



Saint Joseph Parenting Center

Educate the Parent. Protect the Child.

J U N E 2 0 2 4 N E W S L E T T E R



**Strengthening families through
parenting education
& resource support in Stamford,
Danbury & Bridgeport**

Equipping families since 2009



sjpcenter.org
(203) 588-1934

90 Fairfield Avenue - Stamford, CT 06902
46 Stone Street - Danbury, CT 06810



FROM THE DESK OF RHONDA R. NEAL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

It is never really easy to say goodbye.

Thank you to the staff, volunteers, donors, community partners, board members, and God for an amazing experience leading Saint Joseph Parenting Center (SJPC).

After serving a little over five years as the Executive Director, I have made the hard decision to leave SJPC in pursuit of being the next CEO at Bridgeport Rescue Mission. I am excited about this new opportunity but also sad when I think about how much this experience has meant to me.

My beloved father passed away seven months into my role, but he got to see his daughter lead an organization that cares so much about families. Obtaining our first federal grant for dads enabled me to quietly honor his legacy as a great dad.

I have met so many amazing people who serve the community—donors, government legislators, human service agencies, teachers, volunteers, and business professionals. Thank you for your partnership in weathering COVID-19, expanding our DAD Program, and giving us the space to open two more centers in Danbury and Bridgeport.

I am deeply grateful for my wonderful staff and board members who have shaped my leadership and positioned me for my next move. Families are stronger and empowered because of the work we do to produce safe and better outcomes for kids.

Thank you for your continued support of SJPC, and God bless!

Rhonda R Neal

NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



MARIBEL SANDALO STAMFORD CENTER DIRECTOR

We are thrilled to introduce Maribel Sandalo as the new Center Director of Stamford. Maribel brings a wealth of experience advocating for families and creating impactful programs.

With 12 years of experience at the Boys & Girls Club of Stamford, where she served as Unit Director, Maribel is passionate about our work at SJPC, especially in educating parents to prevent child abuse and neglect.

When she's not busy making the world a better place, you'll find Maribel at the boxing gym she owns with her husband, throwing some serious punches! She also has a massive love for music and Latin dances. Talk about rhythm and strength!

Family is a significant source of motivation for Maribel. She starts her day by making breakfast for her children, embodying her belief in strong family bonds. One of her key strengths at work is communicating effectively to overcome challenges.

Maribel is currently on a mission to earn her Master's degree in social work—because she's always striving to find ways to support marginalized individuals. She looks up to her incredible mom, who raised Maribel and her siblings as a single parent after immigrating from Ecuador. Talk about strength and dedication!

Maribel's favorite quote is short but sweet: "In a world where you can be anything, Be Kind." And she truly embodies that in everything she does. Join us in giving a warm welcome to Maribel Sandalo! Let's cheer her on as she brings her energy and passion to the SJPC family!

NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



OLGA DE AZA

BRIDGEPORT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

We are beyond excited to introduce Olga de Aza as our new Program Director at the Saint Joseph Parenting Center! Olga brings a wealth of experience from her five years as a Program Coordinator for Bridgeport Local Community Agency, where she made a significant impact working with diverse and low-income populations.

What attracted Olga to SJPC? It was the opportunity to continue her passion for supporting the vibrant and diverse community of Bridgeport. She's already diving into new partnerships and is thrilled about the positive changes ahead.

When she's not making magic happen at work, Olga loves to let loose on the dance floor, showing off her salsa and merengue moves. She's also a savvy couponer, always on the hunt for the best deals. Olga believes in serving the underserved and is committed to mental health advocacy, working towards her Master's Degree to deepen her impact.

Olga values respect and teamwork, and she starts her day with an energizing playlist, motivated by her mother's powerful advice: "Don't let anyone tell you you can't do it." She looks up to her sister, who overcame poverty to achieve incredible success, and finds daily inspiration in her journey.

We're thrilled to have Olga's enthusiasm, expertise, and positive energy on our team. Please join us in giving her a warm welcome to the SJPC family!

NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



ALBERT MEINDL

JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT

We are thrilled to welcome Albert Meindl to the Saint Joseph Parenting Center team as our new Accountant. With an impressive 22-year tenure at Cadbury Schweppes as a controller for Asia and other multinational companies, Albert brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our organization. Talk about sweet experience!

Albert was drawn to SJPC because of our mission to support and empower parents. His passion for making a difference aligns perfectly with our goals, and we are excited to see the positive impact he will have on our team.

