



# connections

Providence Connections, Inc.

WINTER 2007

[www.providenceconnections.com](http://www.providenceconnections.com)

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## The Arts Bring Lessons to Life



**Providence teens are participating in cultural classes, developing leadership skills and attending events that demonstrate the arts in action through the Cultural Leadership Institute, a new component of the Providence Teen Program made possible by a grant from The Forbes Funds.**

"Every time you acquire a new skill and someone reinforces that, it makes you feel better about yourself," says Nicole Mullet, Providence Teen Program coordinator. "Through the Cultural Leadership Institute, our teens are definitely experiencing new things that are helping them to define some goals, express their feelings and believe in themselves."

Begun in October 2006, The Cultural Leadership Institute (CLI) grew out of Mullet's desire to use the wealth of arts and cultural programming that Pittsburgh offers to expose local teens to different experiences, to encourage them to pursue new interests and to help them cultivate strong communication and leadership skills. "Prior to this program, our teens had little to no exposure to the arts," says Mullet. "Since the fall, they've learned some basic martial arts skills, including the history and language behind the art. They've been to the theatre to see *Ragtime*, which really affected everyone; and they've learned all about painting, which has forced them to open up and express themselves in ways they never could before."

Every teen who enrolls in the Providence Teen Program is eligible to participate in the Cultural Leadership Institute (CLI), provided he or she commits to participating in two six-week cultural class sessions, four Friday-night

field trips, one service learning project and all of the leadership classes. The leadership classes are a mandatory part of the CLI designed to teach teens how to brainstorm; identify interests; prioritize, set and achieve measurable goals; communicate effectively with both peers and adults; and reach consensus when working in a group setting.

**Prior to this program, our teens had little to no exposure to the arts.**

"The leadership classes are a vital piece of the CLI," says Mullet. "In them, the facilitator, Marlon Ferguson from Duquesne University, focuses on helping the teens learn to respect themselves and identify their likes, strengths and dreams. He works with each teen individually to identify where they are right now and where they want to be in the future and makes sure they understand that they're ultimately responsible for their lives. Then, he helps them to create tangible plans to achieve their goals.

"The kids—the boys especially—have really responded to Marlon because he's been in their shoes," continues Mullet. "He came from a similar neighborhood and was told he couldn't play basketball, but he went on to play in high school and college, eventually becoming one of the top players in Pennsylvania at the time. He's a great mentor and role model."

*Continued on pg. 5*

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## Message from Sister Maria Fest



Dear Friends,

We recently completed the Christmas Season—a joyous time of gift giving and receiving. The local community, including individuals, families, businesses, organizations, parishes and schools, has historically been very generous to us each Christmas season, and this past year was no exception. Providence Connections was blessed once again with many gifts—of books, toys, clothing, funds, and much more—which were distributed during our Gifts of Providence program to almost 100 local families who are enrolled at Providence Family Support Center.

The thought of children waking up on Christmas morning without gifts under the tree is a bleak one. It may be that people today, in some small way, want to make up for the dire circumstances surrounding the birth of the Christ Child on that first Christmas over 2,000 years ago. Whatever the reason for your generosity, we, and the families we serve, are extremely grateful.

Recently, charities everywhere have experienced extraordinary growth in charitable giving. *Giving USA*, the annual report on philanthropy, estimates that Americans gave contributions in excess of \$260 billion for 2005, a growth of 6.1 % over the previous year. While half of the increase in total giving is attributable to disaster response, the other half reflects donors' commitments to other causes that matter to them.

Fortunately, for charitable organizations such as Providence Connections, people respond not only to extraordinary causes, such as natural disasters and toys for children at Christmas, but also to ordinary causes, such as support for fragile families, shelter for homeless people and food for the hungry. And equally fortunate for us, people respond in all seasons, not just at Christmas.

As our Financial Highlights indicate (see pg. 3), income from private foundations, government programs, individual donors, businesses, corporations and special events is just as important as client contributions and tuition. Financial gifts, as well as volunteer services and in-kind gifts, make the difference in our ability to meet the needs of the people we serve.

As we begin a new year, we are thankful for your support over the past year. Whether you contribute to us financially, volunteer your services, donate items on our wish list, support our Gifts of Providence program, or keep us in your prayers, we consider you "partners in Providence" in making God's love and care more visible to the people we serve. We wish all of you a happy, peaceful and healthy new year.

