

MARGARET DONNELLY O'CONNOR Education Center

Fall
2013 –
Winter
2014

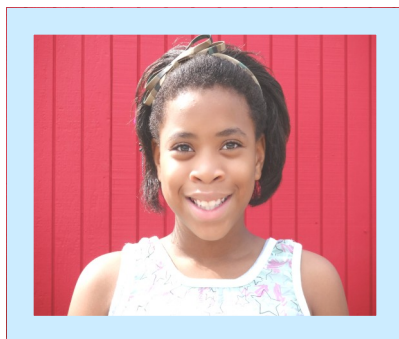
Connecting
People
Who Care with a
Cause that Matters

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 house very low-income families. The Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at ERLH offers an after-school Homework Club, a Summer Enrichment Program, one-on-one tutoring and college prep assistance to ensure that the children residing at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes get the support they need to make the most of the opportunities available in the high-achieving Mount Laurel School District.



Jazmine

Age: 12, 6th Grade

Excels at: Math, language arts

Hopes to Be: Fashion Stylist

"I like Homework Club because the staff is nice and they help me focus. They also assist me with my math skills."

Alaina

Age: 6, 1st Grade

Excels at: Writing and coloring

Hopes to Be: An Engineer

"I like Homework Club because I get to learn numbers and pick tomatoes."



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FAIR SHARE
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
building homes and hope

FSTD: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

The Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes is operated by Fair Share Housing Development, 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 (ERLH), 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.



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.



Harrington Middle School teacher Maureen Barrett helps our kids learn how to build remote-operated vehicles during a special STEM class offered as part of the Education Center's 2013 Summer Enrichment Program

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 (Olivia McCracken), 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. Homework Club alumni also get support with the college application process thanks to SAT prep classes, campus tours and other programs designed to help teens understand the application requirements and how to apply for financial aid.

Parent Spotlight

"I love the Education Center. Miss Cindy helps me so much. She got my son to break out of his shell, to communicate with his teachers. And she's great with my daughter Delilah. It's like I have a partner. And every one of the Jesuit Volunteers has been wonderful, too. My children cry every time they leave. If I hit the lottery, my first focus would be to help the Education Center."

—Sandra Rios, ERLH Parent



Sandra Rios with Delilah, 10, and Zaibian, 13

A Farewell Message from JV Joe Whittaker

Last year's Jesuit Volunteer, Joe Whittaker, a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, has returned home to Texas, where he is working for a youth advocacy organization based in Dallas. Joe was a wonderful resource at the Education Center: he played soccer with the kids; set up a mentoring program and was a big help in Homework Club and the Summer Enrichment program. Here's his farewell message to the Education Center children and staff of FSHD:

"My time at Ethel Lawrence has been one of growth, excitement, struggle, and triumph. To understand the character and vigor that each student brings is something that I have been given the privilege of learning over my past year here. I know that all of the memories and efforts I have put in here at the homework club, and all of the friendships I've made with those who keep Ethel Lawrence running, are ones I will cherish while I continue to mature."

"When I first arrived in my new position, my goal was to shape those who I surrounded myself with, but coming to the end of my term I have found that those I have surrounded myself with have in turn shaped me. Having a director who puts so much into her work and having a staff that looks after you when things go awry, is something that most people don't get to experience. I'm lucky. I am a part of something greater than myself working at the Education Center and for that I am truly thankful to those that allowed me to make that possible. I hope that as the students continue to mature in their ways, the things that I have left behind will come in handy when they least expect it. I hope that the next Youth Coordinator will arrive with the same amount of perseverance and determination that I have, if not more to see that Margaret Donnelly O'Connor's legacy continues. As I look to moving back to Texas and starting a life for myself, I know that everything that I've learned here will help me continue fighting for things that I hold dear in life."

"Thank you again for everything you've given me and thank you for all the time you put into making this year one I will never forget."



Jesuit Volunteer Joe Whittaker (left) with D'Andre, age 11, and Finley the Shark

Reflections from A Homework Club Alumni



Rutgers University student Donte Chamberlain talks about the benefits of Homework Club and growing up at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes in Mount Laurel

Rutgers University student Donte Chamberlain attended Homework Club during his years in the Mount Laurel School District. He took a moment to reflect on the many ways living at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes and attending the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center helped him get ready for college.

