

THE VILLAGER

A Seasonal Newsletter for Warren Village Friends

Warren Village exists so low income, single-parent families can achieve sustainable personal and economic self-sufficiency.

SERENA'S STORY

Courage, Grit and Determination

Serena Charles came to Warren Village when she was 21 – living on her own as mom of a 2.5-year-old boy Julian. Hers is a story of determination, focus and resilience.

Serena is the sixth of seven children born to her single mother. Her mom tried hard to ensure that Serena and her little sister had a roof over their heads and food on the table, but her drug addiction continually got in the way.

When Serena was 9 she and her mom and younger sister were evicted and forced to live in a shelter, and three years later, her mom went to jail and she and her sister were placed in the first of many foster homes. Serena was in and out of foster care and the Family Crisis Center through her teen years. In spite of feeling angry and being unable to trust people she managed to graduate from high school top of her class.

Then at 15, she got wrapped into an unhealthy relationship – involving domestic violence – and at 19 became pregnant. When Julian was first born, she tried to make it work with her boyfriend. Ultimately the relationship ended, and Serena and her toddler son were left homeless.

Serena knew she could make a better life for herself and Julian – she was determined to end this cycle. She applied at Warren Village and was admitted 3 months later. For the first time she could truly breathe, feel safe and have a place to call home.

“For the first time I could really breathe, feel safe and have a place to call MY home.”

She took advantage of every opportunity at Warren Village and thrived despite rigorous expectations. She rose to the challenge, completed the program and today is working towards her Bachelor of Science in Health Care Management from Metro State University of Denver. She will graduate in May 2017! Julian, now 7, is thriving in first grade at Teller Elementary.

Serena (pictured left) shared her story of courage, determination and resilience at our *Celebrating Wellness All Star Luncheon*.

Below she receives flowers from Jodi Rolland, Bank of America Colorado State and Denver Market President.



“I’m so grateful to Warren Village for freeing me to focus on my goals and lifting me and my son out of poverty.”

Inside this Issue:

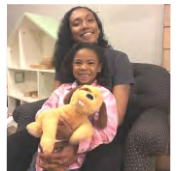
Wellness Launch | Page 3

Lasting personal and economic self-sufficiency requires both a healthy mind and body. Learn more about our new *Wellness Initiative* which launched in February.



Celebrating 10 Years | Page 5

Warren Village First Step is celebrating 10 years! Learn how our partnership with Denver’s Road Home is transforming lives.



Healthy Beginnings | Page 5

Healthy Beginnings Clinic has been meeting the pediatric health needs of Warren Village kids for nearly 20 years. Discover how this CU Med School student-led clinic started.



Volunteer Month | Page 8

April is *Volunteer Appreciation Month*! Read highlights of the gifts of time and talent from so many people who have a passion for our work at Warren Village.



WHAT IS A LEARNING ORG?

Warren Village is striving to become a “Learning Organization” – so what does that mean?

A learning organization is skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new information and insights.

Learning organizations allow team members to work more effectively with relevant information towards target goals to best benefit the community they are serving.

There are Five Building Blocks of a Learning Organization:

1. **Systematic Problem-Solving**
2. **Experimentation**
3. **Learning from Past Experiences**
4. **Learning from Others**
5. **Transfer Knowledge**

To learn more about our Learning Organization efforts, visit:

warrenvillage.org

CREATING HOPE AND LASTING CHANGE

Dear Friends,

As the winter season recedes, hope springs eternal at Warren Village and we look forward to everything that this new season will bring for our hardworking families.

At this time of year our Nature Explore® Outdoor Classrooms become alive – providing a unique space for our kids to grow and experiment in a natural setting. Wonderful volunteer groups help beautify our families' surroundings with landscaping and painting projects.

Our College to Career students move through another semester working towards their degrees and certificates. And our very first VitalU class starts in April, as part of our new Wellness Initiative. Highlighted on the following page, this exciting new initiative promotes balance and well-being by comprehensively addressing the challenges of poverty.