**Whether you contribute to us financially, volunteer your services, donate items on our wish list, support our Gifts of Providence program, or keep us in your prayers, we consider you "partners in Providence" in making God's love and care more visible to the people we serve.**

*Sister Maria Fest*

Sister Maria Fest, CDP  
*Executive Director*

# Financial Highlights July 2005–June 2006



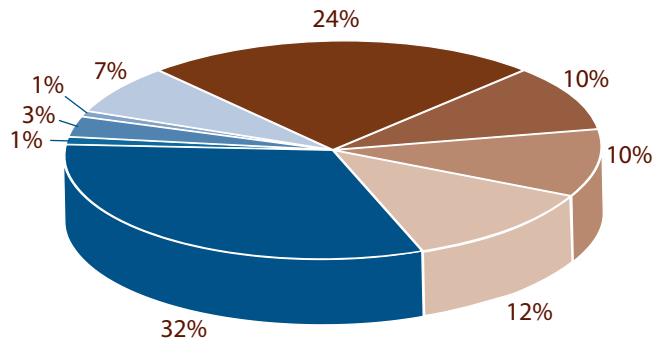
**providence**  
connections, inc

Providence Connections, Inc. was established in 1994 as the parent corporation for the ministries of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Today, the three programs administered by Providence Connections include: Providence Family Support Center, an outreach ministry that serves children and families living in 12 neighborhoods on the North Side of the City of Pittsburgh; Amelia House, a SAFE House located in Clarion County that provides shelter and support services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence; and Providence Child Care Center – South, a child care facility located in the South Hills of Pittsburgh that nurtures and prepares children ages 6 weeks to 5 years to succeed in school. In fiscal year 2006, Providence Connections' three ministries combined provided services to 316 adults and 441 children.



## Revenue

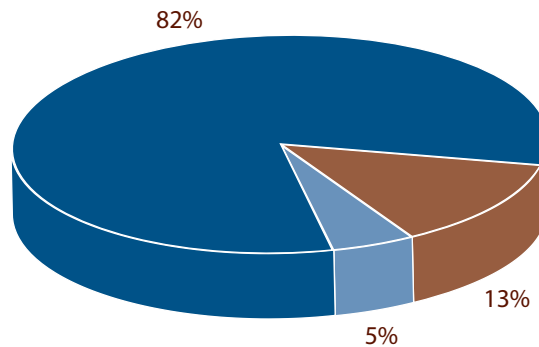
- Divine Providence Foundation
- Other Foundations
- Government Funding
- Government Funded Tuition
- Tuition & Client Contribution
- Corporate, Memorial & Bequest Income
- Contributions & Fundraisers
- Investment & Rental Income
- In-kind & Volunteer Income



**Combined Revenue: \$1,509,513**

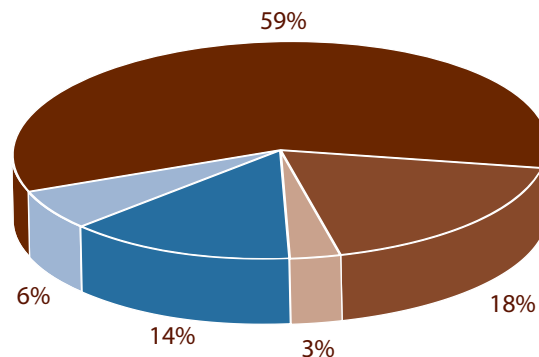
## Expenses by Type

- Program Services
- Management & General
- Fundraising



## Expenses by Location

- Providence Family Support Center
- Providence Child Care Center – South
- Amelia House
- Administration/Development
- Capital Improvements\*\*



**Total Expenses\*: \$1,469,780**

\*Expenses before depreciation (a non-cash transaction), which equals \$139,322.

\*\*Capital Improvements: \$104,597

# Our Ministries At-a-Glance

## Providence Family Support Center (PFSC)

### Clubhouse Kids Keep Busy

Children in Providence Family Support Center's Clubhouse for Kids (after-school) program have been working on expanding their vocabulary and improving their reading skills. Each day, the staff introduce a new word with its definition and ask each child to use it in a sentence. Sample words include junction, lag, synopsis and pinnacle. The children also complete a minimum of 20 minutes of independent reading with a tutor and read aloud to the group weekly.

As a Christmas service project, Clubhouse kids made Christmas cards for men who are in prison. Sister Carol Tenerovich, who works with the Sisters of Divine Providence's Prison Ministry and volunteers at Providence Family Support Center, distributed the cards to the inmates throughout the holiday season.

Finally, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts both started new troops at Providence Family Support Center on December 1. The troops meet every Friday and focus on community activities and crafts.



