

Publication of
The Treehouse Foundation
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news from the Treehouse

Re-Envisioning Foster Care in America

December 2010

Our primary mission

is to provide children in the public foster care system with enduring family relationships and supportive community connections by implementing innovative programs and practices.

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“ Treehouse is innovative,
inspiring and imaginative!
I love living here! ”

—Treehouse Elder

Creating a Culture of Possibility

It is an honor to work with visionary people who are charting the direction child welfare will take in the years ahead. This fall Treehouse joined a group of committed people who gathered to celebrate what is working in foster care and discuss how to surround all of our children with goodness and opportunity.

Over the past decade I have met with hundreds of people to talk about the unique contributions of the Treehouse Foundation. Recently at such a meeting, a national leader shook my hand and said, “There are thousands of non-profits. Tell me what makes yours unique. What are you doing that no one else does?”

He requested that I write down five things that distinguish the Treehouse Foundation from other non-profits working on behalf of children who experience foster care – five approaches that make it distinct.

Here they are:

- The Treehouse Foundation is creating a compelling new menu of engagement options so that citizens of all ages can become resources to children in their communities. Our goal: to ensure that every child is rooted in family and community.
- The Treehouse Foundation is working to move children out of foster care and into life-long families so they will not be at risk for “aging out”. Treehouse and its partners built a planned

intergenerational neighborhood where families who are adopting children from foster care live with caring neighbors of all ages. Other states are planning Treehouse inspired communities.



- Collaboration lies at the heart of the Treehouse Foundation approach. Partnership enables us to leverage regional and national resources and serve many more children.

- The Treehouse Foundation helped launch a national Re-Envisioning Foster Care Initiative to build a dynamic culture of possibility for all of our nation’s children.
- The Treehouse Foundation believes in citizen led change. It is inviting Americans of all ages to become part of the Re-Envisioning Foster Care process. Together we are creating new realities.

After reading my response, this wise leader looked up and said, “The Treehouse Foundation is creating solutions to the address age old foster care issues. Your team is providing innovative leadership. You are inspiring others. The Treehouse model is worthy of widespread support.”

Please let us know what you can do to make us stronger and more effective. We sincerely appreciate your generosity.

Judy Cockerton
Founder

“In my view...”

To me, Treehouse provides a beautiful example of what happens when community members come together to care for children who have experienced foster care.

Treehouse invites people of all ages to become resources to children in their neighborhood—wonderful volunteers who read stories to the children, teach a photography class, organize a nature walk or plant a community garden.

At Treehouse all of these diverse gifts and resources help to create a unique place of healing and transformation—for the children who are creating life long family and community connections and for the adults who invest in their lives.

When more and more regions take a Treehouse-inspired approach, we will change the way foster care is perceived and delivered throughout our nation!

— Beth Fraker
Executive Director,
Generations Together



Treehouse: The Promise of Family & Community!
Make a donation today! Visit www.treehousecommunities.org

Treehouse Foundation Founder Named 2010 Angel in Adoption



Treehouse Foundation founder, Judy Cockerton, received the 2010 Massachusetts Angel in Adoption Award in Washington, DC this fall!

Here she is with Danny DeVito and his wife, Rhea Perlman, who also won an Angel in Adoption Award.

Cockerton was nominated for this prestigious Congressional award by Senator John Kerry for her work on behalf of our nation’s children experiencing foster care. She joined Angels in Adoption from all across the country who were honored for their dedication and vision.

Upon receiving her award, the Treehouse Foundation founder expressed hope that the award would inspire widespread investment in the multi-generational Treehouse Community model to ensure every child in America is rooted in family and community. ●



Treehouse Has A New Playground!



A wonderful set of swings and climbing structures was given to the Treehouse Community by the Victoria E. Snelgrove Memorial Foundation. The new playground was donated in honor of Torie Snelgrove.

This fall over 50 community members and friends of Treehouse showed up to build our beautiful new play structure. Playground building volunteers ranged in age from 8 – 75, showcasing the intergenerational spirit of Treehouse. ●





Treehouse Community Celebrates It's 4th Anniversary!