Life can often feel like a balancing act. In that spirit, Warren Village – like many organizations – continually balances the desire to serve more families while also providing the highest quality two-generation programming that we possibly can to our single parents and children. Our staff and board continue to work to optimize the quality of our programs, expand the visibility of our organization and identify ways in which we increase the impact of our Two Generation model. Together we are on a course as a “Learning Organization” to continually improve the quality of outcomes and ensure that residents and their children can achieve their fullest potential.

It's more critical now than ever that we serve our community in a strategic, intentional and results-oriented way, while always celebrating the accomplishments of our families who are working so hard to lift themselves out of poverty permanently. (More detail on our strategic path ahead can be found on our website.)

Before you peruse the many highlights shared in this newsletter, I will mention that April 1st marks the beginning of our new fiscal year. Indeed this represents a fresh start. It's also a time to express our deepest appreciation to everyone who supported us throughout our 2016-2017 fiscal year. We are working hard to maximize every dollar we receive from you, our supporters.

Thank you for everything you make possible for Warren Village. Enjoy the Spring issue of *The Villager*!

With warmest regards,



Ethan Hemming
President and CEO



NEW TAGLINE REFLECTS “TWO-GEN” MODEL Transforming Parents’ Lives. Improving Children’s Futures

Have you noticed anything different about us lately? We are excited to announce that Warren Village has a new tagline: **Transforming Parents’ Lives. Improving Children’s Futures.** Over the past several months, the PR/Marketing Committee has been hard at work vetting possible new taglines through research, conducting focus groups with residents and staff, and surveying key stakeholders. Our new tagline reflects the “two-generation” service model that Warren Village has pioneered since our inception in 1974.



WELLNESS INITIATIVE LAUNCHES

Program Addition Promotes Healthy Mind and Body

Lasting and long-term personal and economic self-sufficiency requires both a healthy mind and body. That is why Warren Village has launched a new *Wellness Initiative* focused on all aspects of healthy living as a way to achieve long-term self-sufficiency for residents. This new initiative encompasses existing programming, as well as new offerings, and focuses on four key elements: **Physical Well-being**, **Psychological Well-being**, **Social Well-being** and **Financial Well-being**. All of these elements are interconnected, and each contributes to healthy living. When considered together, they improve the quality of outcomes achieved by Warren Village families.



PHYSICAL



PSYCHOLOGICAL



SOCIAL
WELL-BEING



FINANCIAL
WELL-BEING

The four main components of the *Wellness Initiative* are **VitalU**, **Individual Wellness Plans**, **Mental Health Services** and **Village Wellness**. [Details right of this story.]

“For many years we saw how external factors impacted our residents' ability to achieve true long-term self-sufficiency. Without the tools to establish a balanced whole self physically, mentally, socially and financially, the single parents we serve were struggling to achieve goals we know they have the potential to achieve,” said Ethan Hemming, President and CEO of Warren Village.

The *Wellness Initiative* is rooted in best practices and is a direct response to the challenges faced as a result of moving from poverty to self-sufficiency due to the current economic and housing conditions in metro Denver. As a result of this new framework, Warren Village families will be better equipped to sustain the successes they achieve through the Warren Village programs.

Elyse Montgomery, Warren Village Director of Family Services, said “To be fully self-sufficient is an integration of mind and body. It's not just about the money or just about one piece of the struggle – it's about the whole picture contributing to the end goal.”

For more information visit www.warrenvillage.org/WellnessInitiative.



Wellness
INITIATIVE



WELLNESS INITIATIVE COMPONENTS

Beginning in April 2017 every new Warren Village family will participate in:

VitalU: A series of required classes that introduce families to basic skills in all areas of well-being.

Wellness Plans: Completed by families with the support of their Family Advocate, serving as a commitment to continue the work identified in VitalU.

Mental Health Services: We currently employ a Mental Health Clinician in the Learning Center, and are seeking funding for additional on-site mental health support for adults and children not served in the Learning Center.

Village Wellness: Enhanced programming and classes offered by Warren Village and other partners.



WELLNESS HONORED

Congratulations to our *Celebrating Wellness All-Star Luncheon* Program Honoree, the Healthy Beginnings Clinic! For nearly 20 years this weekly health clinic on the Warren Village campus has been providing quality free pediatric care.

