

Horizons

A Publication for Seven Hills Foundation
Affiliates, Friends & Supporters



An Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation

WELCOMING OUR 14TH AFFILIATE

FALL 2020

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr. David A. Jordan
President

Dear Friends,

Since March, we have been inundated with many stressors that are impacting our lives. We are flooded with news assessing the effects of COVID-19 and the tragedy of one million lives lost around the world. As a nation, we grapple with the economic fallout of the pandemic, a political system in turmoil, and the harsh reality that racism and social justice issues are still pervading our society. It is a daily

struggle, which is why our work at Seven Hills is so critical to the people and communities we serve.

This issue of *Horizons* gives you a small sample of the remarkable effort, compassion, and excellence we have seamlessly provided as we navigate these stressors. The dedication our staff continues to deliver is unparalleled. Our frontline heroes—our direct care staff—work with a smile and reassuring voice as they care for our most vulnerable children and adults across Massachusetts and Rhode Island. They put others before themselves despite the risks involved. Our managers and support staff work tirelessly to provide the systems, personal protection equipment, funding, technology, and communications to keep our 4,600 team members in action. I am so proud of how well we continue to provide the highest quality services and supports. For such

a large and complex organization, Seven Hills Foundation is demonstrating just how nimble we can be when needed. Planning is ongoing for the new normal, Seven Hills 2.0, and beyond.

Despite all the weighty factors we've been facing, we moved forward with a significant new affiliation—YOU, Inc., effective April 1. For over 50 years, this leading Behavioral Health and Education agency has serviced at-risk children, adolescents, and families across Worcester County. The YOU, Inc. mission—providing youth and families with opportunities to fulfill their potential and build a brighter future—perfectly aligns with our culture and mission at Seven Hills. I am thankful for the respect and courage it took the YOU, Inc. community to become our 14th affiliate and am honored to work with our new and incredibly talented staff members.

I invite you to read this issue's stories and view the photos. The faces tell tremendous tales of healing and resilience. With your support, together we will ensure that the faces of every life we touch radiate joy due to the support, care, and hope we provide.

Sincerely,

Dr. David A. Jordan
President

HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE



DONATE ▶ sevenhills.org

Your gift brings immediate action to improving lives. To name Seven Hills as a beneficiary in your will, to learn how retirement plans make the most tax-efficient bequest to Seven Hills, or for ways to make a tax-deductible donation to Seven Hills, contact Kate Myshrall, vice president of advancement, **508.983.1302** or kmyshrall@sevenhills.org.

CAREERS ▶ sevenhills.org/careers

Seven Hills takes pride as the Employer of Choice! Join our talented team of dedicated and compassionate staff. Contact Ginger Lavalley, talent acquisition manager, **774.262.7205** or glavalley@sevenhills.org.

VOLUNTEER ▶ sevenhills.org/get-involved

Share your time and talents! Contact Amy Kupranowicz, senior human resources generalist, at **508.983.1373** or akupranowicz@sevenhills.org.

COVER PHOTO: Dr. David A. Jordan, President, and Roy Angel, Board Chair of YOU, Inc., celebrating the affiliation

HORIZONS FALL 2020

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IN THIS ISSUE

IN THE NEWS

- 4 Responding to COVID-19 and Preparing for the Future
- 6 Free COVID-19 Testing Through Seven Hills Behavioral Health
- 7 Donate to the Emergency Response Fund
- 8 Emergency Response Funding – Gratitude for Generosity
- 9 Staying the Course to Rise Up for Mental Health
- 10 Living Wage Needed for Human Service Workers
- 12 Giving Children and Families at Risk the Potential to Thrive
- 14 A Message from the President: Confronting Racism – When Does it End?
- 15 Diversity & Inclusion in Action at Seven Hills
- 16 Seven Hills Direct Care Celebration
- 17 Virtually Irresistible: This Year's Bigger Dipper
- 18 Granting Good Work!
- 20 Leadership Succession that Sustains our Vision

SPOTLIGHT

- 21 Spotlight on Seven Hills



MA State Rep. Joseph McKenna and SHF's Dr. Kathee Jordan, EVP/CEO; Mike Kendrick, director of facilities; and Bill Stock, VP for government & community relations, with PPE shipment

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

As the world has adjusted to the new order of operating in the midst of a global pandemic, we at Seven Hills have transformed our service delivery models to protect our community while still providing the exceptional care that is the hallmark of our business. In March, we instituted a "Nonessential Visitor Restriction" and screening protocol for all program sites, homes, and office locations to protect our community as the spread of COVID-19 and its implications became apparent. Seven Hills immediately rolled out technology to our group homes to make the restrictions easier for clients and families and keep them connected. We secured over \$500,000 in Emergency Response Funding to help defer the costs of enhanced technology for client communication and equipped over 600 staff members with the tools to ensure our care was seamless, even if provided remotely. We established web pages on both our public and staff

websites to provide critical and transparent communication regarding state and federal guidance, and clear directives and protocols to ensure everyone's safety. These websites also celebrated our heroic direct care staff who showcased their servant leadership by putting their commitment to our individuals in the forefront of their lives.

SUPPLY CHAIN CHAMPIONS

The most critical and immediate task in March was securing the proper personal protection equipment (PPE) for our staff to safely provide continuity of care. Shortages of gloves, medical masks, respirators, goggles, face shields, gowns, and aprons were leaving doctors, nurses, and other frontline workers dangerously ill-equipped to care for COVID-19 patients. Our COVID Response Team scoured the globe to secure 350,000 N-95 masks from China for our own use as well as for 126 partners, including other providers, hospitals, and state agencies.

Through July, Seven Hills has spent just over \$1 million on PPE supplies, a significant cost and undertaking to secure and distribute.

S.H.I.P. SAVES LIVES

Seven Hills Community Services and Seven Hills NeuroCare rolled out the initiative, "Stay Healthy In Place" (SHIP) to minimize exposure between rotating staff and the individuals in our care. In this proactive approach, staff volunteered to work 24/7 shifts for 14 days in a single residence. Supplies of PPE, food, and other essentials were delivered to the homes,



so no one had to leave during the two-week rotation. SHIP was instituted in over 70 group homes and was extremely successful in reducing the exposure to COVID with just a 3% infection rate. Our direct care staff, all essential workers, are credited for this remarkable success.



Mike Kendrick, director of facilities, muscling his way through the stock of supplies

ALL HANDS ON DECK

As the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island issued guidance that closed Day Services, restricted visitors, and shut programs, Seven Hills worked to re-deploy hundreds of staff members to programs where extra support was needed. Many of our Seven Hills ASPIRE! staff shifted their talents to group homes, where residents were isolated. This proved a wonderful exercise that kept relationships and activities alive for individuals while building better interdisciplinary teams for our staff.

Despite significant changes and mandated protocols throughout the pandemic, our staff has maintained its commitment, compassion, and good humor, despite managing their own life challenges. Through great creativity, resourcefulness, and flexibility, they continue to bring excellence and quality to every personal interaction.



