



A WINNING TEAM

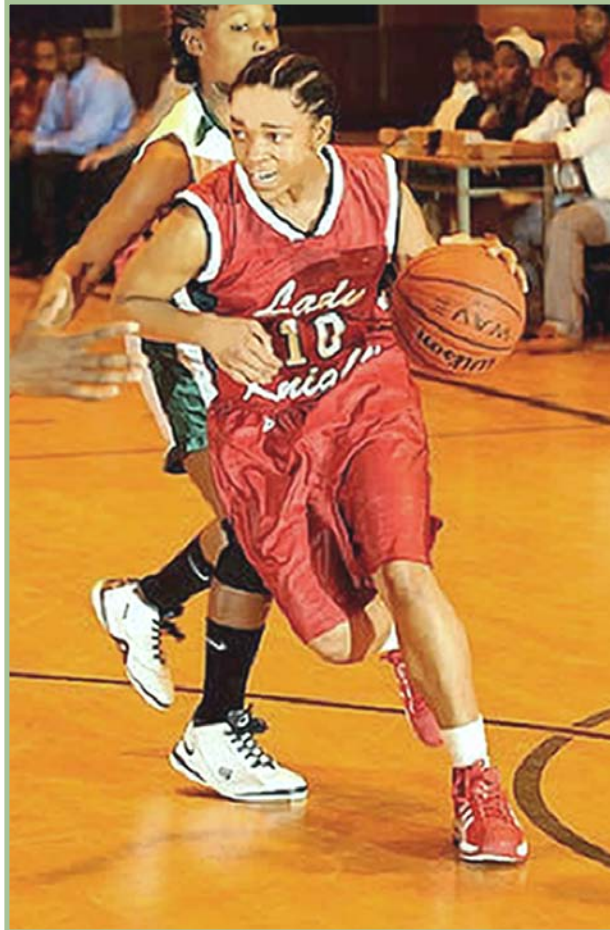
Not your average high schooler, Jazzarae, or “Jazz” for short, has been through a lot. She became a member of the ESS family in October 2008 after being referred to Episcopal Social Services by the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). Her mother had a long battle with drug addiction and spent fourteen years in prison.

Her mother was clean for the first three years of Jazz’s life, but she simply could not fully overcome her dependence on drugs. Throughout her childhood, Jazz witnessed drug binges, strangers coming and going, items being stolen from her apartment, and no food in the refrigerator. She was often left to fend for herself. As a preteen, Jazz mustered the courage to tell her older sister, Eileen, who was in her late 30s at the time, that she needed to get out. Eileen welcomed her into her home.

Eileen, who was a single mom herself, explains, “It was a rough ride, but we managed to remain positive and live together as a family.” During this time, Jazz was also fortunate to find refuge in the game of basketball which gave her strength and determination.

Jazz tried to have a relationship with her mother, but quickly realized that she couldn’t. At one point her mother’s run-ins with the police resulted in a padlocked apartment, leaving Jazz with no access to the new school clothes she bought for herself with the hard earned money she saved. Her anger and resentment about the situation caused her school to contact ACS, who referred the case to ESS.

Thankfully, she had a dedicated sister in Eileen who was willing to officially become her foster parent. ESS was able to provide Jazz money for clothing, a monthly stipend for other necessities, and even paid her senior dues, ring cost, and prom ticket. She also received proper medical attention,



including all necessary vaccinations. “I believe that just knowing that we can call ESS for any issue that may arise has allowed a burden to be lifted off of us and has allowed Jazzarae to finally function as a normal teenager – one that should not have had to grow up as fast as she did,” Eileen explained.

Currently a senior at John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx, pursuing her New York State Regents Diploma, Jazz excels in all her classes and is admired by teachers and classmates alike. She also serves as Vice President of the Senior Council and is a member of the Hispanic Society. This year she was captain of the Varsity Girls Basketball Team, *The Lady Knights*, and recently made the All Bronx 1st Team (while her coach was designated “Coach of the Year”). When she’s not busy with school and basketball, Jazz

attends various workshops about sexual health, financial planning, college preparation, as well as day trips offered by ESS.

