

MARGARET DONNELLY O'CONNOR Education Center

Winter-
Spring
2010-11

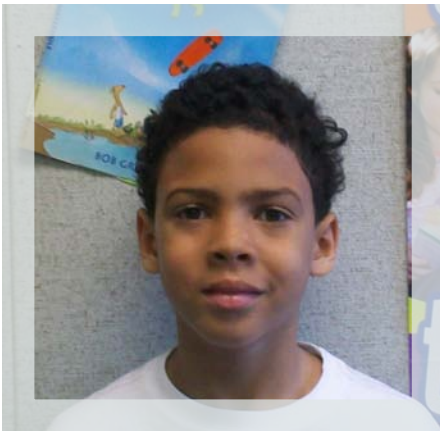
Connecting
People
Who Care with a
Cause that Matters

at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes

NEWSLETTER

Meet Our Children

Ethel R. Lawrence Homes (ERLH), developed by Fair Share Housing Development, Inc., is one of the first affordable housing communities in New Jersey's suburbs to help very low-income families. The Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at ERLH offers an after-school Homework Club, a Summer Enrichment Program, and one-on-one tutoring to ensure that our students get the support they need to make the most of the opportunities available in the high-achieving Mount Laurel School District.



Amir

Age: 9, 4th Grade

Excels at: Math

Hopes to Be: Football Player

"I like that you get to have fun and learn new stuff at Homework Club. We get to play money and math games and learn about animals."

Devon

Age: 12, 7th Grade

Excels at: Language Arts, Math

Hopes to Be: A Photographer

"The summer art program and digital storytelling project have taught me new technology and drawing skills that help me be a better artist."



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Fair Share Housing Development, Inc.
To make a donation, visit www.FairShareDevelopment.org

FAIR SHARE
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
building homes and hope

FSHD: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

The Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes is operated by Fair Share Housing Development (FSHD), a non-profit housing and social services provider that seeks to reduce racial and economic segregation in Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties by developing affordable housing in high-opportunity communities. Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, our award-winning flagship development in Mount Laurel Township, provides 140 townhome-style apartments in a safe environment with access to one of NJ's top school districts.

Affordable housing in an integrated community is the first step to helping families overcome problems stemming from generational cycles of poverty, racial segregation, economic isolation, and the lack of a good education. The key to positive permanent change is to provide ERLH children with supplemental educational support and enrichment programs to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available in Mount Laurel Township.



Children Playing Soccer at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes

The Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at ERLH is staffed by a full-time Education Director (Cindy Haas), a college graduate Jesuit Volunteer who provides a year of service (Aly Parma), and various teen mentors from local organizations. Throughout the year, our dedicated Education Center staff works closely with the Mount Laurel School District to provide a disciplined but creative program, which includes an after-school Homework Club, parent participation workshops, a Summer Enrichment camp, and one-on-one year-round tutoring to transform children's lives through educational achievement and enrichment.



Ethel R. Lawrence is often called the "Rosa Parks of Affordable Housing." A teacher, wife, and mother of nine, Lawrence was renowned for braving racist threats to fight exclusionary zoning in NJ's suburbs. She died in 1994, six years before ERLH opened its doors.

"I love living here at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes. The apartments are spacious and very nice. It has given us room to expand as a family in a safer environment. But what's most important to us is that we have the opportunity to send our four children to some of the best schools in the state. With the extra help our kids get at Homework Club, it's like the perfect triangle of parent, teacher, and Education Center staff coming together to act as a village to educate our children."

- Deitra Chamberlain, ERLH Parent -

Parent Spotlight



Deitra and Raphael Chamberlain Sr. with their four children

New Digital Storytelling Program

Children and teens in 5th grade through high school got a lesson in how to make short movies and music videos during an after-school presentation by 8th grader Devin Barricklow. The talk encouraged more than 15 youth to enroll in the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center's new digital storytelling program, which was launched thanks to a generous grant from Target and the NJ SIM Foundation, the New Jersey chapter of the Society for Information Management.