Trudy Dould and Sonya Bouchard, clinicians at Seven Hills NeuroCare, work with individuals using telehealth

SHIFTING TO THE FUTURE

Seven Hills has been a long-time proponent, advocate, and early user of telehealth. COVID has led to new acceptance and reimbursement for utilization, which is demonstrating great success for providers and clients. Many of our staff shifted to remote work and maintained productivity and uninterrupted service. The use of technology for work, learning, and social capital building is on the forefront of service delivery. The good news is that this comes with the ability to track outcomes and build predictive ability models.

“As our health and human services sector continues its migration to managed care, Seven Hills will be ready to excel, tracking clients’ needs, our response, and how we are delivering the best possible care.”

— Dr. Kathee Jordan



PLEASE DONATE NOW EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND

YOU can make an immediate difference in helping us provide essential services to people in our community most at risk. 100% of funds will target the urgent needs of our clients and frontline staff members.



TO DONATE:

Scan the QR code

or visit sevenhills.org/donate

FREE COVID-19 TESTING THROUGH SEVEN HILLS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The Governor's Office and COVID-19 Command Center selected Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) to provide free SARS-Cov-2 testing in the priority cities of Fall River and New Bedford as part of the **Stop the Spread Initiative**. Testing is open to anyone, even if they have no COVID symptoms. The program started on July 10, and after the incredible demand and administering success of the SHBH staff, the original August end date was extended and the program is still actively testing. As of this publishing, the SHBH team has tested just under 10,000 people. With staff speaking several languages and by bringing the testing sites into the communities' public spaces, people from all over the state are heading to the Southeast to access the SHBH testing.

Connie Rocha-Mimoso, director of community health services at SHBH, led the efforts with her team of community health workers. The team uses the Seven Hills Mobile Outreach Van to raise awareness about free testing, and sets up local testing sites in each community. Clients received their test results by email, phone, or in person.

// I just wanted to say thank you to the people who are standing in this heat and putting themselves at risk to do free testing in New Bedford. I personally very much appreciate it. //

— A grateful test recipient

Staff also connect individuals to medical care and other essential health promotion services in the community including substance abuse; Overdose Prevention Education and Naloxone Education and Enrollments; Syringe Services Programming; HIV and STI Prevention, Screening, Testing, and Referral Services; and HIV/AIDS Medical Case Management Programs.



Connie Rocha-Mimoso on the front lines

SHBH also employs harm reduction specialists and other professional staff to provide culturally competent services to high-risk children, youth, adults, and families living in its catchment area. SHBH works closely with more than 80 local community partners to provide wrap-around supports and referral services to ensure successful outcomes for clients supported. The affiliate's food pantry in New Bedford has become a well-known community resource and has been providing food at the testing sites for clients who are food-insecure. Seven Hills Behavioral Health has used COVID-19 Emergency Response Funds received through the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts as an additional funding source for food, basic hygiene items, rent, and mortgage assistance supports that are being offered to clients in need.





Seven Hills Emergency Response Fund

Seven Hills is taking on extraordinary costs to manage the **COVID-19 response** with expenses to cover premium pay to retain staff, fund overtime and relief staff, purchase supplies and telehealth equipment and software, provide additional janitorial services, arrange special transportation, meet basic needs, and more.

YOU can make an immediate difference in helping us continue to provide essential services to people in our community most at risk. **100% of funds** will target the urgent needs of our clients and frontline staff members.

Please Support Our Dedicated Staff and the Community We Serve



Scan to donate today
or visit **sevenhills.org**



EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDING — GRATITUDE FOR GENEROSITY

Over the past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has put the world on a tailspin and has changed a lot of aspects of our lives. From a complete shutdown of all things nonessential to the phased reopening of businesses and organizations, we have all been working toward our new normal. Seven Hills Foundation and our affiliates are incredibly grateful to those who have worked tirelessly during this time to safeguard the health of our constituents and our employees throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

These careful and conscientious efforts to support our stakeholders throughout the pandemic would not have been possible without the support of our community funding partners. With their assistance, we were able to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all of our

staff; assistive technology for our 24/7 group homes so that residents could speak to their loved ones while in quarantine; telehealth equipment to connect clinicians and medical specialists with those in need of healthcare and mental health supports; grief counseling for people who have lost a loved one during the pandemic as well as frontline healthcare workers coping with the loss they face daily; food and basic need items for clients and community members struggling financially; activities and games for children and youth isolated and confined to their homes; emergency childcare services for children of essential workers; art supply kits for low-income public school students learning at home; Chromebooks for youth participating virtually in our educational programs; and many other COVID-19 related emergency support and stabilization services.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

- Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts
- EdVestors
- Fred Harris Daniels Foundation
- George I. Alden Trust
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Massachusetts Cultural Council Safe Harbors Program
- Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund
- PowerOptions, Inc.
- Reliant Foundation
- Rhode Island Foundation
- SouthCoast Community Foundation
- The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
- The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts
- United Way of Central Massachusetts
- Wellington Management Foundation
- Worcester Together: Central Mass COVID-19 Fund – a partnership of Greater Worcester Community Foundation and United Way of Central Massachusetts
- Wyman-Gordon Foundation



STAYING THE COURSE TO RISE UP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Neither wind nor rain nor a novel coronavirus could dampen the uplifting spirit that casts its annual spell over the Worcester Country Club on the day of the Lori Lajoie Charity Golf Tournament. Monday, August 24, 2020, dawned on course like all the others—the sun rising early in full glory, ready to bask its rays over this signature day.

The preparation leading up to the event, however, wasn't seamless. The logistics were daunting—up until game day, Governor Baker could pull the turf completely out from under the meticulously plotted plans with a new restriction. Yet, the Lajoie spirit prevailed and the Members of the Worcester Country Club (WCC) teed up to help our community Rise Up for better mental health for our children and families.

In this 45th year—one filled with the most unprecedented challenges—the Members of the Worcester Country Club stayed the course to honor the Lajoie Legacy and transform lives. Not only did they rise up, they aimed high—true Champions leading the charge for better mental health for our community members in need.

Thank you to the Worcester Country Club Members, the Sponsors, and the Donors who made this day possible and the movement toward better mental health more promising than ever.





LIVING WAGE NEEDED FOR HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS

by David A. Jordan, DHA

This commentary was originally published on 6/25/20, and is reprinted with permission by Commonwealth Magazine

THROUGHOUT THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic, we have heralded the selfless heroism of our health care workforce and first responders. The doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, EMTs, firefighters, and police continue to rise to the challenges we face, and we are awed by their performance and are forever grateful.

But there is another group of heroes we must add to the list to thank – our human services direct support professionals (DSPs), people who work with individuals with significant disabilities and other life challenges to ensure our most vulnerable children and adults are physically and emotionally well.

These professionals are quietly doing their jobs, with added responsibilities and heightened risk, only they are not as visible because their work is integrated into community-based settings. They provide individualized supports and services in the most dignified ways – just as you and I would expect. As we work to emerge safely from this pandemic, we must step up and justly compensate this group of DSP heroes, as we justly compensate our health care workers and first responders, because their lives are also on the line every day.

The needs are complex for the populations DSPs support. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral disorders, mental health challenges, autism, or brain injury often have co-occurring complex medical conditions. These populations are cared for by a workforce that provides everything from social supports to complex skilled nursing care. This care is provided in community-based settings, homes supported by provider agencies, or in the homes of aging parents.

