

FACS AT A GLANCE

Winter 2021/2022



Family and
Children's
Services, Inc.

Strengthening Families,
Building Futures Since 1893

Dear Friends of FACS:

This time last year, we were looking forward with hope and optimism toward 2021. Although there have been many positive changes over the past twelve months, the pandemic wears on, and we have much work to do on behalf of our vulnerable clients. As I write this note, the American Academies of Pediatrics and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have just declared a State of Emergency in child and adolescent mental health – with inpatient mental health admissions soaring among America's youth as the psychological effects of the pandemic take a steep toll.

At the same, there are over 88,000 children in New Jersey who do not have health insurance to cover outpatient mental health treatment. FACS' charity funds, our Good Mental Health is for Everyone fund, and our HEART (Hope, Empathy and Recovery for Trauma) fund for migrant children and refugees, provide mental health counseling at little or no charge to our clients. We rely on you, our supporters, to donate to these funds so we can keep supporting vulnerable children and families with case management services and trauma-informed care from licensed clinicians.

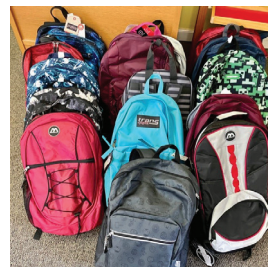
Thank you for your support throughout this challenging time, and on behalf of all of us at FACS, best wishes for a happy and healthy 2022!

Warmly,

Molly Fagan, LCSW
Executive Director

Back to School Support and Hope for Our Youngest Clients

For many students, Fall of 2021 was the first time they were entering the classroom in 18 months. Knowing there was much apprehension and anticipation with the new school year, FACS wanted to make it extra special for our clients. Each year, community partners, including the Parish Community of St. Helen, support our most needy families with backpacks filled with school supplies for back to school. This year, in addition to the backpacks, the Westfield Service League awarded FACS with a grant to provide books to our clients. We created a book fair for our clients with hundreds of books lining our office. We are so grateful to our supporters for providing us with backpacks, school supplies and many, many wonderful books.



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Elizabeth Community Comes Together After Devastating Hurricane Ida

On September 1, 2021, Hurricane Ida created a devastating path of destruction across New Jersey, and our hometown of Elizabeth was especially hard hit. Catastrophic flooding caused loss of life and extensive property damage, with many of our clients suffering from flooded homes and cars in addition to losing many personal belongings. FACS was also affected, with the lower floor of our office sustaining significant damage. On September 8, our office was proud to be one of many organizations that participated in a resource fair for those affected by Hurricane Ida.



Red Carpet 2021 Honors Pandemic Frontline Workers

The Red Carpet Party 2021 was held on June 8 at the Brooklake Country Club, and while it featured the usual fabulous food, fun, and fashion the event is known for, it also included a special salute to local pandemic essential frontline workers. FACS honored Galeny Castro of On Time Medical Transportation; Gigi Harris of ShopRite of Union; Mary McTigue of Trinitas Regional Medical Center; Joseph Nacheff of Summit Health Urgent Care; and Anthony Romano, of UPS – five individuals who truly made a difference in the community during the pandemic. FACS is so grateful to all of the attendees, sponsors, designers, committee members and volunteers who helped make the evening a tremendous success, and raised funds for our FACS programs for vulnerable children and families.



Year-End Customer Satisfaction Survey Comment:

“They encourage you to engage in self care and that its ok to not be ok, and to ask for help when you need it most. They understand and they don’t judge you.”



Holiday Giving 2021

Donors Support our Most Needy Families with Gifts and Toys

The pandemic continues to take its toll on our most vulnerable clients, and many suffered illness and job loss. The flooding from Hurricane Ida also deeply affected thousands who are struggling to provide even the most basic needs for their families. We are so grateful to our many community partners, including Hearts of Watchung, the Parish Community of St. Helen of Westfield, All Saints' Episcopal Church, Matthijssen Business Systems, Coldwell Banker East of Westfield, Ruprecht, Hart, Ricciardulli & Sherman, LLP and Mendonca & Partners, LLC., who year after year, provide gifts and toys to make sure that every family has presents during the holiday season.

