



# From Our House to Yours

Fall 2017  
Caroline House News

## Caroline House Mission

*To enable women  
and children  
to reach the fullness  
of their potential  
through education  
in English language  
and life skills.*



*Founded and sponsored by  
the  
School Sisters  
of Notre Dame*

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**“Marie always speaks to her baby in English,”** remarks Sister Eileen. Marie tells us she also sings to Anna-ëlle in English at home.



## The Language of a Mother’s Love

**W**hen you walk into Sister Eileen’s classroom, you see rows of hard-working women students. One of the students is Marie, and with Marie you will see the newest member of the Caroline House family: Marie’s 3-month old daughter Anna-ëlle.

Once you meet Marie and her baby, you feel the determination Marie has to not only love and take care of her baby, but also to keep up with her English language and life skills classes at Caroline House.

Marie emigrated from Haiti in 2016. She heard about Caroline House from her husband’s friend and enrolled in classes last January. Marie had learned some English in Haiti, but once she moved to the U.S. - and especially when she found out she was going to be a mother - she was determined to learn more English. In fact, at home she now speaks only English with her husband, even though Haitian Creole is their first language. (Marie knows French and some Spanish, too!)



**Marie and her classmates with teacher Sister Eileen Denny, SSND**

Marie says, **“Before, when I went for my doctor visits, I needed an interpreter. Now, I don’t need an interpreter. I call the hospital myself and make checkup appointments for my baby in English.”**

Marie is one of the many strong women who are building better lives for themselves and their families through **education and determination.**

# “Falling” for Books in the Preschool Classroom

September and October have flown by as we have been getting to know the 21 children in our classroom and as the children have been getting to know each other as well as their teachers and volunteers. **One thing is already very evident: the children love being read to!**

We recently received grant funding to purchase new books for our classroom. **What fun we had reading and deciding which books to choose that would appeal to and challenge the children.** You would agree the choices we made were the right ones if you could hear the shrieks of delight when we are reading *I Dare You!* and the funny monster in the story attempts to gobble the children’s hands or the little goblin under the bed peeks out at them!



**Jose Matteo, Nataly, and Jadiel dare to touch the silly shark’s teeth as Miss Jean reads *I Dare You!***



**Jazmine and Jessie enjoy story time with Karina. Karina is a Caroline House graduate who now volunteers in our preschool classroom.**

Of course, not all the books are “scary.” With the help of classroom stories, we are learning about what makes us different and unique. We also talk about the many ways we are all the same. **The story and illustrations in *Most People* present a positive view of people in the world and convey the message that most people are good, helpful, and kind.**

With 21 children it takes time to fully recognize the individual nature of each child. As teachers, we often have to step back and observe more than lead so we can get a sense of how to motivate the children to make good choices. Many of the books we read in the classroom support this. **The *Elephant & Piggie* books by Mo Willems have great examples of sharing, kindness and empathy.**

**We are looking forward to a wonderful school year full of good friends, great books, and lots of learning through play.**

**Mark your calendars! Friday, April 6, 2018**

*Starry Night Gala*

**The Inn at Longshore, Westport**

Please join us as we honor **Cindi Bigelow** for her many contributions in support of Caroline House.





# Community Programs and Outreach

## Room to Grow

This summer an attic storage area was renovated to create much-needed program space.

The room was transformed into a bright, open and welcoming space that is home to our new Community Programs and Outreach Office.

The new space has a comfortable tutoring and gathering area where women and children can read,

learn and share ideas through conversation, education and mentorships.



We had a full house during our summer tutoring camp!



Taylor Barrow

## Building Our Community

We are excited to announce that **Taylor Barrow has joined our staff as Community Programs and Outreach Coordinator.** Many of you already know Taylor's friendly smile and creative energy from her serving as our Jesuit Volunteer during the 2016-17 program year.

We welcome interns **Melanie Castillo and Oscar Diaz.** Melanie and Oscar have been working with Taylor to increase social media efforts and get our 2017-18 after-school program up and running.

**Melanie** is a senior at Southern CT State University and is majoring in sociology with a concentration in criminology and criminal justice.

**Oscar** is a familiar friend of Caroline House. He and his family live across the street, and Oscar and his brothers have been involved in our tutoring. Oscar began as a tutored student after middle school and was quickly "promoted" to tutor others. He currently attends Housatonic Community College and is majoring in criminal justice.



Melanie Castillo & Oscar Diaz

In her new role, Taylor is bringing fresh ideas and energy to provide additional services and benefits to the women and children we serve.

Taylor has been meeting with women to help them with their questions and concerns. She has organized an October health fair and brought in two interns to improve our programs and community outreach.

## You soon became a tutor. How did that come about?

I started by helping to print out worksheets and put out snacks and drinks for the kids. Pretty soon I was tutoring children. Now I'm interning while I go to college and work part time. *It's a community here; you become very close with those you help.*

## Leading By Example: Oscar Diaz

### When and why did you first come to Caroline House?

It was the summer before high school. My mom didn't want me to fall behind in my school work so she signed me up for summer tutoring.

### What stood out in your experience?

I liked meeting and getting to know the tutors. The community here was a drastic change from what I was used to at school. The tutors were really supportive.



### What are your college and career goals?

I plan to complete my bachelor's degree in criminal justice. After college I would like to be a homicide detective or a forensic pathologist.

**Caroline House****Executive Director / President of the Corporation**

Lucy Freeman

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**Caroline House Staff**

Taylor Barrow,

Community Programs &amp; Outreach Coordinator

Eileen Denny, SSND, Teacher

Maria DiPierro, Bookkeeper

Jean Fredricks, Preschool Director

Betty King, CND, Teacher

Cyndie LaMastra, Grants &amp; Business Manager

Mary Lynch, SSND, Teacher

Christine Paine, Development Director

Joan Pollack, Program Assistant

Kate Whalen, SSND, Teacher

**Looking Forward***Greetings from Executive Director Lucy Freeman**Dear Friends,*

The here and now keeps us busy at Caroline House, but what about a year from now, or perhaps five or ten years from now? While we cannot predict how times may change in the years to come, we do know that there will continue to be people migrating to the United States hoping to live the "American Dream."

*Where we want to go*

While we are thankful for the opportunities we have to educate the women and children who come through our doors, we are not yet totally satisfied with where we are. There is always room for improvement. Our goal is that Caroline House will be the first choice for every family in our community who desires to improve their English language skills and build a better life in our country.

*Always looking*

Because we strive for excellence in all we do at Caroline House, we are always looking for new ideas and new ways we can meet the needs of the families we serve. Sometimes this means attending conferences and seminars. Other times, it means spending time prayerfully reflecting on and discussing possibilities for new programs and services. Ultimately, we are always seeking to meet the needs of our students and their families as they pursue their educational goals.

*What that means to you*

For those of you who are our prayer partners, volunteers and financial supporters, we sincerely thank you. Your commitment to Caroline House is a great encouragement. We also view your support as a great responsibility which we do not take lightly.

In one, five, or ten years, we want to look back at where we are today and say that in 2017, great things were happening. We also want to be able to say that together, we've come a long way from where we were.

*Thank you for being a part of our journey. We cannot do this alone.*

*Lucy Freeman  
Executive Director*

