

# Cornerstone Quarterly

December 2016

## Teen REACH is Humanitarian Award Recipient

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When you talk to Quincy Teen Reach Program Director Dennis Williams, he wants you to remember two words, "trauma" and "footsoldiers". Trauma because it's not just poverty that many of their kids deal with every day, but the trauma it so often brings. Footsoldiers because it describes his staff's dedication to the unglorified, and sometimes difficult, daily work they do for the children they serve.

Quincy Teen REACH is an after-school program that promotes Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring and Hope, serving nearly 40 kids a day during the school year. QTR helps youth get the support they lack at home by offering activities that improve the likelihood of future success, provide positive choices, reduce at-risk behavior, and develop career goals. It's a safe place to go and thrive when no one's home after school, instead of the street where trouble can happen.

The program provides homework assistance, a healthy snack and meal, life skills, service learning, fun and recreation, and a safe environment to talk over their concerns.

Marlisha Washington and Lachelle Wigfall are two of the QTR footsoldiers who deliver the daily program, which starts when Marlisha heads out to pick up kids at 2:00 from various schools. The kids turn in their phones as they get on the bus. What follows when they arrive at the center is a planned afternoon where homework is the clear priority, and everyone is expected to follow the set schedule. At the end of the afternoon the kids set up for dinner, and they all sit down together. Like a family, they talk to each other, and give individual recognition to the successes of the day. "Their minds are like flowers, you have to help them bloom," says Marlisha. "I see so many kids out roaming, not using their brains, not challenging themselves. You have to engage them, and let them know education is key. They want to do it!" Poverty can mean trauma to kids who suffer the devastating effects of crime, substance abuse and family dysfunction. "When people hear the word trauma they think of a head-on car wreck," says Dennis, "but you have to remember it's what these kids experience too. Teen Reach is their escape from what's going on at home." Responsibility falls to one girl in the program to take care of her mother, brother and sister due to the mother's Bipolar disorder and depression. She is just eight years old.

The level of dedication Dennis and his footsoldiers have for Teen Reach is extraordinary. They make themselves available to talk at all hours, "even if it's just to say good night," says Lachelle. They are trusted; they know what's going on in the community because they are in the trenches. They have even gone without pay during the state's budget crisis, personally sacrificing rather than closing the door on these kids. When the decision to give up or soldier on without pay was put to the staff, they chose unanimously to keep going.

Cornerstone is honored to recognize Quincy Teen Reach as this year's Humanitarian Award recipient, for its commitment and devotion to the underprivileged children of our community.

The Humanitarian Award will be presented at the Dancing with Local Stars event on February 3.



*At Teen Reach kids learn the importance of community by doing service projects every two weeks. Here they are working together to clean up downtown Quincy.*

## Cornerstone Welcomes Deb Stock to First Steps



*Deb Stock*

Cornerstone welcomes new First Steps Caseworker Deb Stock to the staff! First Steps is Cornerstone's Healthy Families Illinois program that focuses on helping new and expectant parents to promote a loving and nurturing environment for their child. Our family support workers meet with parents in their homes to teach parenting skills, monitor the child's development and connect them with community resources helpful to the family.

During the state's fiscal crisis the program lost its subcontractor, leaving Cornerstone alone in its efforts to continue on with the services. Our commitment remains strong, in spite of budget uncertainty. Prior to the addition to staff, First Steps was handled solo by longtime Family Support Worker Raquel Kroencke. With the program now expanded, Raquel has been promoted to Supervisor.

Intensive home visiting programs are effective at decreasing child abuse and neglect. As young mom Ashley has said, "The program has helped me more firmly believe in my choices to parent in a healthy, non-violent way as well as encouraged me to keep up with self care. It provides valuable material which keeps me aware of the developmental strengths

and weaknesses of my child and what I can do to help her."

Deb Stock's background in Human Development and Family Studies will be put to good use. "I love working with families, and my passion is having the opportunity to make a difference with their future," she says. "That is what prevention is all about."

## First Rocky Horror Picture Show Fundraiser a Hoot



*Cornerstone supporters Craig and KC Freeman came in costume. Recognize Eddie and Columbia?*

October 21, 2016 saw Cornerstone supporters "doing the Time Warp again"!

One Restaurant and Bar at 600 Hampshire in The District was the perfect locale to hold this unique Cornerstone fundraiser, its first ever screening of the 1975 cult film classic Rocky Horror Picture Show. Tickets included delicious appetizers available during cocktail hour before the show, as well as a full Prop Kit that included everything guests needed to enjoy the full audience participation expected at a Rocky Horror showing. It was a real hoot!



Thank  
You  
Sponsors!



Savings Made Simple

# Registration for Dancing with Local Stars Open Now

Registration for the 2017 edition of Dancing with Local Stars opened the first week of December. Don't miss the opportunity to see our fabulous dancers who are ready to entertain all of us.

Check out this year's stars and make your reservations soon to take advantage of discounted pricing. Early reservation for tickets at \$65 ends on January 3. On or after January 4, tickets will be \$80.

Sign up online at [www.cornerstone-quincy.org/dwls](http://www.cornerstone-quincy.org/dwls) or call the office at 217.222.8254 for information or assistance. Can't wait to see you there!

<b>2017 dancers</b>	
Matt Anderson Angelica Niemann	
Jason Beddell Laura Keane	
Kevin Buss Kris Mason	
Max Dancer Catie Doyle	
Brian Durante Emily Gartland	
Rome Frericks Heather Sommers	
Chris George Lori George	
Steve Grawe Morgan Grawe	
Dr. Dustin Higgins Melinda Higgins	
Philip Krupps Erin Krupps	
Mike Peterson Liz Bentley	
Nick Phillips Brittany Phillips	
Adam Ridder Casey Little	
Todd Rost Kelsey Rost-Davis	
Zach Scharnhorst April Azotea	
Dominic Scott Kat Reid	
Andrew Smith Regan Smith	
Bryan Smith Joyce Waterkotte	
Scott Souser Allison Bakrow	
Jared Summers Amy Kuhl	
Jamie Veach Diana Veihl	
Ryan Willingham Jenny Willingham	
"Preferred Table Seating" is available for advertising sponsorship. Contact Cornerstone if interested.	

Please Join Us for Cornerstone's  
**NIGHT OF CELEBRATION**  
To Honor Our  
Humanitarian Award Winner  
**Teen Reach**  
**Friday, February 3, 2017**  
**6:00 p.m. Social**  
**7:00 p.m. Dinner**  
**The Ambiance**  
5225 Kochs Lane  
**\$65.00** per ticket if paid by January 3, 2017  
\$80 per ticket on or after January 4, 2017  
Cash Bar Available  
**Proudly Presenting**  
For Your Entertainment:  
**dancing with LOCAL stars**  
To Purchase Tickets:  
**cornerstone-quincy.org/dwls**  
or call **222-8254**



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*Merry Christmas!*  
*You matter.*

[www.cornerstone-quincy.org](http://www.cornerstone-quincy.org)

*Our Mission:  
Helping people meet life's  
challenges by providing the  
skills, support and hope  
needed for effective fulfilling  
lives.*

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