

GRAHAM RECORD

Message from President & CEO Kimberly Watson

Happy New Year Graham Community!

As I reflected on this past year and the challenges we faced, from helping the influx of migrant families into the City to confronting the staffing shortages that we and our sector are experiencing, I'm grateful for our staff's dedication to continue advancing Graham's vision and mission, the One Graham way, achieving excellent outcomes in the process. This includes the brave conversations we've had on race and equity to inform our practice. Over the past 2+ years, our Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee has been spearheading Graham's transition toward becoming an organization that is combatting Anti-Black racism. We conducted a thorough selection process and hired a consultant



firm to conduct an organizational assessment and help us to develop and implement sustainable changes.

As I look to the year ahead, we're entering the next big step in Graham's Anti-Black Racism agenda: delving into our psychological safety needs (the ability to speak up and/or be our

authentic selves without fear of reprisal) to make action steps toward our 2025 Vision goal of changing biased systems and fighting inequity. We have some strengths to build on, more learning and work to do, to better support the psychological safety of our teams. While this work is challenging and uncomfortable, it is necessary as a foundation for change. I look forward to sharing our progress with you in the year ahead.

I hope you enjoy this quarterly newsletter, which highlights our first in-person adoption event in over three years as well as our holiday gift drive.

With Gratitude,
Kym

Graham's Adoption Day Celebration

"We believe in the strength of family in all its forms" - Graham's Respect Pillar



As November is recognized as National Adoption Awareness Month, on November 11th, for the first time since 2019, we came together to celebrate Graham's children in foster care who were adopted or discharged to the care of a relative through the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP). In total, we celebrated 29 adoptions and 22 KinGAPs from 2020-2022! Even with the courts closed during the pandemic, Graham was able to persevere and build consensus with attorneys to help children to be in a permanent home.

It was a lovely night to celebrate forever families filled with love, laughter, and face painting and balloon art for the children. Kym opened with a speech about what family means, sharing that her favorite definition is from the animated movie, Lilo and Stitch, where "Ohana" means family and family means "no one gets left behind."

Kym shared that she loves the expansiveness of that definition and how its insistence on supporting one another is the key to family. We are so happy for our children who have found permanent homes with loving families.

Holiday Celebrations and Wish Lists

Graham hosted in person holiday celebrations for families early in December, 2022 in Brooklyn and the Bronx. We were disappointed to have to re-schedule the party in Harlem, but due to the “triple-demic” it was the best decision for our families and staff. We plan to host it soon. The festivities were joyous opportunities for families and staff to come together and included a life-sized snow globe and snow man, face painting, animal balloons, cotton candy, and candy giveaways within snow globes. There was a lot of food and dancing including a conga line. Families and staff volunteers also enjoyed playing jumbo games and musical chairs with music provided by DJs complete with lights and smoke machines. Many commented how welcoming and fun the event was as children and families enjoyed playing and dancing together. Within our Community Centers, our children and families also enjoyed holiday cheer with holiday performances, cookie decorating, crafts and more food.

An outpouring of Generosity

Fulfilling wish lists is another wonderful tradition at Graham. We join hands with our generous supporters and community partners to fulfill wish lists for our youth and families. This past holiday season, we fulfilled 147 wish lists, gave out 2,951 gift cards and gave numerous toys to children and families. We were blown away by the generosity of donors who provided families with hundreds of sorely needed winter clothes. One donor shared how they came to our Family Enrichment Center in Hunts Point to donate coats on a cold day and were able to provide someone who had just walked in shivering with the coat they needed.



That donor came back the next week with more coats. This was a season of need met by an outpouring of generosity, for which our Graham community is abundantly grateful.

We are so happy we were able to come together this holiday season and help deliver joy to our families.

DID YOU KNOW?

Graham Windham has been supporting adoptions for over 70 years.