

Cape May Cares enriching lives in public housing

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A local organization is helping children who live in Cape May's public housing with tutoring, summer camps and holiday gifts.

"Encouraging and empowering through education and experience" is the motto of the nonprofit Cape May Cares, whose mission is to create and fund educational and community programs to help improve the everyday lives and enhance future opportunities for children, senior citizens, lower-income families and disabled persons.

Cape May Cares began in 2018 and currently focuses on the Cape May Housing Authority but plans to branch out to more of the community. "Most people do not know

there are 53 children in this housing authority," said Dr. Keith Lafferty, president of a seven-member board of directors of Cape May Cares.

Lafferty is co-director of Emergency Medicine at Gulf Coast Medical Center and an adjunct assistant professor of emergency medicine at Temple University. He also serves as chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Cape May Housing Authority.

Last week, Lafferty and his wife, Cathy, were outfitting a room at the housing authority office to be used for after-school tutoring by retired teachers. The room has been equipped with shelves with a cubby for each student, two computers with Wi-Fi and a closet for teacher's items.

"We have three tutors now and they still have connections with the schools in this

area," Lafferty said.

Nine children have signed up for tutoring. Lafferty said volunteer tutors will assist with homework, identify problems such as deficiencies in reading or math and work with the school to tailor the tutoring to the child.

He said he grew up in various housing projects in Philadelphia and feels fortunate to now have a home in Cape May.

"When I grew up, I had many mentors," he said.

Cape May Cares has its roots in a Christmas toy drive for public housing children.

"We started collecting brand new toys, getting a list of names and delivering them every Christmas Eve morning," Lafferty said. "Each of the children here throughout the last nine years would get an individually wrapped toy or toys with their name on it and often it's their largest gift."

In some cases, it's their only gift.

Most of the children in the public housing are from single-parent families, he said.

Cape May Cares held camps throughout the summer.

"We were extremely fortunate to tap into resources on the island and some various entities and businesses have been more than kind and gravitated toward this and supporting us," Lafferty said.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Dr. Keith Lafferty and his wife, Cathy, stock books on shelves at the Cape May Housing Authority office.

The Corinthian Yacht Club awarded four scholarships for sailing camp and the Tennis Club of Cape May offered free tennis lessons for some of the children, he said.

The Girlfriends Foundation sponsored 11 children for swim lessons. Three teachers offered tutoring during the summer, Lafferty said.

Cape May Cares held an

end-of-year barbecue and a back-to-school barbecue for all housing authority residents.

Lafferty said Congress Hall offered Breakfast with Santa at no cost to the housing authority children, including a train ride around the grounds.

Cape May Cares sponsored a Santa's Workshop, allowing the children to wrap presents for their parents and siblings, items they may not have been able to purchase, he said.

"We've had arts and crafts for the seniors, we've had a trolley tour with the seniors at Christmas," he said. "MAC (Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities) donated their trolley and they were able to see the Physick Estate and see the Christmas lights in town and the Cherry House."

At the start of this year, a successful fundraising event

was held at Cape May Brewing Co., he said.

Cape May Cares is also working to tie in Big Brothers/Big Sisters to children in public housing. On its wish list, Cape May Cares would like the public housing to have a playground for the kids and a shuffleboard court for senior citizens.

"At the end of the day, these kids want to feel loved and they need mentors," Lafferty said.

He said the organization would like to branch out from the housing authority because extreme poverty exists elsewhere in the county. Lafferty said the board members of Cape May Cares bring strength and caring to the organization.

For more information, visit capemaycares.org. Donations for Christmas gifts for public housing children may be given through the website.

TIDES : Oct. 16-23, 2019

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
16	10:04	10:25	3:34	4:15
17	10:39	11:03	4:08	4:57
18	11:18	11:46	4:46	5:43
19		12:05	5:31	6:38
20	12:40	1:01	6:25	7:40
21	1:47	2:08	7:30	8:46
22	3:01	3:20	8:42	9:50
23	4:12	4:29	9:54	10:48

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Theatre

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the complex, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy last year.

Christopher Lang, chief restructuring officer for Frank Theaters, told the Pilot newspaper in Southern Pines, N.C., he blamed the chain's losses on an unprofitable expansion into bowling. CineBowl & Grille, a venture launched by the company in 2015, tried to attract customers by offering movie theaters and bowling lanes under the

same roof.

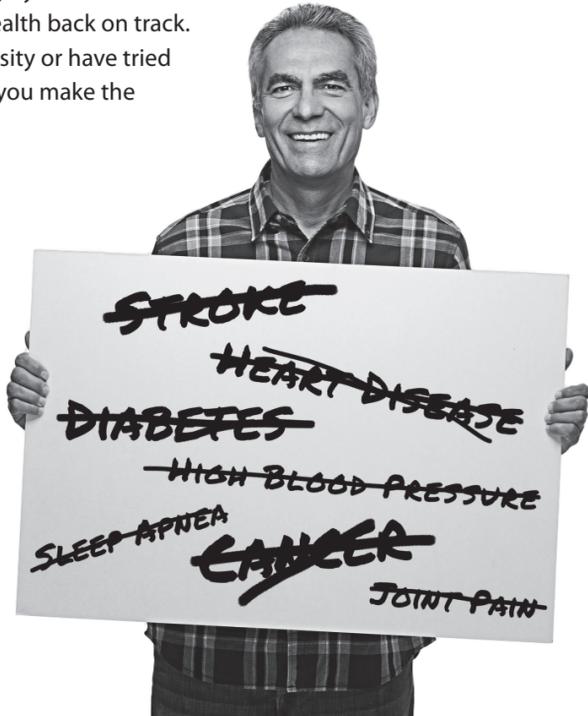
Bankruptcy filings indicate Frank Theaters lost \$21 million from 2016 to 2017. The Pilot noted customers complained of poor conditions at theaters owned by the chain. Bankruptcy filings stated preventive maintenance was reduced or abandoned at its locations.

In 2011, Frank Theaters demolished the auditorium portion of the complex retaining stores along Beach Avenue.

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Friday, November 8 at 6 p.m.
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