The holidays are right around the corner! Give the gift of choice to families in our housing programs by donating cash or Target or Walmart gift cards. We have a goal to raise $30,000 to help create joyful memories for over 560 Community of Hope families, and we can do it with your support! With your gift, families will celebrate the holidays together enjoying their own special traditions.

Your gift empowers our families with the gift of choice. To make an Adopt-a-Family gift, or collect with your workplace, community, or faith group, contact development@cohdc.org or visit our website communityofhopedc.org/adoptafamily.

Each family will receive a gift card, so please consider giving in $25 or $50 increments.

Plan to do some holiday shopping? Choose Community of Hope as your selected AmazonSmile charity and a portion of your sale will benefit our work!

Also, go to www.communityofhopedc.org/wishlist to find items to help our families settle into their new homes.

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The day Star Douglas and her son moved into their new apartment was full of gratitude. “I felt a massive amount of relief when we moved into our place. A whole world of pain was released off of my shoulders.” The pain for Star started when she was just a child. Her mother abandoned her and then her father sold her to a stranger so he could pursue a career in music. For the next few years, Star was subjected to neglect, mistreatment, and abuse. When her father returned and took her to live with her grandmother, she thought things would get better. Sadly, they only got worse. Star continued to be abused by her family. “The pain was too great for me. I wanted to escape all the way out.”

Star later became a teenage mom and a cycle of housing instability continued. Many nights were spent staying with friends and in motels. Star was finally able to secure a permanent place to stay, however, that was short-lived due to a dispute with the landlord and Star was soon evicted. “A stranger helped us pack our things. It was an awful feeling.” The landlord dispute further limited Star’s ability to land an apartment somewhere else. Star’s unending housing battles started to shift when she was connected to Community of Hope’s Homelessness Prevention Program. “Community of Hope was the best-kept secret. Where have you been all my life with the key?”

The Homelessness Prevention Program works to stabilize families at risk of becoming homeless through case management, budgeting, mediation, assistance with bills, and making connections to other community resources.

(Star’s story continues on page 3)
We remain blown away by the outpouring of support shown at our Bellevue Back to School Bash hosted in partnership with William O. Lockridge/Bellevue Library and the Metropolitan Police Department. We appreciate all of our donors – Gallup, AmeriHealth Caritas DC, EAB, National Air Traffic Controllers Association, KTGY, The Michaels Organization, and countless giving individuals. With their support, we gave away more than 1,500 backpacks stuffed with school supplies and many young men also received FREE haircuts from Wallace Wilson. Thank you – on behalf of all families served.

Over the past year, we served more than 215 women through CenteringPregnancy®, and midwives are projected to deliver about 200 babies at either Washington Hospital Center or our Family Health and Birth Center in 2019.
Our guests gave generously in the “Give Hope” moment and together with our sponsors and host committee, we raised a record-breaking $444,000. Our deepest thanks to Innovation sponsor; Bill Conway of the Bedford Falls Foundation; our Signature sponsor; PNC; our Sustainer sponsor; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; our Partner sponsors; CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, Fort Myer Construction Corporation, Horning Brothers, Joe & Lynne Horning, KPMG, Pebblebrook Hotel Trust, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Suzanne Sullivan and, Visionary Eye Doctors/Dr. Lenny Friedman and Colleen Ryan; our Contributor sponsors; City First Bank of DC, Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc. and Friend sponsors; AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia, Amerigroup, Arminco Inc., Commercial Real Estate Advisors, KatzAbosch, Lockton Companies, Palm Facility Services, Robert L. and Janet R. Sloan, Tom and Elissa Davidson, USI Insurance Services, and WC Smith.

Once Star was connected, she received comprehensive case management support and was referred to get legal counsel to help investigate her previous landlord’s claims. During that investigation, her dedicated case managers not only connected her with family and friends to stay with but were also proactive in introducing Star to a host of employment resources, budgeting and financial management, and behavioral health services—all solutions to help address other barriers in her life. After a seven-month investigation, it was determined that Star was wrongfully evicted, and was therefore released of all outstanding debt and claims from the landlord. Our case managers helped ensure a clear rental background and Star was able to lease her own apartment.

“As soon as we stepped in our apartment, we said our prayers. We were so thankful to everyone at Community of Hope.”

After years of trauma, Star reached a point of triumph. With support from a rapid re-housing program, she was finally able to offer her family a stable home and is using all of the tools and resources she learned while in the program to ensure continued positive outcomes. “Community of Hope gave me all the hope and strength I needed to be successful.” Now, Star is working towards becoming a homeowner and hopes to foster other children one day. She is hopeful that by sharing her story it will help others remember that no matter how painful your story starts, it doesn’t define how it will end.