### Progress Reports Provided to Parents

During the month of November, Group Supervisors from Providence Family Support Center's Child Care Program scheduled individual appointments with parents to review their children's "Observations of Student Progress" evaluations. During the one-on-one meetings, parents were provided with a written report that addressed age-appropriate areas of development specific to each child. Developmental areas evaluated in the Toddler Rooms included Self Esteem and

Independence, Interactions and Cooperation, Communication, Discovery and Exploration, Physical Capabilities, and Creativity.

The Preschool parents also received reports that identified how their children are moving along in acquiring the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten. The developmental areas evaluated in the Preschool included Reading Readiness, Math Concepts, Fine Motor Skills, and Character Development.

### Mystery Readers Captivate Children

A new Providence Child Care Program titled "The Mystery Reader" began in November. Special guest readers have been invited to share a favorite book or a book that goes along with the center's weekly theme. Mary Beth Parks, a librarian at Woods Run Library (below), was the very first mystery reader. Since the program began, Mary Beth has shared stories about Halloween, Thanksgiving, spiders and dogs. Providence Connections staff and Providence Family Support Center parents have also volunteered to be the mystery reader.

"The kids really get excited when a new face comes into the room, and it drives home the importance of reading and books," says Ann Royster, assistant director of Providence Family Support Center. "Our hope is that as staff and parents continue to get involved new relationships will be built. Everyone has a unique personality that can help reading come alive."

*If you would like to be a Mystery Reader, please contact Ann Royster at 412.766.6730, ext. 213 or [aroyster@providenceconnections.com](mailto:aroyster@providenceconnections.com).*



## Providence Child Care Center-South (PCCC-S)

### PCCC-S Goes International

The children and staff at Providence Child Care Center-South are enjoying a rich and rewarding international experience this year as they learn to play with and care for three children who were adopted from foreign countries. Samantha, who is 18 months old, and Alison, who is 3, were adopted in China; and Connor, who is now 2, was adopted in Russia.

All three children understand and communicate in English, though Connor is often treated to a quick conversation in his native tongue with Vera Margargan, one of the caregivers in the Infant Program. Vera, who was born in Armenia, speaks English, Russian and Turkish fluently so PCCC-S is well prepared should there be an influx of other adopted children from Eastern Europe.

"All parents are anxious when their children first enter a child care program," says Sister Kathleen McGrady, director of PCCC-S. "With adoptive parents, the anxiety level is understandably a bit higher. We recognize this and work closely with them to expand and enrich their role in their children's early childhood education. We emphasize that we're their partner in their children's care and another resource that they can turn to for extra help and advice about ongoing health, developmental, language and literacy issues."

Samantha, Allison and Connor have all adjusted extremely well both to their new families and to PCCC-S, indicating that they're comfortable in their new environments, which is a testament to the unconditional love and countless hours of undivided attention they've received from their adoptive parents. "It's truly a privilege to care for these children and watch them thrive and to work side-by-side with their parents," says Sister Kathleen.



# The Domino Effect

By Sister Carol Stenger, CDP | Resident Director, Amelia House

If you've ever played the game of dominoes you know that it can bring great enjoyment. Recently, here at Amelia House, a family of four played the game for the first time. The children were amazed at the amount of fun they had. After the first game, the children asked me daily if they could play, and I would join them as often as I could. After they mastered the game of "Mexican Train" they wanted to stand the domino pieces on end, in a line. Once the pieces were all lined up, they would fall one by one in a row making the children laugh with glee. It was such a delight to play and watch the fascination on the faces of these children and their mother, as well.

Domestic violence has its own "domino effect" that brings with it a harmful pattern of hate, greed, confusion, guilt, and low self esteem. No wonder many women become scared of trying to make it on their own when they leave an abusive relationship. The "domino effect" on their self worth and future dreams has shattered their confidence and ability to dare to reach out for support from strangers in agencies they are not familiar with or don't know how to access. Knowing what to expect from an abusive person sometimes seems like the only course to follow for abused women so they return to the abusive situation. Being brave enough "to pick up the pieces of their domino life" when they've been knocked down over and over again is a real challenge.

One evening, the children asked me if they could "build" with the dominoes instead of playing one of the 16 games that come with the box. What fun we had building

high towers, castles, houses with windows, fences and much more! Their laughter filled Amelia House night after night as we sat at the dining room table with the box of dominoes. How wonderful it would be if

**My prayer for all of you is that your lives may have a wonderful domino effect on those you love, those with whom you work and even those you meet on the street of life. May our Christian love ripple out and into the hearts of all those who touch our lives.**

we could "rebuild" the lives of these women and children as easily and with so much fun as we did with the dominoes.