The care provided is multi-faceted, requiring a vast skill set and management of the whole person's wellness; emotional, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, and vocational.

Unfortunately, the compensation for these professionals has not been aligned with the whole-person care that they provide.

In our country, our human service workforce is shrinking while the demand for services continues to increase. Because the responsibilities of the job do not correlate with the compensation, successful recruiting for these positions is extremely difficult. The turnover is enormous, roughly 45 percent in the US.

The staff churn is extremely difficult for supported individuals who struggle with the constant change in caregivers. This growing crisis is due to several factors, the most significant

being inadequate state and federal funding to human service provider agencies, all while our nation's population of elderly and people with disabilities is growing.

In Massachusetts, median wages for the DSP human services workforce are just over \$27,000, compared with a median wage of \$40,500 for all other industries in the state. We must work to ensure that the lowest paid human services workers receive a livable wage commensurate with the critical services and specialized care that they provide. By compensating our DSPs at such low rates, we have set up a scenario where they are “less than” – and this is simply unacceptable.

DSPs are the backbone of our human services workforce and to not recognize and value their place as heroes in the health care sector simply perpetuates the notion that individuals with disabilities are not fully valued in our society.

We have passed laws to foster inclusion, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Supreme Court has validated those principals through its decision on the Olmstead case in 1999, which ensured an individual's right to live in the community when appropriate.

We need to continue to ensure that all Americans will have the supports they need – regardless of the extent of any disability or impairment – to live in the community and direct their services, and this can only be done if we can provide the workforce needed to achieve their goals. It is up to us to provide equity

not only for the individuals receiving services, but equity for the professional workforce providing the Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo and their respective administrations have been exceptional during this crisis. They have shown steadfast leadership that is needed to protect the health of our citizens while guiding a complex public health and economic response. After recognizing the importance of our vital DSP workforce and the perils of their work, both Massachusetts and Rhode Island made additional funding available to enhance the salaries of these employees.



Though greatly needed and valued, the commitment to the additional funding by both states ends in June. What happens then?

We need Baker and Raimondo to make permanent the current supplemental hourly pay to DSPs and commit to a path toward establishing a “living wage” for the profession. It is time to sound the call to keep these salary enhancements

in place as COVID-19 has exposed the inadequacies of reimbursement for this workforce.

Let's come together to secure the funding and pay a living wage that honors our human services professionals.

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THE CARING FORCE CONNECTION TO A LIVING WAGE: IT'S TIME TO CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS

THE CARING FORCE MISSION:

The Caring Force is the grassroots advocacy initiative of the Providers' Council. The Caring Force seeks to empower those who care about the human services sector to advance an agenda that creates an environment in Massachusetts that protects our most vulnerable neighbors and creates a stronger economy with the pay, recognition, and respect our workers deserve.

Join The Caring Force at <http://bit.ly/CaringForce>





GIVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT RISK THE POTENTIAL TO THRIVE

On April 1, Seven Hills welcomed YOU, Inc., its 14th affiliate, to our integrated network of agencies, expanding our expertise in the behavioral health sector in central Massachusetts. Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc.—YOU, Inc.—was founded on the simple premise that given the opportunity, all children and families at risk have the potential to thrive. From a single program developed in cooperation with the Worcester Juvenile Court to serve youthful offenders, YOU, Inc. became one of the leading child welfare, behavioral health, and education agencies in the region. With more than 30 sites across Worcester County, YOU, Inc. has remained true to its mission while adapting to the increasingly complex needs of its clients. Today, the agency serves more than 15,000 youth and their families each year, and employs more than 550 full- and part-time staff.

Dr. David A. Jordan, President of Seven Hills, noted the impact the affiliation will have on central MA communities:

“This partnership has brought exceptionally talented staff to our network of services. The work underway has expanded our clinical expertise as staff shares best practices. We are also reaching more youth and families as we promote YOU, Inc.’s important programs. During this time of crisis in mental health, ensuring that YOU, Inc. can help more people is our main goal.”

YOU, Inc. provides a range of services to youth and families:

Education component—provides college access supports, as well as HiSet degree programs (an alternative to the GED), and vocational training and certifications in thriving sectors such as health care and hospitality.

Community-Based Services—include in-home therapy, mentoring, positive parent coaching, and family stabilization.

Behavioral Health Centers—four centers offer group and individual counseling for children, adolescents, and families coping with a range of issues including mental health diagnoses, trauma histories, and substance use disorders.

Worcester and Southbridge Family Resource Centers—part of a statewide network of community-based centers providing easy access to information and assistance related to health care, safety, employment training, education, and peer support.

Residential care—short-term stabilization and hospital diversion programs, to longer-term behavioral treatment residences, supported living apartments, and foster care.

YOU, Inc. is a trusted collaborator and active member of the greater human services and youth-serving community in Worcester County. Leaders from YOU, Inc.’s staff actively

participate in key networks and associations that affect their constituencies, including the Association for Behavioral Healthcare and the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership. The agency holds longstanding contracts with the Massachusetts Departments of Youth Services, Children and Families, and Mental Health. YOU, Inc. works in partnership with the Worcester Public Schools, Juvenile Court, Police, and Probation Departments to secure and administer grants including BRACE (Bullying Remediation and Court Education) and the Pre-Arrest Diversion Program. Members of our Executive Leadership team serve on important community initiatives and boards including YouthConnect, the Youth Workforce Investment Board, Harrington Healthcare, the United Way USE Committee, the Mental Health/Behavioral Health Career Pipeline Collaborative, Mass Non-Profit Network Award Committee, and the Worcester Education Collaborative.

Like many human services agencies of its size, YOU, Inc. has experienced a number of operational and financial challenges. The agency was confronted by a shrinking workforce with not enough qualified staff to meet the increasing demand for services for youth and families with significant needs. Level-funded state budgets, lower reimbursement rates for behavioral health services, and major healthcare reforms further impacted YOU, Inc.'s ability to provide high-quality services in the most cost-effective manner.

To position the agency for long-term stability and continued service excellence, YOU, Inc.'s Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved an affiliation with Seven Hills Foundation, effective April 1, 2020.

services, while designed for clients of differing ages, abilities, diagnoses or environments, are nonetheless grounded in these common values. Both agencies offer services in community-based, clinical, and out-of-home settings. Together, we reach children from birth to age 18, through transitional-aged youth, young adults, adults, caregivers, family members, and seniors.



The timing of the affiliation with the COVID-19 crisis and statewide quarantine certainly presented challenges, but more important, it reinforced the opportunities that our two agencies have to share resources and best practices. For example, the strength of Seven Hills' Finance and Information Technology operations were instrumental to YOU, Inc. quickly implementing emergency COVID-19 grants for our education and clinical services. At the same time, YOU, Inc.'s expertise and success with telepsychiatry was highly beneficial to other Seven Hills affiliates as they moved their clinical operations to a remote model at the start of the crisis.

Paula Aiello, former interim president and CEO of YOU, Inc., reflected on the timing of the affiliation and the pandemic:

“The affiliation was designed to ensure the long-term viability of our programs and services. What we couldn't have expected was that a crisis of the magnitude of COVID-19 would happen almost simultaneously. Over the last seven months, it's become clear that affiliating with Seven Hills was the right choice for our agency. Our two staffs have effectively shared information, ideas, and resources throughout the crisis. Despite the extreme challenges of COVID-19, we've continued, almost uninterrupted, to provide a high level of services to youth and families. The affiliation gives us confidence that YOU, Inc. as an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation, will remain strong and productive in the difficult months ahead, and for many years to come.”