ERLH kids are using FLIP video cameras and iMovie software on Macbook laptops as they learn to create a digital story of their lives. The program promotes artistic self-expression as well as building technological skills that will enhance their future both academically and in the workplace. This fall, the children started the storyboard/scripting process and began filming and editing during the winter 2010-2011 months. The project culminates with a "film festival" and select digital stories will be featured on our website in late 2011.



Anadie, 11, with Jesuit Volunteer Aly Parma



Cupcake Decorating at the 2010 Fall Festival

Fall Festival

A moon bounce, cupcake decorating, face-painting, and a visit by McGruff the Crime Dog were among the highlights of the 2010 Fall Festival. The October 17th event drew some 60 children and their families and included a visit by the Mount Laurel Fire Department as well as the Mayor and a Council Member. The Education Center would like to thank Wawa, ShopRite, Yasmin Millayes, artist Marcy Morris and the Mount Laurel Municipal Alliance for supporting this event, which promotes community cohesiveness.

Holiday Toy Grant

Some 60 ERLH parents and children got to visit with Santa on Saturday December 18th. Families and children were photographed with Santa and treated to an egg and muffin breakfast. Children from infants to age 13 each received a gift, a book, and a chance to whisper their Christmas wishes into Santa's ear. The gifts were donated by Toys for Tots and Mattel Toy Company through Gifts in Kind International. Books were provided by students and faculty of Southold Public School and Southold Library on Long Island, NY. Education Center JV Aly Parma collaborated with her mother, Pamela Parma, to organize the book drive.

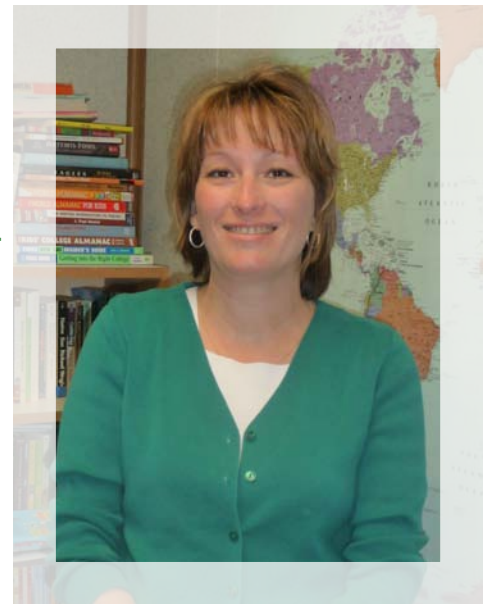


Ashley, Cian, Santa and Ciaron

Message From Cindy Haas, Education Center Director

Every spring we welcome spring flowers, April showers, warm weather and NJ ASK standardized testing. These tests, although only one indicator of a child's aptitude, are an important accountability measure instituted by the federal government under No Child Left Behind. Taken for the first time in third grade, children are expected to be able to understand basic Language Arts and mathematics concepts at a level that is proficient (a score of 200 or more out of 300 possible points) or better. With the approval and cooperation of the Mount Laurel School District administration and ERLH parents, we have been able to obtain the scores for thirty-one 3rd to 8th grade children who participate in our program and took the test in Spring 2009 and Spring 2010. We looked at the average proficiency level for all combined grades and compared our children's scores to their peers in Mount Laurel Township and the City of Camden, New Jersey.

The data speaks for itself (see page 6). Approximately 68% of the children enrolled in our program in received proficient marks in Language Arts in 2010 compared to 20% of the children in Camden. Approximately 93% of the children enrolled in our program received proficient scores in math during 2010 compared to 26% in Camden. This level of proficiency is consistent across each grade level for each subject when looking at the data by grade. The year-to-year proficiency level for all of our children has been increasing, and one child even scored a perfect 300 in math!