The women who come to Amelia House have taught me what courage is all about. I have never had to flee or leave my home because of violence, hate or fear. My world has never been knocked down like dominoes. Has yours?

Starting all over and standing strong so as to not be knocked over again takes much courage, faith and support. This is what we try to model here at Amelia House.

My prayer for all of you is that your lives may have a wonderful domino effect on those you love, those with whom you work and even those you meet on the street of life. May our Christian love ripple out and into the hearts of all those who touch our lives. Then, maybe, just maybe, we will only read about the "olden days" when domestic violence was present in our society. We will have eradicated it from the face of the earth with our love.

What kinds of domino effects are in your life? Which ones do you want to keep and which ones need to be "knocked down"? Can we learn from the children at Amelia House and be patient with those who need encouragement as they begin to "rebuild" their lives? I believe we can and must.

Thank you for your support, prayers and for the way you peacefully live your lives, playing games that bring laughter rather than the kind of "games" that women have to "play" in order to survive the abuse they experience. May our loving Provident God continue to bless you and your loved ones with the "domino effect" of love. ■

*Amelia House is a ministry sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence providing long-term, safe hospitality for women and their children who are homeless and/or fleeing from domestic violence. Rooted in Providence, Amelia House ministry is a response to a few of the social problems of our times.*

## **The Arts Bring Lessons to Life...continued from pg. 1**

As the leadership classes continue into the spring, the teens are preparing for their Art Show, where they'll display and discuss the paintings they created, and for their next six-week cultural class, which will focus on drama. "I feel really good about the program so far," says Mullet. "Because the teens chose the cultural

class topics themselves, they're participating in things that they're genuinely interested in, which helps them focus and keeps them coming back. If we can keep them involved, we've got a really good chance to make a big impact on their lives."

*For more information about the Cultural Leadership Institute or the Providence Teen Program, contact Nicole Mullet, program coordinator, at 412.766.6730, extension 404.*

## In Memoriam

### Board Member Sr. Roberta Bradley



In late December, Providence Connections mourned the loss of Board Member Sr. Roberta Bradley. An active member of the Board of

Directors since 2002, Sr. Roberta served on the Board Strengthening Committee. She was always particularly supportive of the staff and programs at Providence Connections having served as director of Providence Child Care Center-North from 1992 to 1995, before it became part of Providence Family Support Center.

"Throughout all of her many ministries Sr. Roberta was always very compassionate and giving, of herself, her talents, and even her possessions," says Sr. Maria Fest, executive director of Providence Connections. "It was both a pleasure and a privilege to know and work with her."

Sr. Roberta entered religious life in 1956 at the age of 16, and, in 2006, celebrated her Jubilee—her 50th year as a Sister of Divine Providence. With a bachelor's degree from La Roche College and a master's degree in education from Duquesne University, Sr. Roberta was an educator throughout most of her ministry, serving as a classroom teacher and administrator at several schools in the Pittsburgh Diocese, including St. Sylvester, St. Basil, Providence Heights Alpha School, St.

Mary's in Glenshaw, St. Mary of the Mount and Cardinal Wright Regional School.

She served as associate director of Providence Heights, the Pittsburgh motherhouse, from 1981 to 1983, and as a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence's Leadership Team from 1991 to 1996. She had assumed the position of co-director of Providence Heights again in 2002, a position that she held at the time of her death.

Sr. Roberta is survived by several siblings, including the Very Reverend Paul J. Bradley, Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh, and 1,000 Sisters of Divine Providence and Associates throughout the world. She will be sorely missed and forever remembered in our thoughts and prayers. ■

## Thank You to Our Donors

**Providence Connections is the grateful recipient of thousands of generous contributions. Each contribution helps to ensure that the vital work of the agency and its three ministries is sustained. With gratitude, we acknowledge the following contributions made and services provided between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006.**

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# Gifts of Providence Makes Christmas Merry for Local Families

**This year, more than 100 local families participated in Providence Family Support Center's Gifts of Providence Program, held December 13-14, 2006.**

As in years past, families who are enrolled in Providence Family Support Center and eligible to participate in the Gifts of Providence program through their attendance at Adult Enrichment Classes and Family Fun Nights, were invited to come to

Providence Family Support Center to choose gifts for their children from items that were purchased and donated by local individuals, families, businesses, organizations, parishes and schools. The number of gifts each enrolled family was eligible to select was determined by the family's need.

