



# The Connection

NEWSLETTER FROM TEEN PARENT CONNECTION

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Meatheads Burgers & Fries Fundraiser:**  
Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2014  
Glen Ellyn Location
- **Festival of Friends**  
Sunday, November 2, 2014  
Medinah Country Club
- **Holiday Shopping Room**  
December 16-18, 2014

## IN THIS ISSUE

- **Festival of Friends**  
Save the Date
- **Board Member Spotlight**
- **Charity Navigator**  
Four Star Rating

## STAY CONNECTED!



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## Looking Back... Looking Ahead

As June came to a close, so did our 28th year of service to the DuPage County community. Our program managers spent much of July crunching last year's numbers and pouring through an enormous amount of data – collected at parent groups, home visits, Prevention presentations, the Parents' Pantry, and more. After all the spreadsheets are finished, we can take a step back and reflect on program quality: What works? What needs work? And what steps can we take to make a greater impact on young families? I look forward to sharing our findings in the annual report, which will be posted to our website early this fall.

Beyond all the numbers, there are so many wonderful stories to celebrate and share. And behind every story is a person – a parent, a child – who speaks to the true impact of our work.

Read about Sandra's story below.

*Bucky Buitrago*

### Baby Steps: Sandra and her Twins Graduate from the Healthy Families Program

At 17 years old, Sandra found herself on the brink of homelessness, without family support, and pregnant with twins. Sandra was overwhelmed by the weight of expecting two little girls and worried about what the future may hold.

Having developed preeclampsia during her pregnancy, Sandra delivered her twins at 26 weeks. Kathy weighed 1 pound and 10 ounces, and Cindy weighed 1 pound and 13 ounces – both had medical complications.

*"I was scared to be a new mom, afraid of how fragile the babies were, and was starting to feel depressed."*



Concerned for Sandra's mental health, a hospital social worker referred her to Teen Parent Connection. Sandra was quickly connected to TPC's Healthy Families Program and introduced to Family Support Specialist, Sarah. Through intensive home-based services, the Healthy Families Program connects families to needed resources, helps strengthen the parent/child bond, conducts early childhood development screens, and supports both parents and children in achieving educational goals. Parents can participate in the program until their child is five years old. Through their weekly visits – conducted at first in the hospital – Sarah listened carefully to Sandra's needs and provided her the

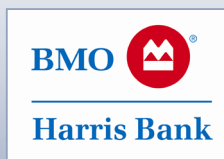
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# Save the Date!

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On **Sunday, November 2, 2014**, Teen Parent Connection will host Festival of Friends at Medinah Country Club. We invite you to join us for a lovely reception with a raffle and delicious lunch while enjoying the breathtaking grounds of Medinah Country Club. Learn more about our mission from a participant speaker.

Proceeds empower young parents and their children to reach their fullest potential. Learn more at [TeenParentConnection.org/events](http://TeenParentConnection.org/events), and contact Sarah Pluth at [sarahp@teenparentconnection.org](mailto:sarahp@teenparentconnection.org) or 630.790.8433, ext. 232 for more information and sponsorship opportunities.



# The Festival of Friends

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**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2014**  
**MEDINAH COUNTRY CLUB**

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## *“Baby Steps” continued from cover*

positive support and guidance she needed to begin caring for her babies and moving forward with her life.

At three months old, the twins were finally strong enough to come home. Caring for any newborn, let alone twins, can cause a lot of stress. But caring for two girls with special needs – without the support of hospital staff – Sandra felt overwhelmed. Scheduling medical appointments while feeding, bathing, and comforting the twins was a learning experience each day. Through it all, her Family Support Specialist was there as a constant source of support for Sandra during this transition.

With each weekly home visit, Sarah guided Sandra through setting goals and taking steps to secure stable housing, keep track of medical appointments and health records, and access additional resources to help care for her daughters. *“She coached me through whatever it was that I didn’t understand and gave me helpful resources for housing, food, and more,”* Sandra remembers, *“She even told me about TPC’s parenting groups which I also began attending. I found it helpful to talk to other parents my age who understood what I was going through.”*

As the twins grew older, it became apparent that they were experiencing some developmental delays. With the support and guidance of the Healthy Families program, the twins were able to access early intervention services to address their

needs. Within weeks of their referral, the girls were getting developmental therapy. Sandra shares: *“Sarah helped me understand what the therapists were saying and helped me stay on track with everything that was needed to do at home.”* And when the twins were showing early signs of behavior often associated with Autism, Sandra became worried about keeping them in preschool. After meeting with Sarah and school administrators, Sandra realized that this early learning opportunity was not only possible, but beneficial.

