



Family Service of Rhode Island

FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

Healing the Hurt



Photo: Luca Del Borgo

It was early January, shortly after Christmas, when Sammy* arrived at Quanacut House, our group treatment home in East Providence for young boys who have suffered severe abuse and neglect. He was seven.

He had barely set foot in the door when the other boys crowded around him, each eager to be the one to tell him about the Red Sox and the boys' special relationship with the team. On all the walls hung pictures of the boys at Fenway Park and pictures of the Red Sox and their mascots at Quanacut House.

At first Sammy was profoundly unhappy. Whenever anything went wrong for him, he would curl himself up into a tight little ball on the floor and cry or whimper. When visitors

* Photos and some details are representative, based on actual case.

came to the house, he hid. He was afraid to go out with the other boys on even the smallest field trip. But Sammy loved all sports. It was something he had shared with his dad before he, too, like his mom, had gone away and left him alone.

"The Red Sox made a difference for Sammy," Iris Waite, the Quanacut House manager explains. "They make a difference for all our kids. Everybody wants to watch the games. They cheer on Manny and Big Papi. They would wear their Red Sox tee shirts every day if we let them."

"The Red Sox made a difference for Sammy. They make a difference for all our kids."

Counseling, medication, a special school program, and the caring, patient staff at Quanacut House were also important to Sammy's recovery.

When Rhode Island Day at Fenway Park arrived, Sammy and his house mates were the special guests of the Red Sox. The little boy afraid of field trips stood at the microphone in the middle of Fenway Park and gleefully shouted out, "Play ball!" He went out onto the field during batting practice, met the players including Big Papi, shook hands with John Henry, the owner of the Red Sox, hung out with the Green Monster, and wolfed

down an extravagant buffet. In short, he had the time of his life.

"I know years from now when these kids look back on their childhood, they'll remember at least two good things; they'll remember Quanacut House ... and they'll remember the Red Sox!" Waite says.

Sammy has been living with a foster care family now for the past two years and he is very happy. He is part of a big, loving, long-term family that includes another foster child, a boy who is also from Quanacut House, and two new sisters. He still calls to chat with the staff and let them know how well he's doing and of course, to check up on all his pals ... including the Red Sox.



Photo: Luca Del Borgo

Preparing for the Unthinkable

June 5, 2006—The Providence Emergency Management Agency and the US Office of Homeland Security initiate a mock drill.

The scenario: Providence is on high alert. There is a warning of a possible terrorist attack on a train.

Then suddenly, a “bomb” explodes aboard an early morning Amtrak passenger train approaching Providence station. Passengers are slashed by lethal shards of shrapnel. Fire erupts; smoke and flames fill the cars. Some lie dead amid the wreckage. About 30 dazed, bleeding survivors stumble out onto the pavement. One might be the bomber.

Police arrive ... and the fire department, the FBI, the bomb squad, and others. A unified command post is established. A search is made for secondary explosives. The fire has to be put out; the critically injured rushed to hospitals, the bomber, if still on board, must be identified and apprehended. Fire, police, bomb squads, coroners rush about.

Shocked, confused, frightened survivors mill on the sidewalk and grass. Some are injured and bleeding; children are crying. Among them is a little boy—alone.

We'll call him Tommy. He's waiting for



Photo: Sgt. Britto, Providence Police Dept.

someone—anyone—to take his hand and lead him away from all the noise to safety. He may have been traveling alone; his parents may be among the dead or critically injured. In every disaster, big or small, there are the helpless and vulnerable—like Tommy. Today, it is a young boy who needs special care; tomorrow, it might be a frail elder or a disabled adult.

We took care of Tommy and all the other survivors. We, too, are first responders for the Providence and Rhode Island Emergency Management Teams. Our CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) team is nationally certified and an active member of the state CISM network.

We began our CISM team in the aftermath of 9/11 as a public service to our community when we, like the rest of the nation, came to the realization that the unthinkable—a terrorist attack—not only had to be thought about, but prepared for.

All our team members volunteer to take on this responsibility in addition to their regular duties.

We have responded to incidents from across the state, including the Station Nightclub fire, workplace and school violence, house fires, a plane crash, a mercury spill, sudden death, a lost senior, and violent accidents. We also responded to the Hurricane Katrina victims airlifted to Middletown.

There, among the evacuees getting off the plane, we found three helpless and vulnerable victims, still confused and dazed weeks after the levees broke. We found a frail elderly woman from a nursing home whose despairing children had given up all hope their mother was still alive. And we found two young, shivering sisters, dramatically plucked by helicopter from the roof of their flooded home only to be trapped amid the chaos and despair of the Superdome. They had each needed special care, but no one had been there to give that care until we stepped forward onto the tarmac.

And so we prepare. Another mock drill is scheduled for October. We'll be there for the survivors and families of victims needing our help. We'll be there for the helpless and confused who need special care—like Tommy.

“And employees from Family Service of Rhode Island arrived to counsel the living.”

—Providence Journal, June 6, 2006



Photo: Sgt. Britto, Providence Police Dept.

Family Service of Rhode Island CISM Team members counseling “the living.”