Meet Our Staff



JV Aly Parma with ERLH kids

Each year, Jesuit Volunteer Corps provides a full-time youth coordinator to work at the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at ERLH. Jesuit Volunteers make a commitment to serve where the need is greatest and to live in apostolic community with other JVs. Our youth coordinators have come from all over the nation, attending colleges and universities such as Boston College, Canisius, Clemson, Dartmouth, Dayton, Fairfield, Fordham, George Mason, Georgetown, Hamilton, Holy Cross,

Michigan, Notre Dame, Rockhurst University, Scranton, St. Joseph's, St. Louis University, and St. Olaf College.

Aly Parma, our 2010-2011 JV, graduated from Fairfield University in 2010 with a degree in mathematics and sociology. Aly provides individual math tutoring, daily homework assistance and has run SAT Prep Classes at the Education Center. She also helped plan our annual Fall Festival and Holiday Event. She is very excited to learn as much as she can about the link between educational support and affordable housing. Aly's love of children, commitment to service, and work for social justice have been great assets to the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes.

Teacher Testimonial

"Homework Club has been an invaluable tool for my students. They look forward to attending each day and it provides the extra academic support my students need. Homework Club is a wonderful program that helps my students succeed academically and builds self-confidence.

- Charina Zimmerli,
First Grade Teacher,
Hillside Elementary School

Help FSHD Build An Outdoor Recreation Area



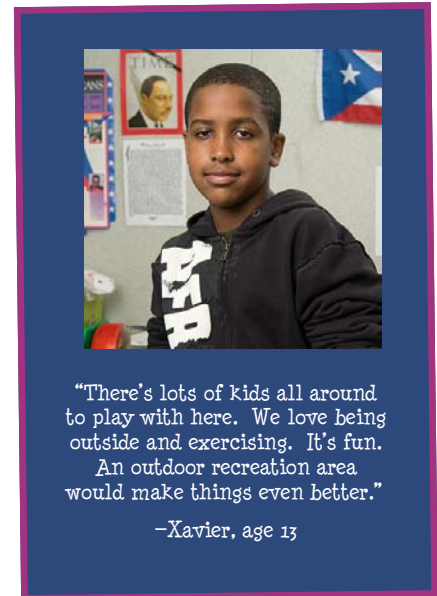
Proposed Outdoor Recreation Area, Ethel R. Lawrence Homes

Mount Laurel Township has presented Fair Share Housing Development, Inc. (FSHD) with a Challenge Grant to fund the development of Phase I of the Outdoor Recreation Area at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, our 140-unit affordable housing project in Mount Laurel. The Township has committed \$860,000 in grant funds for the project if FSHD raises \$423,000, a 2-1 match. This Outdoor Recreation project is an

integral part of our supplemental education support program. The project will feature fully-lighted basketball, tennis and handball courts, an amphitheater, and picnic and games areas. Playground equipment will also be installed for younger children.

The Challenge Grant gives FSHD the opportunity to directly help more than 200 low-income children, grades K-12, learn to live, play, and interact with their classmates and neighbors in an environment free of crime, fear, violence, and hazardous materials.

Won't you triple your gift today and help FSHD build an Outdoor Recreation Area for the children of Ethel R. Lawrence Homes? FSHD has raised \$73,000 and we have a pledge of an additional \$50,000 if we raise the \$300,000 balance.



"There's lots of kids all around to play with here. We love being outside and exercising. It's fun. An outdoor recreation area would make things even better."

-Xavier, age 13

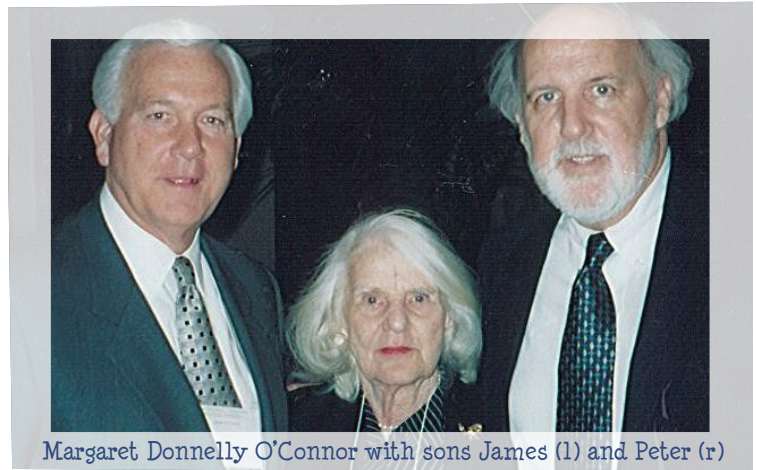
Thank You Donors

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An Inspiration: Margaret Donnelly O'Connor

