



Founded on Agape

Thea's Notes

A Newsletter of Thea Bowman House

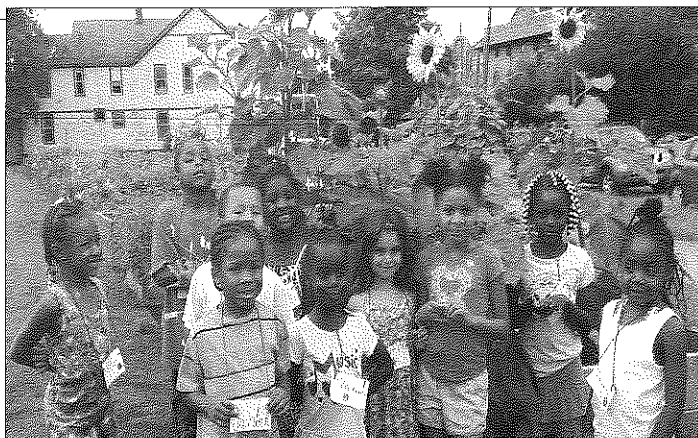
June 2015

A few years ago I read an inspiring book by theologian Edwina Gately. Its name was, *I Hear A Seed Growing*. Edwina spent many years working with abused women and children. Many of them had turned to a life of prostitution to feed their families. Even when faced with the hardest of shells, Edwina took time to listen for awakening sounds of potential that were in each and every person.

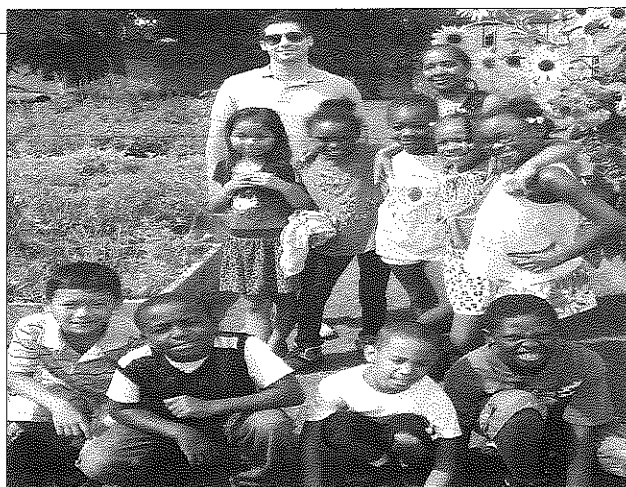
Perhaps that is what makes this season of the year so special. In the next few weeks, we will proudly celebrate 150 pre-k children as they “move up” to kindergarten thanks to funding from the Utica City School District. These little ones from very diverse backgrounds have one thing in common. They have started on the journey to become life-long learners. It is a core belief of Thea Bowman House that education breaks the cycle of poverty, and they are on their way.

We cheer for all of those young people that were once part of our child care and teen programs that are graduating from high school and college and that are choosing positive paths. We applaud the efforts of community gardeners like the Master Gardener Volunteers at Cornell Cooperative Extension, who are transforming desolate lots into green spaces.

There is a new energy bursting among us. Whether it is the amazing success of the Comets, or the hope for new jobs, or the Mother’s Day Flower Fest on Oneida Square, it is evident that we are surrounded by people who “hear seeds growing” and are willing to nurture them. Thank you for believing in our mission and for helping create a garden where everyone is welcome, nourished, and loved unconditionally.



The Children's Garden Program provides the opportunity for our children to work with Master Gardener Volunteers in order to have a hands-on experience planting and growing seeds and small plants.



The children take a break from their garden activities.

Bids for Kids

The beautiful spring and early summer weather has helped to fade our memories of a winter of record breaking cold. Our hearts were warmed this winter by our friends at Club Monarch in Yorkville. Joe Hickel and Monica Price spearheaded an event called *Bids for Kids* on a chilly February 28th and raised close to \$5,000 for the children at Thea Bowman House. Mark Piersma from WUTQ was an excellent auctioneer and was able to move some of the most beautiful gift baskets and donated items. The food was delicious and the company outstanding. Joe and Monica put their all into the event and did it because they believe that children are our future. We thank them for their efforts.

Community Foundation to the Rescue

Many of you may know that the former St. Francis DeSales School was given to Thea Bowman House and that the DeSales Center Inc. was formed to keep the mission of the building alive. The four-story building is continuing to serve the community.

In December 2014 we learned that the parapet on the Park Avenue side of the DeSales Center (formerly the St. Francis DeSales School) was structurally unsafe. The entrance directly under the parapet is used by hundreds of refugees each day on their way into the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees for resettlement services or to the Adult Learning Center for classes. It is also the entrance used by school buses dropping children off at Thea Bowman House for pre-kindergarten and the school-age child care activities.

Thanks to an emergency grant for \$32,290 from the Frank W. Baker Fund of the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, the parapet was stabilized and the Park Avenue entrance was made safe and awaits reconstruction at a later date.