This year, 308 children and teens and 110 families received gifts. The total value of all the gifts donated equaled \$11,240. Providence Connections is humbled by the ongoing generosity of the many individuals and organizations who contribute to Gifts of Providence year after year, truly making a difference in the lives of many local families. ■



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Tara Gates\*  
Daniele Grossberger  
Kayla Guttino  
Charity Hall  
Carol Happ  
Corina Hinchberger  
Sandra Harrison  
Megan Malikowski  
Stephanie Mancine  
Megan Hoffman  
Meghan Hurley  
Leona Jones  
Sr. Denise Kabacinsky  
Christina Marchiona  
Pasquale Mete  
Katie Micco  
Ginger Morris  
Rachel Nalitz  
Leah Niecgorsky  
Kathy Osterrieder\*  
Patricia Patterson  
Eleanor Pearson  
Carol Peterson  
Jen Roth  
Anastasia Sobecky  
Sr. Roxanna Solano  
Timothy Sullivan  
Randy Tecza  
Sr. Carol Tenerovich  
Corinne Wawa  
Sr. Mary Weatherly  
Sr. Carolyn Winschel  
Alex Wright

† Deceased \* Employee

*If we have inadvertently omitted your name or listed you inappropriately, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us at 412.766.3860.*

#### Administrative Staff

Sister Maria Fest, CDP  
*Executive Director*

Tish Dzone  
*Director, Providence Family Support Center*

Sister Kathleen McGrady, SC  
*Director, Providence Child Care Center-South*

Sister Carol Stenger, CDP  
*Director, Amelia House*

Christine Macedonia  
*Director of Administration*

Kathleen Osterreider  
*Director of Finance*

Kimberly Tarquinio  
*Director of Corporate Communications*

Ann Royster  
*Assistant Director, Providence Family Support Center*

Sister Sandra DeNardis, CDP  
*Volunteer Services Coordinator*

Sherri Searight  
*School Age Program Coordinator*

Sister Donna Tracy, CDP  
*Volunteer Services Coordinator*

Nicole Mullet  
*Providence Teen Program Specialist*

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 3 4-6:30 p.m.  
**Family Fun Night – Family Swim**

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Thursday, February 8 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Valentine’s Day Dinner**

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Saturday, February 17 10 a.m.-noon  
**Parent Council Meeting**

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Wednesday, February 21 10-11 a.m.  
**Play with Me**

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Thursday, February 22 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Family Fun Night - Black History Night**

MARCH

Saturday, March 3 5-8 p.m.  
**Parents’ Night Out - Mystery Dinner**

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Thursday, March 8 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Family Fun Night – Family Fued**

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Saturday, March 17 10 a.m.-noon  
**Parent Council Meeting**

---

Wednesday, March 21 10-11 a.m.  
**Play with Me**

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Saturday, March 31 2-4 p.m.  
**Easter Celebration**

APRIL

Saturday, April 14 2-5 p.m.  
**Parents’ Night Out – A Day of Pampering**

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Wednesday, April 18 10-11 a.m.  
**Play with Me**

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Saturday, April 21  
**Parent Council Retreat**

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Thursday, April 26 5:30-7:30 a.m.  
**Family Fun Night – Science Fun**

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Saturday, April 28 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
**Staff Appreciation Luncheon**

EVENT KEY

**Family Fun Nights** are open to the public and include a light supper followed by creative activities and games that strengthen the family unit and model sharing valuable time together.

**Adult Enrichment Classes** are offered to help parents improve their lives and family relationships. Classes are open to the public and begin with a light supper. Free child care is provided.

**Parents’ Night Out** is a monthly opportunity for parents enrolled in PFSC to enjoy an evening without their children that includes dinner followed by recreational and social activities. **Play With Me** is a monthly opportunity for parents of children ages 0-5 to come together as a group and engage in age-appropriate developmental play. Sessions are open to the public and include a light breakfast.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the events listed above are free and will take place at

**Providence Family Support Center**  
 3113 Brighton Road,  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

For more information or to register for any of the following, please contact **Family Program Specialist** Cindi Hopson-Smith at 412.766.6730.



**providence connections, inc**

3113 Brighton Road  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15212-2456  
 412.766.3860 ■ 412.766.6775 fax  
[www.providenceconnections.com](http://www.providenceconnections.com)

**OUR MISSION**

Providence Connections, Inc., sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, is rooted in the congregation’s heritage of service and justice. As a lead agency, we provide vision, support and governance to our three ministries that serve families in need.

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