



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES



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IMPACT

2017

Meet Jennifer Stratton, the Lewis Hines Fellow

Q&A

Last fall, Jennifer Stratton began a fellowship at Children's Aid and Family Services from the Lewis Hines Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. The Lewis Hines Documentary Fellows Program "connects the talents of young documentarians with the resources and needs of organizations serving marginalized communities around the world." An accomplished photographer, animator and documentarian, Jenny has been working on two projects with our clients, which she discusses in the following article.

Q. Why did you choose Children's Aid and Family Services for your fellowship?

A. The agency's mission spoke to me on a personal and professional level. I also have a personal connection to New Jersey.

Q. What are your observations about the agency and its clients?

A. There's so much heart here. I've been taken aback by the dedication and passion of the staff. Everyone cares a lot about what they do. I've become very connected to the agency's clients and developed meaningful relationships. I've attended birthday parties and baptisms. I think of them as family.

Q. What projects are you working on?

A. I'm working on a mobile audio project with some

of the younger children and teenagers living in the group foster homes. I built a professional sound booth and we are using professional microphones. The kids are learning how to operate sound and recording equipment as well as how to conduct an interview and conceive and produce an audio story. They are involved in every aspect of the process, from conception to editing.



The kids have interviewed staff members and each other, which helps them investigate their own world in a different way. And using a microphone is empowering for them. Often they feel as if they haven't been heard; a microphone gives them a voice to express their viewpoints.

I'm also working with the young mothers at Zoe's Place on a collaborative photography/creative writing project which is centered on the idea

of motherhood.

Finally, I've worked on smaller communications projects for the agency, including a video for the Disability Support Services program and I photographed guests at the spring gala.

Q. What has surprised you during your time at Children's Aid?

A. The resiliency of the people that Children's Aid serves has reinforced my faith in the human spirit. They have endured so much trauma and yet they persevere.

Continued on page 6

"Mother, Me," an exhibit featuring the photographs of the mothers at Zoe's Place, who have been under the guidance of Jenny Stratton, will be at The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, 113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ on Wed., Nov. 1 from 6-8:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

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Message from the President

Welcome to this year's issue of "Impact." In it you'll read how your support is making an enormous difference to those we serve.

This year has been a busy one for us so far. Our Medical Services & Advocacy Center evolved to better serve the needs of our children, who have complex medical, physical, developmental and mental health needs. The Center moved to our location in Fair Lawn, which also houses our psychiatrist, clinicians and staff that regularly interact with the children. Having these services located together enables increased collaboration, communication and healthcare coordination. Additionally, we invested in an electronic health records system to ensure increased efficiency and better coordinated care for our clients, and the system "went live" recently.

Our Disability Support Services program recently opened its seventh community residence in Mahwah. This vital program emphasizes community engagement and our clients are responding to the high quality of care they receive. Another need for adults with intellec-

tual and developmental disabilities is day programming. We will soon be offering this service in a refurbished, barrier-free space in our Paramus administrative offices.

Finally, The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources received funding from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to launch The Opioid Overdose Recovery Program to help address the serious opioid and heroin crisis in Bergen County. You can read more about this vital program on page 4.

We couldn't do this life changing work without your commitment. Thank you for all you do!



Jerry Binney, President & CEO

Preparing for the future

The goal of our staff when working with children in foster care is two-fold: to help them heal from the trauma they've experienced and also prepare them for an independent future. To that end, our Life Skills program provides opportunities for them to not only learn practical skills, but gain confidence, practice essential communication skills and explore potential careers. "Life skills are taught to the children every day, whether it's coaching them to say 'thank you' to enhance their relationships or helping them to understand how to use public transportation," says Shanita Talton, Youth Development Specialist. "We aim to ensure they have the skills they need to manage a smooth transition into adulthood and also find out what career interests them."

Recently, teenagers in our care attended improvisational workshops that focused on conflict resolution. They played the roles of student and teacher and cashier and customer, all engaged in disputes. By the second session of the improv series, some of the quieter teens, such as Anna*, actually volunteered to "star" in a workshop. "These exercises teach the children confidence, to think on their feet and stay alert

and focused," says Shanita. "They also reinforce the skills that the children learn in therapy."

"Interviewing Skills" was another recent class, led by Jennifer Stratton, a Lewis Hine fellow from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. The young women in attendance learned audio storytelling techniques and how to ask open-ended questions in order to start a conversation. Paulina*, one of the participants, said that the class "helped us to know more about each other. The questions made us really think about ourselves and our partners."



Interviewing Skills workshop participants

Children's Aid and Family Services is seeking volunteers to lead life skills workshops, especially in the following areas: How to Lower Utilities and Save Energy, Understanding and Securing a Student Loan, Budget Planning, Music Instruction, Trade/Vocational careers and Entrepreneurship. We are also seeking college students, managers, actors/actresses to discuss their experiences. If you have expertise in these areas, please contact Melinda Iannarone-Geraghty, Community Relations Manager, at 201-740-7012.

