

For Immediate Release

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Who *KHAIRS*?

Introducing a new program to benefit foster children through a unique partnership involving Clifford Beers Clinic, Community Health Network of Connecticut, Inc. (CHNCT), & WTNH News Channel 8/MY TV 9

New Haven, CT—Who *KHAIRS*, you ask? The Clifford Beers Clinic, Community Health Network of CT, Inc. and News Channel 8/MY TV 9 do.

What is at the core of *KHAIR*? *KHAIR* (pronounced Care) aims to serve at-risk adolescents through a unique program in which they are paired with hair stylists or barbers who have committed to monthly appointments for one year. The participating salons and barbershops are also providing product and direction for routine hair maintenance with no charge to the adolescent. “Our goal is to provide these kids with the dignity and respect they deserve by enhancing their levels of confidence through *KHAIR* that they might not otherwise receive,” stated Veronica Douglas. In order to ensure they receive the best treatment, the *KHAIR* Kids are matched to a salon or barber that will suit their hair-specific needs. The salons and barbershops selected are based on their commitment to community service and willingness to contribute to the well being of the adolescents in the program. They are: Hairs Kay Beauty & Barber Salon, Mohogany Natural Hair Heaven, Sheer Elegance, Pro Styles, Euphoria, Rimage, Francesco’s Barbershop, Nissy’s, Salon Bordeaux & Beyond, Soranyi Beauty Salon, and Finesse.

The idea for *KHAIR* originated after Jacqueline Buster, Director of Marketing & Community Relations at CHNCT, visited an orphanage to read stories to the kids there. “It truly touched my heart as I sat and read to all the children. It was then I knew I needed to help these kids somehow.” After her experience at the orphanage, Buster immediately shared her ideas and took action to find partners to work with on this program. When she shared her experience and idea with WTNH News Channel 8’s Veronica Douglas (host of “Wednesday’s Child”). Douglas found the program to be much needed and a good tie into her show, which regularly features children in Connecticut who are waiting to become adopted by sharing their story. After meeting with salon owner Karane Holness; she also agreed that there was a way for salon owners like her to become involved in helping to take care for kids in need.

Barbara Strauss, Director of Public Relations at Clifford Beers, stated, “*KHAIR* is truly a wonderful program. Many people don’t understand the importance of self-esteem and the role it plays in the development of young individuals. Being an adolescent is tough enough—when it is coupled with the inherent stresses with those faced in foster care—you have a powerful mix of emotions. *KHAIR* gives them the opportunity to feel valued and nurtured by individuals who feel the need to help.”

For more information on the *KHAIR* program, please contact Marisol Avarez at (203) 949-4045.

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Community Health Network of CT, Inc, The One with the Sun, located in Wallingford, CT is a not-for-profit community health plan that provides free or low cost health insurance to children and families in CT who qualify for the HUSKY program --HUSKY is a Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth in CT. We recently also started administering the SAGA program in CT. CHNCT, Inc. is committed to building healthier communities throughout the state in collaboration with our staff, healthcare professionals, provider sites and members. For more information on what CHNCT, Inc. has to offer, call 1-888-SUN-2345 or log onto our website at www.chnct.org

The Clifford Beers Clinic provides accessible community-based mental health services and advocacy that promote healthy and resilient lives for children and families. The children serviced by the Clinic's professional staff have experienced life in ways that no child should ever have to endure. Many of our children have been exposed to a life of trauma including poverty, sexual and physical abuse, drug use, and homelessness. The treatment, compassion and support services provided by the Clinic's culturally diverse staff help to ensure that these children will grow into healthy, resilient adults. For more information on Clifford Beers Clinic log onto their website at www.cliffordbeersclinic.org

For more than two decades, News Channel 8/MY TV 9 has partnered with The Department of Children and Families to find adoptive homes for children who have suffered abuse or neglect, through our "Wednesday's Child" feature. Each week at Noon and 5:30pm, News Channel 8's Veronica Douglas gives a voice to the voiceless children of Connecticut waiting for their forever family. Visit www.wtnh.com or call DCF at: 1.800.842.6348 for more information.