

# FACS AT A GLANCE

## Winter 2020/2021



### Dear Friends of FACS:

Around the globe, 2020 has been a year of loss, economic hardship, and challenges few could anticipate. On March 23, Family and Children's Services completely changed the way we help clients by converting to telehealth services. Without disruption to our clients, the vast majority of our staff began working from home, providing mental health and case management services to our clients via Zoom and other technology. Thanks to you, our generous donors and other funders, we were able to provide technology, including Chromebooks, to clients in need.

We couldn't have successfully gotten through the year without our wonderful staff of almost 40 licensed mental health therapists, case managers, and office support members. As always, our clients amaze us with their strength and resiliency. I would especially like to thank you, our donors and supporters. We rely on you to help us do what we do. As we look forward with hope and optimism to a better 2021, please consider a gift to help our mission: Building Hope and Healing Trauma to Strengthen Families and Communities. Thank you!

Warmly,  
Molly Fagan, LCSW  
Executive Director

### Backpacks and Holiday Gifts for the Most Vulnerable Families



Thank you to The Parish Community of Saint Helen's in Westfield, Hearts of Watchung and all who donated this year.

The families served by Family and Children's Services are mostly low-income, unemployed or underemployed, and struggle with providing basic needs for their children. This year has been especially difficult for those who face financial and mental health challenges. The FACS Team is once again so grateful for our community partners for providing back-to-school backpacks, school supplies and holiday gifts this year. Our clients are deeply touched by the generosity.

### New Vision for High School Kids

In coordination with Elizabeth High School, and with support from the Union County Youth Services Commission's NJ Juvenile Justice State Community/Partnership grant, Family and Children's Services was able to provide new glasses for low-income uninsured teens at the school. Although school is certainly different this year, everyone deserves clear vision!

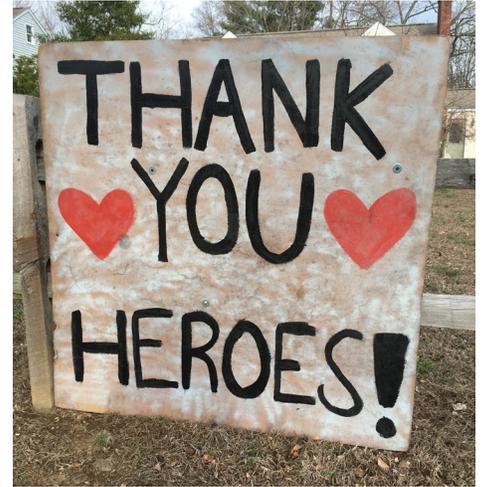


**"I have seen the difference in my daughter since coming to FACS. She has learned and improved her ability to overcome obstacles"**

-Year End Customer Satisfaction Survey Comment

## Good Mental Health is For Everyone: A Fund for Low-Income Uninsured Individuals and Families

Sahana\* was relieved when her daughter, age 14, began mental health therapy at FACS. The teen had been struggling with sadness and anxiety that affected her ability to engage with schoolwork and friends. While speaking with Sahana about her daughter, the FACS therapist could see that Sahana was also struggling emotionally. Although most children from low-income families will qualify for Medicaid, their parents may not, and many are unable to afford out-of-pocket costs associated with private health insurance or the Affordable Care Act. Sahana is just one of these “working poor” adults. To help Sahana and other low-income uninsured adults receive mental health therapy, FACS taps into our Good Mental Health is For Everyone Fund (GMHE). Supported by private donations, GMHE allows us to provide quality therapy to an underserved population. For more information, and to learn how you can help, visit [www.facsnj.org](http://www.facsnj.org).



Senior Case Manager Jarline Rosario links clients with local resources

## FACS Case Management: Building Community Support and Resources

Case management is the organization and coordination of services on behalf of an individual or family. This collaborative process allows for communication across all members of the care team to ensure activities and support are best serving the well-being of the individual or family. Family and Children’s Services’ four full-time case managers have been especially busy this year, helping families secure internet access for telehealth and school, locating COVID-related resources and benefits, supporting families through job loss and physical illness, and much more. Thank you team!

## IIC: In-home and Community Mental Health Therapy

Family and Children’s Services is excited to announce the launch of a new program, Intensive In Community (IIC) services, which provides mental health counseling for children with emotional and behavioral challenges in the child’s home or another welcoming place in the community. As part of the New Jersey Children’s System of Care, our IIC is publicly funded. To learn more, or to request help in your area, contact PerformCare: 1-877-652-7624.



