



Thank you! We have distributed over 1.8 million dollars in grants! ★

# Todd Ouida Children's Foundation

591 Clarendon Court, River Edge, NJ 07661

[www.mybuddytodd.org](http://www.mybuddytodd.org)

Fall 2021

## Our Mission

The Todd Ouida Children's Foundation was established by Todd's family to create a meaningful legacy for Todd, whose life was tragically ended in the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Born out of Todd's own successful struggle with childhood anxiety, the mission of the foundation is to:

- Financially support psychological services for children of families in need and promote mental health initiatives for all children
- Raise awareness and reduce the stigma of anxiety and depression disorders in children, recognizing the need for early intervention
- Provide contact information for those seeking help

Most of us know that the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc with our mental health and the repercussions will be with us for many years to come. More adults and children than ever before are suffering from anxiety and depression. There are more reports of domestic violence, alcoholism, drug addictions and overdoses, eating disorders, and suicides. Tragically, those who were most vulnerable before the pandemic are the ones who have been impacted the most.

When we think about the pandemic's healthcare heroes, we need to include the dedicated mental health professionals—especially those who have walked the walk with our most disadvantaged children. Thank you for helping us to support them!

*Herb and Andrea Ouida  
Amy, Alex, Ashley, Andrew and Aidan Morik  
Jordan, Heather, Chris and Nicky Ouida*

## Twenty years later....

When our family established the Todd Ouida Children's Foundation in November 2001, I don't think any of us realized where we would be today and that we would have distributed 1.8 million dollars in grants.

We think it might be worth revisiting the genesis of the foundation.

Yes, it was born out of Todd's own successful struggle with childhood anxiety. But the inspiration to do that came from Alex's mother, **Helen Morik**, after hearing **Dr. Nat Donson** speak at Todd's memorial service.



*Helen Morik (center front)*



Dr. Donson is the skilled and compassionate child psychiatrist who worked with Todd during his most challenging years and I have always considered him Todd's third parent. When he and his lovely wife Mimi came to visit us after September 11th, I asked him to speak at Todd's memorial service.

At the same time, directly during the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, there was an outpouring of love, concern and donations from family, friends, neighbors, strangers and organizations. We did not need the money as so many other victims' families did, so Helen very simply said: *Why don't you help children who suffer the way Todd did?* We did not hesitate for a single second; that felt exactly right.

Our good friend and attorney, **Howard Schwartzman**, steered us to the Community Foundation of New Jersey to set up a donor-advised fund and the deed was done.



But it is the ongoing and amazing generosity of each and every one of you that has kept the foundation going strong, fulfilling our mission to *help children who suffer the way Todd did*. Our constant hope is that every one of them will be able to live a richer, fuller life—the way Todd did.



university of Michigan



We are truly proud to have established the Todd Ouida Clinical Scholar Award and Annual Lecture in Childhood Anxiety and Depression at Todd's beloved alma mater. Since 2003, our annual visits to Ann Arbor, sharing time with our Michigan "family," have become a highlight of each year. We have a few events to catch you up on....



Dopp, Gipson, Koschmann, Czyc, Fitzgerald

**2018** was very special as the annual lecture consisted of research presentations by Ouida Scholar Award winners **Kate Fitzgerald**, MD, **Rich Dopp**, MD, **Polly Gipson**, PhD, and **Elizabeth Koschmann**, PhD. The Clinical Scholar Award winner was **Ewa Czyc**, PhD.



Premo (left) and Luby

In **2019**, **Joan Luby**, MD, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, spoke about *Early Childhood Depression: Parent-Child Psychotherapy Targeting Emotional Development*. **Julie E. Premo**, PhD, was the newly named Clinical Scholar.

Alas, **2020** was a virtual presentation, robbing us of our joy in visiting Ann Arbor. Fortunately, **Jean A. Frazier**, MD, UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center, kept us totally engaged as she remotely discussed *Mood and Anxiety Disorders in Preterm Born Children and Adolescents*. The Clinical Scholar award was presented to **Megan M. Julian**, PhD.



