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**Summer, 2013**



## **Welcome Back Summer! We Missed You!**

*Summer - The time for concerts in the park,  
Vacations, swimming and dancing till dark.*

*Children with Popsicles or watermelon sweet  
Playing at the beach and letting water cool their feet.*

*Have a great summer!  
Love Katie*

### **What's New With This Newsletter?**

*In our past newsletters Katie's House focused on describing our programs and activities and telling everyone what we have been doing. This issue, we decided to shift the focus somewhat and introduce you, to 2 of our members and share with you just what the activities at Katie's House means to them.*

*Evelyn Dudzic Executive Director*

### **Her smile lights up the darkest night**



***Meet Kerry (Kerry's Mom writes)...Kerry spent one year sitting home after graduating out of the school system at 21 years of age. In the fall of 2011 we heard about Katie's House after visiting her old school and meeting up with some former classmates. Within the week Kerry and I met with Evelyn and Kerry's and my life were enriched. She joined cooking class, a book club that Evelyn recommended and the Circle of Friends. Just recently she started dance classes. Every activity is headed by some of the best people I have ever met. As a parent, my greatest joy is seeing Kerry, more self-confident, building solid relationships, learning and just having fun.***

***Much credit for this goes to the men and women who teach these classes, chaperone events and who aid many of the young adults. Kerry loves them all. Many a Friday night you'll find me at the Circle of Friends activity. Bowling, pizza, game night, hoop and drum circle, even a visit from farm animals. The list could go on and on. I'm there because it is so much fun and I too have built friendships. I think deep down that's what Katie's House is truly all about. For these young adults Katie's House is providing the necessary learning tools to grow, to be productive and to take part in life just like everyone else with a sense of belonging. That's what we all want, to belong, to fit in and hey we all need friends.***

## When's Friday???

**Meet Lauren (written by Lauren's Mom)... Lauren graduated from Newton High School in 2011.**



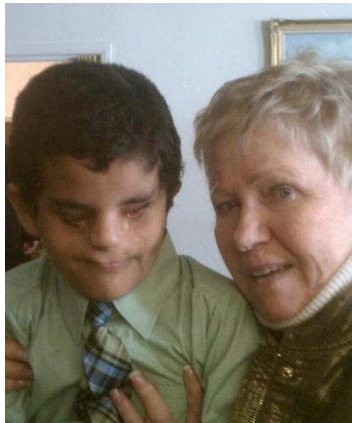
**She had been in the life skills program there for 7 years. Lauren is a very social girl, so when she graduated it was a huge adjustment. During the summer, I would take her to lunch or shopping to keep her busy and at night Lauren, her Dad and I would go for walks. She seemed sad. In the fall, we learned she was accepted into a day program. The program is something for her to do during the day, but many of her peers in the program are older and some non-verbal. I knew there was something else she needed in her life.**

**There was a nurse from NJ Special Child Health Services that would call us every year to make sure we knew what types of services were available. I expressed my concern over Lauren's need to be more involved. She gave me Evelyn Dudzic's name and phone number. Evelyn invited us to Katie's House Friendship Group for a magic show. Lauren had a ball! She hadn't been around kids her age. She now goes every Friday to Circle of Friends. She starts asking on Monday, "When's Friday?" She is so happy to see Kerry and Mike every week. Kerry was in Girl Scouts with her in high school and Mike and Kerry were in her class. She has also developed and is still developing new wonderful friendships. She absolutely loves to dance, and that is done a lot at group activities!**

**Katie's House has been a life saver and Lauren now has a well-rounded life. She also has the opportunity to join other activities, like dance, which we may join or the cooking class. The transition from high school to adult life is extremely hard. Katie's House made it so much easier for her and us.**



*Just Give US A Chance  
We Can Make  
A Difference In The Lives Of Others.*



**Katie's House Helps Honis. At Katie's House we recognize how much we receive from the community in which we live. So, we look forward to the opportunity to "give back when we can".**

**Honis was 7 months old when he came to N.J. from the Dominican Republic for medical care and surgery. He was born without eyes and much of his face was open due to a bilateral cleft lip and palate. A volunteer plastic surgeon provided reconstructive surgery to close his face and give him a normal appearance. During years of surgery a volunteer host family cared for Honis and provided a loving home. He is now a happy, 9 year old but the only mommy he has ever known recently and suddenly passed away while they were trying to adopt him. Now the host sister stepped in to help.**

**We at Katie's House requested donations for legal fees so that his N.J. "Sister" can adopt Honis, keep him and continue to raise him in the only home and family he has known. You donated \$11,000 to assist with the very high cost of an International adoption. Thank you to everyone who gave to this cause.**

*It is good to be blessed but it is better to be a blessing.*