*Names changed to protect client confidentiality.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES:

Moving Forward



Carolyn, Kristen and Mary Rose who live in our newest community home.

Construction is moving along quickly on Children's Aid and Family Services' new day habilitation program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The renovated space at our Paramus administrative offices will provide supports and services to 12 – 18 individuals from 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. The new program will encourage life skills development, such as laundry, budgeting, grocery shopping, cooking and organizing personal items. The program will also emphasize social skills development and community engagement through fun and educational day trips, such as visits to Liberty Science Center and Liberty State Park. To help increase confidence and independence, participants also will have weekly errands in the grocery store, bank and post office.

In addition, we will also provide an after-school respite program for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It will operate Monday – Friday from 3:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. year-round and will emphasize social skill development in a safe, engaging and nurturing environment. Children will practice sharing, taking turns, listening, staying on task, as well as play games and participate in arts and crafts. These activities will enhance their motor, sensory and social skills development.

"There is an enormous need for these services in the northern New Jersey area," says Donna Kennedy, Senior Vice President, Disability Support Services. "We are thrilled to be helping more vulnerable children and

adults to become more independent and reach their full potential. The after-school respite program will especially provide much-needed support to their families."

Currently, it is estimated that as many as 5,000 adults are on a state waiting list for services. In addition to providing essential day programming, our Disability Support Services program recently opened its seventh community residence, thanks in large part to the generosity of our donors. This home, our first dedicated to women, provides round-the-clock support to four residents. Similar to our other community homes, the

emphasis on personal independence, recreational activities and community engagement will help our clients to live richer, fuller lives.

Special thanks to the William Randolph Hearst Foundation for providing the funding for the space renovation of the new day habilitation and after-school respite programs. For more

information on any of these services, please call Donna Kennedy, Senior Vice President, Disability Support Services, at 201-261-2800.



Congratulations to longtime foster parents Pam and Ed Brady, who were honored at our "Nurturers Among Us" event. Pictured (l. – r.): Jerry Binney, President & CEO; Pam and Ed Brady; and longtime foster parent Shea Campbell.

Innovative Recovery Supports

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources has launched critical services to help the community in response to the serious opioid and heroin crisis in Bergen County. This year, the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, awarded The Center funding to launch the Opioid Overdose Recovery Program to help guide survivors of opioid overdoses into treatment. According to the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, there were 42 overdose deaths in 2014 in Bergen County; this number more than doubled to 87 in 2015 and increased to 98 in 2016.

When an opioid overdose occurs, first responders administer Narcan (Naloxone), which works by blocking the effects of opioids and reversing an overdose. Although Narcan has saved thousands of lives, sadly many survivors are trapped in a cycle of repeated overdoses and trips to the emergency room. The Opioid Overdose Recovery Program is comprised of Recovery Specialists, who themselves are in long-term recovery. They meet survivors of overdoses at all Bergen County hospital emergency rooms. The Recovery Specialists work to guide survivors into treatment and also provide essential follow-up services, connecting survivors with treatment and support services.

The Center also was part of "Operation Helping Hand," a collaboration led by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office. During this weeklong effort, individuals arrested by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, primarily for heroin possession, were provided with the opportunity to speak to a Recovery Specialist (the offer of help was in addition to any criminal charges). The results of Operation Helping Hand were impressive, with 22 of 43 individuals arrested entering five-day detox programs.

Support for Families

The opioid and heroin crisis is also dramatically affecting the families of those with substance use disorders, who are often overwhelmed and don't know where to turn for help. To help support families, The Center engaged Robert Myers, Ph.D., to deliver training in the Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) model, which was presented to our staff, therapists, clinicians and families from the community. Dr. Myers, who created and developed the CRAFT approach, has nearly 40 years' experience in the field of addiction. An evidence-based protocol, CRAFT is designed to help loved ones learn techniques to guide individuals with substance use disorders into treatment.



Thanks to Boiling Springs Savings Bank for its generous donation of \$10,000 to the Opioid Overdose Recovery Program. (l. – r.): Andy Jones, senior vice president, Boiling Springs Savings Bank; Robert Stillwell, President & CEO, Boiling Springs Savings Bank; Ellen Elias, Senior Vice President; Elaine Cordova, OORP supervisor and Jerry Binney, President & CEO.

A CRAFT-trained therapist works with a family member of a substance user to change the home environment by learning to communicate with their loved one in a non-accusatory, more positive way. For example, instead of saying "You are drunk again" a loved one might say "I get scared when you drink too much" or "I want to be with you, but I can't until you're sober."