Pictured far left: **Dr Stephanie Stevens** and **Colorado University School of Medicine** students representing our Program Honoree, Healthy Beginnings Clinic.

Pictured left: Warren Village Board Chair, **Brian Sandy** presents Program Honoree award to **Dr. Stevens**.

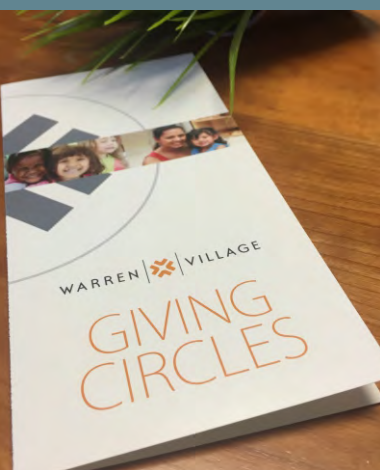
GIVING CIRCLES

By becoming part of Giving Circles, you are joining the Warren Village family. Our ability to offer affordable housing, supportive services, and early care and education is only possible with your support.

As a Giving Circle member, you'll receive regular updates from Warren Village along with a variety of special benefits.

Thank you for your partnership.

[warrenvillage.org/
GivingCircles](http://warrenvillage.org/GivingCircles)



CELEBRATING WELLNESS LUNCHEON

Event Raises Support for Self-Sufficiency Programs

On February 22, 2017 Warren Village presented its *Celebrating Wellness* All-Star Luncheon at the Marriot Denver City Center. The event featured an inspiring keynote presentation by Joan Lunden, former *Good Morning America* host and women's health advocate. The luncheon also launched our new *Wellness Initiative*.

This year's honorees included Michael Benedict, Corporate Leader Honoree, and the Healthy Beginnings Clinic, Program Honoree.



CELEBRATING
Wellness



Healthy fruit centerpieces were donated back to Warren Village residents.



From left: Luncheon emcee and 9NEWS anchor **TaRhonda Thomas**, keynote speaker, **Joan Lunden**, and Warren Village Workforce Partnerships Manager, **Jessica Cassarino**.



Joan Lunden inspires luncheon attendees with her words of "saying yes" and pursuing goals at work and home.



From left: Luncheon Corporate Leader Honoree and Warren Village Trustee, **Michael Benedict**, being presented the award by Board Chair, **Brian Sandy**.



From left: Warren Village resident, **Precious Larry** with **Joan Lunden**.



From left: Luncheon emcee, 9NEWS anchor **TaRhonda Thomas**, alumna **Serena Charles**, **Joan Lunden**, alumna **Whitney Whitston**, CEO **Ethan Hemming**, Deputy Denver Mayor **Happy Haynes**.



From left: President and CEO **Ethan Hemming**, Colorado State and Denver Market President, Bank of America **Jodi Rolland**, keynote speaker **Joan Lunden**, Warren Village Board Chair **Brian Sandy**.

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS CLINIC THRIVES

CU School of Medicine Students Lead Free Health Clinic

Healthy Beginnings is a University of Colorado School of Medicine student-run pediatric clinic offered weekly at Warren Village. The mission is to provide convenient, free healthcare services for children, advocate for healthy lifestyles, educate on prevention and safety, and inform parents about primary care physicians in the Denver area.



The idea for the Healthy Beginnings clinic originated in the 1990s within the Pediatrics Club at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. The program has been serving Warren Village residents and their children for nearly 20 years.

Medical students provide well-child examinations, diagnosis and treatment of routine conditions, and referrals to hospitals or specialists for more complicated conditions. Parents receive nutrition counseling, asthma care, safety, information on good sleep habit tips, and how to discipline. In addition, immigrant families learn how to access health care and communicate with a doctor. A licensed physician supervises the weekly clinics and often conducts instructional discussions after clinic hours.



FIRST STEP CELEBRATES 10 YEARS!

