



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES



Building Brighter Futures
Since 1899

IMPACT

2019

Introducing STRIVE: A Life of Possibilities

There's a pressing need in our community for high-quality services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Children's Aid and Family Services has responded to this need by opening the STRIVE Day Habilitation Program and After-School Respite. The focus of both programs is to help people with disabilities lead lives of possibilities, with an emphasis on increased independence and engagement in the community.

STRIVE Day Program

At the age of 21, school ends for people with developmental disabilities and quality day programs play a vital role in their continued development. Thanks to generous funding from The William Randolph Hearst and The Alfiero and Lucia Palestroni Foundations, we renovated space at our administration building to create a modern, sunny and spacious environment for our STRIVE program. The program honors personal development and choice for its members, and our staff helps them to develop independence and social and life skills. They cook and bake in the commercial kitchen, host special holiday parties such as Cinco de Mayo, attend art classes, learn money management and skills such as self-advocacy. One of our members even teaches a Zumba class every week.

There is a strong emphasis on community engagement and our members go into the community with their



Michael loves to paint at STRIVE



Angie baking for St. Patrick's Day



A fundraiser for a Bronx Zoo trip

peers and agency staff every day; some of them even volunteer at the Bergen County Zoo and the Fair Lawn Library. They also spend time in the recently opened Social Café playing games and forging stronger relationships. Sam is a member of STRIVE, and he is excited to attend the program. Sam has cerebral palsy and was housebound just a few years ago. In 2016, he moved into one of our community homes and became a member of STRIVE last spring. "My other day program wasn't social and I was on the computer all day," he says. "At STRIVE, I have friends. We go to the park, the mall, to restaurants, and I volunteer at the library. My life is better now."

STRIVE After-School Respite

STRIVE also offers an After-School Respite program, which provides a safe, encouraging and nurturing environment for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The goal of the program is to provide social and recreational experiences in a group setting to encourage each child to reach beyond his or her own — and other's — expectations of what he or she can achieve. STRIVE After-School Respite is open Monday – Friday, 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. year round.

For more information on STRIVE Day Program and After-School Respite, please contact Melinda Iannarone-Geraghty, Director, Adult Day Programs and Supports at 201.740.7161.



DAY PROGRAM • AFTER SCHOOL RESPITE • COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Message from the President and CEO

Welcome to the latest issue of **Impact!** It's been a busy and productive year at Children's Aid and Family Services. As you will read in our cover story, we opened the STRIVE Day Habilitation Program for Adults and After-School Respite for Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, thanks to funding from the William Randolph Hearst and Alfiero & Lucia Palestroni Foundations. The program is in great demand and growing quickly. Our members are busy every day with activities that truly engage them in the community and help them to be independent. Our members are enjoying our newly created "Social Café" and arts and craft space, and we honored STRIVE member Danny Bloch at our Volunteer Event for his volunteer efforts at the Fair Lawn Library and Bergen County Zoo!

Our commitment to vulnerable children remains strong. A 12-year-old girl in our foster care was recently adopted by her foster parents. She was in 10 different placements before joining this family! Upon placement with them, she felt at home and has made wonderful progress both in school and socially. We are fortunate to have dedicated foster parents who take their roles to heart! We are redoubling our efforts to find more loving foster families to help our children overcome trauma and build brighter futures. Of course, if you'd like to learn more about becoming a foster parent or

know someone who would, please contact our family recruiter at 201.261.2800.

You can also read about the vital prevention work by The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources in this issue of **Impact**. When survivors of opioid overdoses, who have been revived by Narcan, arrive at the hospital, our recovery specialists are there to meet them and give them support at this critical moment. They provide linkages to detox, treatment and support, all while saving lives. The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources has helped over 800 people in recovery support since 2017.

Next year marks Children's Aid and Family Services' 120th anniversary! Thanks to you, we have helped thousands of children and families to live better lives. Thank you for all you do.

Joanne E. Mandry
President and CEO



Joanne E. Mandry, President and CEO



Calling All Volunteers

We have several opportunities for children, families and groups — including Girl/Boy Scouts, schools, corporate groups, rotaries — to lead drives to help those we serve. Please contact Christina Diomedede at 201.740.7104 or CDiomedede@cfsnj.org for more information.