CRAFT also emphasizes that family members of substance users must take care of themselves, whether by going to the gym, taking a yoga class or making time for meditation, to help them become more resilient. The CRAFT approach has been successful in helping family members to guide their loved ones into treatment. Numerous studies indicate that when family members are trained in and implement CRAFT, there is an average of a 70% success rate in getting their loved one into treatment.

Elaine Cordova, Supervisor for the Recovery Support Services, is currently training to become a CRAFT-certified therapist. "A large percentage of the time, there is a parent, spouse, or other family member desperately trying to get a person who is abusing drugs or alcohol into treatment," she says. "There is a huge need for an approach such as CRAFT that helps reduce anxiety and anger by changing the environment."

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources is seeking Recovery Specialists. Applicants must be three years in recovery and be available for three 12 hour shifts per month. Full training provided. Please call Elaine Cordova at 201-740-7150 for more information.

Mentoring: Being There for a Child or Teen

The Mentoring Program of Children's Aid and Family Services matches children ages 12 – 19 with trained adult mentors. These children may live in group or individual foster homes or with their birth families. "Our mentors are responsible, caring, adult role models with whom the children can build a bridge of trust," says Marcia Fisher, Administrator of Adoption and Permanency Services. "The relationship helps to create much-needed stability and consistency in a child's life."

Research demonstrates that the presence of a stable and positive role model in the life of a child is an essential element for positive and successful youth develop-

ment. Studies confirm that mentored youth have better school attendance; a better chance of going on to higher education; and better attitudes toward school. Additionally, in terms of health and safety, mentoring appears to help prevent substance abuse and reduce some negative youth behaviors.

We provide comprehensive training to prepare you for your role as a mentor, as well as a mentor support group where you can ask questions and share your experiences in a warm and welcoming environment. For more information, please call Marcia Fisher at 201-740-7038.

Volunteer Power

Children's Aid and Family Services was founded by volunteers nearly 120 years ago who wanted to change the lives of vulnerable children. Today, we have more than 1,000 volunteers who help us in a myriad of ways. We are highlighting a few of the terrific corporate volunteers who are always ready to help out, from reading to the children in our Turrell Child Care & Early Learning Center to painting and beautifying our group homes to helping us prepare mailings to our supporters. We are so grateful to everyone who shares their talents and brightens the lives of those we serve.

We would love for you to share your talents with us. We are in need of enterprising individuals or groups to hold community drives. Our children are especially in need of toiletries. To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, please visit cafsnj.org or call Melinda Iannarone-Geraghty, Community Relations Manager, at 201-261-2800.



A volunteer from Target helps students at the Turrell Center to craft beads.



Our children in foster care have fun at their annual Field Day, thanks to the help of volunteers from Suez.



Volunteers from Samsung Electronics America gardening at one of our group homes for children in foster care.

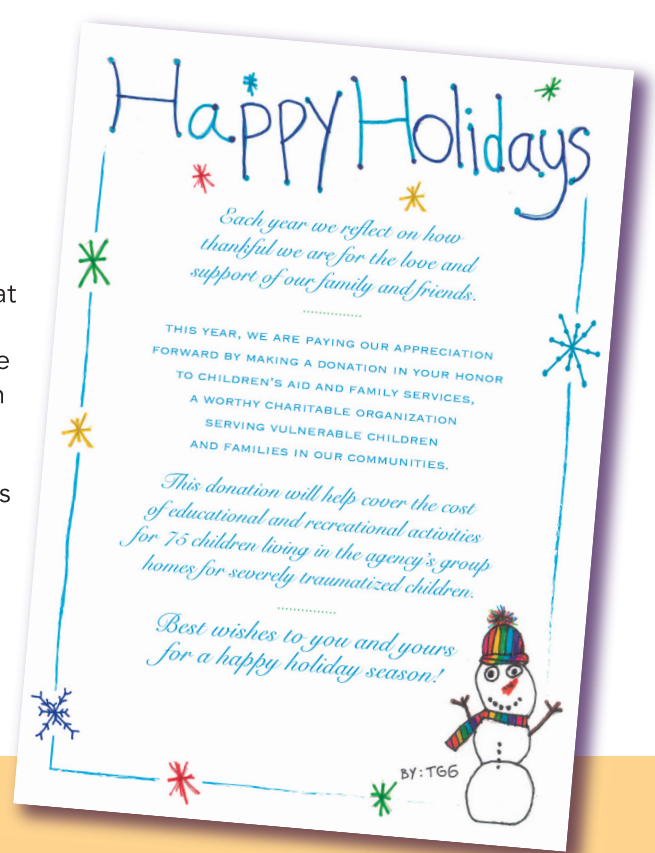


Volunteers from Benjamin Moore & Co. carefully edge a bedroom in one of our group homes.