Tell me about your college career. I attended Burlington County College for one year as a business administration management major and then went to the University of the Southwest in New Mexico. My cousin attended this college and they offered me a merit scholarship. I have returned home now and am attending Rutgers-Camden in the same major.

What do you remember about the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center? In Homework Club, I got extra help in all of my academic subjects in addition to the help that I received at school. The college workshop helped me to learn about financial aid; I was able to do the FAFSA and get grant assistance because of it. I also worked as a Teen Leader during the summer. The HBCU college tour was very helpful because it allowed me to see different colleges and get a feel for the different types of universities and college life.

Tell me about the affordable housing advocacy work you have done for Ethel R. Lawrence Homes. I have gone to Trenton with my mother when she was advocating for affordable housing in the state capital. She was interviewed and on the news. Affordable housing is important because times are rough. I have three siblings and my parents have to provide for everyone. Living here has helped them to do that.

Message From Cindy Haas, Education Center Director

This summer the children had the opportunity to participate in many new activities thanks to the generosity of the Mount Laurel community. In June, the children planted a small garden of tomatoes, cucumbers, and watermelons with the assistance of Mitchell Lane, a local farmer, and last year's Jesuit Volunteer, Joe Whittaker. During the summer program, Maureen Barrett, Harrington Middle School's STEM teacher, received a grant to purchase SeaPerch ROV kits and taught our first through sixth grade summer campers how to build remote-operated vehicles from start to finish. The children gained hands-on experience in engineering including how to build and solder electric remote-control devices. Our local artist, Marcy Morris, once again taught the children art through unique techniques that incorporated mindfulness methodologies. This fall, the children will have the opportunity to participate in a Lego's Club that will be facilitated by Olivia McCracken, our new Youth Coordinator/Jesuit Volunteer. This program was made possible through a generous donation by Suzanne Shenk, a local Mount Laurel resident. Our children greatly benefit from the support of our local community. We look forward to creating many more new programs that will allow our children to explore the world around them and thank our supporters for making these programs possible.



Education Center Director Cindy Haas

Meet Our New JV: Olivia McCracken

Our newest Jesuit Volunteer is Olivia McCracken. Olivia graduated last May from the University of Portland in Oregon with a degree in Civil Engineering. Olivia's hometown is in Silverdale, Washington. After JVC, Olivia hopes to obtain her masters in the water resources field. Coming from the Pacific Northwest, Olivia loves to be outside, hiking, running and reading in the sun. Other hobbies include painting, drawing and traveling.



Our 2013-2014 Jesuit Volunteer:
Olivia McCracken (center)

Each year, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps provides a full-time youth coordinator to work at the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center at ERLH. Jesuit Volunteers commit to one year of post-college service where the need is greatest and to live in apostolic community with other JVs. Our youth coordinators have come from colleges and universities across the United States including Holy Cross, Boston College, Gonzaga University, Fairfield, Notre Dame, Stanford, Dartmouth, Dayton, Fordham, George Mason, Georgetown, Hamilton, Michigan, Rockhurst University, Scranton, St. Joseph's, St. Louis University, and St. Olaf College.

Testimonial

"Everyone involved at the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center should be very proud of your program."

"Your commitment has brought a measure of security and hope to the children and parents/guardians who live at Ethel R. Lawrence Homes."

—Linda Keegan
former Guidance Counselor
Hartford Elementary School

A True Life Hero: 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 45 years, father of two daughters, and a grandfather of three, retired in December 2004 as Group Vice-President Marketing, Sales, and Service for 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
(College of New Rochelle
Yearbook Picture, 1937)



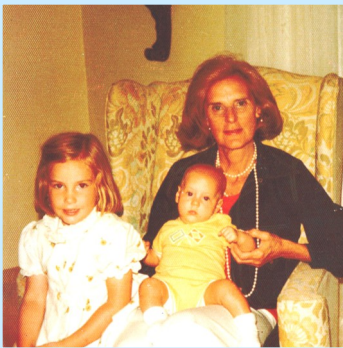
Margaret with her 1972 elementary class at
South 17th Street School, Newark, NJ

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.



