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Holyoke, MA 01040

www.homeworkhouseholyoke.org

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### A Season of Fun & Fundraising: Save these DATES!

**Dec. 4th is 10/10 Day** at the Village Commons in South Hadley. Get 10% off your purchases at participating Village Common stores & restaurants and they will donate an additional 10% to Homework House!

**Dec. 10th is VALLEY GIVES DAY.** Help us meet our \$10,000 goal. Donate on the 10th online at:

<http://valleygives.razoo.com/story/Hh01040>

or use your mobile device to scan the QR code.



**Dec. 10th** join us for "Get the Scoop on Reading!" a special Valley Gives Day event. This community celebration of reading and ice cream will take place at 3:30PM at our site at Our Lady of Guadalupe, 340 Chestnut St. in Holyoke.

Do you have a few hours to spare during January?

Do you know a college student who is coming back to Western MA for winter break?

Can you help us out when our college volunteers go home for the winter holidays?

## WE NEED TUTORS IN JANUARY!!!

**YOU** can make a difference!  
For more information on volunteering call Christie at 413-265-1017



VOLUME 7

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# NEWSLETTER

rekindling a love of learning one page at a time

## We've Been Challenged!

That's right! Homework House has been challenged by the Amelia Peabody Foundation to raise \$10,000 before March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015! And we're asking **YOU** to help us meet our match on **Valley Gives Day**.

Every dollar that's donated on **12.10.14** up to \$10,000 will be matched dollar for dollar. Donating on Valley



Gives Day is a great opportunity you to **DOUBLE** the impact of your gift! **AND** your donation that day makes Homework House eligible for thousands of additional dollars in special prize monies.

Please mark your calendars for **12.10.14** and help us spread the word about Homework House! How? **It's easy!** Like our Facebook page and invite your friends to like it too. Follow us on Twitter (@HH\_01040) .

**AND MOST IMPORTANTLY** on Valley Gives Day make a donation online to Homework House at: <http://valleygives.razoo.com/story/Hh01040>

or scan our QR code:



(Not available on 12/10? No problem- you can schedule your Valley Gives gift beginning 12/1/14 and it will count toward our goal!)

## A Road Map to our Future!

**H**omework House's strategic planning process began almost two years ago in December, 2012 when we realized that even though Homework House had grown and thrived since 2006, we needed a clear plan for sustainability and management of our financial and human resources (both staff and volunteer) in order to ensure Homework House's continued success. Thus, we embarked on the path to strategic planning and we set out to secure funding and choose a consultant to facilitate the process. With a capacity building grant from the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation in hand, we signed on with Rainmaker Consulting in late 2013.

We kicked off the planning process in April, 2014 with a gathering of the Homework House community. Out of this meeting we formed four working committees to focus on the areas of program, volunteers, board governance, and fund development/sustainability. Our work has spanned many months and it has been a collaborative effort among many stakeholders.

We anticipate that the completed plan will be ready for our Board to review in December. We are confident the outcome will make us a stronger Homework House which will be here for years to come, providing the children of Holyoke with a warm and welcoming environment where they can come for help with their homework. We look forward to sharing this plan with you!

*Lorraine M. Golio, Board President*

**THE RESULTS ARE IN** ... and all we can say is **WOW!** So many of our students made significant progress in reading last year! Almost 80% of our children **EXCEEDED** the school district's expectations for reading level growth. This means that even if the student did not end the year At-Grade Level, **s/he made MORE progress in reading** than the school district expected. By the end of the school year, 45% of our K-3<sup>rd</sup> graders were reading at or above grade level. Among our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, 39% are reading at or above grade level. This is awesome news since so many of our students come to Homework House struggling to "catch up" to grade level!

**THANK YOU to our wonderful volunteer tutors for making this possible!**



# Volunteer Spotlight

**P**ositive role models, skilled tutors, nurturing adults. That's how we describe Kevin Billieux and Ericka Blais, two of our most faithful volunteers who tutor in our 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade room in the Flats.



A college student for a second time, after a stint in business including heading his own enterprise, Kevin reclaimed a youthful dream of teaching. A few years ago in a class in multicultural education at UMASS, he was assigned to Homework House's site at Our Lady of Guadalupe. He completed the assignment and keeps coming faithfully, sometimes biking twenty miles, summer and winter, rain or shine even through semester breaks. Kevin says that at Homework House he finds motivated children who want to learn. He also realizes that his experience tutoring teaches him how children understand and apply knowledge. He's likely to tell you "it's real." In the end, he confesses that he learns from them "how to motivate myself."

A certified teacher, Ericka first came to Homework House through our partnership with the Holyoke Medical Center where her mom is a nurse. Like many of our students, Ericka struggled in school as a child. Last year, Ericka came to Homework House every day after a full day of teaching in the Chicopee schools. And now, still teaching and working on her MA at the Elms, Ericka comes to Homework House 2 days each week. She always seems to find a creative way to help the kids work through their challenges.



## WITH OUR THANKS!

**D**uring this season of thanksgiving we would like to remember all of our volunteers, friends and benefactors. Your support takes many different forms and we are truly grateful for all.

**We thank** all of our individual and family donors whose generosity helps make our mission a reality.

**We thank** our foundation, corporate and public funders:

- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Annual Catholic Appeal
- Big Y
- Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice
- John Bickford Foundation
- Chicopee Savings Bank
- City of Holyoke Community Development Block Grant
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Fund
- Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation
- Hampden Bank
- The Lego Fund for Children
- Mt. Pleasant Fund
- PeoplesBank Charitable Foundation
- Susan A. and Donald P. Babson Foundation
- United Way of the Pioneer Valley
- Westfield Bank
- United Bank
- The Ronald McDonald House Charities

**We thank** the businesses of the South Hadley Village Commons and Ode Boutique in Northampton for their ongoing support of Homework House.

**We thank** Holyoke Community College, Holyoke Catholic High School, St. Michael's Parish in East Longmeadow, St. Mary's Parish in Westfield and the Girls' and Women's Club in Glen Ridge New Jersey for helping to brighten this holiday season for the children and families we serve and for their donations of school supplies throughout the year.

And **we thank** the parishioners at St. Joseph's Church in Belleville, Ontario for supporting our End of Year celebration of the children's achievements.



What I like about Homework House is I get help. The tutors help me get better at reading and they take care of me like my family always does. They help me with things I need help with like math and reading. Sometimes I help other kids. Homework House is my favorite place to go after school.  
~ Serenity R.



My 7 year old son, Jaykuon, is a 2nd grader at Lawrence Elementary School. Homework House means a lot to him and to me for the simple fact that he has learned more than his school lessons. Jaykuon has advanced his reading level. Homework House is a place I recommend to other mothers. There are so many loving and friendly people. Homework House also has amazing tutors.  
~ Zuleyka V.



I go to Kelly School and I'm in 4th grade. I've been going to Homework House for five years. I like going because I always learn new things like how to divide and multiply. I like when I make new friends and see my old friends, tutors, and students.  
~ Damian S.



I look forward to coming to Homework House every week. The kids are always happy to see us and work with their tutors. There's never a day with them that we don't laugh while we learn. I'm so happy to use my teaching skills and watch their progress. Students & tutors are blessed to have Homework House!  
~ Bobby C.



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