



Angel of Hope Gala Raises over \$180,000

With the generous support of our sponsors and all attendees at the iconic Rainbow Room in NYC, we raised over \$180,000 which helps MercyFirst provide children and families in need with safe opportunities for hope, healing and a brighter future. During the event we spotlighted our Youth Development program, *Bridges to the Future*, and heard from **Juan** (pictured above), about how important the program is to him as a youth in foster care, and the support he receives from his Youth Life Skills Coach, Jelani Goodwin. Please visit our Facebook page to view more photos from the event: www.facebook.com/MercyFirst



Youth Celebrate Through Art!

MercyFirst youth at both our Brooklyn and Syosset locations celebrated **National Coming Out Day** through art- creating "rays of hope" expressing their support of the LGBTQ community and decorating fans, enabling them to feel safe and confident in their expression through creative process.

Youth in our START with Hope program also used art to create posters for **Hispanic Heritage Month** celebrating significant figures with Hispanic heritage. Students then came together to share presentations about their figures' significant contributions. During the event, youth, teachers and staff collaborated on a collective tapestry artwork representing the positive impact Hispanic culture has had on them.



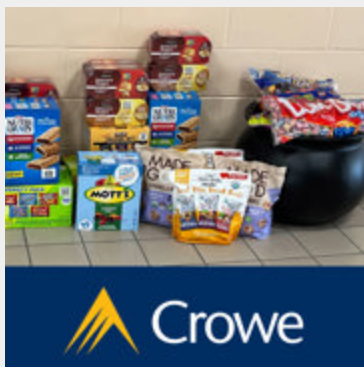
Makeover at our Merrick Community Residence

Thanks to a generous grant from **National Grid**, our Merrick Community Residence was able to do beautiful upgrades to both their dining room and kitchen. With all new appliances, flooring, wall treatments and curtains, the space looks completely new! This act of kindness from National Grid really demonstrated to our youth how important their needs are and helped to make the Merrick house feel even more like a home.



Halloween Candy & Snack Drive for MercyFirst

The kids at MercyFirst enjoyed a mound of Halloween candy and snack thanks to the team at **Crowe LLP New York Office!** After being introduced to MercyFirst by our Board Chair and Partner at Crowe, **Brian Hecker**, the team organized a Candy Drive for the kids and made sure everything was delivered in time for Halloween!



NYC ACS Excellence in Practice Awards

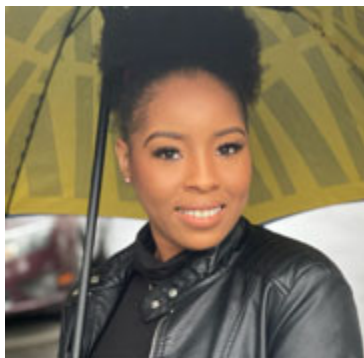
Congratulations to three amazing staff members who were awarded Excellence in Practice Awards from NYC Administration of Children's Services for their outstanding work with our children and families.

(pictured top to bottom)

Halimatou Barry, Caseworker, Pregnant & Parenting program

Etson Bazile, Casework Supervisor, Residential program

Deitre Reynolds, Program Director, Family Foster Care



Presentation: "Art Therapy with Unaccompanied Minors"

Eileen McGann, MercyFirst Director of the Arts and Creative Therapies, presented on a panel at the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society's October conference. Ms. McGann's presentation, "Art Therapy with Unaccompanied Minors," reflects on her work with youth in our START with Hope program.

"Common experiences of loss, hope and survival are themes unaccompanied minors in a residential facility often present. In this setting, art therapy has been an essential part of the treatment for youth, from initial assessment to long term therapy." Read the full presentation summary on our [LinkedIn page](#).



Youth Artwork.



Make a Child Smile this Holiday Season

We have made it easy for you to send holiday cheer to the children & teens at MercyFirst this holiday season. Just shop our [Amazon Wishlist](#) and gifts will be shipped directly to us! It's also a great time to gather your friends, family or colleagues to host a holiday gift drive. To find out more, please email [Kerri Sneden](#).

Make a Donation Today

ABOUT MERCYFIRST: Rooted in a legacy of mercy spanning more than a century, MercyFirst inspires hope and promotes healing for the most vulnerable children and families in New York City and across Long Island. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1894, today MercyFirst offers a range of innovative programs and services that provide stability and support and help individuals and communities thrive.



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