Denver's Road Home Partnership Thrives

Warren Village First Step is celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2017. This unique one-year transitional communal living program for women with children is funded by Denver's Road Home - a Denver Human Services entity - providing housing for homeless families. First Step, located near Regis University, offers 13 apartments, case management, life skills classes, and on-site staff to assist residents in achieving their goals towards personal and economic self-sufficiency.

Sharell, and her two boys, Izaiah and Izzak, found a safe place to call home at Warren Village First Step.



"Since 2007 we have housed 370 residents at First Step. Our 10-year partnership with Denver's Road Home continues to meet the housing and wrap-around support needs of single-parent families who need a helping hand," says Tori Ambrosio, First Step Program Manager. Support services are at the heart of First Step's success by providing the resources residents need to change and improve their lives. Skilled and dedicated family advocates help residents by providing education planning, career exploration and guidance, financial literacy and plans for long-term housing.



HOMELESSNESS IS CLOSE TO HOME

Warren Village is proud to be part of the CLOSE TO HOME campaign to raise awareness, increase understanding, and move Coloradans to speak up and take actions that make a meaningful difference in addressing homelessness. Increased public engagement paves the road to identify, pilot, implement, and sustain solutions such as affordable housing, supportive services, and employment and education opportunities.



Through the work of the CLOSE TO HOME campaign, and the efforts of many other committed individuals, groups, and organizations, we want to "make homelessness history in Colorado" and for all people to be able to live with dignity and hope.

CLOSE TO HOME is committed to a campaign that is collaborative, respectful, action-oriented, and solutions-focused.

Learn more at www.CloseToHomeCO.org, and consider these 5 ways to make a difference:

PLEDGE - Take the Close to Home pledge;
LEARN - Toss the stereotypes;
SPEAK UP - Your words matter;
SHARE - Make it viral; and
ACT - Your actions matter.



LEARNING CENTER EMBRACES CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE CURRICULUM

Social-Emotional Curriculum Builds Foundation for Excellence

The Warren Village Learning Center teaching staff recently trained in an innovative social-emotional curriculum called Conscious Discipline. What is Conscious Discipline? It is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum which is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline is a way of organizing learning center schools and classrooms around the concept of a School Family. "We have great confidence in the teaching techniques used by the Conscious Discipline curriculum, and see it as a cornerstone for the Learning Center's quest to provide an excellent learning environment for the children we serve," said Maggie Rittenhouse, Learning Center Director.

The techniques employed by Conscious Discipline empowers teachers and other adults with the Seven Powers for Self Control:

1. **Perception** – No one can make you mad without your permission
2. **Unity** – We are all in this together
3. **Love** – See the best in others
4. **Attention** – What you focus on, you get more of
5. **Acceptance** – The moment is as it is
6. **Free will** – The only person you can make change is yourself
7. **Intention** – Conflict is an opportunity to teach

These powers allow teachers to draw from within themselves to become proactive instead of reactive during moments of conflict. Teachers stay in control of themselves and positively influence children. From the beliefs instilled with the Seven Powers for Self Control emerge the Seven Basic Skills of Discipline:

1. **Composure** - Becoming the person you want your children to be
2. **Encouragement** - Building a school family
3. **Assertiveness** - Respectfully setting limits
4. **Choices** – Building self-esteem and will power
5. **Positive Intent** - Creating teachable moments, turning conflict into cooperation
6. **Empathy** - Handling the fussing and the fits
7. **Consequences** - Helping children learn from their mistakes

Through the Powers and Skills, adults stay in control of themselves and in charge of children. As adults begin to change their attitudes and behaviors, so will the children in their care. We cannot teach behaviors and skills that we do not possess ourselves.



Children enjoying imaginative play on our Nature Explore® Outdoor Classroom.



DID YOU KNOW?

Losing a home can happen to anyone. Job loss, high housing costs, family break-ups, domestic violence, and illnesses are among the most common causes of homelessness.

Over the past 10 years there's been a **322%** increase of school-aged children known to be homeless in Metro Denver.

Almost half (**47%**) of those experiencing homelessness in Metro Denver are families with children.

43% of Metro Denver residents indicate that they know family members or friends who have experienced homelessness.