The following items are urgently needed:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Diapers (sizes 3, 4, 5) | Baby wipes |
| Shampoo | Conditioner |
| Body wash | Deodorant |
| Toothpaste | Toothbrushes |

Helping Older Children Find a Family

Sadly, 60% of children in foster care must wait two – five years to be adopted. Usually, these children are considered “old” by the age of nine, but there are benefits to adopting an older child, such as forming a relationship with them before the adoption and knowing their histories. Last year, Children’s Aid and Family Services’ recruitment team worked with 39 children to help them find families — or in the event they are not adopted — adults they can rely on as they leave foster care at age 18.

Jeanne Dunn, Adoption and Youth Development Specialist, and the other members of the recruitment team meet with each child regularly. They work to build a trusting relationship with the children by listening to them, finding common ground and sharing fun activities. “Since the children we work with are older, it’s important they have an active voice in the process of finding the right family for themselves,” Jeanne says. “Together we go through every past connection they’ve had: previous foster parents, family friends, a mentor or coach.” Another part of the recruitment process is “Match” events, where families meet waiting children in a fun environment filled with activities to help everyone relax.

“The families we work with tend to be open minded and want to give something back,” Jeanne says. “They have a good sense of self and understand that adoption is about the child and his or her needs.



I trust John. He’s taught me things I didn’t know. He is patient with me. If there is a problem, he explains it to me. He communicates well. I’m excited and relieved that he adopted me.

— Marcus

“Since our children have been through so much trauma, attaching to a family can be very scary,” says Jeanne. “There can be a lot of fear of making one mistake and it following them long after. It’s important for adoptive parents of older children to help them understand that their past doesn’t have to define them.”



John and Marcus

Adopted at 18

John is a longtime mentor with Children’s Aid and Family Services.

He met 18-year-old Marcus four years ago when he became his mentor. Marcus had been in foster care for 11 years, and as he moved to five different foster homes, John was the constant in his life. They spent time getting together, going bowling, playing pool and basketball. After John learned that Marcus’s goal was to be adopted two years ago, he decided to become his adoptive father. “At first, I thought I hope he gets adopted by a nice family,” says John. “Then my thoughts morphed to nobody could care for Marcus the way I could, or nurture him the way I could.”

Marcus moved into John’s home 10 months before the adoption finalized. He is studying to be an auto mechanic at technical school and is learning essential life skills, including cooking, laundry and banking skills. He’s become more confident and independent as a result. “I am simply here to guide him as he makes his own decisions and learns from them,” says John.

“I trust John. He’s taught me things I didn’t know. He is patient with me. If there is a problem, he explains it to me. He communicates well. I’m excited and relieved that he adopted me,” says Marcus.

You can help a child! To learn more about adopting or becoming a mentor, contact Marcia Fisher at MFisher@cafsnj.org or 201.740.7038.



Marcus’s 18th birthday

Prevention Efforts in Our Community

Last year, The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources provided prevention education to more than 12,000 individuals in our community through its work with schools, families and coalitions. The goal of prevention is to delay the onset of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Research indicates that teenagers who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to experience problems related to drinking than individuals who begin after 21 years of age. However, strong family bonds can help delay adolescent experimentation with alcohol and other drugs.

Strong Families Spend Time Together

The Strengthening Families Program, facilitated by The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, is a seven to 14-week program that helps parents learn more effective parenting skills and enhance communication within families. Research shows that teenagers who frequently eat dinner with their families are less likely to drink, smoke cigarettes, or use other drugs.

There are separate programs for families with children ages 6 – 11 and 10 – 14. The program starts with a free family dinner and includes babysitting for any younger siblings. During the first hour of each session, parents and children meet separately with facilitators to work on specific skills. During the second hour they come together for fun activities designed to engage the whole family.

“In all my years of working with parents and families, I have never come across a parent who received the ‘big book’ of what to do in every situation with their child,”

says Stephanie Drag, Director, School and Family Services. “This program builds on the existing strengths of the family so they become even stronger.”

Community Coalitions

Another prevention strategy employed by The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources is coalition building through both the Bergen County Prevention Coalition and Garfield Prevention Coalition. The coalitions have connected multiple sectors of the community, including law enforcement, healthcare, parents, and schools, to help change public policy and community attitudes toward substance use. According to CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America), 91% of coalitions are effective at reducing population-level substance abuse problems.