**98%**

of FACS clients surveyed would recommend FACS to others and

**100%**

felt helped by the staff at FACS.

\*To protect the privacy of our clients, names and images have been changed.



# HEART PROGRAM

HOPE, EMPATHY AND RECOVERY FOR TRAUMA

**HEART Conéctate For Teens:**  
a social group for unaccompanied migrant youth

**Children or teens who have migrated to the United States alone face post-traumatic stress and loneliness.**

FACS's HEART program (Hope Empathy and Recovery for Trauma) is an evidence-based trauma therapy program funded by a federal SAMHSA grant that supports unaccompanied migrant children with case management and therapy. It helps them cope with symptoms of trauma and ease their transition to life in their new country. Through the therapy sessions, FACS clinicians noticed the unique issues HEART teens face, particularly during the pandemic. Realizing there was a need to help teens connect, build support, share their unique stories and adjust to this culture, we've launched Conéctate (Connect), a virtual support and therapeutic group specifically for teens. Spearheaded by psychologist Melany Rivera-Maldonado, PhD, and HEART therapist Christian Santana, DA, LMFT, the Conéctate program helps promote bicultural identity integration and reduce acculturational gaps as immigrant youth adjust to living in the United States. The initiative is also intended to provide support and create a network of new relationships during the COVID-19 health emergency. FACS is excited to introduce this new group to our HEART teens and to extend our commitment to helping them to adjust to life in the United States.

## Did you know?

In the past 6 years, the US Office of Refugee Resettlement has settled 13,459 unaccompanied migrant children into New Jersey.

The Celia Lipton Farris and Victor W. Farris Foundation Home Community Fund has awarded FACS a \$50,000 grant to expand our HEART trauma therapy program to young migrant adults between 18 and 30 years of age. We are grateful to have the opportunity to help these newest Americans overcome trauma and adapt to their new homeland.

**We have been honored to receive additional grants this year from the following foundations:**

- Community Foundation of New Jersey
- E.J. Grassman Trust
- Hyde and Watson Foundation
- Investor's Foundation
- JC Kellogg Foundation Fund
- Meek Foundation
- Neal Philanthropy Fund
- Northern New Jersey Community Foundation
- The Willis and Nancy King Foundation



## Job Loss, No Benefits, and a Baby on the Way...

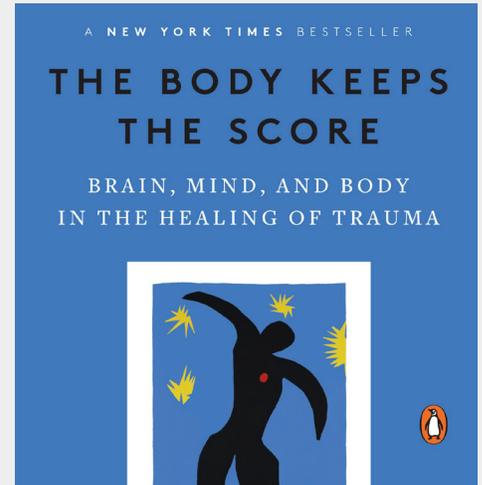
When our friends at Hearts of Watchung heard a number of our clients had suffered pandemic-related job losses and had new babies on the way, they jumped in as they so often do – and held a Virtual Baby Shower! Cindy Homer and her team quickly sent in diapers, baby clothes, bath items, infant toys – everything a new baby needs. On behalf of those young, vulnerable families – thank you!

### FACS Recommends:

This book was recommended by our own Abby Colen, LCSW, associate program director for trauma.

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Transformation of Trauma by Bessel Van Der Kolk

Emotional trauma affects individuals and families in every socio-economic strata. From the wealthiest families to the poorest, the effects of trauma can be devastating for sufferers, their families and future generations. Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk, a world-renowned expert, explains how trauma affects the body, the brain, and behavior. The book also addresses how to approach healing from trauma, and how healing can start recovery.



## Red Carpet 2020 – Pre-Pandemic Style

2020's Red Carpet Event, held on March 5th, was a night to remember. Not only because of the fabulous food, fun, and fashion, but also because it was likely one of the last public social events held in New Jersey due to COVID-19. FACS remains deeply grateful to all of the attendees, sponsors, designers, committee members and volunteers who helped make the evening a tremendous success, and raised over \$100,000 for FACS Programs for vulnerable children and families. Thanks as always to planner extraordinaire Leslie Patrizio for putting the event together. Keep an eye out for a Save the Date – we hope to have Red Carpet 2021 scheduled for late Spring!

