



# alphabet soup

## NEWSLETTER

winter 2017

[www.cskmorristown.org](http://www.cskmorristown.org)

### Our Outreach Center caring, connecting, changing lives

There's no such thing as a typical day at our Outreach Center, where three staffers hustle to help up to 300 guests a day. First, there's a call to track down a birth certificate for a housing application. Next, a trip to the DMV for a guest's license. Then frantically working the phones to secure a rehab spot. A mom and her children need emergency shelter, while an elderly man needs food stamps. Now, it's time to coordinate a hospital discharge. Quick, before a guest's job interview, a scramble for a haircut. Then, near the day's end, a nursing home visit to bring an Oreo milkshake to a former guest. And finally, dashing to see a 61-year-old woman in her new apartment and deliver a fuzzy pink chair.

Wait – say what?

Tara Ryan, director of programs and services, explains the story: "We had a guest with heart trouble and mental illness, who lived outside for 20 years. Her doctors said she wouldn't survive another winter, and we helped her get an apartment. All she asked for was a fuzzy pink chair, so we gave her one. This is how we do social work."

And it's working. In the past year, Tara and her team, Manny Diaz and Michelle Kieffer, helped house 30 chronically homeless guests. Success comes from continuously adapting and evolving.

"We change our programs to fit the needs of the community," Tara says. "We shape our practice to fit our people."

As an Outreach worker, Michelle believes her job is all about giving guests a chance, even when others have given up. One elderly homeless woman feared for her life living outside in a tent. First, Michelle found her emergency shelter, then fought to secure a government housing voucher. "Now she's living in her own apartment," says Michelle. "She told me: 'Never in a million years did I think this was possible.'"

For Manny, the Outreach Center is vastly different than his time working at a health clinic or with seniors. "There's no script," he says. "You have to be prepared for everything." One common thread is the importance of building a guest's trust. One man, who doesn't speak, wrote on a napkin asking for water. Manny fetched the drink and also gave him a notebook for messages. Then, every morning for six months, Manny handed him a water bottle. Finally, the man shared his story and asked for help with food stamps and shelter. Even though Manny assists the guests, he's clear that they're his teacher. "I've learned to ask for help and be happy with simple things," Manny says. "Small things can change your whole perspective on life."

Like a haircut, an Oreo milkshake or a fuzzy pink chair.



Tara Ryan (C), programs & services director,  
with Outreach Center workers  
Michelle Kieffer and Manny Diaz

# HUNGER WALK 2017

Thank you to all who helped make Hunger Walk 2017 a success! More than 900 walkers helped raise more than \$90,000!



With gratitude to our  
Hunger Walk 2017  
sponsors:



## SPONSOR the day

Thank you to our recent teams:

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Panova



For more information about our *Sponsor the Day* program, please contact Nancy Rudgers, director of development, at [nancy@cskmorristown.org](mailto:nancy@cskmorristown.org).

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

For most of her childhood, Sophia, 25, lived in poverty and cycled in and out of foster care. Eventually, she was separated from her family and adopted by a foster parent. But things didn't get better. Her foster family was abusive and after high school, when she turned 18, she was on her own.

Then Sophia started classes at a community college but dropped out when she became homeless. Studying proved impossible when her most pressing concern was where to sleep. Some nights she stayed in a shelter, others she crashed in a friend's garage or she slept in an unlocked car. It looked like things couldn't get any worse, but soon it became apparent that she had a mental illness. With no treatment options in sight, she was at an all-time low.

Six years ago, Sophia started coming to the Community Soup Kitchen (CSK) for breakfast and lunch. She knew her life wasn't going the way she wanted and reached out to Tara Ryan, director of programs and services, for help.

"Sophia had an unstable upbringing and wanted to break the cycle," says Tara. "She decided to change her life."

First, Tara introduced Sophia to counselors from the Mental Health Association who regularly meet with CSK guests right in the dining room. With the proper support, Sophia faced her mental health challenges and her addictions.

In the meantime, Tara and her Outreach team helped Sophia get her driver's license and social security card, as well as copies of her birth certificate and high school diploma. Armed with the proper documents, they then helped her secure a permanent housing voucher.

Finally, after all these years, Sophia has a home. She recently moved into an apartment and started working at a nearby store. She's excited to pick up extra holiday hours and to celebrate Christmas in her own place. Next, Tara and her team will help her get health insurance and apply to college.

"The Community Soup Kitchen always stood by me," Sophia says. "I'm grateful for all they did. When I go back to school, I want to become a social worker so I can share my experience with teens and help them make better decisions."

As Sophia's life keeps getting better and better, Tara and her staff see her less and less. Even though they miss her, that's the best outcome.



## FAMILIES FEEDING FAMILIES



Every Tuesday for the past four years, the chefs at George + Martha's American Grille whipped up soup for CSK guests through its Kitchen to Kitchen partnership. Every week, that is, until last January, when a two-alarm fire damaged the kitchen, leaving the popular restaurant closed for renovations.

In July, George + Martha's reopened and got right back on track contributing to the CSK. "They started donating soup again right away," says Dawn Masino, CSK van driver who collects dishes from 34 local Kitchen to Kitchen restaurants. "Everyone at George + Martha's is all smiles and happy to help. And their food is delicious."

Giving back to the community is important to restaurant owners and brothers, Ben and Anthony Scotto. In fact, the corporate identity of their Villa Restaurant Group revolves around the motto, "From my family to yours." The CSK is most thankful for the Scotto family's continued support.

When visiting George + Martha's, located at 67-71 Morris Street in Morristown, take this culinary tip: Try the bourbon maple-glazed corn bread and the disco fries!



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Return Service Requested

*The mission of the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center is to provide nutritious meals in a warm, safe and caring environment, free of charge, no questions asked, to anyone who comes seeking nourishment. As part of our hospitality, we also encourage and assist our guests in accessing community resources, services and educational programs.*

## CURRENT NEEDS

New white t-shirts (L & XL)  
New white socks  
Sweatshirts  
Coats, ski hats and warm gloves  
Thermal tops and bottoms (L & XL)  
Toothpaste  
Shampoo  
Soap  
Deodorant

*Donations can be dropped off  
at the Soup Kitchen M-F  
from 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m.*

**Thank you  
for your support.**



As you prepare to celebrate your blessings this holiday season, please consider supporting the Community Soup Kitchen with a meaningful year-end gift to help our neighbors in need. To donate, visit [www.cskmorristown.org](http://www.cskmorristown.org) or mail a check to the Community Soup Kitchen, 36 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960. Thank you!