There is an emphasis on engaging young people in substance abuse prevention efforts. For instance, the Garfield Prevention Coalition collaborated with the Partnership for Drug-Free New Jersey, the Bergen County Prevention Coalition and the Garfield Police Department on

Knock-Out Opioid Abuse Day. Approximately 35 students from Garfield High School, walked through local neighborhoods, hanging door hangers with important information about opioids at residents’ homes. “The opioid crisis that has taken up such a great amount of media attention in the past few years is very important, and a true public health emergency, but it didn’t happen in a vacuum,” says Shelley Stuart, Director, Coalition and Community Services. “It’s important to take a holistic approach to addressing substance use and misuse.”



Recent graduates of the Strengthening Families program

Family Support Group for Women

Do you love someone who is struggling with alcohol or drugs?

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources is hosting a free support group for women dealing with a family member struggling with the misuse of alcohol or drugs.

The support group philosophies and course materials are based on the Community Reinforcement and Family Training model (CRAFT). The program is funded by Women United in Philanthropy and is offered free-of-charge at locations in Bergen County. For more information about times and locations, call 201.740.7069.

In Memory of Natalie Hamilton



The library at NJ ARCH (New Jersey Adoption Resource Clearing House — www.njarch.org) was recently dedicated to the memory of longtime employee Natalie Hamilton, who passed away in December 2016.

An adult adoptee and adoptive mother and grandmother, Natalie joined the agency in 2003. She served as the primary warm line worker, and her soft voice and strong sense of empathy helped callers feel that they had contacted the right place for adoption information.

Natalie almost singlehandedly created the NJ ARCH library, which today contains over 1,500 books and videos covering a wide range of adoption, foster care and kinship topics. A prolific reader, she reviewed books in a column entitled "Natalie's Library Corner" for the NJ ARCH newsletter. Natalie was also honored as a Congressional "Angel in Adoption" at a ceremony in Washington, DC in 2008.

Natalie's family from California, Canada and NJ joined agency staff for the dedication of The Natalie Hamilton Memorial Library. "Natalie was one of the most compassionate, kind and caring people you would ever meet," says Dana Fried, Assistant Director. "She was passionate and knowledgeable about adoption and all the issues related to it and she touched a lot of lives. We wanted to honor her outstanding legacy."



Maschio's Food Services, Inc. catered the barbecue

Zoe's Place

The young moms and their babies living at Zoe's Place celebrated the end of the summer with our supporters at a fun barbecue.

Many thanks to Maschio's Food Services, Inc. for catering the event and to all who attended!



Members of the Woodlea/Path I Advisory Council
Delia Peretta, Rebecca Golembiski, Mary Krugman, Trudi Dial and Joanne Mandry, President and CEO



Volunteers from The Depot Gift Store in Midland Park
Linda Mendrys, Holly Maschio, Beth Sciano, Maureen Grassi, Mae Mahonchack, Eileen Negrycz and Karin Vanuga.

Helping Families Heal

Q&A

Children's Aid and Family Services has 30 programs that help children. In this issue of **Impact**, we are highlighting two of these programs, the Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program (TSVP) and Wrap-Around Intensive Services for Families (WISE).

TSVP (Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program)

Scott Nelson, Director of TSVP and Family Counseling Services, answers some questions about the Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program.

Q. What is TSVP?

A. Therapeutic Supervised Visitation typically is a court-ordered service that allows a parent who doesn't have custody of his or her child to meet with a minor child in a safe environment supervised by one of our team of clinicians.

Q. How many children have been helped by this program?

A. Since 2009, we've helped over 600 children. The kids usually enjoy the visits as they've typically not seen one of the parents in some time. We supervise visits anywhere from the agency's office in Fair Lawn to trampoline parks and Chuck E. Cheese.

Q. What is the goal of TSVP?

A. The purpose of it is to establish or maintain a relationship between the parent and child with the goal of eventual reunification between the two of them. The process can take three months to a year. During that time, we observe the relationships and how the parent and child interact. Sometimes there is anger or feelings of abandonment on the child's part. Often, the parent relates to the child as a friend and he or she needs to learn limit setting and establishing boundaries with the child.

After each visit, we meet with the parent for individual sessions and determine what can be done to improve the relationship.

Q. What are the main causes of parent/child separation?

A. Generally mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence as well as custody issues related to divorce. We will recommend additional services that families may need, such

as anger management, substance abuse treatment and recovery support.