Family Service of Rhode Island Board of Directors

Malcolm Farmer, III, *President*
Gina Raimondo, *Vice President*
Robert Waddington, *Treasurer*
Joan Hertel, *Secretary*

Sandy Ballou
Curt G. Beckwith
Melvold J. Benson
Susan E. Bodington
James M. Bower
Frank J. Cenerini
Curt Columbus
Christopher J. Crosby
Dean M. Esserman
Peter C. Fuller
William F. Hatfield
Saul Kaplan
Bradford B. Kopp
Cynthia Leonard
Mary McGoldrick
Richard L. Morin
Constance R. Pemmerl
William E. Smith
Julia Steiny
Anson G. P. Stookey
Adriana Vargas
Robert Vincent
Jeffery Williams
Leigh Ann Woisard

Family Service of Rhode Island CEO Advisory Committee

William Allen
Elizabeth Dennigan
Christine Ferguson
Jill Goldstein
Anna Cano Morales
Jay Orson
Philip Rivers
Diane Sangermano
Marguerite Schnepel
Maxine Shavers
Stephen Zito

Margaret Holland McDuff
Chief Executive Officer

Mailing address:
55 Hope Street
P.O. Box 6688
Providence, RI 02940-6688

Administrative Offices:
134 Thurbers Avenue
Providence, RI 02905

Outpatient offices:
55 Hope Street
Providence, RI 02906

Lafayette Mills Unit 13
650 Ten Rod Road
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Telephone/TDD
401 331-1350
401 294-6138

www.familyserviceri.org

Additional programs in Mount Pleasant, Smithfield, North Smithfield, Bristol, East Providence, Newport, and Westerly

My Experience

Arrmed with three years of what I considered rigorous high school training at Lincoln School, I felt more than equipped for my task ahead—writing an article highlighting the Afia Center, Family Service of Rhode Island's HIV/AIDS facility in downtown Providence. I was determined to decide whether or not non-profit

work was for me, and was sure I would come out of my brief two and a half week internship with new direction and focus.

My first day at Family Service of Rhode Island made me apprehensive. An acronym-filled meeting, mentions of fingerprinting, and constantly ringing phones led me to believe there was something happening here I had absolutely no understanding of. I wondered how I would keep DCYF, CPC, DMH, and RIPEC all straight when the only acronym that I

could recall was SOS.

But it only took a few questions to start the gradual demystifying of Family Service of Rhode Island, and for me those questions were in regard to the Afia Center. Begun in 2003, the Afia Center for Health and Wholeness is housed in Mathewson Street Church. Unanimously chosen by clients, providers, and organizers, the church was approached about hosting the center. After meetings with the congregation and discussion about the nature of AIDS, the congregation agreed to open its doors. Soon, however, it was clear that the relationship between the members of Afia and the church was more than a simple issue of

Edited for space. Full article online at <http://fsri.blogspot.com/2006/i-have-certainly-learned-how-important.html>.

housing. Many members of Afia have begun to attend Sunday morning services at Mathewson Street, and members' weddings and funerals have taken place in the church.

When you enter the church, it is soon apparent that this is not a place divided by knowledge or health, where one group has the answers and the other waits to be enlightened. The Afia Center is a place where each person benefits from the presence of every other, and all social constraints are left behind. The divisions any outsider might anticipate were nonexistent, and the care and treatment that was directed toward the members very obviously extended to the volunteers and workers as well. This was a place with no acronyms, no fingerprints, and no distracting phone calls. This was the personal connection made possible by the work I had seen in the office. As I left, I remembered how many people I had spoken to who had visited the Afia Center, not letting the distance between office and center keep them away from seeing the results of their work.

I was able to see firsthand the amazing community relationships that are formed surrounding the agency's programs, and also the encouragement those programs provide to their clients. Although I have not ended this internship with a clear direction for my future studies, I've learned something much more valuable about the importance of each individual, and the importance of learning from those around us as well as sharing what we know. Perhaps someone will read this article and be motivated to volunteer, or provide funds for a struggling program, or simply become more aware of the issues surrounding them here in Rhode Island. I may never be able to remember what the acronyms stand for, or be able to be on three phone calls at once, but I have certainly learned how important the work at Family Service of Rhode Island is.



Lauren Van Schepen recently entered Wellesley College.

Open Your Heart and Home to a Foster Child

All across Rhode Island there are children who need foster homes. Whether due to physical abuse, mental health problems, or a family emergency, at times foster care is necessary. Can you help?

"All caring, secure, supportive families are valued," says Christina Londono, foster care recruiter.

Foster parents receive the support of a team of clinicians and case managers, available 24/7/365, responding to any phone call within ten minutes. Foster parents receive tax-free dollars to support the placement, plus a clothing allowance and free medical coverage for the child. Many of the children ready for placement are school age. Occasionally there are younger children.

For more information, please call Christina Londono at 401 331-1350 ext. 3371.



The Red Sox Are Coming!

November 13 at noon, Rhode Island Convention Center
The Brighter Futures Award Luncheon
honoring the Boston Red Sox and the Red Sox Family,
to benefit Family Service of Rhode Island.
For tickets or information, call 401.331.1350, ext. 3319.

Photo: Luca Del Borgo



Grand Slam Supporters



Home Run Supporters



Green Monster Supporters

Brooks Pharmacy • Collette Vacations • Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP
H. Carr & Sons, Inc. • Sansiveri, Kimball & McNamee, L.L.P.
Signature Printing • Sovereign Bank



55 Hope Street
P.O. Box 6688
Providence, RI 02940-6688
<http://www.familyserviceri.org>

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 686
Providence, RI

Our Mission is to respond
creatively to the unmet needs
of individuals, families and the
community by building
partnerships that
help people help themselves.