

Publication of
The Treehouse Foundation
1 Treehouse Circle
Easthampton, MA 01027
treehousecommunities.org
413.527.7966

Re-Envisioning Foster Care in America

Fall 2011

Our primary mission

is to inspire, implement, and support innovative practices which ensure that children and youth experiencing foster care find their places in loving, connected family relationships and supportive communities that help them lead fulfilling, productive lives.

Board of Directors

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“Among its other benefits,
giving liberates
the soul of the giver.”

—Maya Angelou



Treehouse

news from the

Something To Celebrate!

The headline read “More Than 2 Million People Lose Power in Rare October Storm.” Schools were closed. Halloween was cancelled! Everyone at Treehouse hunkered down and cleaned out their refrigerators. Folks gathered in the Community Center and started cooking: soups, pasta, spaghetti, scrambled eggs, chili and stew. Everyone pitched in. It was pure Treehouse!

Since 2006, Treehouse has been empowering families, creating community and helping to change the world. For the past five years we have demonstrated that when people come together and invest in our children placed in foster care, entire communities are transformed.

Looking around the kitchen during the October Storm, it was hard to believe that only five years ago families and elders were just moving into the beautiful new townhouses and cottages on Treehouse Circle.

So much has happened since that first summer. We’ve gathered for holidays, adoptions, baby showers, graduations and birthdays. Enduring relationships have been formed. Life trajectories have been altered.

If you stop by the Treehouse Community Center, you’ll find adults knitting, kids doing homework, people of all ages using

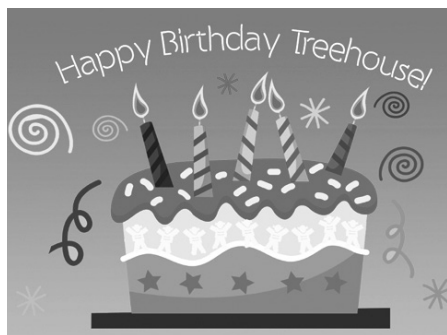
the Library computers. Someone might be teaching jewelry making or helping a group of teens fill out college applications. An elder might be making beautiful signs to hang in the Foyer. The Peace Club might be meeting. Or, the Treehouse Ambassadors. Chances are, if you smell coffee, people are gathering!

The front door is filled with colorful signs announcing the week’s offerings: Salsa Dancing, Yoga, Sign Language, French Club, Movie Nights, a Mt. Holyoke Hike, Youth Council, Treehouse Tea, Saturday Café. It’s clear that you are about to walk into a thriving community.

We would not have been able to accomplish all this innovation without the strong leadership of the Treehouse Foundation board, a visionary staff, our wonderful partners, dedicated Treehouse community members and the unfailing support of people throughout the region. Your contributions have made it possible for Treehouse to create a culture of possibility. Here’s to the Treehouse mission! Let’s inspire more people, ideas and financial investments over the next five years as we continue to re-envision foster care together!

With deep appreciation,

Judy Cockerton
Founder/Executive Director
Congressional Angel in Adoption





To Celebrate National Adoption Month

The Treehouse Foundation Presents

An Evening With
Vanessa Diffenbaugh

Acclaimed Author of
The Language of Flowers

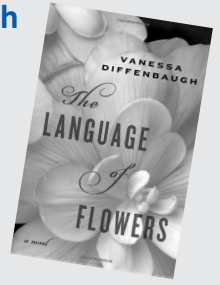


Photo credit: Infinity Portrait Design

DATE: November 7th
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: First Churches
127 Main Street, Northampton, MA

For more information about this FREE community event,
go to www.treehousecommunities.org.



“In My View...”

Turning five is a significant milestone for the Treehouse Community. The early challenges of being “the new kid on the block” have faded. In just five years, we have learned—and accomplished-- a great deal, and now have a foundation of experience and knowledge to stand on.

Treehouse continues to inspire engagement and attract widespread interest. We are excited about Phase 2: Home ownership. It offers new energy efficient housing options to the region and exposes a wider audience to Treehouse. Recently a wonderful woman from Florida came for a visit. She wanted to see whether living in an intergenerational neighborhood would be a good fit for the next stage in her life. Like many of her peers, she wants to be actively involved in her community. It is an honor to meet such people and learn what is important and meaningful to them.