The two agencies' mission statements speak to our shared purpose of providing opportunities for youth and families—despite their life circumstances and challenges—to find and fulfill their potential. YOU, Inc. and Seven Hills share core values of respect, innovation, integrity, and hope. Our programs and

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: CONFRONTING RACISM — WHEN DOES IT END?



We value all members of our **DIVERSE** Seven Hills family ■ People of all **ABILITIES, FAITHS, RACES, and BACKGROUNDS** ■ **IMMIGRANTS and REFUGEES** ■ **WOMEN, MEN, and our LGBTQ community** ■ We stand with our entire Seven Hills

COMMUNITY

Respect & Kindness • Integrity • Teamwork
Service to Others • Innovation

SEVEN HILLS CORE VALUES

Hate • Intolerance • Disrespectful Behavior
HAVE NO BUSINESS HERE

We Stand TOGETHER
Estamos JUNTOS

Dear Seven Hills Community,

I've spent the past two days reflecting on the issues we face here at Seven Hills Foundation, but even more so, the seeming out of control dynamics facing our country, and the world. Beyond the COVID-19 crisis, the other issue that has shaken me to my core is the unraveling of the social fabric of America as a result of the decades of racial and social injustices suffered by Americans of color. The heinous and needless deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have let loose the frustration and anger of millions of Americans. The groundswell of reaction, from Boston to Los Angeles, is not reflective of just this latest incident so visually depicted on TV, but is a result of the cumulative overt as well as subtle insults and atrocities foisted on our nation's African American community, immigrants, and those who are devalued. The George Floyd atrocity lit the match on a long-simmering and engrained social injustice, which has become an unjust equilibrium in our country.

All of us—every one of us—have biases and prejudices that we've learned and have acquired from childhood. It's time we stop and deeply think about what our own prejudices are and how hurtful they are to others—as well as ourselves. America needs to purge itself of the longstanding hatreds and presumptions about minority populations and that can only start with each one of us—individually. What's happening now across America is a start of that purging and I pray in time that after the riots and anger have abated, we each use this opportunity to re-build a “new normal” of tolerance, respect, and kindness toward others. I pray that America commits itself to societal values that ensure economic and educational opportunities for ALL citizens of these United States.

I have been so troubled trying to think of the right words to say to our 4,600 Seven Hills employees on this matter, which are not overtly political. What I am left with, however, are thoughts of leaders whom we can point to that help us think through this period. Historically, I look to the words—the courage—the civility of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was determined, passionate, compassionate, and resolved to address the injustices suffered by African Americans for so many decades, yet he never burned a building or physically assaulted anyone. He was steadfast in his belief of nonviolent confrontation until the day he was taken from us. I am hoping that we can look to someone like Dr. King in the future who can inspire our nation, our states, our own Seven Hills Foundation in reflecting upon the values we must hold dear in the years ahead if social justice for all is to remain our ultimate goal.

It is clear that institutionalized racism that condones brutality against black people and other minorities is the same racism that perpetuates health disparities and inequities. It is no surprise that the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people of color in America is not an accident. It can be traced to years of conscious decisions made by people with power—elected officials and others—who have determined that, in communities of color, it is acceptable to have significantly higher levels of pollution, lower standards of housing, joblessness, and schools far inferior to those for children in white communities. If we wish for a better America, we must all fight for racial and social justice including choices concerning police accountability, healthcare access, economic and educational opportunity, housing, and how we address the needs of our essential healthcare workers—who are disproportionately immigrants, who are black and brown—during this COVID-19 crisis.

I believe in the inherent goodness of people and yet I am aware that some will do anything they can to tear down others they perceive as different. I will continue to fight for those who support social justice and racial, ethnic, and gender equality. Those children and adults we care for at Seven Hills would expect nothing less.

Sincerely,
Dr. David A. Jordan
President, Seven Hills Foundation



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN ACTION AT SEVEN HILLS



Strength Grows from Diversity

Seven Hills celebrates the diversity of the individuals supported as well as our staff who come to us from 57 different countries and bring a richness of backgrounds, talents, and experiences. Our diversity embodies the culture of equity and inclusion that drive the Seven Hills Foundation mission and vision.

The Diversity Committee was founded in 2006, to champion our differences as well as our commonalities. In 2017, the committee was renamed the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Council to parallel advances and best practices as well as incorporate Inclusion as the action-oriented piece to the equation. Two cochairs lead a growing and passionate membership who represent each of the 14 affiliates and are guided by the D&I mission and vision:

MISSION

// To provide and encourage sharing and learning through promoting a culture of respect and developing a community of inclusion of all forms of diversity. //

VISION

// To be a model of progressive enlightenment which nurtures, dignifies, and values individuals of all backgrounds and beliefs, while promoting an inclusive and respectful work environment. //

The Seven Hills Global Outreach (SHGO) affiliate stemmed as a hallmark D&I initiative to leverage humanitarian efforts of partnering health, education, and human services organizations in developing nations and home communities of Seven Hills' staff. SHGO promotes the philosophy that diversity grows a rich culture of giving—a culture defined by putting others first.



Locally, D&I initiatives spotlight Seven Hills staff and include Journeys, staff storytelling; Stellar Staff Career Pathways program; and the High Flyers Enrichment program. The council also sponsors campaigns to raise awareness as well as educate on topics in the news and on the calendar.

Moving forward, the council has identified three subcommittees that will help implement its strategic goals and objectives: Professional Development, Recruitment, and Engagement. The subcommittees will work to achieve D&I advancement in D&I training, roundtables, and events; innovative recruitment to increase a diversified pool of candidates; and ongoing internal and community D&I engagement and outreach.

Diversity & Inclusion is at the core of Seven Hills—integral to the Foundation's CORE VALUES of Respect & Kindness—Integrity—Teamwork—Innovation—Service to Others. We celebrate our diversity and bring our unique experiences to the work we do together for the common caring of the children, adults, and seniors we are so privileged to support.

SEVEN HILLS DIRECT CARE CELEBRATION

Congratulations to the prize recipients—and thank you to all our Seven Hills Direct Care staff for the unwavering dedication to the individuals in their care.

The Direct Care staff throughout our affiliates works tirelessly every day to assist individuals with disabilities and life challenges in their quest to lead their best lives. This year, we pulled out all the stops to recognize our frontline heroes during Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Week, September 14-18.

Each day of the week, names of our direct care staff were randomly drawn to win cash prizes, iPads, Seven Hills swag bags, gift cards, and paid days off.

The weeklong raffle generated a lot of anticipation and excitement as potential winners checked the staff web site daily for the latest drawings.

THANK YOU TO OUR FAMILIES PRAISING SEVEN HILLS DSPS!