Discover more at:
www.CloseToHomeCO.org

COMMUNITY EMPOWERED!

We just had to share this "full of smiles" picture from the *Celebrating Wellness* All-Star Luncheon of our amazing Family Services Team and some of our wonderful Warren Village alumni. The picture beautifully reflects the love and empowerment that the Warren Village community brings to so many single-parent families.



FAMILY, GENEROSITY AND LEGACY

Donor Highlight: Jeff and Ann Drabing



During the holiday season, Trustee Tammy Abramovitz and CEO Ethan Hemming had an opportunity to enjoy good conversation and beer with Dr. John H. Drabing and his son and daughter-in-law Jeff and Ann Drabing at their thriving establishment the Rockyard Brewing Company in Castle Rock, Colorado.

The family has a very special history with Warren Village that began well before our building was constructed on Capitol Hill with a determined and caring woman—Mrs.

Faith Wells Drabing – John's mother and Jeff's grandmother. Theirs is a story of three generations of compassion, generosity and *loyalty*.

Faith was an active member of Warren Methodist Church for 55 years, and was involved with the early planning for Warren Village. John and Jeff described how she embodied commitment and hard work by raising two children on her own after her husband died in 1943, and working for the same doctor for over 30 years. She also provided a home for her mother, sister and brothers. Never one to be idle, one year, Faith knitted 360 items for the Warren Village children—all while watching the Broncos!

Because of her unwavering commitment to helping others, Grandma Faith was awarded the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award – awarded annually by The Denver Foundation – in 1988.

From the beginning, Faith was a loyal supporter of Warren Village until her passing in 2003 at age 97. Even when she could no longer live independently, she would still make sure that her son, John, was making regular contributions on her behalf. In turn, John, a retired orthopedist in Colorado Springs, continues to be a loyal supporter today, as do Jeff and Ann – who even chose to include Warren Village in their will last year.

When asked why they continue their loyal partnership with Warren Village after all these years – Jeff and Ann responded:

"For us it's a win-win situation. We know that Grandma Faith was a woman with very high standards and Warren Village is a quality organization that she cared deeply about. It is a model for changing lives. We also believe that the families who are living and learning at Warren Village are not receiving a handout. It is a hand up."

We are fortunate to be in a position to share and give back. By supporting Warren Village, we're not only building on Grandma Faith's legacy, but we're also helping families get on their feet so they too can be in a position to give back to the community."



From left: Warren Village Trustee, Tammy Abramovitz and Ann Drabing.



ROSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In the fall of 2016, Warren Village was invited to participate in an exciting opportunity with the Rose Community Foundation: their Endowment Cohort program. This special program, which will conclude in May, has included six learning sessions focused on endowment and planned giving.

Rose Community Foundation has been a key partner for Warren Village since 1996. We have received more than \$900,000 from Rose Community Foundation as well as their donor-advised funds and collaborative giving groups.



As a result of being participants in the Endowment Cohort, Warren Village established an endowment fund at Rose Community Foundation with generous matching grants, a benefit offered to participants. This will be an excellent option for those interested in making planned gifts. Having an annual distribution from an endowment fund will help alleviate some of our fundraising burden.

We are more motivated than ever to grow our endowment, which will ensure that Warren Village can continue to provide much-needed services to single parent homeless families long into the future.

Are you interested in supporting Warren Village's endowment at Rose Community Foundation? Please call 303.320.5052 for more information.

Return Address Requested



CELEBRATING WARREN VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS THIS APRIL

Thank you for sharing your time and talent!

Warren Village is proud to celebrate *Volunteer Appreciation Month* this April to honor the 747 volunteers who joined us during the past year. Our incredible volunteers contributed nearly 15,000 hours of service, providing over \$294,000 in budgetary relief for our organization.

Whether you facilitated a class for our parents, cuddled a toddler in childcare, provided dinner for our families, painted a hallway, stuffed an envelope - and so much more – we want to say *thank you!* Your time, talent, and energy are a key ingredient in making our work possible.

Know anyone looking for a volunteer opportunity?
Contact Angie Ruddell:
303.320.5032 or
aruddell@warrenvillage.org.