Collaborations in our region have brought new resources together to support children whose lives have been impacted by foster care. They have also inspired critical new conversations about foster care, adoption and the value of the Treehouse Community model. Along with the Rudd Adoption Research Program at UMass, we are engaged in an evaluation process to deepen our learning, strategic development and replication capacity.

Additional partnerships include a mentor program with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Hampshire County to support youth who have experienced foster care and adoption, new learning opportunities at Hampshire College for youth in the region, and programs that bring resources to elders with the Easthampton Council on Aging/Enrichment Center. These are just some of the treasured collaborations that are central to the Treehouse approach.

— Kerry Homstead
Treehouse Community Facilitator

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

Over the past two years, The Suitcase Project has been providing the Department of Children & Families with a steady stream of duffle bags and suitcases. Thanks to all of the wonderful people, organizations, schools and businesses who have chosen to help children via this Treehouse Initiative! We are especially grateful to Samsonite and Groupon for their support and generosity.

Happy Valley Supports Children Placed in Foster Care with THE SUITCASE PROJECT

Problem:

Every day, in Department of Children & Families offices across the region, there are children who have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care waiting to find out where they will go next. Their belongings sit next to them on the floor in trash bags.

Solution:

Provide children with a new suitcase or duffle bag to replace their garbage bags. Give them a few age appropriate necessities to put in them. This is a simple solution. It's also a great way for people in the area to join together and help children in our community who need us.

Happy Valley's Support:

We are delighted that Happy Valley has chosen to support the Suitcase Project! Now you can help children placed in foster care while you shop at Happy Valley on Main Street in Northampton, a whimsical store chock full of fabulous treats for "kids of all ages"!

The Suitcase Project is a Treehouse Foundation Initiative designed to support children of all ages who are experiencing foster care: newborns, infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, elementary age kids, middle schoolers and teens.

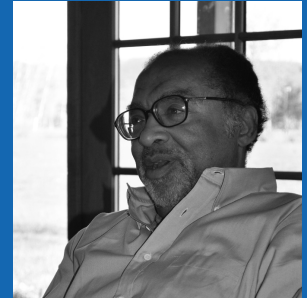
Our immediate goal is to increase the number of suitcases and duffle bags available to children and broaden the number of people supporting our young people in foster care. Another wonderful example of how we can all join together to re-envision foster care in the region!



How You Can Help!

1. **PURCHASE** a Suitcase Project Gift Certificate!
2. **DONATE** a brand new suitcase or duffle bag!

For additional information visit our website:
www.treehousecommunities.org





HOME SWEET HOME!

Have you heard? Spread the word!

Beautiful new energy efficient homes are being built on Treehouse Circle.

You can own a home next door to Treehouse!

Groundbreaking started this fall. The foundation for the first home in the neighborhood was just poured and Treehouse community members of all ages are eagerly watching the home building process!

Our new neighbors attended a recent Treehouse Tea, one of our favorite Treehouse Community traditions, bringing homemade scones to add to our table full of tasty treats. They are scheduled to move in this winter and we can't wait! Two beautiful little boys with their parents and grandma.

Here's the home ownership scoop:

Our stellar Treehouse Foundation housing partner, Beacon Communities LLC, has partnered with Transformations, a residential development and building company that specializes in building Zero-Energy Custom Homes. Transformations won the \$15,000.00 prize in the Zero Energy Challenge program sponsored by the investor owned utilities in Massachusetts.

The home was featured on the Discovery Channel and in the Solar Today magazine. Transformations is working with David Hardy, a well respected western Massachusetts builder, to construct these exciting Easthampton Zero Energy homes.

Located in the beautiful Pioneer Valley, with a view of Mt. Tom and adjacent to both the Treehouse Community and Nonotuck Park, **The Homes at Easthampton Meadows** provide a unique opportunity for those folks who are interested in sustainable living and an engaged lifestyle!

Each home has been designed to maximize natural light and incorporates state of the art, energy efficient construction techniques and equipment with many different 2, 3 & 4 bedroom models to choose from. Prices begin at \$309,900.00. In addition, 9 of the houses being built at **The Homes at Easthampton Meadows** are available to income eligible first time home buyers.

The model home seen above is open for tours!

To set up a time to visit, please call Dave Ryan, our exclusive Coldwell Banker Upton-Massmont real estate agent @ 413.586.8355 or send him an email: dave@cbumr.com to let him know what days work best for you.