The Treehouse Community celebrated its 4th Anniversary with our annual fall fiesta!

A special thanks to Treehouse Foundation board members for helping make the day possible. We truly appreciate all of their assistance with children's activities.



We are also grateful to Treehouse community members for their pot luck contributions. Mel's Pony Pals donated pony cart rides to all who came. In addition, we enjoyed balloon animals, face painting and live music provided by our very own Treehouse Chorus.

Wicked Good Cupcakes donated the most amazing "people cupcakes" to honor everyone who lives on Treehouse Circle. The facial details were awesome: glasses, hair bows, smiles, and all kinds of hair styles.

Cupcakes and ice cream cones for dessert out on the Treehouse meadow with Mt. Tom as a backdrop. What a perfect ending to a wonderful day! ●

FOSTERING MEDIA CONNECTIONS VISITS TREEHOUSE

FMC was established earlier this year by award winning journalist Daniel Heimpel. Daniel and videographer, Eytan Elterman are touring the country highlighting outstanding programs that restore the health and well-being of children and youth in foster care. This fall they visited Treehouse.

After three weeks meeting with folks from all across the Bay State, Heimpel remarked, "I have traveled the country and seen many incredible programs that positively effect children experiencing foster care, so when I say that the Treehouse Community is something truly transcendent I know what I am talking about.

Here's what makes the difference. The Treehouse Community taps into the vigor of elders who are actively investing in the lives of youth in their backyards. The youth flourish. It is so natural, so simple that it is absolutely



brilliant. If there were more Treehouse Communities in America, the country would undoubtedly be a better place."

Daniel was the keynote speaker at the region's first Re-Envisioning Foster Care Conference where Eytan debuted his stellar video showcasing life on Treehouse Circle. You can view it at www.fosteringmediaconnections.org or on *Youtube!*

We look forward to seeing Daniel and Eytan at our next Re-Envisioning Foster Care Conference on March 11th! ●

Treehouse Suitcase Project



Thanks to Treehouse Suitcase Project supporters we are now able to provide a steady stream of brand new duffle bags and suitcases to children experiencing foster care in western Massachusetts!

Together with folks from around the region we are collecting suit cases and making regular deliveries to the Holyoke office of the Department of Children and Families. Social workers are delighted to provide youngsters with a beautiful new way to transport their belongings.

Donating a new suitcase is such an easy way to honor the life of a child. Children experiencing foster care often live in multiple homes. It means so much to them to make those moves carrying a suitcase rather than a garbage bag.

Join us! Collecting suitcases is a great project for your civic group, faith based organization or school.



Have you Heard? Spread the Word!

You can buy a house at Treehouse!!!



The Homes at Easthampton Meadow offer folks of all ages the opportunity to live in one of the beautiful, new, energy efficient homes that are being built right next to the Treehouse Community. Great for home buyers interested in sustainable living and an engaged lifestyle!

These two, three and four bedroom homes have been designed to both reflect life in the Pioneer Valley as well as the environment. Each house has been designed and will be constructed to maximize natural light, and each incorporates state of the art energy efficient construction techniques and equipment.



Although actual energy usage will vary depending on the behavior of those living in each home, these ultra-low energy efficient homes are designed to use 60% less energy than comparably sized new construction homes. If an owner decides to incorporate solar electric panels on the roof, the homes are designed to perform at a “net-zero” energy usage. This means that on an annual basis, the energy created will be close to or equal to the energy needs.

Phase One of this new neighborhood is underway. Choose from:

- 9 thoughtfully planned building sites
- 7 home designs
- Two, three and four bedroom designs ranging from 1,500–2,365 sq. ft.
- Prices starting at \$309,900 for these ultra-low energy homes



For more information about this exciting home ownership opportunity, please contact Judy Cockerton at 413. 527. 7966 or visit our website: www.treehousecommunities.org



Thank you!