Peter J. O'Connor with "his" kids
At Ethel R. Lawrence Homes



Margaret with granddaughters
Meredith (left) and Erin (lap)



Margaret with sons Peter (left) and James (right)



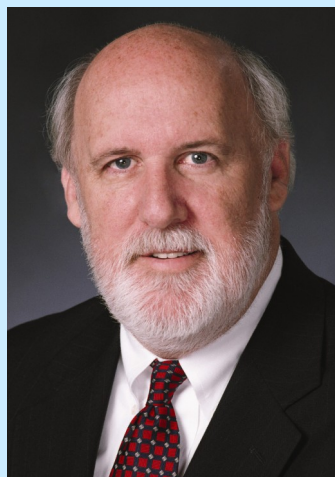
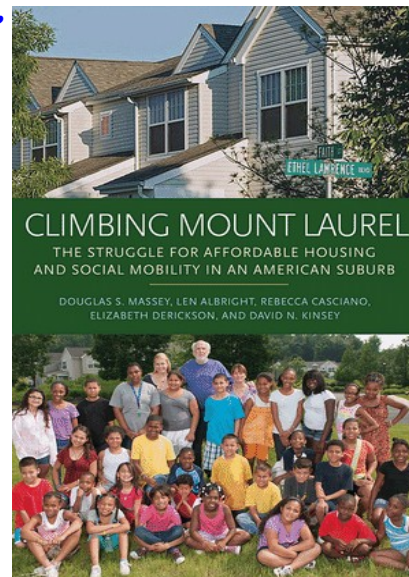
Margaret celebrates her 85th
birthday with her sons

Princeton University Book Shows Benefits of Mount Laurel Doctrine: A 'Pathway Out of Poverty' for Low-Income Families

Ethel R. Lawrence Homes offers low-income families “a pathway out of poverty,” according to a new book published by Princeton University which identified significant benefits associated with moving into FSHD’s flagship development. Among the findings: ERLH residents experienced a reduction in welfare dependency and significant improvements in mental health, personal safety, employment rates, and income levels. Families with children also benefitted from quality academics thanks to a superior school district and an increased focus on classwork and reading by young people living in the development.

Climbing Mount Laurel: The Struggle for Affordable Housing and Social Mobility in an American Suburb is the result of two years of research by Princeton University. Professor Douglas S. Massey, who led the Princeton team, decided to focus on Ethel R. Lawrence Homes because the development was built as part of the settlement agreement in the landmark case, which is often called the most important civil rights ruling since Brown v. Board of Education. Additionally, ERLH’s residents and the surrounding community were most impacted by the New Jersey Supreme Court rulings (1975 and 1983) known collectively as the Mount Laurel Doctrine.

Massey and his colleagues Len Albright, Rebecca Casciano, Elizabeth Derickson and David Kinsey surveyed residents of Ethel R. Lawrence Homes to assess their personal, household, neighborhood and school circumstances before and after relocation, then compared them to a similar group of low-income people who applied for an apartment at ERLH but did not get in. The research found that living at ERLH conferred many benefits on residents and saved taxpayer dollars in the process because:



Peter J. O'Connor, founder of FSHD and co-counsel in the Mount Laurel litigation, said he was pleased with the Princeton University research because it proved the wisdom of the Mount Laurel Doctrine.

“Locating affordable housing for families in more affluent communities, providing supportive education and social services, and designing developments to fit into the community landscape should be the factors that drive affordable housing policy,” O'Connor said. “These factors are totally absent in the overwhelming majority of government-supported housing for the poor, resulting in a continuation of concentrated urban poverty, failing public schools, no access to employment opportunities, and racial segregation that has fueled generational poverty.”

Since ERLH first opened its doors in 2000, the development has been praised for promoting racial and economic integration as well as helping to reduce concentrated poverty in nearby Camden. The complex received the New Jersey Excellence in Housing Award in 2001.

“Location matters: it provides access to educational opportunity, a safe environment, green spaces, better employment and reduces the racial and economic segregation that plagues New Jersey’s urban areas.”

— Peter J. O'Connor

- * Welfare use decreased by 67 percent;
- * Earnings went up by 25 percent;
- * Mental health improved by 25 percent (stress reduced due to safer neighborhood)
- * Rates of employment rose 22 percent;
- * Total average income was significantly higher for ERLH residents (\$26,271) than non-residents (\$21,022).