// We are very grateful to all the hard-working staff at Old Stage Road in Chelmsford for keeping our son Paul safe and healthy during this pandemic. They are very kind to him and he is happy living there! //

—Ruth and Sal Stanizzi

// Thank you for everything you all you do for Terri and the other residents at Park Avenue. Please know you all are truly appreciated!! //

—Patti & Mary

// Thank you all for the commitments, dedication and love you give to the individual at Park Ave, you are such an AMAZING team!!! //

—Damaris Mbugua

// During this crazy time of COVID, thank you so much for taking care of each other but most importantly for taking care of our family members. With much love and appreciation //

—Dorothy Wallace / Sara

// The DSPs at Pelham ROCK!!! My son is so happy there and it is due in part to the care they take of him!!! Great job everyone and Thank you for all that you do //

—Gary and Becky Dupuis

// There are no words to thank all the Pelham Dr. DSPs! This has been the hardest of times and you have all worked so hard with tons of kindness and professionalism! Justin is so happy in his home and we appreciate you all more than you will ever know!! The best staff!!! //

—Joan and Justin

// As parents, we never worried that he wasn't having fun. I visited often and he was always in the middle of the action, causing trouble as often as he could. Never doubt that you all make a real difference in the lives of the individuals you work with. You gave him a lot of joy and you gave us many happy memories. //

—Steven's Mom

VIRTUALLY IRRESISTIBLE: THIS YEAR'S BIGGER DIPPER

A scooper-duper thank you to all who participated in this year's Virtual Bigger Dipper, especially our ice cream vendors! We couldn't have done this without you:



Berry Fusion Frozen Yogurt • Christopher's Homemade Ice Cream • Coco's Tropical Ice • Cool Licks • Dairy Queen Grill & Chill of West Boylston • Froze Zone • Gibby's Famous Ice Cream • Janine's Frostee • Pinecroft Ice Cream • Robbie's Place • Swirls & Scoops

In years past, our ice cream sponsors donated the ice cream that volunteers scooped at the one-day event. This year, participants purchased tickets to be redeemed at our ice cream sponsor locations. Each ticket purchased was entered into a raffle.

Thank you to all of the businesses that donated raffle items:

Discovery Museum • Hebert Candies • Michael Stone Portraits • Wooden Toys in Flight • Worcester Bravehearts • Worcester Railers

This year's Bigger Dipper raised over \$40,000 for our kids! All proceeds go right to our programs at our affiliate, Children's Friend, that supports children and families through mental health counseling, in-home therapy, adoption and family services, early childhood and education, and grief support.

Thank you to our sponsors who continued to support the event and take the leap with us in this virtual adventure:

White Companies Charitable Trust • Avidia Bank • Saint-Gobain Corporation Foundation • The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, Inc. • UniBank • Webster Five • Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts • Bay State Savings Bank • Berkshire Bank Foundation • Cornerstone Bank • Digital Federal Credit Union • People's United Bank • RSC Insurance Brokerage, Inc. • Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. • Alliance Energy LLC • Bob's Discount Furniture • Cutting Edge Promotional Products • Massachusetts State Council Knights of Columbus • National Grid • Reliant Medical Group • Walmart Leicester • Al's Rubbish Removal & Container Service.

Stay tuned for all the scoop on next year's Bigger Dipper!



GRANTING GOOD WORK!

Seven Hills Foundation is fortunate to leverage grant and align contract support from numerous sources to strengthen and expand our work across our 14 affiliates located in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Grants support programs or projects not typically funded through existing funding streams and provide us with unique opportunities to develop and implement innovative and creative initiatives that enhance the lives of people faced with significant life challenges. The following highlights recently funded projects:

PREVENTING HUNGER THROUGH STREET OUTREACH AND LOCAL FOOD

Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) is grateful for the longstanding support of **BayCoast Bank**, which recently awarded the **SHBH Food Pantry** with a \$1,000 grant. The food pantry has been providing food, resources, and support for the past eight years to homeless and high-risk individuals living on Massachusetts' south coast. Food pantry staff had difficulty keeping up with the demand as a result of rising food costs, increased unemployment, children out of school, and other significant stressors. Now, they are hard at work making and distributing 25-30 bagged meals daily to people living or congregating in high-risk areas such as streets, parks, and in encampments. The team also uses funds to stock and distribute food to over 400 visitors to the pantry each month.

BUILDING SKILLS THROUGH PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS; ANNOUNCEMENT OF IPVAP 2.0

The John E. Fogarty Foundation has granted another \$5,000 award to **The Integrated Performing and Visual Arts Program (IPVAP)** at Seven Hills Rhode Island (SHRI). This popular program is headed into its 11th year thanks to this amazing Foundation and its commitment to supporting people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in the community. IPVAP partners with the Trinity Repertory Company's **TRAIN** program to engage children with I/DD in two 14-week performing arts productions that each conclude with a final performance. IPVAP also offers adults and children with disabilities a weekly therapeutic visual arts program with community-based artists. The program's annual comparative studies consistently demonstrate that individuals who participate in IPVAP meet or exceed treatment plan goals in the areas of self-esteem, communication, and vocational skills as compared to individuals supported who are not taking part in the program.

Since the inception of IPVAP, key relationships have formed with other organizations such as The Moran Foundation, RI State Council on the Arts, The Fogarty Foundation, and many other volunteer artists and facilitators.



After a stellar performance of *Super* in January, IPVAP was poised to wow even more arts patrons with a Visual Arts Gala in May and performance at the Trinity Rep theatre in June. Alas, COVID-19 proved to be a formidable opponent and forced all events to suspend in early March 2020. However, no pandemic can stop the creative facilitation team from bringing arts experiences to Seven Hills. The program sought to recruit

local visual artists and organize online programming. "We'll take up the call to innovate along with the rest of the Foundation," IPVAP Founder Jonathan D'Amico said. "IPVAP 2.0 has a nice ring to it." This more, "techy" approach to delivering arts programming promises to increase arts access. "IPVAP's 'reboot' will incorporate online meeting platforms to reach across all Seven Hills affiliates," D'Amico said. "We are ready to bring the visual and performing arts to every Seven Hills (consumer and staff) home." Stay tuned for the official launch date and program schedule. All you'll need is a thirst for creating... and an internet connection.

PREVENTING SUMMER LEARNING LOSS FOR ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN

The Worcester Area **Summer Literacy Initiative (SLI)** of Family Services of Central Massachusetts (FSCM) was recently awarded \$129,000 in grants from **United Way of Central Massachusetts (UWCM)**. The SLI, active for over a decade, is a flagship program of FSCM's **Center for Childcare Careers** in collaboration with UWCM. The initiative is designed to mitigate summer learning loss in the early elementary school years, and works with local summer camp and youth programs, Worcester Public Schools, and Worcester Parks and Recreation. Due to the impacts of the pandemic, the Center for Childcare Careers had to quickly redesign the program to adapt to the various scenarios—face-to-face and virtual—in summer camp. The SLI operated under three models during the summer: teachers who worked with children and staff at their open sites, teachers who provided remote instruction to children at their sites, and teachers who provided remote instruction to children

at their homes. Generous funding from the United Way of Central Massachusetts helped reach 400 Worcester students to prepare them for the start of the new and different school year.