When he's not balancing our books, you might find Albert traveling or cheering on his favorite sports teams. He's also an avid golfer, always aiming for that perfect swing. And if you spot him on the green, don't hesitate to challenge him to a friendly round!

Albert's favorite book is "Blink" by Malcolm Gladwell - he loves diving into the fascinating world of intuition and snap decisions. He starts his day with a cup of Morning Joe, ready to tackle any challenge with a positive mindset, thanks to his mom's timeless advice: "Be nice to people." His mantra, "Just do it," keeps him motivated and focused.

Please join us in welcoming Albert to our community!

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT



“To me, [the D.A.D. Program] signifies something very important, I think that all parents should take the classes because they help us a lot, to become a better person, to know how to educate our children. I would recommend it to other dads... I feel good [and] satisfied.

[There was] something that I had not developed before, I had an understanding but I hadn't developed it.”

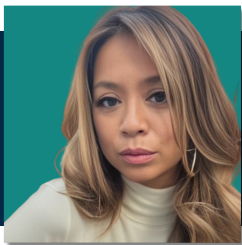
-Pedro, D.A.D. Graduate 2023

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

As a parent and really just as a human, the mission of Saint Joseph Parenting Center speaks to my heart. There is nothing more important than protecting innocent children and keeping families together. I began volunteering for SJPC shortly after learning about the mission at the 2022 Gala. I helped to plan the 2023 and 2024 Ladies Luncheons. Bringing mothers together to learn about SJPC has been incredibly rewarding and joyful. We have already begun thinking about and planning for next year!

Donating to the non-profit is how SJPC keeps the doors open, so I continue to support the centers that help children feel safe from child abuse and neglect.

-Laura Maher, Donor & Volunteer



FROM THE FUNDRAISING OFFICE

MICAELA MALIN | SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

The first half of the year has been a whirlwind for our Fundraising Team! We hosted three fantastic events, launched our monthly Giving Tuesday on social media, and kicked off our Annual Fund Pledge. But the excitement doesn't stop there! Mark your calendars for our popular Golf Event at The Griff in Greenwich on Monday, July 29th, and our signature Fall Gala on Friday, November 1st. If you'd like to join in the fun as a volunteer, sponsor, or participant, or would like to make an Annual Fund Pledge please reach out to me directly. We'd love to have you!

WINTER & SPRING EVENTS

3 ON 3 DOUBLE ELIMINATION BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



The tournament was held at St. Luke's School on March 23, 2024. Despite facing adverse weather conditions, the event proved to be a testament to community spirit, drawing in sponsors, participants, and volunteers alike. The tournament showcased fierce competition, with the Off Ballers emerging victorious for the second consecutive year. Their triumph highlighted the essence of teamwork and perseverance embodied by all participants.



ANNUAL BENEFIT BREAKFAST



We are thrilled to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who joined us for the Saint Joseph Parenting Center's 15th Annual Benefit Breakfast in celebration of Child Abuse Prevention Month! Held at The Italian Center in Stamford, CT, on Thursday, April 25, 2024, this event was truly special.

A massive thank you goes out to Senator Patricia Billie Miller, our 2024 recipient of the Catherine A. Klie Award. Her unwavering dedication shines as a beacon of hope in our mission to end child abuse and support families in need.

Liz Murray's incredible story moved us all, reminding us of the extraordinary power of resilience and the profound impact of giving back. Let's carry this inspiration forward as we continue to make a difference together!



SPRING LADIES LUNCHEON



The SJPC Spring Ladies Luncheon at the Silver Spring Country Club on May 30, 2024, was an absolute blast and our best turnout yet! This inspiring and memorable event was truly one for the books.

We were overjoyed to welcome back the incredible Liz Murray as our keynote speaker for the second time. Her powerful message of hope and resilience deeply touched everyone in the room, leaving us all inspired and ready to take on the world.

Thank you to everyone who made this event so special. Let's keep this energy going as we continue to support and uplift each other!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR HUBS

FROM STAMFORD

MARIBEL SANDALO | SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

Our 2nd DAD Program Cohort initiatives have been an absolute smash hit! March was all about celebrating 12 amazing dads in our hybrid Cohort 1 program, keeping everyone engaged and excited through six weeks of dynamic virtual classes. Our team even leveled up their skills at the New England Fatherhood Conference!

April brought an inspiring community discussion on 4/16/24 with Sergeant Molina, DVCC: Alexa Chalas, The Rowan Center: Jorge Lopez, and therapist Ingrid Paten, leaving us all feeling empowered and connected.

