Founder’s Message

Thanksgiving is our favorite holiday at Flawless, with Valentine’s Day being a close second. When I think of Thanksgiving, I think of “cornucopia,” which in Greek mythology was a magical goat’s horn that gave its possessors whatever they wished for, in great abundance. The words that come to mind are “overflowing,” and “stuffed to the brim.” At Flawless, we are filled with gratitude for being blessed with this magic horn all year long.

Why is Thanksgiving our favorite holiday? It is a gift that informs everything we do. We are grateful for the inspiration our children and adults work with, source, gratitude for the privilege to serve, and gratitude for our donors and volunteers who share our passion and vision. Finally, we are grateful for our board members and advisors who steadfastly hold space for it all, propelling us forward, and constantly allowing for a greater reach, both fiscally and structurally.

One of our core missions is to bring a sense of warmth, connection, and home to children, particularly those with emotional and behavioral challenges. Today at Flawless, we are filled (or shall we say stuffed) with gratitude as we reflect on the joy of serving Thanksgiving dinner at the Pioneer Special School for 350 children and their family members. As part of a team which provided this meal—which for some guests was their only hot meal of the year, I was reminded of the power of our work. The atmosphere was calm, full and peaceful, a small miracle and manifestation of our goal to nourish the bodies, minds and hearts of our children.

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Janine: Thank you so much for the donation. It was so generous of you. Was it your parents’ idea to donate a portion of the sales of your toy/book sale to charity or yours?

Janine: Yes, this is a big and very common issue. One in five kids will have a mental health diagnosis by the age of 18.

Miles: Wow. That is a big problem. Kids: we are the next generation. This could affect the world. We have to look at the genetics. How is this happening? Is it molecules in the mothers’ womb, or is it just lifestyle?

Janine: It is complicated and a combination of a lot of factors—biography, genetics, environment, societal issues.

Miles: Does Flawless do research or help with daily lifestyle, improving lives?

Janine: We do both. We are involved with a doctor at Harvard who has come up with a really weak model to solve problems while collaborating with kids. We help promote his work and research.

Janine: Great ideas. Miles, we really appreciate everything you are doing. Is there anything you want to say as we close?

Miles: Yes, this is a great cause. Everyone should get involved. People should stop being so egocentric and get off the couch and do something. I feel better now that I’ve donated money. It’s important for everyone to do this.

We were thrilled to have so many friends in media, music, and sports come out to support our Perfection Party. Having Jim Watkins (WPIX News) kick the night off with his inspiring speech to listening to Dan Zanes serenade us at the end of the evening - we couldn’t be more grateful. An extra - special thanks to Al Roker for narrating our Flawless DVD and to Conan O’Brien and Darryl Strawberry for all of the special autographed merchandise.

Join us in creating miracles for the children of Flawless!
It is the heart-felt generosity of our various supporters and corporate sponsors that has enabled Flawless to create such a significant impact in a very brief time.

**Burlington Tower**
The Burlington Tower is one of our greatest supporters. They recently organized a very successful Thanksgiving food drive and they are not skipping a beat with a holiday gift drive on its way. A member of the Pioneer Staff shared with us that they really appreciate the support of the Burlington Tower. “We are so thankful for the furniture donations. People don’t realize that the furniture serves two purposes — when a child takes time to process something on a coach with a therapist or needs a place to decompress, it is so much more therapeutic to sit on a nice, intact piece of furniture over something that is broken and has foam coming out of it. These gifts mean so much.”

**Warner Pacific College**
Flawless also has an important partnership with the folks at Warner Pacific College, where we meet weekly and create fundraising and service projects. The college students have already organized clean up days, work projects, and an astonishing Halloween fundraiser. Warner Pacific is committed to Flawless’ pilot program at the Pioneer Special School and genuinely shares our vision of care for this community.

**The Movement Center**
We are very excited about our collaboration with The Movement Center to provide more yoga and meditation classes for the adults and children in our Flawless community. Jennie Ehrlinger, a special education teacher and yoga instructor, has joined our team, helping to create specialized trainings and classes for the children and adults of Flawless.

**National Day of Service**
When President Obama designated September 11th as a National Day of Service, many businesses joined our cause by donating a portion of their proceeds to Flawless. A huge thank you to Stella & Dot, Lulu Beauty, Bob’s African Wines, Alice Hair, The Little Green Grocer, SE Grind, and Blue Sky Wellness.

**Alice Hair**
Alice Hair (www.alicehair.com) has been such a good friend to Flawless. We were so touched when Caroline (salesman) donated all of her wages from the National Day of Service. When we chatted with Caroline about her generosity she said, “Alice has been so passionate about Flawless that it is contagious. When she told us we would do something as a company on September 11th, I decided to do everything. It was the least I could do… We were all so touched at the Perfection Party. I cried, watching the Flawless video and seeing what you have done with the teenage girls. I am a Mom, I can’t imagine struggling every day the way that these parents do. This hit home. I truly believe in Flawless. The love continues on in this holiday season. On December 5th, at 8pm, Bikram Yoga South Slope in Brooklyn, NY (bikramyogasouthslope.com) will be holding a special benefit class for Flawless. Thank you to all our extraordinary corporate sponsors!”

**Chat with Dr. Stuart Ablon**
**Director of Think:Kids, Mass. General and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School**

One of our most exciting projects is our collaboration with Dr. Ablon of Think:Kids (www.thinkkids.org). We sponsored a conference with Dr. Ablon at Oregon Health Science University in August and had 100 physicians and mental health professionals in attendance. We are currently funding the production of a training video from that conference which will educate people all over the world about this revolutionary approach. Our video interview of Dr. Ablon was just posted on YouTube and has been viewed by over 1,300 people. Below is an excerpt from this informational interview.

Janine: So, Dr. Ablon, Collaborative Problem Solving, in a nutshell… what is it?

Dr. Ablon: Well, in a nutshell, it’s actually a completely different mentality for thinking about who challenging kids are, and when I say challenging kids what I mean is, kids who can be very aggressive or explosive, but also kids who can be impulsive as well. We’re talking about a really wide range of kids who have trouble tolerating frustration, problem solving, and being flexible. And they respond in all kinds of ways to these challenges that we adults are not so wild about. And the reality is that CPS brings a dramatic change in terms of what we make of it and as a result, what to do about it.

Janine: What’s the philosophy behind Collaborative Problem Solving?

Dr. Ablon: This is an approach that has a philosophy behind it, which is the anchor when the going gets tough. And the philosophy is very simple. “It’s kids do well if they can”, which is just to say that if a kid could do well, he would do well. If he’s not doing well, something has got to be standing in his way, and it’s up to us to figure out what is getting in his way and how we can help.

**STAY TUNED FOR INFO ON:**

- **Perfection Party, NYC, Spring 2010**
- **Events with Dr. Ablon in NYC**
- **Rod and Racquet**
- **Fly fishing and Tennis Tournament, Memberbase Springs, Colorado**
- **Summer 2010**

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**“It Takes A Village”**

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