Literacy Specialist Sophronia Woods holding books that were read in the Summer Literacy Initiative

INCREASING COMPETENCY AROUND THE NEEDS OF LGBTQIA+ YOUTH

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation has awarded an \$8,000 grant and The Boston Foundation Equality Fund has awarded a \$5,000 grant to support LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults through the Gender Wellness Initiative at Children's Friend. According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are three times more likely than straight students to have been assaulted, bullied, and skip school. More than 40% said they had seriously considered suicide while 29% have made attempts in the past year. With this support, Children's Friend will continue to provide counseling services through its outpatient mental health clinic; offer support groups and resource information to the families of transgender and gender non-conforming youth; and provide information and training to school personnel and health care providers on working with LGBTQIA+ youth in supportive and non-judgmental manners.

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE INCLUSION AND IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

Open Door Arts (ODA) is grateful to The Ramsey McCluskey Family Foundation for awarding the COOL Schools Program with a \$25,000 three-year trilogy grant. COOL (Creative Outlook on Learning) Schools places teaching artists in classrooms to develop arts-integrated learning experiences that promote inclusion, and improve academic and artistic outcomes while deepening student engagement in school.

The Ramsey McCluskey Family Foundation will help COOL Schools provide arts education to 1,250 students of all abilities in eight Boston Public schools.

CREATING SYSTEMS CHANGE AND IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Seven Hills ASPIRE! would like to thank the Middlesex Savings Charitable Foundation for the generous grant award of \$20,000 to provide internship stipends to individuals with disabilities in the Milford ASPIRE! Workforce Readiness and Employment Program. In addition to learning valuable on-the-job skills that help prepare participants for a more consistent and paid employment position, interning participants will be able to earn a guaranteed paycheck giving them the chance to also learn the process of budgeting, saving, and spending their hard-earned cash. With evidence that paid internships lead to improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities, we hope to elicit systems change to make this a standard and required Department of Developmental Services' funded component.



ASPIRE! Milford CBDS participants, Alex and Lauren, working at National Grid

REMOTE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT GAP-YEAR LEARNING DURING THE SUMMER

YOU, Inc.'s Dynamy Youth Academy continued to offer remote educational programming to participating students throughout the summer thanks to a generous grant in the amount of \$20,000 from the United Way of Central Massachusetts as part of its Summer Strong Initiative. These services included weekly advisory meetings with each student to monitor their academic progress and performance, writing seminars, study skills and time management workshops, and personal mentoring. As a result of this thoughtful and generous support, the Youth Academy team prepared students to successfully transition to the changed school environment.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION THAT SUSTAINS OUR VISION

Throughout Seven Hills Foundation, we are fortunate to have a robust pipeline of leaders that are poised to step into any role and provide continuity of care, while expanding our reach of services. This deliberate focus on professional development and mentoring is paying off as we transitioned two of our affiliates under new senior leadership.



Joseph Allred, JD, MS, the current vice president of Stetson School, will be leading YOU, Inc. and Children's Friend, effective October 1. Joe's success in operations, and delivery of high-quality clinical programs at Stetson School, as well as his prior experience at the Key Program, aligns him with the skills needed to oversee our youth-serving programs. Joe also brings his extensive experience with program licensing, state procurement, state and federal regulations, and national marketing.



Dr. Jay Hayston joined Seven Hills as the vice president of ASPIRE! in October 2018. In this role, Jay oversees day programming and supports for more than 500 adults with intellectual and developmental differences across five physical sites, as well as many community and employer partner locations. In September, Jay was also named vice president of Seven Hills Rhode Island, taking on the operational and financial oversight of all our children and adult services. Jay is an Employment and Community Services program surveyor with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). He also serves as the co-chair for the Massachusetts Day Habilitation Coalition, and sits on the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers' Day Services committee.



Karen Ludington, Esq., began her work leading Children's Friend 33 years ago and continued in that capacity when Seven Hills Foundation affiliated with Children's Friend in 2017. Our community and certainly those of us at Seven Hills Foundation owe Karen a debt of gratitude for her decades of work advocating on behalf of children and families while delivering excellent, vital services to our community.



Paula Aiello, CPA, was invaluable as the interim President/CEO of YOU, Inc., maintaining a steady hand both prior to and after the affiliation of our respective organizations. She helped guide YOU, Inc. staff as the COVID-19 pandemic started, and has been preserving and enhancing YOU, Inc. services ever since. Thank you, Paula, for your 30 years of service to the children and staff at YOU, Inc.

Both Joe and Jay have large responsibilities to continue the legacy of service cemented by our former leaders Karen Ludington of Children's Friend, and Paula Aiello of YOU, Inc. I wish to congratulate both Karen and Paula who are moving on to well-deserved next chapters in their lives and thank each for their dedication to the children and families of our community.

— Dr. Kathee Jordan, EVP/CEO, Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates

SPOTLIGHT

SEVEN HILLS ASPIRE!

Over the past seven months, the ASPIRE! Team has jumped into many new roles, including working in residential programs and one-on-one outreach, and leading daily classes on Zoom: cooking, community and home gardening, employment skills, health topics, bingo, karaoke, chair yoga, a book club, art workshops, sensory exploration, hands-on science, current events, and more. **ASPIRE! has received the second-highest engagement with remote services of providers submitting data to ADDP.**



ASPIRE!’s **vocational services** have been primarily remote for essential workers with developmental differences. Updates include establishing new virtual platforms for service delivery with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) for consumers, adapting to new video conference skill-building sessions, and virtual job development and placement services.



More than 200 persons served have regularly participated in Zoom classes and other remote ASPIRE! services, yet

many individuals rely on the therapeutic, skill-building, and nursing supports they receive at an ASPIRE! location. Partial reopening of day programs at significantly reduced capacity began on August 3. Some participants continue to engage in completely remote services, while others engage in a mix of in-person and remote services.

SEVEN HILLS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (SHBH)

The **Family Support and Stabilization** and **Supervised Visitation** programs have adapted to recurring Zoom appointments and have been instrumental in securing food and other necessities to ensure families’ well-being. Outside spaces at our offices and in the community have been adapted for in-person visits with games and activities available for the families.

The **Educational Opportunity Center** and **Educational Talent Search** programs switched to virtual and telephone appointments for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, financial aid advising, and advising on the “best fit” for school choices and how to pay for college. Face-to-face appointments have resumed in addition to virtual and telephone appointments.

Community Health Promotion Services was selected by the state to provide COVID-19 testing services throughout New Bedford and Fall River. The response has been incredible; as of early October, nearly 10,000 people arriving from all over the state have been tested—a phenomenal achievement!

The **Southeast Tobacco-Free Community Partnership (TFCP)** prioritizes racial justice while supporting communities’ efforts to help people quit using tobacco, prevent youth from starting to use tobacco, and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.

Massachusetts’ new tobacco law went into effect in June, restricting the sale of flavored tobacco including menthol cigarettes. With local community partners and the media, the TFCP is building awareness for the law and resources to help people quit smoking. The TFCP is promoting a new incentive offered by the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline in response to the new state law: call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or enroll online at <http://makesmokinghistory.org/>. This effort supports MA residents, particularly Black, Latina, and LGBTQ+, who have been historically and disproportionately targeted by the tobacco and vaping industries. Learn more at <https://www.nomentholknowwhy.org>.