This story speaks to the core of the mission of Teen Parent Connection:

Sarah met a young mother five years ago who was overwhelmed and unprepared for the challenges her daughters faced. Through the continued support of her Family Support Specialist, today Sandra is empowered and self-sufficient. Kathy and Cindy turned five years old in June – they are healthy, happy, and looking forward to starting kindergarten this fall!

As a Healthy Families Program Graduate, Sandra reflects, *“At first I didn’t know how we were going to make it. Every week Sarah came to my house – I shared my problems and she helped me. As time went by, those tiny baby steps added up to so much. We did it... we made it.”*

## BOARD SPOTLIGHT

### Teen Parent Connection is pleased to welcome Dora Praxedis and Molly Salisbury to its Board of Directors.



**Dora Praxedis** is a former Teen Parent Connection Participant and first to join the Board of Directors. Dora participated in Teen Parent Connection's parenting programs and volunteered as a Peer Education Specialist in the Peer Prevention Program. Reflecting on her program experience at age 16, she shares, "I was fortunate to find a place where I belonged and provided the unconditional emotional support I lacked among my friends and family. I am looking forward in sharing my experience as a teen parent to enhance services provided in the community." Dora is a graduate of DePaul University with B.S. degree in accounting who recently obtained her MBA from Keller Graduate School of Management. She is an Operations Analyst at SWC Technology Partners, located in Oak Brook, IL. She resides in Hanover Park with her husband and children, ages 10 and 3.



**Molly Salisbury**, retired Executive Director of the non-profit BEDS Plus and former small business owner, will offer her talents to the development component of Teen Parent Connection. Molly shares: "I am pleased and honored to participate in the vital and impressive work of Teen Parent Connection. This agency fills an increasingly necessary service with young adults at risk in our communities and I will enjoy focusing my expertise helping to guide the development team." Molly lives with her husband in La Grange. With deep roots in the west suburban communities she will increase and expand awareness and support for our mission.



### Charity Navigator Awards Teen Parent Connection with 4-Star Rating

Charity Navigator, America's largest and most-utilized independent evaluator of charities, has awarded Teen Parent Connection the prestigious 4-Star Rating for good governance, sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. The rating indicates that Teen Parent Connection "adheres to good governance and other best practices that minimize the chance of unethical activities and consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way," Ken Berger, president and CEO of Charity Navigator, wrote in a congratulatory letter addressed to Teen Parent Connection Executive Director Becky Beilfuss. Approximately 25 percent of the charities Charity Navigator evaluates have received the highest rating, indicating that Teen Parent Connection outperforms most other charities in America.

**Angie Black**  
President

*Clinical Director of Inpatient Pediatrics, PICU, Pediatric Short Stay, Child Life & IV Therapy  
Interim Clinical Director of NICU  
Cadence Health*

**Joe Beck**  
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*Certified Nurse-Midwife  
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**Adrian Laurean**  
Attorney  
*Kupisch Carbon & Laurean Ltd*

**Maria Ochoa**  
*Manager of Business Operations  
Access Dupage*

**Dora Praxedis**  
*Former Teen Parent Connection Participant & Operations Analyst  
SWC Technology Partners*

**Molly Salisbury**  
Owner  
*Salisbury Interiors  
& Retired Non-Profit Director*



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**DEVELOPMENT:**

630.790.8433 x232

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**BECKY BEILFUSS:**

630.790.8433 x230

Visit our website: [teenparentconnection.org](http://teenparentconnection.org)

# Celebrating a Successful Year!

On Friday, June 20, 2014, Teen Parent Connection hosted a Ribbon Cutting & Open House Celebration. More than 50 community supporters visited Teen Parent Connection and enjoyed a tour of the agency, took part in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and enjoyed a delicious lunch generously provided by My Chef Catering! Thank you to **Modern Woodman of America** and **BMO Harris Bank** for their continued partnership.



*Pictured: Board of Directors with Executive Director Becky Beilfuss and Glen Ellyn Chamber President Katie Cass.*

## PARENTS' PANTRY NEEDS

Our Parents' Pantry acts as a supplemental resource to our teen parent participants, distributing essential supplies to more than 200 young families throughout the year. Our current needs include:

- Diapers, all sizes
- Baby Shampoo & lotion
- Baskets for Raffle Items & Picture Frames (new or used)
- Formula
- Personal hygiene products
- Wipes
- Toilet paper