A Mother's Story: The Ramirez Family

For a small family of three, the Ramirezes'* have the strength and determination of an army.

After fleeing their home country of Colombia due to political and gang violence, Andrea and Francis and their 10 year old son, David, arrived in the United States with little but the clothes on their backs. "After everything that happened in Colombia, we were now safe," said Andrea.

"I was so hopeful when we arrived in the United States that everything would be great," she said. But the years of trauma had left their mark on the family. "If we saw a group of men on our street, we would remember gangs in Colombia, and it would make us all afraid," Andrea said, "I would try to act brave for my son, but it was hard when I had the same fears as he did about being in danger."

Around this time, Francis was diagnosed with cancer, and Andrea was suffering with serious arthritis. "By that point, my crisis level was very high, and it was hard to be there for my family. My son was severely depressed, isolated, and starting to engage in self-harming behaviors." Andrea said. She added that she would break down crying at different times throughout the day.

The Ramirezes eventually received a referral to Family and Children's Services, where David started individual therapy through FACS' HEART counseling program. Andrea said David benefited by having someone to talk to and she decided to seek help also. She said "I always refer to my son as my life's champion, and I wanted him to know that."

"FACS was able to provide David and me with guidance and coping skills. For example, when I'm anxious, I no longer shut down. We no longer get feelings of desperation or feel like we are in a dark hole. My relationship with my husband has improved greatly, and I can be there for him now." David is now happy in his new school and has made good friends.

Through FACS, Andrea said "My family and I were able to find peace. I can honestly say that I feel good now when telling my story. I never thought that could be possible before."



FACS Senior Clinician, Christian Santana, LMFT, sees clients from across the world

**Family and Children's Services' HEART Program is funded entirely through private support.
Your donation can help us make a difference for a child like David and his family!**

**client names have been changed*



FACS Welcomes Traumatized Families from Across the Globe From Nigeria to Brazil and from Honduras to Afghanistan

World events, including political unrest and gang violence, have forced the migration of thousands of people to New Jersey over the past several years. A growing number of families from around the world have found their way to our Elizabeth offices seeking mental health counseling, case management services, and a better life for their children.

Unaccompanied migrant children, people with special immigrant visas, and other new arrivals often experienced harrowing traumas that have left a profound negative effect on their mental health. FACS' licensed mental health clinicians are trained to provide evidence-based therapies for children and families who

have experienced the worst that humans can do to each other. Trauma-informed therapy and other supportive services can help the families and children cope with the past and ease the transition to their new home.

Please help us provide mental health counseling for a 12-year-old Honduran boy who crossed the US border alone on foot so that he would not be forced into a violent gang.

Your gift can also help a young Afghani mother and her daughter who've fled the Taliban's brutal grasp.

Please give today!

A sampling of some of the home countries of our clients



Afghanistan



Brazil



Colombia



Costa Rica



Cuba



Dominican Republic



Ecuador



El Salvador



Ethiopia



Guatemala



Honduras



Mexico



Nicaragua



Nigeria



Pakistan



Peru



Philippines



Venezuela

FACS Index 2021

99%

Percentage of client households earning less than \$35,000 per year

5,723

Number of telehealth sessions held

400%

Percent increase in the number of in-person therapy sessions

1.2:1

Ratio of child to adult clients

61%

Percentage of new clients who report serious traumatic events*

104

Number of back to school backpacks and school supplies given away

1903

Year in which FACS began providing mental health counseling

78

Number of tacos enjoyed at the annual staff picnic

1

Number of FACS vehicles destroyed by Hurricane Ida

4

Number of staff who attained full clinical licensure

250

Number of books given to clients through our book fair

97%

Percent of clients who say FACS staff "stick with them no matter what"

129

Number of years FACS has served the Union County Community

46%

Percentage of Elizabeth residents who are foreign-born

1158

Number of Facebook and Instagram followers (join us! #facsnj)

*Serious traumatic events include experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, serious bodily injury, sexual assault, or other violence

(Sources: FACS Electronic Health Record; Zoom HIPAA compliant technology reports; Client Satisfaction Survey (Survey Gizmo); US Census Bureau)