Frazier (top) and Julian

## Follow-up on Ouida Scholars

It's always very rewarding to see how far the Ouida Scholars have come from their early research days. Just recently we learned that our very first scholar, **Kate Fitzgerald**, MD, and another Ouida scholar, **Kate Rosenblum**, PhD, received a \$3 million National Institute of Health grant to expand their promising Kid Power camp program, an intervention for treating and preventing childhood anxiety disorders. *As we work to understand the science behind anxiety in young minds, we can use that science to develop treatments that are more effective*, Fitzgerald says.

## Thank you, John Greden!

The only way to describe John Greden is to tell you that he is a passionate visionary, who inspires everyone around him, and we are honored to call him our friend. Dr. Greden founded the University Of Michigan Depression Center in 2001 and served as its executive director until his recent retirement. Under his impassioned leadership, the U-M Depression Center catalyzed the formation of the National Network of Depression Centers, a collaborative network of mental health researchers focusing on depression and bipolar disorder. We have no doubt that we will continue to see John Greden during our future visits to Ann Arbor!





## Featured Charities



Since 2003, **Zoe's Place** has been providing a safe, 24-hour supervised home and supportive services for young moms and their babies, who would otherwise be homeless. Each young mother works with a professional Mobility Mentor on attaining education and career goals, fostering financial independence and promoting positive parenting. While the young mothers are at school or at their place of employment, they have access to free on-site childcare. Once the young women have transitioned out of Zoe's Place, they are encouraged to stay engaged with the Zoe's Place family, with access to all of their programs. Zoe's babies get a positive start in life!



**The Center for Hope and Safety** has a Safe House Children's Program designed to address the trauma associated with domestic violence, helping children affected by abuse to rebuild their lives. This includes one-on-one and group counseling, case management, art therapies, and organized recreational activities. The children learn about healthy communication, relationships, and their own self-worth—all part of putting an end to the cycle of violence.



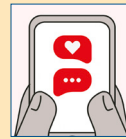
**The Juvenile Bipolar Research Foundation** supports children (and their families) suffering from bipolar disorder and Thermoregulatory Fear of Harm Mood Disorder through research, education and outreach. Fear of Harm includes symptoms of aggression, extreme anxiety, and intense fear that harm will come to self or others. What makes Fear of Harm unique is that it includes a physical symptom. Children with Fear of Harm feel hot most of the time, even when their environment isn't hot, because their bodies can't properly regulate their temperature. Many children with Fear of Harm live in a constant state of torment, which is destructive to themselves and their families. Preliminary research with intranasal ketamine has been extremely promising. The JBRF has recently been selected to participate in the Accelerator Workshops program of Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute, which will support further research.



Children's Aid President and CEO Phoebe Boyer with friends



**Children's Aid** was founded as the Children's Aid Society in 1853 and has been at the forefront of helping children in poverty to succeed and thrive for 168 years. Addressing behavioral health has always been an integral component of their work, with dedicated programs and services to meet children and youth's mental health needs. Many of the children they serve are experiencing trauma, grief and post-traumatic stress as a result of COVID-19, making Children's Aid's services more essential than ever.



Because the need has never been greater, we've added the **Crisis Text Line** this year. They provide free 24/7 high-quality mental health support and crisis intervention through a community of trained volunteers. *Text HOPE to 741741.*

*A complete list of charities supported is available on our website.*



## Stigma-Free

*There is no health without mental health.* Fear of stigma is the primary reason people do not seek help for mental illness—and *help is available*. To that end we remain involved in our local Stigma Free Initiative, presenting programs and holding events to educate and offer hope. Our programs are presented by mental health professionals and those who have lived through the challenges of mental illnesses. We also host programs that encourage wellbeing, such as yoga, our recent Concert in the Park and the King Pong tournament for youth at the swim club.



