

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

Re-Envisioning Foster Care in America

Spring 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

Judy Cockerton
Emmy Howe
Dana Pasquale
Peter Pollard
Rosa Young

Strategic Planning Committee

Cheryl Anderson
Sarah Buttenwieser
Judy Cockerton
Beth Coombs
Mike Ford
Hal Grotevant
Carmen Hickley
Kerry Homstead
Pamela Lumpkin
Dana Pasquale
Peter Pollard
Sally Popper
Carolyn Price
Beth Spang
Rosa Young

“Happy Birthday Treehouse! Five years of putting down roots & creating a model that shows us all that with roots, people fly.”

—Sarah Buttenwieser



Treehouse

news from the

Let That Be Our Legacy!

Springtime at Treehouse is always welcomed with open arms! It signals the re-opening of our community garden, kids on bikes, folks chatting on the back porch, children climbing and swinging on our new play structure, and happy dog walkers.

This year, as we celebrate our fifth anniversary, we look back with deep appreciation for all of the wonderful people who have nurtured our fledgling community. We also look forward to a host of exciting new developments!

During our first five years of the Treehouse Community, life on Treehouse Circle flourished. We collaborated with Beacon Communities, Berkshire Children & Families, and Treehouse community members to co-create a vibrant neighborhood where families who are adopting children from our child welfare system live with caring neighbors. Children are moving out of foster care into loving, connected families. People are investing in one another's lives. Families and elders are receiving responsive supports. All generations are thriving.

Unique partnerships with a broad cross section of professionals and citizens have been formed. Thanks to the generosity of a visionary funder, our dream of launching a national Re-Envisioning Foster Care Initiative rooted in western Massachusetts has become a reality.

In five short years, the Treehouse Foundation has developed a multi-

generational community, established a Hub of Innovation, and expanded its leadership role regionally and nationally.



Thanks to all of our wonderful partners and the Treehouse Foundation board, we have been able to bring new people, idea and funding resources to the world of foster care.

Sharing the learning is a top priority. An exciting result: The

Treehouse Approach traveled to the Pacific Northwest! Bridge Meadows, a Treehouse inspired neighborhood in Portland, Oregon welcomed its first families and elders on April 1st.

This spring we are also entering a new phase of Treehouse Community development: Home Ownership. What a great opportunity for homeowners who want to live a sustainable and engaged lifestyle. There are seven new low-energy housing designs to choose from. Sign up for a tour of our model home!

As we look forward to the next five years we feel excited and optimistic! Here's to 2016! May the journey be full of committed people, stellar ideas, and deep investment. May we raise the level of public debate and inspire Americans of all ages to engage in citizen-led social change so that every child is rooted in family and community. Let that be our legacy!

Judy Cockerton - Founder
2010 Congressional Angel in Adoption

“In My View...”

As we celebrate our fifth anniversary, the Treehouse Community is old enough to survey it's beginning history & appreciate all the supporters who have helped to bring the community to this proud point in it's development. These supporters include an array of partners & collaborators who have invested in the Treehouse mission & vision.

We are so grateful to our Treehouse Community members who are the heart of the neighborhood, building caring relations across generations. We appreciate our organizational partners, Beacon Communities and Berkshire Children & Families.

To community members & volunteers who are part of the Treehouse Foundation strategic planning committee, we thank you for helping us plan ahead. Many organizational collaborators have inspired us. Among those in our region are the Rudd Adoption Research Program, Enchanted Circle Theater, School Sprouts, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Holyoke Rows, the Women's Fund, Friends of Children, Smith College & Westfield State University.

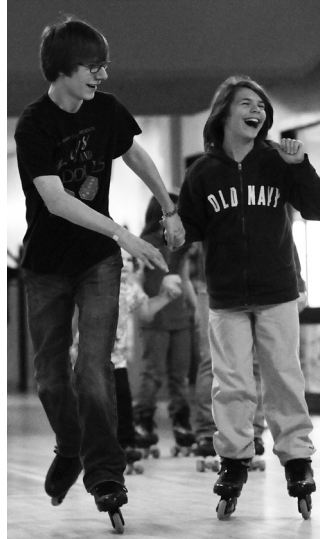
Finally, as we survey how our circle of collaboration has expanded in our first five years, we are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside all the wonderful organizations and individuals who are participating in the Re-Envisioning Foster Care Initiative. From the Department of Children & Families, to child therapists, parents, elders, youth & many others, we appreciate coming together on behalf of children whose lives have been touched by foster care.