SEVEN HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICES (SHCS)

While the pandemic forced a worldwide shutdown, the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Staff at Seven Hills Community Services exceeded the demand to work harder than ever. SHCS long-term residences participated in our **Stay Healthy In Place (SHIP)** initiative, from early April through May 2, which provided the opportunity for DSPs to work a week or more at a time, thereby limiting the risk of exposure in the residences as well as their own homes.

SHIP led to a lot of innovation including technology and applications to stay in contact with family and friends. Our health care providers transitioned to telehealth for physical and mental health sessions. SHCS clinicians’ remote programming included groups focused on exercise, current events, arts and crafts, dance, reading, cooking, and COVID-19 safety trainings.

In May, several SHCS staff graduated with advanced degrees as they pursued their career paths and expanded their expertise. Congratulations to Tammy

Peterson, Bachelor of Liberal Arts with a concentration in Management; Maryanne Thiga, Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis; David Fofanah, Master in Applied Behavior Analysis; Joshua Wanganga, Master in Applied Behavior Analysis; Elizabeth Lizotte, BSN; David Ankomah, LPN; Queenette Asia, LPN; and Felicia Agbanyo, AS Psychology.

SEVEN HILLS FAMILY SERVICES (SHFS)

The onset of COVID-19 disconnected many families from their usual food sources. The **SHFS North Central team** recognized the void, stepped up to the plate, so to speak, and created a **Support-for-Food group**. The team devised a grid with contact information for supported families that needed food and connected them to resources such as food pantries and farmers markets.

The Department of Developmental Services recruited SHFS to gather and deliver items or gift cards to families. SHFS staff also answered the call from schools to deliver lunches to families without access to transportation. **Family Support Specialist Kathy Black** worked with the local schools to organize bus routes to locations where families were able to retrieve their lunches from their area buses.

Rebecca F., a participant in **Agency With Choice (AWC)**, had difficulty with her small tablet during isolation. SHFS staff worked remotely to help Rebecca buy a large screen with her AWC funds. Staff Zoomed with her to create a schedule of activities, which included nutrition & cooking, music lessons, and fun like trivia! Rebecca recently got her own Zoom account so she can “run the meetings.” Mom confirms this process has been an eye opener to just how independent Rebecca can be with the use of technology.

South Valley Family Support Center participant, Sarah, became withdrawn during COVID-19 isolation. Zoom activities were challenging due to Sarah’s sensory noise sensitivity. Staff suggested Sarah simply watch at first, then participate when she became more comfortable—which happened when she couldn’t resist Jeopardy! Sarah’s mom emailed staff saying, “Thank you so much for doing the Jeopardy! Sarah really enjoys participating. It’s the first (only) thing that she has found to do that she likes! (even when she doesn’t do so well). You do a great job with the questions and emceeding the event.”

SEVEN HILLS GLOBAL OUTREACH (SHGO)

For the last 11 years, **Zion Ministries’ Directors and Pastors Michael and Cynthia Kanu** have guided SHGO’s work to uplift millions of people in the impoverished country of Sierra Leone. Major impact has decreased the maternal and infant mortality rates in 26 rural villages of Southern Bo. 24 of the villages have received clean water wells and sanitation facilities. All of this was possible through the generosity of SHGO’s donors. For the last nine years, residents, six churches, and a mosque in Garland, TX, have held the **Running-4-Clean Water Charity 5K** to benefit initiatives in Sierra Leone. This year, the 5K sponsors raised over \$12K despite the event’s cancellation due to the pandemic. SHGO and the people of the southern Sierra Leone villages will forever be grateful to the loyal supporters in Garland.

SHGO has launched a campaign to construct a **Community Library** in Bo, Sierra Leone. Dr. David A. Jordan initiated the concept of a community-based “place of learning” to expand the capacity of Bo’s two primary schools. Over 23,000 educational textbooks for grades K-12 have been acquired through

US-based **Books for Africa**, and will arrive at the Freetown port at the end of October. SHGO is now calling on its base of generous supporters to assist in raising the money needed to build the first-ever community library in Bo, with hopes for construction to begin by the end of the year.

“Without question, a library will benefit the students of Bo in their quest for knowledge,” said SHGO and Seven Hills Foundation President Dr. David A. Jordan. “Creating a sanctuary of learning accessible to the community has long been a goal for Zion-Ministries.”

Support the Bo Community Library Fund at sevenhills.org.

SHGO’s Kenyan partner, the Bethel School, is launching a revitalization project. Since 2006, the Bethel School has provided psychosocial, educational support, and food for orphans and vulnerable children in the Kibera Slum—Nairobi’s largest slum with a population of one million in an area smaller than one square mile. Residents have limited access to electricity, clean running water, sanitation, and medical care. Many children are orphaned, having lost parents to AIDS or violence. In Kenya, 1 in 3 children do not attend school and of the non-attendees, 2 in 3 are girls. The national student-teacher ratio is 40:1; in poorer communities, the ratio is a daunting 80:1. Groups of children share a single textbook while other basic supplies are unavailable.



SHGO hopes to raise \$50,000 to build a new Bethel School for grades 1-3. Bethel's founder and headmaster Mary said, "...education is the main tool that we can use to eradicate poverty, which is prevalent in our society. For this reason, we leave no one behind. Through the school, we have a platform that we have always envisioned to use as a tool for transformational change in our community." **Support the Bethel School initiative at <http://bit.ly/bethel-school>.**

SEVEN HILLS NEUROCARE (SHNC)

SHNC helps people with brain injury reclaim lives and achieve individual goals in recovery. The SHNC team has consistently risen to meet the challenges of COVID-19, readily embracing the abrupt changes affecting our residential homes statewide and implementing effective safety measures. To staff's pleasant surprise, the pandemic has led to positive developments and end results that are truly impressive.



The team developed meaningful activities to keep participants motivated during isolation.: **Sullivan** residents created collages of self-expression. The **Winter Hill** ladies enjoyed brunches, a barbecue, and a picnic outside. **Tanglewood** repurposed items to make an art collage showing unity as a global community. **Salisbury Street**

residents grew vegetables in bucket containers. **Richmond Ave.** enjoyed board games. **Chestnut Street** residents created a beautiful garden constructed of wooden pallets and recycled and donated materials. Across our homes, people engaged in activities that found the beauty within themselves, their support system, and the world during unprecedented times.



SHNC recognized staff whose leadership inspired their peers. A residence director and clinician sewed cloth masks, scoured our community for personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies, and made hand sanitizer. Another residence director organized a surprise "**A-PPE-rciation Parade**" for residences across her region. Dozens of staff sacrificed time away from family to live and work at our homes around the clock for weeks at a time. Without their sacrifices, we would not be where we are today: healthy, and more prepared and determined to achieve our goals.

SEVEN HILLS PEDIATRIC CENTER (SHPC)

SHPC residents need the level of medically intensive care that requires unwavering dedication and a rigorous routine on a regular basis, bar none—not even a bar that has been raised as high as the novel coronavirus. With infection control in overdrive, **SHPC at Groton** reports weekly to nine different organizations. The Department of Public



Health conducts weekly Infection Control Surveys as well as on-site inspections. The SHPC infection control specialist is responsible for all policy changes, which change weekly, and the training of all staff on Infection Control Technique. The team is adhering to protocol with precision, yet flexible to change at a moment's notice.