## Todd Ouida Children's Foundation Annual Conferences

Once again, over 300 enthusiastic attendees filled the room at Montclair State University on May 9, 2019 for the **Eighth Annual Conference**. The theme was *Creating Safety For and Within Children* and we had a plethora of esteemed speak-



Costa, Mulcahy, Beyer,  
Osofsky, Marcus, Armstrong

ers, including **Sheila Marcus**, MD, from the University of Michigan and **Joy Osofsky**, PhD, from Louisiana State University and former president of ZERO TO THREE. **Kaitlin Mulcahy**, PhD, Associate Director of Montclair State's Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health (CAECMH) is always an engaging speaker and **David Armstrong**, a member of the NJ Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative, spoke about his experience as a grandfather advocating for his young grandson.



The Todd Ouida Children's Hero Award was presented to **Mary Ann Uzzi** (left) and

**Cynthia Chazen** for bringing the Stigma Free Initiative to Bergen County and working tirelessly to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

The 2020 **Ninth Annual Conference** was canceled at the last minute due to the COVID-19 pandemic and not enough time to transition to remote. On May 6, 2021 it was presented remotely as *Resilience and the Human Spirit: Our Legacy to Infants, Children, Youth and Families*. It was a rewarding surprise to have 292 participants Zooming in! We were honored to have **Christine Norbut Beyer**, MSW, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, open the



conference with her inspiring remarks and vision for the future. Continuing

the tradition of having an Ouida Scholar presenting at the conference, **Megan Julian**, PhD, joined us from the University of Michigan. Other luminary speakers were **Thomas Blatner**, founder of the Family Success Institute, and **Retha Onitiri**, PMP, director of community engagement at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. **Gerard Costa**, PhD, director of Montclair's CAECMH, closed the program, leaving everyone on a high.

The Todd Ouida Children's Hero Award was presented to **Tara Augustine**, MSW, President and CEO of YCS.

After a distinguished career at CarePlus, she is now breathing new life into YCS.



*We are looking forward to seeing everyone in person in 2022!*

### Thank you, Gerry Costa!

We met Gerry Costa in 2001 as we embarked on our work through Todd's foundation. He was, at that time, the founding director of the YCS Institute for Infant and Preschool Mental Health. In 2011 he became the founding director of Montclair State's Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health. Gerry is, quite simply, the guru of infant and early childhood mental health! He speaks and consults throughout the United States and internationally. He is warm, compassionate, inspiring, and the force behind all of our conferences. Gerry has become a good friend and will remain in our lives even as he retires from the CAECMH.





## Creative Contributions



**Zach Deckler** (*post race with his sister*) challenged himself to do two things: run the NYC marathon and raise a generous amount of money for Todd's foundation by doing so. He admirably succeeded in both!

**Monica Venn** graciously nominated us to be a recipient of a gift from her employer State Street Global Advisors SPDR, who made charitable donations instead of giving client gifts during the 2020 holiday season.



As part of his Bar Mitzvah preparations, **Zachary Woda** held a Sports Trivia Night, which raised funds for Todd's foundation.

We were grateful to receive a number of **stimulus checks** from supporters who felt their funds would be well spent helping vulnerable children.

It was lovely to receive gifts in honor of **Valerie and Creighton Drury's** 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations!



**Mary Jo Armen** designated us to be the recipients of a special donation made in her honor after being the featured speaker at the annual retreat of the Women of the Parrish of St. Gabriel in Saddle River. She spoke about faith, hope, love and forgiveness and why she selected Todd's charity.

Heartfelt thanks to **Matt Anderson**, Music Director at Central Unitarian Church, for conceiving and bringing to fruition "A Legacy of Hope" benefit concert, held on Todd's May 18, 2019 birthday.

## A Legacy of Hope

Todd Ouida Children's Foundation



[www.mybuddytodd.org](http://www.mybuddytodd.org)

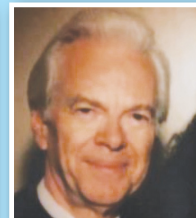
A benefit concert in honor of Todd Ouida  
and to support the Todd Ouida Children's Foundation



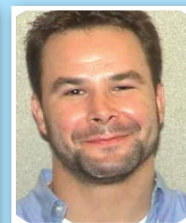
## In Memoriam

*Memorial donations are always very special and we are grateful for every donation and remembrance.*

We remember Herb's always-interesting brother **Eddie Ouida**, kind and gentle brother-in-law **Seymour Mirrow**, and warm and witty cousin **George Pflugel**.