It was not the first time that this great Foundation has come to our rescue. When the original boiler ceased working, Community Foundation replaced it with an energy efficient one. There were also needed electrical upgrades and auditorium renovations that have given the former school building a new life. We are all so fortunate to have such a resource and partner in our midst. To read more about the DeSales Center, you can visit our new website at www.desalescenter.org.



Summertime is a very busy season for the children and staff of Thea Bowman House. Your monetary gift can help with summer expenses like our annual camp-out and our trips to local parks. Most importantly, it can help to sponsor a child who might not otherwise be able to come to the program.

- *Large new or used towels for swimming
- *New or used children's swimwear
- *Hand sanitizer
- *Children's socks (age range 18 months through teens)
- *Diapers size 4 and 5
- *Diaper wipes and diaper genies
- *Lawnmower in good condition

Donations may be sent to Sister Luanne, Thea Bowman House, 731 Lafayette Street, Utica, NY 13502

Name _____

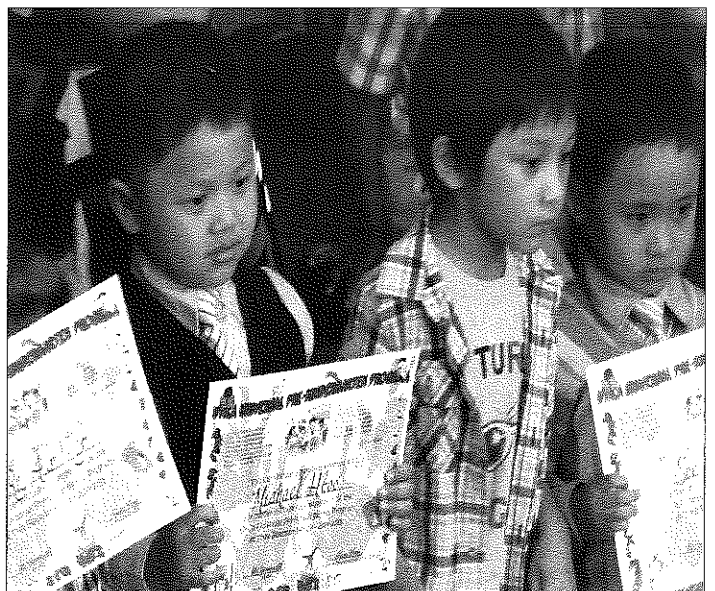
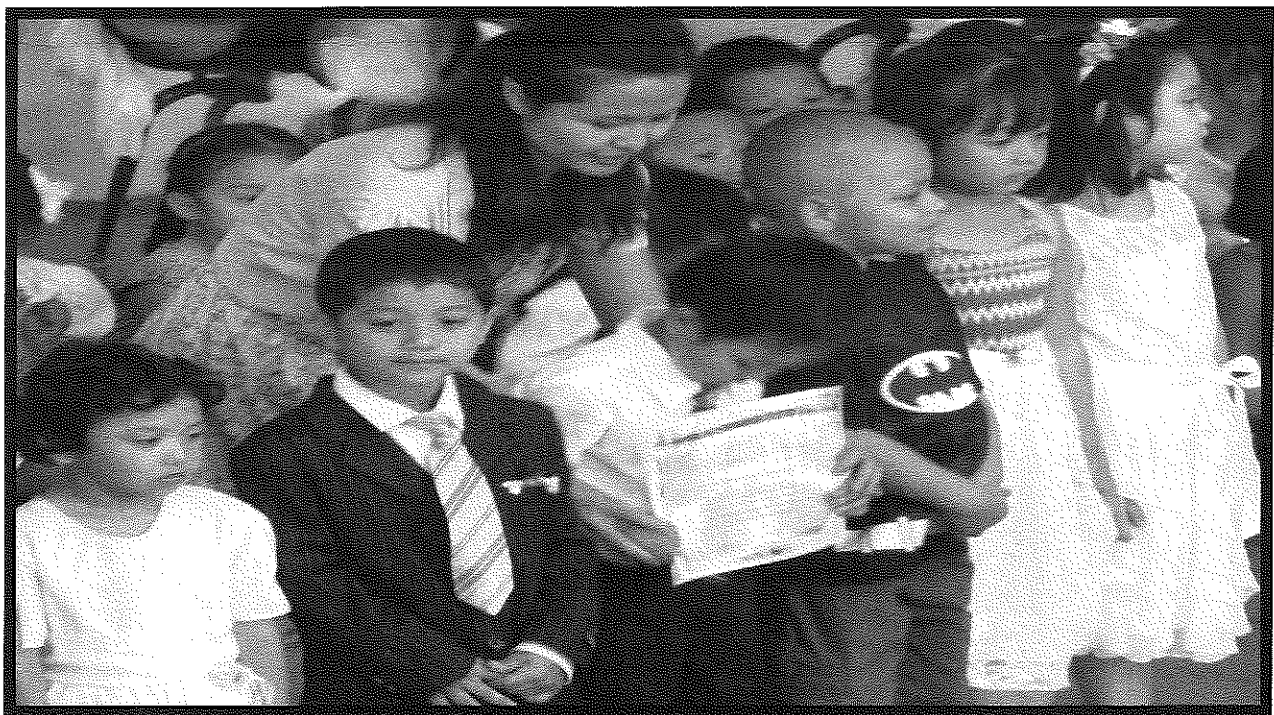
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Check out our new web site for the DeSales Center!
www.desalescenter.org



