In April, we witnessed the unthinkable- the bombing of the Boston Marathon. The city pulled together in amazing ways, refusing to be cowed. "Boston Strong" became the rallying cry. Boston Strong got me thinking about strength in a new way. We were all changed forever as we witnessed this ruthless act and its aftermath.

HOPE has always been immensely proud of its dedicated marathon runners for their courage and determination to make a difference. This year, due to the extraordinary circumstances and tragedy, our runners faced an unexpected challenge beyond the 26.2 mile run. Many of our runners, their families and friends were close to the finish line and witnessed the confusion, horror and anxiety that the explosions caused. We are enormously thankful that all of them were unharmed.

*"No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster."*

- Dalai Lama XIV

**Strength is...** watching a father, who is the only one physically capable of handling his son, do so not with self pity, but love, knowing full well that this difficult child is truly doing the best that he can.

**Strength is...** watching caring staff step up to do whatever is needed for each and every client, knowing full well that every day is a new one, and every child/adult matters

**Strength is...** dealing with physical and emotional demands of raising a child with significant challenges for a LIFE TIME!

**Strength is...** knowing when you need help! Constant stress impacts physical and mental health and diverts attention from other family members.

**Strength is...** withstanding all the disappointments and setbacks of life, but knowing deep in your heart that every day is a gift.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi

*"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."*

**That is why we call ourselves, "HOPE strong"**



As we reflect on our organization, HOPE is thankful that we are growing stronger all the time. We anticipate over 875 repeat clients from 58 communities utilizing our programs and we are forecasting 43,000 hours of service for 2013. This holiday season we have committed to helping 100 special families who have had significant financial hardship. We could use your help to help them.

As we approach Thanksgiving, I hope that you find joy and gratitude beyond your expectation and may you truly understand that each and every day is a gift and every person you help is making the world an infinitely better place.

*With love, admiration and hope for the strength we need.*

**Paula Kavolius**  
Founder-President



## New Chief Operating Officer

We are thrilled to announce that Rita Capotosto has accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO). Rita joins us from Saint Vincent's Home in Fall River, Massachusetts where she served as Senior Program Director/Quality Management Director. In this position, Rita utilized leadership and management skills that our organization and programs will now benefit from. Ms. Capotosto led the development of overnight and day respite care services for youth and families served by the Department of Mental Health. HOPE will make the most of her experience with respite care programs since this central to our mission. Having a full time COO will aid in strengthening and moving our organization forward.

## Expanding Our Menu

The original vision for the House of Possibilities was the ability to provide respite care for those caring for children and young adults needing 24/7 care. Since our opening in 2009, we have been able to provide respite, but now we do so much more. Our menu has expanded to a total of nine programs and clubs in 2013 and we currently have participants from 58 communities. These include: Adventure Club, Overnight Respite, Snack and Chat, Vacation Week programs, Saturday Night Live, Special Events, Extended Day, Cheerleading Club and HOPE Club.



**HOPE Club is our newest program**, it focuses on friendship and having fun in the community. Please visit our website at <http://www.houseofpossibilities.org> for more detailed information on any of our programs.

**Overnight Respite is critically needed and a burgeoning challenge for families.** We are delighted to announce our plans to double the availability of free overnight respite over the next six months; demonstrating significant growth in the core of our original goals.



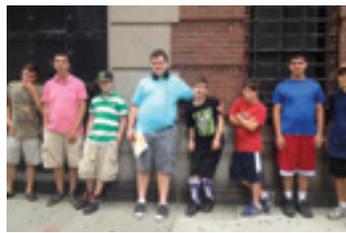
# Special Events

In 2013, thanks to the Marilyn Rodman Theater for Arts, we have blessed over 60 HOPE families with theater and sports tickets that they would otherwise not have experienced. Here is a glimpse of the exciting places our HOPE families have journeyed:

Boston Celtics game, two performances of Blue Man Group, a Red Sox game, Disney on Ice, Wicked and Peter Pan. It is truly thrilling to see the attendees respond to all of these different activities.



"My children and I have benefited greatly from the wonderful programming offered by the House of Possibilities through the generosity of the Rodmans, in particular the magical theater experiences in Boston. My family would never have been able to enjoy shows such as "Beauty and the Beast," "Mamma Mia," "Billy Elliott," and our absolute favorite, "Blue Man Group!" HOPE has opened up a new world for children with disabilities and their families. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU!"



## Boston Marathon 2013

Our heroic marathon 2013 team was comprised of the amazing duo of Dr. Rafael Castro and Lisa Vasallo-Castro, the father and son team of David and Bob Kelson, Diane Brady, Lisa Verricho, Michael Conway, Dan Frazier.