TWICE AS NICE

HOLIDAY CARDS

Children's Aid and Family Services is offering holiday cards that will make your holiday season Twice as Nice! They will help raise funds for the agency's programs and, at the same time, give you the opportunity to make a gift in the true spirit of the season to your family and friends with a donation to the agency in their honor. We are offering beautiful holiday cards as well as card inserts that you can use in your own holiday cards. The artwork was created by one of our children living in our foster care group home. There are other card designs available too. Please contact Julie Grapin, Corporate and Community Relations Officer, at 201-740-7103 for more information.



Grants UPDATE

Children's Aid and Family Services wishes to thank the many generous organizations and foundations that provided vital support to its programs for vulnerable children and families this past year.

- Myron and Elaine Adler Foundation
- CME Group Community Foundation
- Gift of Life America Fund
- Elizabeth Givner Education Grant
- Greater Newark Holiday Fund
- Grovo
- Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey
- William Randolph Hearst Foundation
- Horizon Foundation for New Jersey
- The Hyde & Watson Foundation
- The Kaplen Foundation
- The George Link, Jr. Foundation
- National Mah Jongg League Foundation
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
- Orange Orphan Society
- OritaniBank Charitable Foundation
- PSE&G
- Winifred M. and George P. Pitkin Foundation
- The Price Family Foundation
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- The Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation
- St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
- TD Charitable Foundation
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- The TJX Foundation
- The Valley Hospital Foundation
- The Edward W. & Stella C. Van Houten Memorial Fund



Meet Jennifer Stratton *continued*

Also, so much of the staff has been here for decades and deals with painful and complicated issues everyday with resilience as well. At the end of the day, there is a diversity of trauma that is incredible. The scope of work is quite vast.

Q. What do you hope the clients gain from the projects?

A. I hope they enjoy the process — that it is fun, enlightening and meaningful to them. I hope they feel empowered by their work and gain a new way of looking

at their surroundings and communicating their ideas.

Q. What have been the highlights of your fellowship?

A. When the kids see me and yell, "Hi, Miss Jenny!" I melt. I feel like I'm part of the family. During my time here, one of the young women at Zoe's Place had her baby. That was incredibly special for me.

Overall, I'm so proud of the creative work that the children and young mothers have produced. I've learned just as much from them as they have learned from me. It's been a gift to be a part of it.

Medical Services & Advocacy Center Update

The vast majority of our children in foster care have histories of severe trauma, abuse and neglect. They have also experienced multiple moves and foster care placements. As a result, their access to medical care has been fragmented and inconsistent. Consequently, their medical, physical, developmental and mental health needs are complex and require a comprehensive and holistic approach.

To better serve our children in foster care, the Medical Services & Advocacy Center was recently moved to our Fair Lawn location, which also houses our psychiatrist, clinicians and staff that regularly interact with the children. "Having all of these services located together will enable increased collaboration, communication and healthcare coordination among our medical and behavioral health staff," says Jerry Binney, President & CEO of Children's Aid and Family Services.

Additionally, Dr. Hugh Bases, a pediatrician with offices in Midland Park and New York City, has joined The Center as its Medical Director. Dr. Bases has been a practicing physician for more than 20 years, and earned his M.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr. Bases is Board Certified by the American Board of



Wayne Yankus, M.D., member, Children's Aid and Family Services' Board of Trustees, Jerry Binney, President & CEO and Hugh Bases, M.D., Medical Director.

Pediatrics in General Pediatrics and Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at NYU Langone Medical Center and treats a range of developmental and behavioral disorders.

Summer Fun

Our children had an extra special summer, thanks to our generous donors. They visited the Statue of Liberty, attended basketball camp, took therapeutic horseback riding lessons and celebrated together during the agency's annual Field Day festivities.





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Visit us online at www.cafsnj.org
 Call us at 201.261.2800

SAVE THE DATE

Our annual Evening of Wine and Food is:

Date: **Friday, October 13, 2017**
 Time: **7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.**
 Place: **Indian Trail Club**
 830 Franklin Lake Road
 Franklin Lakes, NJ
 Honorees: **Kathy & Mike Azzara**
 M&T Bank



This fabulous evening will feature a tasting of wines specially selected by Chuck Russo of Carlo Russo's Wine & Spirit World of Ho-Ho-Kus. You'll enjoy unique hors d'oeuvres, carving stations, a delicious buffet, open bar and elegant desserts. Join us for an exciting silent auction, and raffles for your chance to win great prizes! Be sure to save the date! Sponsorship details are available at www.cafsnj.org.

Our **Mission** is to preserve, protect, and when needed, provide families. Motivated by compassion and in partnership with the community, we make positive lasting differences in the lives of those we serve. We provide high quality, innovative services to children and their families that advance social, educational and emotional development and well-being.