



PRESS RELEASE
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PETIT FAMILY FOUNDATION TO FUND INTERVAL HOUSE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

HARTFORD – Interval House's art and music therapy program -- which helps children cope with trauma stemming from witnessing domestic violence -- will continue to operate thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Petit Family Foundation.

Interval House applied for partial funding for the program, but the Foundation's board members said the “New Beginnings for Children” program was so important, they wanted to fully fund it for the year.

“We are so grateful to Dr. William Petit and the entire Petit Family Foundation board for being so generous towards this vital program,” said Mary-Jane Foster, Interval House’s President and CEO. “The tragic effect domestic violence has on children is long-lasting and ultimately is one of the key reasons why it’s so hard to break this insidious cycle of violence. This art and music therapy program truly helps children heal.”

According to national statistics, more than 90-percent of abusers in domestic violence cases are men. Of that number, about 70-percent witnessed domestic violence in their homes as children.

Thanks to the grant, the program will also offer holistic therapy such as yoga and meditation for children and mothers, as well as special field trips to farms that offer animal-assisted therapy.

During the past summer through a pilot program, several children staying at Interval House’s safe house (ages 4 to 13) together painted: “We Are Family.” Shannon Marone, an art therapist working with Interval House, guided the children through exercises to visualize words and images representing their feelings about living with strangers.

“All of our artists agreed there needed to be a house big enough for everyone -- a place for everyone to feel safe, welcomed, and included -- surrounded by trees, flowers, and a

sunny sky,” Marone said. “They also wanted to include a barn to depict a sanctuary, similar to their current residence, only with animals! It was decided the phrase “We Are Family” should be included on top of the house, along with words that describe what it’s like to live with strangers -- nature, unity, love, peace, family.”

“We Are Family” is currently being shown at the Mandell JCC in West Hartford as part of an exhibit called: [Under One Roof.](#)

Since its founding in 1977, Interval House has helped more than 250,000 people. It provides free and confidential services to 24 cities and towns in the Greater Hartford area. It operates a 25-bed safe house, support groups, offers safety planning counseling, advocacy programs in the courts, a children’s program and community education.

Anyone looking for help can call the Interval House 24-hour hotline at: 860-527-0550



Pictured above, Interval House President/CEO Mary-Jane Foster accepts the big check from Dr. William A. Petit, Jr., in front of a painting: “We Are Family” that Interval House’s youngest clients created through the art therapy program.