Due to the events at the 2013 marathon, four of the members from Team HOPE will receive Boston Athletic Association vouchers to run in 2014. They are Dr. Rafael Castro and Lisa Vasallo-Castro, Diane Brady and David and Bob Kelson. We will be fielding an additional eight runners: Kel Kelly, Ginny Pitcher, and Julia McGovern aka "Runderdogs", David Kelsen, Jr. Paul & Cynthia Villanova and we have TWO(2) additional coveted spots.

We would also welcome any unofficial participants who would like to run in support of Team HOPE. If interested, kindly contact Kathleen at [k.nardi@houseofpossibilities.org](mailto:k.nardi@houseofpossibilities.org).

Alternatively, if you would like to donate in support of our runners please visit <http://www.crowdrise.com/HOPeMarathon2014>



# Testimonials

**Our programs are thriving and they continue to get rave reviews from participants and families!**

“We literally have NEVER had any respite until we found you! The first Saturday Janey went to your program was the FIRST time since Janey was born that we were able to go out to eat with her two older brothers for a restful meal. Janey had a wonderful time too!”

“Eliza has loved the sleepovers at HOPE and always comes back “happily” tired! It’s a great experience for her and for us, to let her do it and allow ourselves some time apart. She’s also done some of the special events offered through vacation program times. She had a wonderful time at Coco Key with a great 1:1 staff; and has had the opportunity to see Peter Pan and Blue Man Group. She loved both and we would never have dreamed of trying to take her had it not been for the generosity of the donations through HOPE. The house and staff are beautiful—you provide such a warm and loving place that gives these kids the dignity they deserve in a “real” home and not a “residential” cold building. We have been so richly blessed by HOPE! Thank you!”

“It is fun getting together with new people, meeting new friends at HOPE. I like socializing, playing games, talking to others about what’s going on in our lives. I like singing for everybody, with everybody & playing piano. Now that I’m older, I look forward to HOPE’s dances, SNL nights and talking with volunteers from St. Gerard’s church. I always meet great people at HOPE. And I must say how much I enjoyed Saturday overnights there, when I was younger. Mary O’Toole always made an especially delicious Italian dinner for me!”

“My husband & I always know that John is in good hands at HOPE. Staff is always caring and attentive. It makes us happy to see that our son feels very independent & proud each time he spends an evening socializing at an SNL event. He looks forward to socializing with friends from staff, volunteers & of course, meeting new friends. SNL nights are very special nights for our young adults with special needs. We were absolutely thrilled when we found out about SNL!! I don’t think people realize how much our children with special needs miss out on socializing with other children. To have a social program like SNL available is a super big deal for all of these kids! “

“Our son Matthew has enjoyed each activity at the House of Possibilities from Saturday Adventure days, school vacation camp days and summer camp days. The security you feel as a parent in trusting others with your disabled child cannot be measured. HOPE has provided this security in an environment where Matthew has had fun and thrived with other children like him, which is truly what childhood should be about.

-Mom of a very happy 12-year-old son with autism.”



# HOPE Clubs



*"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all."*

-Emily Dickinson

## **The HOPE Squad @ Stonehill College**

Autumn is often associated with football and here at HOPE that is no exception. We have a wonderful group of cheerleaders on our HOPE Squad. This group joins the Stonehill College Cheerleaders at home football games. This is just one more way that we benefit from our association with Stonehill.



## **The Band of HOPE has hit the road!**

This year, five amazing musicians formed our Band of HOPE. Each bringing a unique ability to our HOPE family. If you know someone who would like to join our extremely talented musical group, please email Kristen Desisto [K.desisto@houseofpossibilities.org](mailto:K.desisto@houseofpossibilities.org).