— Kerry Homstead
Treehouse Community Facilitator



What Does Treehouse Mean To You?

A wonderful family!
Friends of all ages.
A beautiful neighborhood.
People who care.
A pretty home.
Mt. Tom.
Fun!



BUY A HOME @ 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.

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

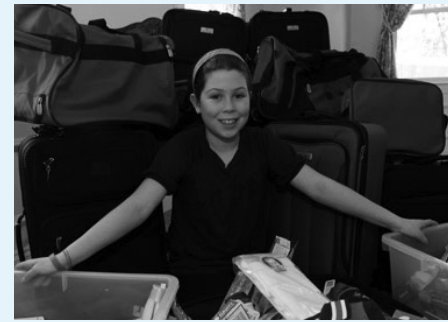
- 9 thoughtfully planned building sites
- 7 home designs
- Two, three and four bedroom designs ranging from 1,500–2,365 sq. ft.

“Go forth & transform you personal relationships, your community, your world, so it becomes hospitable to joy, to justice, to freedom, to peace.”

Happy Birthday Treehouse!



Thanks for Supporting The Suitcase Project Emily!



Please help us deliver brand new suitcases & duffle bags to DCF offices all year long so children experiencing foster care can carry their belongings with pride. Thank You!



Living at Treehouse

When it was time for me to retire & I was looking for a new challenge, I remembered hearing Judy Cockerton speak at a church service about a vision she had for creating an intergenerational community. I had been moved by the concept of older folks interacting with foster/adoptive families.

When I drove into Treehouse for the first time to check things out, I was stunned by the beauty of the open meadow backed up by Mt. Tom. After being warmly welcomed, I immediately felt this was the place for me.

Living here for nearly four years now has been a rewarding experience. I immediately volunteered to help one of the little girls. Since then it has been my pleasure to get to know many of the children.

I also like helping with some of the special projects like the arts program or my favorite... rowing on the river.

Rowing spurs me to mention the close relationships that develop with our peers in the community. Some of us have been sculling on the river for four summers now. What fun! We come together to share meals, watch movies, hike, exercise, converse, meditate, laugh & develop new programs.

I appreciate the opportunity to live in such a unique, cutting-edge community. I believe Treehouse is a model worth duplicating in other areas of the country & I am grateful to all who collaborate to keep this model happening. It certainly enriches my life to live here.

— Mary Steele
Treehouse Elder



What would it look like for all children in America to be rooted in family & community?

To live joyful & fulfilling lives?

What if we promised every child a happy & healthy future?



Thanks to the visionary leadership of a beloved social entrepreneur and a wise philanthropist who understood the importance of investing in the lives of our nation's children who experience foster care, a national Re-Envisioning Foster Care in America Initiative was launched in November 2010.



This dynamic initiative, rooted in western Massachusetts, is creating a culture of possibility for the country. It is designed to foster engagement, change and success by bringing together a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders that includes youth in care, former youth in care, families, advocates, child welfare and mental health professionals, educators, philanthropists, court personnel, legislators, researchers and interested community members. It aims to inspire additional investments in innovative ideas that lead to positive outcomes for our youngsters whose lives have been impacted by foster care.



Three working groups addressing Aging Out, Education and Permanency have been meeting at Treehouse this winter. Their task: to identify opportunities, challenges and partnership possibilities in the region. Their goal: to work together to leverage people, idea and financial resources in new ways that enhance the lives of children placed in foster care. Ultimately, REFCA participants will help create a compelling menu of engagement options so that many more people can become resources to children in their backyards. In addition, they will support the development of a regional model that can be used by communities coast to coast.



Our second Re-Envisioning Foster Care Conference will take place on May 6, 2011 at Holyoke Community College.

For more information, go to treehousecommunities.org or call 413. 527. 7966.