May was all about the moms! We celebrated 10 wonderful women graduating from the Women's Circle with a joyful Mother's Day event, complete with gift bags and roses. Plus, our DAD 2024 Cohort 2 program transitioned to in-person on 5/23/24, with 27 enthusiastic participants completing the journey.

June was a whirlwind of fun and celebration. We were thrilled to receive new children's and parent books from the Ferguson Library, and we made Father's Day extra special with thoughtful gift bags. Our team also joined in the Juneteenth festivities and participated in various community events.

And the excitement doesn't stop there! We've kicked off our 3rd DAD Program Cohort and the GPP cycle, and we're buzzing with anticipation for our upcoming partnerships with Person to Person (P2P), New Covenant House, Building One Community (B1C), and Stamford Police Activities League (PAL).

Here's to more success, growth, and community joy ahead!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR HUBS

FROM DANBURY

CRYSTAL PERKINS | SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

This March, we celebrated an incredible milestone—two years of empowering families since launching classes at the Danbury Center in 2022, and we're just getting started!

Our pilot program for The Women's Circle was a smashing success, leading to a thriving Spring Cohort where 9 amazing moms benefited from our unique format, engaging topics, and uplifting peer support. We're already buzzing with excitement for the Fall Cohort, kicking off on September 12th, 2024!

The dedication and growth of 15 incredible dads in Cohorts 1 and 2 of the D.A.D. program have been truly inspiring. We're constantly finding innovative ways to engage and support fathers, with our team making waves at conferences like the 2024 New England Fatherhood Conference and gearing up for the upcoming Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Biennial Conference and National Fatherhood Summit.

Our partnership with CT DSS is flourishing, with our lead case manager tirelessly sharing program information at Child Support Enforcement Court every Wednesday. We've reached nearly 20 new clients since Spring, extending our impact even further.

April was all about appreciation and community. We celebrated our amazing volunteers and teamed up with A Break Deserved, LLC to provide much-needed childcare, giving parents a delightful Saturday afternoon break twice a month. The joy on the faces of both parents and kids has been priceless!

Here's to more milestones, more success stories, and a brighter future for all the families we serve!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR HUBS

FROM BRIDGEPORT

OLGA DE AZA | SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

We're thrilled to announce our upcoming Bridgeport opening this September, and the excitement is building! As we prepare for this new chapter, we're diving into local networking events and forging powerful partnerships. We've connected with incredible organizations like Unite CT, the Salvation Army, and the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants to gather essential resources and support.

Our team is also dedicated to top-notch training opportunities for our staff and leadership, ensuring we're fully equipped to serve the Bridgeport community with excellence. We've already started assisting local families and are in the process of bringing on board a passionate Volunteer Manager for Bridgeport.

The future is bright, and we can't wait to make a positive and lasting impact in the Bridgeport community! Let's embark on this exciting journey together!



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



RD SCINTO
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT



BRIDGEWATER

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Community Champions for their unwavering support of our mission.



Your generous sponsorships and donations in kind make a significant impact, allowing us to continue our vital work in educating parents to prevent child abuse and neglect.



Together, we are creating a stronger, safer community for all.

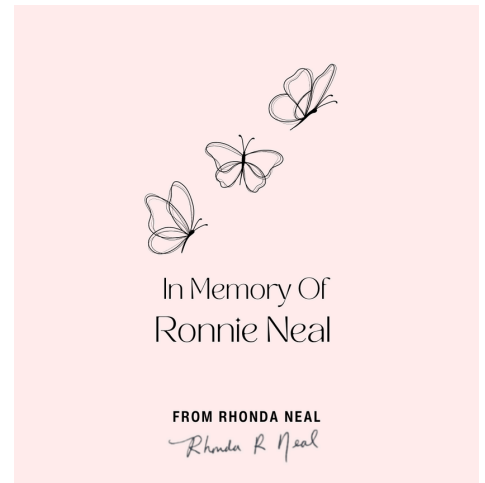
Thank you for being a cornerstone of our efforts and for believing in our cause.



FOOD RESCUE US



Ridgefield Dental Care
Family Dentistry for 20 Years



WAYS TO SUPPORT

SAINT JOSEPH PARENTING CENTER

- ♡ Financial Support
- ♡ Volunteering
- ♡ In-Kind Donations
- ♡ Advocacy and Awareness
- ♡ Corporate Partnerships
- ♡ Participating in Events
- ♡ Providing Expertise
- ♡ Community Engagement
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