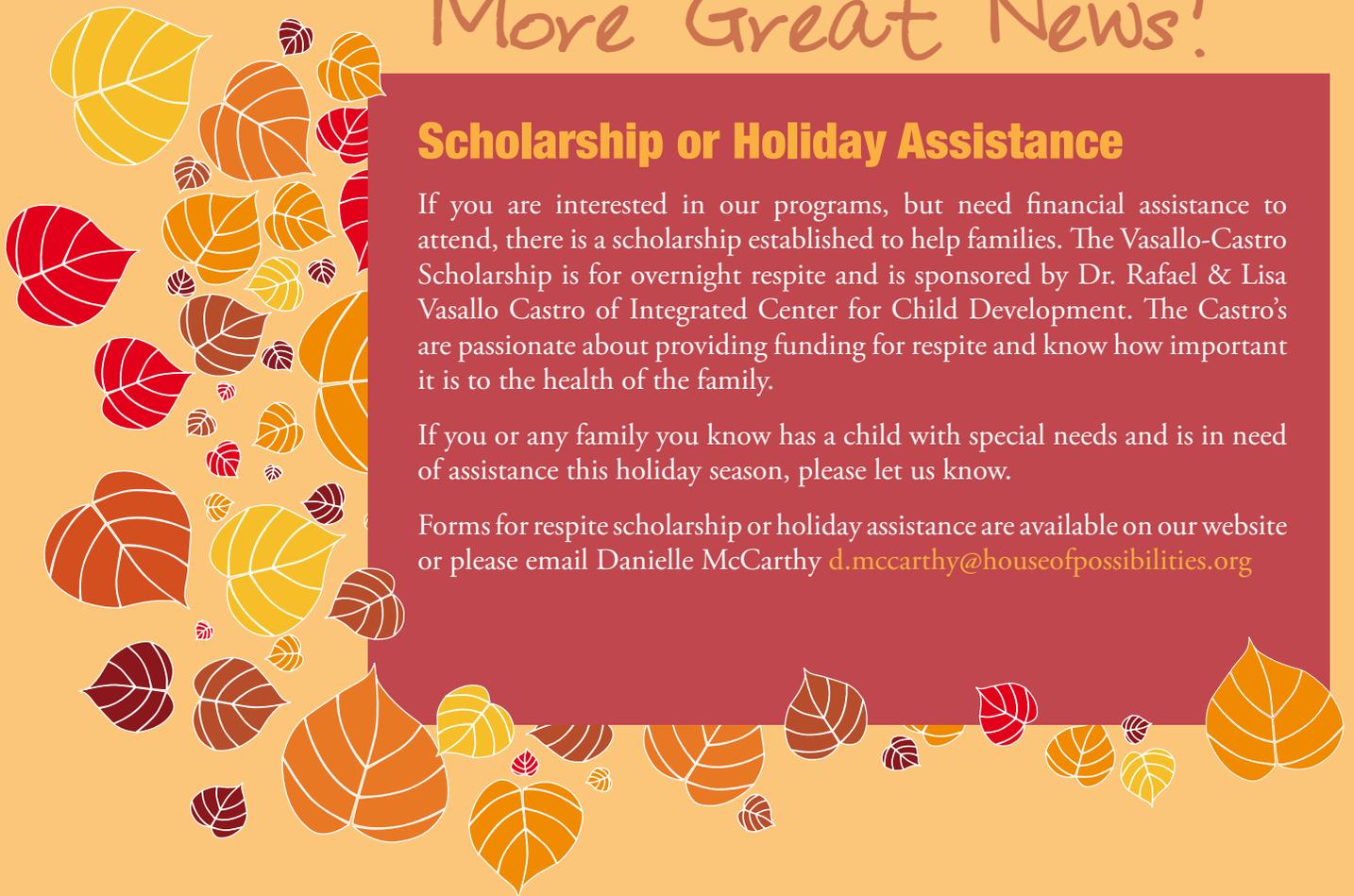
# More Great News!

## **Scholarship or Holiday Assistance**

If you are interested in our programs, but need financial assistance to attend, there is a scholarship established to help families. The Vasallo-Castro Scholarship is for overnight respite and is sponsored by Dr. Rafael & Lisa Vasallo Castro of Integrated Center for Child Development. The Castro's are passionate about providing funding for respite and know how important it is to the health of the family.

If you or any family you know has a child with special needs and is in need of assistance this holiday season, please let us know.

Forms for respite scholarship or holiday assistance are available on our website or please email Danielle McCarthy [d.mccarthy@houseofpossibilities.org](mailto:d.mccarthy@houseofpossibilities.org)



# Upcoming News/Events:



In November, we will kickoff our first Annual Fund Drive that will focus 100% on sustaining our children's respite programs.

**Holiday Gift Campaign**-HOPE has committed to help 50 families having children with special needs that have experienced abuse. If you would like to adopt a family, please email: Danielle McCarthy [d.mccarthy@houseofpossibilities.org](mailto:d.mccarthy@houseofpossibilities.org)

**Save The Date:** Annual Christmas Party--If you would like to attend our fantastic celebration of HOPE on 12/7/13, please email: Kathleen Nardi [k.nardi@houseofpossibilities.org](mailto:k.nardi@houseofpossibilities.org)

**Thank you for helping us bring peace and hope to hundreds of families! We could not do this without you!**



Stonehill College  
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## HOPE is changing lives each and every day!

Results of our Caregiver surveys have shown that our Respite services have helped to reduce the stress level of caregivers by 60% on average and helped relieve the strained relationships with other family members by 75%.

### **Adventure Club has had an amazing year.**

A glimpse of some of the places they have visited in 2013 include N.E. Aquarium, Duck Tours, Pats Training Camp, Boston Children's Museum, Coco Key Water Park, Boston Red Sox, Museum of Science, Mystic Aquarium, Frenzy, Boston Celtics, Edaville Railroad, Monster Mini-Golf, Patriots Hall of Fame, Roger Williams Zoo, Ecotarium and Castle Island!