The Deckler family honored us with donations in memory of Marc's beloved mother **Lorraine Deckler** and the Varhol family found Todd's foundation to be the perfect charity for gifts in memory of their cherished son and brother **Michael Varhol**, a clinical psychologist who helped countless young people with their struggles.



## Thank You!

*You make so many opportunities possible!*

Whether you've been with us for 20 years or you've joined us recently, your impact is significant.

We appreciate your gift at this time and contributions year-round through [mybuddytodd.org](http://mybuddytodd.org) or checks mailed to:

**Todd Ouida Children's Foundation**

**591 Clarendon Ct.**

**River Edge, NJ 07661**

Please share your email address with us so that we may keep in touch two or three times a year with an email blast.

*What is the essence of life? To serve others and do good.*

*--Aristotle*

## Family Notes

September 2001

Todd's goddaughter Ashley Morik received the following letter from Todd's high school friends:

Dear Ashley,

*As you grow older you will learn what a special son, brother and friend your Uncle Todd was. With a smile that lit up a room and with a heart of gold, Todd made significant impacts on many people.*

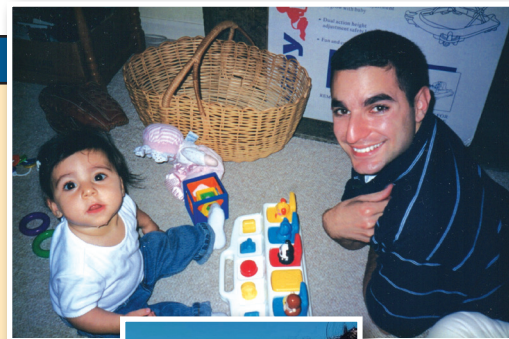
*Todd adored you and you will always be his little jewel.*

*This gift hopefully shows you that you mean an awful lot to Todd's "other" family and we are very interested in your wellbeing. We hope, upon maturity, these bonds will get you out of a summer job or pay for a vacation of yours, for Todd's "other" family would like to spoil you a little. Enjoy!*

Love,

*Joe Venn, Monica Eilyuk, Kerianne O'Brien, Susan Bolter, Alesha Beshara, Jenn Varhol, James Salvo, John Siegel, Dave Rubin, Jimmy Lucey, Alex Reist, Jason Gorman, Lee Allen, Sean Healy, Mike Sicari, Michele Labita and Ryan McKeon*

**WELL! THANK YOU to Todd's "other" family! Ashley was treated to a vacation in the Bahamas during her senior year of high school because of all of YOU! And now she is a junior at High Point University.**



Dear Todd,

*I can't believe it's been 20 years. 20 years since a normal cloudless September day changed everything. Changed all of us. Changed me. Not a day goes by that I don't think of you. That I don't miss you. Every time I go to Yankee Stadium, eat chicken parm, listen to U2, or see a black BMW I think of you. And every time I see a dark-haired, short, 25 year-old confident, fearless, cocky dude with the biggest smile on the planet, I miss you. (Sorry for the short comment but you know it's true!). I miss the brother you were and I miss the brother that you would have been. My two sons would have loved you—and you them! Chris shares your live-every-day-to-its-fullest mentality and Nicky your unwavering confidence and cheeky smile.*



*As you know, I am one of the ones left behind. Two brothers. Same profession. Same company. One in New York that day, one in London. Not only did I lose you, I lost all of you. Pepe, Chris, Timmy, Tim, Keith, Andy, Teddy, Phil, Rob. The list goes on. I miss them all. I try to honor all of you every day by being the best friend, dad, husband, uncle and person I can be. I also give thanks to the one bright spot from that horrendous day: that Daddy got out of the building.*

*Heather and I have a mantra from a poem written by Anya Garcia, an American Airlines flight attendant, who lost her entire crew on AAL flight 11 that day: "Make it Count." For you, for them, for everyone who lost their lives that day, we try to make every day and everything we do count.*

Love,  
Jordan