It doesn’t stop there. Jazz also plans for an even brighter future. Recently accepted at Alfred State College - SUNY College of Technology, she will major in Engineering or Forensic Science. She remains devoted to her family, performing household chores and serving as a wonderful role model for her nephew. Both Jazz and Eileen look forward to Jazz learning about independent living through ESS, as this will be her first time away from home. Regardless of where Jazz’s journey takes her, Eileen looks back on her experience and says, “It has been absolutely a joy raising my little sister and I would not have had it any other way.”

ESS congratulates Jazz and wishes her continued success both on and off the court.

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT H. GUTHEIL



Dear Friends,

We're talking about some honest successes in this issue of our newsletter. Not just corporate successes, although they're important too when they happen, but individual successes. In other words, the kind of success for which Episcopal Social Services exists.

A young girl in foster care who has risen to prominence in school athletics and school work. A young man who many years ago had his developmental delays successfully addressed in our therapeutic nursery program, and is now on his way to a prestigious college. Parents who have successfully reunited with their children after foster care placement now helping other families involved in the foster care system as Parent Advocates, to the great benefit of children in our care.

These are just a few examples of the everyday achievements (miracles?) of our wonderful staff. Like everyone else in the human services field, they'll never be rich and famous, but this is why they do what they do. These are the results of their outstanding competence and intense commitment. Deep human caring and professional competence are the daily reality of work here. I have the great privilege of seeing this lived out time and again. I delight in sharing these stories with you.

Let me close with a tribute to an outstanding Board member. Sadly, we just lost Dennis Coleman after a brief illness. He had been on our Board for many years, with a special interest in our Early Head Start and After School programs. Much of our expansion in educational services came through Dennis's wisdom and perseverance. He was a former Bronx state senator, and opened many doors for us. He called me regularly with ideas and advice, and when he didn't call me I called him. I will miss him greatly, as will many of our Bronx staff. As the Bible has it, a good and faithful servant who did it very well.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert H. Gutheil". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robert H. Gutheil
Executive Director

P.S. We're about to distribute our annual grants to parish-sponsored summer day camps in some of the neediest neighborhoods in the Diocese. Although our friends at Episcopal Charities carry out their mission very well of providing such support on a scale beyond what we are able to do, we're very pleased that we can in this way supplement our own direct service work to the children of New York.

*Thanks to the advances in technology,
we're able to offer this newsletter in color at no additional cost!*

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Ex Officio

A FAMILY OF SERVICES

When teenage mother Kwanetha noticed her four-year old son, Dequan, was experiencing some speech difficulties in the summer of 1995, she felt ashamed, not knowing where to turn. During this time she began to search for schools near their apartment in Harlem that could provide the speech therapy he would require. She was reluctant and skeptical, not knowing much about programs or their offerings, but by September she chose to enroll him in ESS' Therapeutic Nursery. Though Dequan only needed speech therapy, this unique program also offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling services for students and their families. She soon realized she made the right choice, explaining, "The group of teachers he had were dedicated, attentive, and understanding about his social and emotional needs."

One year later, when Dequan graduated from the program, he was not only declassified from special education and transitioned into mainstream classes, but was placed in a gifted and talented kindergarten class! And, his successes were only the beginning. Fast forward fourteen years, and Dequan is a senior at Norman Thomas High School in midtown Manhattan, where he will graduate this June. There he's maintained honor roll status throughout his entire high school career and has been accepted at four universities.

Now as Dequan decides between Penn State, Buffalo State, Herkimer County Community College, and Tompkins County Community College, mom couldn't be more proud. Two colleges so far have offered him financial aid packages. His interest and aptitude in communications and media (his future major) led him to Harlem Children's Zone, where he has had a part-time internship in cinematography for the past 2½ years.