FSHD's Education Center is dedicated to Margaret Donnelly O'Connor (1914-2005), a true hero who overcame adversity and hardship, never accepted defeat, and was a model of one who promoted education and lived her life for others. Margaret, an orphan, married, gave birth to two sons, and was deserted by her husband when her boys were two and three years old. As a single parent, Margaret O'Connor sacrificed her entire adult life to provide her two sons, James and Peter, with the opportunity to live in South Orange, New Jersey, attend the best schools (Seton Hall Prep, College of the Holy Cross, Villanova University, and Georgetown Law Center) and develop the values needed to succeed in life. James, now married for 42 years, father of two daughters, and a recent grandfather, retired in December 2004 as Group Vice-President, Marketing, Sales, and Service, Ford Motor Company after a 40-year career. Peter, a public interest lawyer, is the Founder and Executive Director of FSHD and Fair Share Housing Center (www.fairsharehousing.org).

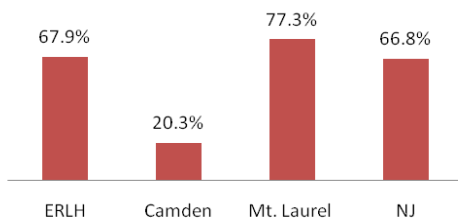


Margaret Donnelly O'Connor with sons James (l) and Peter (r)

Margaret, a graduate of The College of New Rochelle (class of 1937), was an elementary school teacher for more than 30 years in Newark and Orange, New Jersey. She earned a Master's Degree in Education at night at Seton Hall University, worked every summer to make ends meet, and always told her sons, "I will never let you down," and "No matter what the obstacles are, you can do it." After her sons became adults, Margaret devoted herself to the sick and infirm – reading to the blind on the radio, volunteering at nursing homes and church-related activities in the City of Camden, and joining the Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi in Haddonfield, NJ.

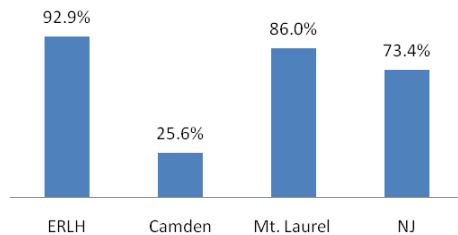
Language Arts: Spring 2010 3rd-8th Grade

■ % Students Proficient and Above



Math: Spring 2010 3rd-8th Grade

■ % Students Proficient and Above



Housing Policy is School Policy

What is the best way to ensure the educational success of low-income children? Move them into affluent neighborhoods where they can attend school with middle-class peers. That's the finding of decades of research – data that is borne out in a recent study of ERLH children conducted by Aly Parma, the 2010-2011 Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center Jesuit Volunteer. Ms. Parma analyzed New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) scores from 2010 for 28 Education Center students and found that our children performed much better in both Language Arts and math than their peers in Camden, where the poverty and crime rates are among the worst in the nation.

The reason? Upscale neighborhoods generally have better teachers, safer schools, less distractions, more academically engaged students, and a greater number of involved parents. These findings reinforce FSHD's mission to promote more racial and economic integration in the high-opportunity communities surrounding the City of Camden. As columnist Bob Herbert noted in the *New York Times* recently: "If you really want to improve the education of poor children, you have to get them away from learning environments that are smothered by poverty."

How You Can Help

To make a secure online gift, visit www.FairShareDevelopment.org

We also accept donations via U.S. mail:

Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center

Ethel R. Lawrence Homes
1 Ethel Lawrence Boulevard
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054