In addition, residents with children were more closely involved in educating their young ones, who did well in school despite the fact that the academic environment was much more competitive than the schools many of the children had been attending in Camden. ERLH children spent much more time studying and reading than non-resident children

“In their new neighborhood, project residents evinced better mental health and achieved greater rates of employment, more abundant earnings, and greater economic independence that they would otherwise have achieved,” the Princeton researchers

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 7

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

said in the preface to *Climbing Mount Laurel*. "It also gave residents more time and energy to devote to the education of their children, and enabled their children to attend higher quality and safer schools while earning grades that were as good or better than what they would have earned in their old schools.

"For these reasons, we see the construction and management of the project not only as a vindication of Ethel Lawrence's dream, but as a model for promoting greater integration and a pathway out of poverty for disadvantaged minority families throughout the United States," the researchers said. Ethel Lawrence, a teacher and mother of nine, was the lead plaintiff in the Mount Laurel litigation and is often called the "Rosa Parks of Affordable Housing." She faced death threats throughout the contentious Mount Laurel case and later the planning process that preceded the construction of the development that bears her name.

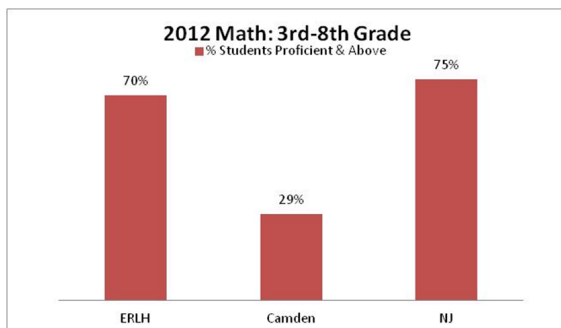
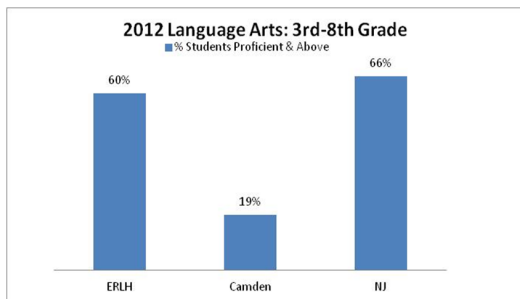
The Princeton researchers also looked at census and administrative data to undertake a time-series analysis of trends in crime, property values, traffic congestion, taxes, school performance before and after 2000, comparing trends in Mount Laurel to those in surrounding communities. Neighbors were also interviewed to assess their perceptions of how conditions in the community have changed since 2000. The Princeton research found no evidence of increased crime, higher taxes or a decrease in property values.

The Princeton study is the first of its kind to measure the costs and benefits of affordable housing for the high-opportunity communities that house them and the poor families that live in them.



ERLH families enjoy a beautiful fall day in Mount Laurel, an affluent suburb located about 30 minutes from downtown Philadelphia

HOUSING POLICY IS SCHOOL POLICY



What's the best way to ensure the educational success of low-income children? Move them into high-opportunity neighborhoods where they can attend school with middle-class peers. That's the finding of decades of research, data that's shored up by a recent study of ERLH children. Each year, staff at the Margaret Donnelly O'Connor Education Center analyzes New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) scores. Data from 2012 for 27 Education Center students shows that our children performed significantly 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.

Why are ERLH kids doing so well? 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*: "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."

Thank You Donors

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF FSHD DONORS, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.FAIRSHAREDEVELOPMENT.ORG/DONORS/

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Toni and George Reidy (Holy Cross, Class of '63)
Judy and Hank Cutting (Holy Cross, Class of '63)



EDUCATION CENTER WISH LIST 2013

School supplies, snacks, and books are always needed.

We are also trying to raise **\$40,000** for much-needed repairs to the trailer that houses our Education Center. **We've have raised half of our goal** – help us finish the repairs!

MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION TODAY!

JESUIT VOLUNTEERS

Abby Habein (2012 Education Center JV)
Peter Habein (father of JV Abby Habein)
Harold Habein (grandfather of JV Abby Habein)
Deanna Johnson (2006 Education Center JV)
Kate Maich (2004 Education Center JV)
Pamela Parma (mother of 2011 JV Aly Parma)
Joel and Christine Stenberg (2010 Education Center JV)

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Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden
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Lenape High School National Honor Society
Mount Laurel Municipal Alliance (MLMA)
Salvation Army
Quixote Quest Teen Club
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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