United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica provides critical support for our child care programs, our DOVE Domestic Violence Ended program and our teen program called Kids with Promise. They will also help support our emergency food pantry known as St. Clare's Cupboard and Cleophas' Closet where donated clothing is available to anyone in need free of charge. The United Way of the

Valley and Greater Utica continues to be a valued community partner. We want to spotlight a very important initiative of our local United Way called 211. We are all familiar with 911 for emergencies. 211 is a number that can be dialed by someone needing non-emergency help. It is a way to find out where needed services are located in your community and to find the right one for you. You can look it up at www.211midyork.org to learn more. Pass the information on to a friend. We are fortunate to have this service in our community.



Thea Bowman House

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Mission Statement

The mission of Thea Bowman House, Inc. is to provide a safe, nurturing environment to enable culturally diverse children and families to achieve their full potential.

The foundation on which Thea Bowman House is built is *agape*, unconditional love.

Jane Domingue
Executive Director

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Darby O'Brien, President
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Child Care Director

United
Way



United Way of
the Valley and
Greater Utica Area

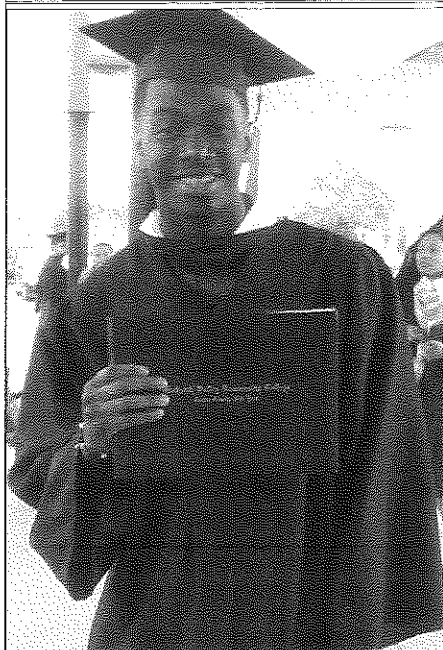
Mid-York

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Get Connected. Get Answers.

Madison • Oneida • Herkimer

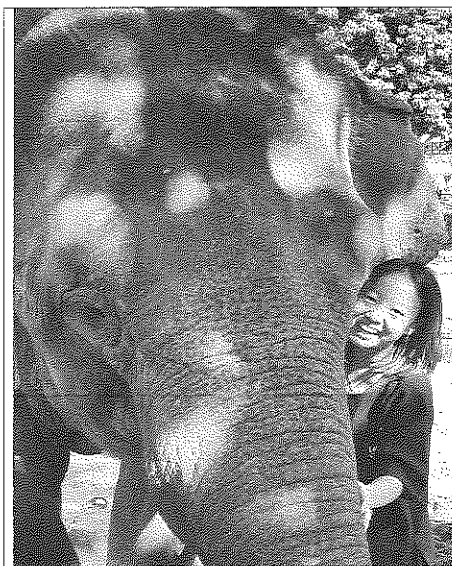
Good Luck, Julius and Victoria



Julius Blackshear on his graduation day.

Julius Blackshear began attending Thea Bowman House as a kindergartener. He has been a blessing through the years in so many ways. He is a friendly, outgoing and genuinely respectful young man. Julius is a well-rounded person who enjoys sports, being with his friends and making a difference in the world.

He currently works in our after school program with 4th and 5th graders. We are all so proud of Julius who just received two associate degrees from MVCC College. The first is in Civil Engineering Technology and the second is in Computer Aided Drafting. Julius will attend SUNY Polytechnic Institute in the fall where he will continue his studies in Civil Engineering. His goal is to obtain his professional engineering license. This could open up employment as an architect, or civil or mechanical engineer. Julius offered the following quote, "Keep striving to become great. If an obstacle comes your way, never give up." Julius truly lives those words.



Victoria enjoys a day of fun during her internship in Thailand.

Victoria Naw came to Utica, New York, as a refugee from Myanmar (Burma). Her first nine years were lived in a camp in Thailand with her parents, sister and two brothers. Victoria entered into the world of education at Watson-Williams School. She moved on to St. Peter's School for 6th grade and then to Notre Dame Middle and High School. Victoria graduated from Notre Dame in June 2011.

Victoria majored in criminal justice at Utica College and received her diploma in May 2015. During her final semester, Victoria enjoyed an internship at the National Anti-Corruption Commission in Thailand. She highly recommends this experience saying that, "Studying abroad is a good idea for self-exploration and for getting to know other people." A side trip that she took during this time was to actually reunite with a delighted grandmother in Burma. Victoria is a very determined young woman. Her tiny size does not reflect her might as a person committed to peace and justice in our world. She intends to pursue graduate studies in the field of law and human rights.

Victoria speaks of feeling blessed to be in America and to have had so many opportunities. She is likewise a blessing to all of us who know her.