Q. Do you have a story of the impact?

A. We worked with a family that was affected by substance abuse. The children were removed from the parents' care and were living with a foster family. The parents worked very hard to regain custody of the children. They each completed day substance abuse treatment programs and worked opposite shifts so one parent would always be home with the children. The TSVP visits progressed well and after eight months, the children were allowed overnight visits with their parents. They really missed their mom and dad and were thrilled to spend time with them. Eventually, the parents regained custody of the children. This job is very rewarding because we see families make progress together as they heal and grow.

WISE (Wrap Around Intensive Services for Families)

The WISE program is a partnership of Children's Aid and Family Services and Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center in Newark. Lisa Duff, Director, Pre and Post-Adoptive Counseling Services & Clinical Services, discusses the impact of the WISE program below.

Q. What is the WISE program?

A. WISE is an evidence-based program that was developed by Dr. Barbara Bonner and her colleagues at Oklahoma University's Center for Child Abuse and Neglect to help families with children ages 8 – 15 who have problems with sexual boundaries. It provides assessment, education, treatment and prevention to both the parents and the children. Families are in treatment for approximately 12 – 16 weeks. Each family participates in group counseling based on a comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum. Individual, family and peer group sessions are held as well.

Q. What is unique about the program?

A. The fact that a child acts out in this way is a sign that the entire family needs healing.

Most programs that address sexual behavior concerns are victim-focused. WISE works with all members of the family to ensure that the family environment is safe for everyone.

There is nothing else like this program that helps children who have behaved in a problematic way.



TSVP Team

Front Row L-R Marcia Fisher, Yamile Manotas, Rachel Perlman, Diane Belfi
Back Row, L-R Kaitlyn Personette, Scott Nelson, Jill DePeri, Eileen Caruso

Grants Update

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

BD
BRV Sharma Family Foundation
CME Group Community Foundation
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Edward W. & Stella C. Van Houten Memorial Fund
The Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation
Gift of Life America Fund
Greater Newark Holiday Fund
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St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
TD Charitable Foundation
Todd Ouida Children's Foundation
The Valley Hospital Foundation
The Wawa Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
Women United in Philanthropy
Yaw Paw Foundation



WISE Team

L-R Katherine Morales, WISE Intern, Krystal Banks, WISE Intern, Blaire Fuchs, Program Supervisor, Melissa South, Senior Clinician, Rose Moise, WISE Intern.

Q. How are parents helped?

A. We provide support and education to parents by helping them set rules and boundaries, increase supervision of their children and be more attentive to what is going on at home. We help both the children and parents communicate more effectively with one another and work to identify any underlying issues in the family that need to be addressed. The parents meet with one another as a group, separate from their children, and often they form connections and stay in touch. We see parents who have been in the program longer mentoring parents who are new to the group. Before graduating, every family needs to achieve specific benchmarks.

Q. How are the children helped?

A. The children we work with haven't shown predatory behavior but, unfortunately, they can be branded as a predator and experience stigma. The WISE Families Program diverts children from the juvenile justice system, works to prevent the placement of children into foster or residential care, and promotes healthy relationships and family well-being by treating the whole family and creating a safe environment for all family members.

The success rate of the program is 98% and we know it reduces the possibility of problematic behaviors in general. Because their behaviors are improving, there is less likelihood the children will be involved with juvenile justice in the future.

"The Wrap Around Intensive Services for Families program is one of the most effective programs that the agency delivers in terms of changing the direction and course of a child's life," says Rose Zeltser, Senior Vice President. "It has had a direct and powerful impact on the 200-plus families served. The boys are diverted from the juvenile justice system which can follow them for their lifetime, and their families are empowered and strengthened in understanding how to keep their children safe. We are proud of the success of the WISE program."

The WISE program is helping families and changing young lives. It is supported by philanthropy and in urgent need of donations. Please consider making a donation to this vital program at www.cafsnj.org.



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Call us at 201.261.2800



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Spring Gala

Join us as we celebrate 120 years of serving our community!
 For sponsorship information, please contact Edith Fiato
 at 201.740.7101 or EFiato@cafsnj.org.

Date **Thursday, March 28, 2019**
 Time **7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.**
 Place **Seasons, Washington Township, NJ**

Our **Mission** is to strengthen families and empower individuals — children and adults alike – to reach their fullest potential. 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, adults, and their families that advance social, educational and emotional development and well-being.