As luck would have it, in 2000, after completing her own college education,

Dequan's mother Kwanetha bumped into Celeste Gordon, Director of the Therapeutic Nursery. Now on a career path and flooded with fond memories of her son's progress there, she arranged an interview, applying for the Teacher's Assistant position. "I wanted to make a positive impact on the minority children in my community," she said. "Other programs cost a lot of money, but these services are actually free and very much needed."

ESS congratulates Dequan and wishes him all the best in college and beyond. ESS is also thrilled to have Kwanetha as part of its dedicated staff.

MORE GOOD NEWS...

Mott Haven families participating in our Family Preservation Program are currently benefitting from on-site mental health services thanks to a grant of \$35,000 from the **Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund** and a grant of \$10,000 from the **Marion E. Kenworthy-Sarah H. Swift Foundation**. With this support, families struggling with a range of difficult issues receive timely mental health therapy in a highly supportive setting. By facilitating the healing process, we help parents and children remain together as a healthy family unit.



Tawanna Wright, Parent Advocate and Family Services Specialist

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION



(L-R) ESS Board Member, Jose Maldonado; ESS Executive Director, Robert H. Gutheil; and Council Member, Annabel Palma

The NYC City Council recognized ESS recently in the form of a Proclamation on Wednesday, March 3rd in honor of Professional Social Work Month, for providing nearly two centuries of social services to those in need. Speaker Quinn and the entire Bronx delegation signed the Proclamation.

A grant of \$40,800 from the **Parent Advocates Initiative**, a collaboration of six foundations, the **New York City Administration for Children's Services**, the **New York State Office of Children and Family Services**, the **Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies**, the **Child Welfare Organizing Project**, and the **Fund for Social Change**, is enabling ESS to bolster our foster care services with the addition of two full-time Parent Advocates. As parents who have successfully reunited with their children after foster care placement, the Parent Advocates bring a unique perspective to the child welfare system. By improving communication and understanding on the part of birth families, foster parents, and caseworkers, the Parent Advocates help to facilitate the best possible outcomes for the children in our care.



HOW CAN I HELP EPISCOPAL SOCIAL SERVICES?

So glad you asked! There are several ways!

PERSONAL DONATION:

Every dollar given will help sustain our programs that transform the lives and communities of 5,000 of New York's neediest each year. By making a multi-year pledge, you help plan not only for this year, but the future as well.

MEMORIAL OR HONORARIUM GIFT:

Give in memory of a loved one or, if you have a friend "who has everything," recognize their special occasion by making a gift to ESS in their honor.

CORPORATE GIFT, MATCH, OR SPONSORSHIP:

Corporate support plays a big role in the success of our fundraising efforts. Corporations may give year-round, and sponsorship of one of our program or fundraising events may help you market your business! If you make a personal gift, don't forget to ask for your company's matching gift form to double the impact of your donation.

PLANNED GIVING: Consider including ESS in your estate plan. There are many types of planned gifts we can accept. Please call us to discuss them.



THIRD-PARTY EVENT:

ORGANIZE YOUR OWN FUNDRAISER! Be creative: throw a party, run a marathon, sell your old stuff- with the proceeds going to ESS. Please call to discuss your ideas and the guidelines.

VOLUNTEER: See our web site for a listing of current volunteer needs or call us to discuss your ideas of how you'd like to help.

SPREAD THE WORD:

Learn about ESS by coming on a tour, and bring a friend! "A Few Words with ESS" is a one-hour informational session and tour designed to give our friends an up-close and personal look at what we do. We promise not to keep you more than an hour and that you will leave inspired. Please visit our website, www.essnyc.org, for upcoming tour dates.

For more information on how you can help Episcopal Social Services, please contact Mary G. Connolly, Director of Development and Communications, at 212-886-5604 or connollym@e-s-s.org. Or visit our web site at www.essnyc.org