Social Services staff have been mandated to organize all outdoor family visits, which were permitted again in August. Families are thrilled to see their loved ones in person, and for families who are unable to visit, the **Education and Adult Service** staff manage 100 FaceTime calls per week.



The beginning of September was an uplifting time at **SHPC at Hopedale** as all 11 children returned to their public schools. It was a joy for staff to see them head out to experience the change of scenery at their various educational destinations. The Hopedale building inspector granted permission for the center to install a new swing set that was donated as a **Make-A-Wish** gift for two of the center's sisters. With special seating on one side and a wheelchair ramp on the other, the swing will be enjoyed by all the children.

SEVEN HILLS RHODE ISLAND (SHRI)

COVID-19 transformed Seven Hills Rhode Island in ways we could not have expected and our team certainly rose to the unprecedented challenges: We transitioned to telehealth and telecommuting. We engaged with our state leaders and agencies to ensure best practices across all service areas. We fought in earnest for the supplementary funding to ensure access to care. Our SHRI employees are all heroes who play an essential role in the health and wellbeing of our community.

Early Intervention (EI) staff bring passionate teamwork to the meeting of developmental milestones for the children in the program, and didn't miss a beat in the transition to telehealth delivery. The team's silver lining during this experience has been the ability to connect with families whose children are traditionally supported at their day care facilities. The one-on-one facetime through telehealth has helped deepen the EI connection with the families as well as the children as they returned to their childcare routines. Many of the parents have asked to continue telehealth visits later in the day so they can stay involved through this convenient model of service delivery.

Ray is a **Day Services** staff member who works in collaboration with residential supports. He quickly became the favorite of a gentleman who is showing signs of Dementia and tested positive for COVID-19. The man was struggling with his recovery until Ray set up activities for him, which included getting him a fishing license. It was a relief for the man's family to know he was being well cared for during his isolation. They are exceptionally pleased with Ray and the positive impact he is having on their loved one.



The transition to telehealth has transformed the outcomes in the **Personal Assistance Services and Supports (PASS)** program. PASS staff develop home and community-based support systems with families and their children to build self-determination, independence, and improve participation in social situations. PASS participant, Matthew, who has a developmental disability from a serious seizure disorder, has worked with PASS staff member, Cheryl, for several years. He is very quiet, processes information slowly, and can often take several minutes to complete a task. For example, it took Matthew 10-15 minutes to tie his shoes independently. Since the onset of COVID-19, Matthew has experienced a "Telehealth Turnaround." He has become more vocal and self-assured. He initiates tasks and has created a shoe-tying game where he sets a timer on his iPad and races Cheryl to see who can tie their shoes faster. Matthew is now able to tie his shoes in less than a minute—an amazing feat for his feet! Cheryl has done a wonderful job developing creative ways to keep Matthew motivated. Bolstered by telehealth and technology, Matthew is meeting significant milestones and his family is overjoyed with his progress.

With the onset of COVID-19, on-site orientation became a prohibitive process. **Virtual New Employee Orientation (VNEO)** is the online solution to new-

hire orientation gaining momentum as HR departments scramble to onboard new hires during the pandemic. Faced with this unprecedented challenge and solution, the SHRI HR team's bewildering question "Now what?" quickly morphed to "What if?" and VNEO itself was virtually onboarded into their vocabulary—and plan—overnight.

SHRI HR Generalist Ali Suenart is on the VNEO team that includes Corporate College training staff, and HR recruiters, generalists, and administration. The team converted the orientation material to a digital format and created virtual versions of in-person trainings. Technology and connectivity were provided for onboarding employees in need—another obstacle to overcome since public access points such as libraries were closed.

As best-practice steps are being documented, Ali emphasizes it is not a cookie-cutter process and there is no recipe for success this early in the game. The learning curve has had some hairpin turns and uphill climbs, but the now concerted effort of the Seven Hills HR department was determined to navigate this new necessity to cross a viable finish line. Ali estimates they have successfully onboarded over 80 employees into their new positions.

The ease of restrictions has also eased VNEO to the modified "BVNEO"—or Blended Virtual New Employee Orientation, which will most likely be sustainable as part of the new normal in orientation. Cheers to the onboarding team, with a shoutout to the amazing administrative assistants, for never wavering on the Seven Hills' Core Values of innovation, teamwork, and service to others—in this case, the new staff who are being welcomed into the Seven Hills Foundation family.

CHILDREN'S AID & FAMILY SERVICE (CAFS)

The work of **Child Care Resources (CCR)** continued through the pandemic as staff processed regular voucher payments as well as payments to 135 Emergency Child Care providers in central MA, which included CAFS' **Child Enrichment Center** and the Children's Friend **Early Child Care Center**. CCR partnered with **Child Care Aware of America** to distribute small gifts to the Emergency Child Care centers. The program also joined the **Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**, and **Kaplan Distributors** to provide free toys and educational supplies to families supported by the Department of Children & Families. Distribution was made possible through EEC's partnership with **WGBH**.

CCR assessed the state's wait list to ensure more streamlined access for families needing subsidized child care—a significant undertaking, with nearly 13,000 children on the list. Throughout the spring and summer, CCR staff reassured families of their subsidy status and informed them of guidelines and extensions.

Kudos to the CCR team for assuming responsibility above and beyond, and doing so efficiently, resourcefully, and with exemplary professionalism.

Cheryl Stewart has been a **Family Child Care** provider for 33 years, amassing tools, resources, and social support such as Facebook to mutually bond and share experiences with fellow providers. Yet, none of this could have prepared her for the novel coronavirus. This was, as Cheryl put it, "The BIG One" and there just simply wasn't a user manual to turn to for it.

Instead, Cheryl turned to her tight-knit group of Family Child Care Providers supported by CAFS. When centers closed, the group opened their hearts to the

children for whom they cared, rallying to assemble and deliver activity packages to the doorsteps of their homes.

Anticipation from within was relieved when reopening was scheduled for June 29. Centers were given the flexibility to reopen as they completed the daunting checklist that deemed them ready. Cheryl reopened on July 8, after scouring online and off to stock supplies as well as order new "socially distanced stations" for each child. Gone was the familiar round table to congregate, share, and squabble over lunch bag disparities.

In its place—a more organized and regimented approach: Sanitization is teaching the children about patience. The toy of the moment is now the toy of the hour. After it's been played with by one child, it must be thoroughly cleaned for the next. Social distancing is teaching the children about respect for space. The list goes on as well as the tally of expenses that were absorbed in order to welcome the children post-quarantine.

Cheryl takes it all in stride, however, as it's clear she's hit her stride again caring for children. The BIG One will always be more than a blip on her 33-year radar, but it did yield a little glimmer from a silver lining: "The kids are definitely washing their hands more," Cheryl said, with a laugh.

CHILDREN'S FRIEND (CF)

Despite the pandemic, Children's Friend has remained resolute to its mission and quality of services.

The **Early Learning Center (ELC)** teachers immediately agreed to provide emergency childcare from March 26 through June 29, for the kids of essential workers in healthcare, supermarket and delivery, direct support professionals and others during statewide closure. The



teachers handled the adjustments with grace and compassion for the children in their new environment. On July 6, ELC Director Summer Haggerty and her staff reunited with the children who regularly attend the center and their families.

Adoption and Family Services staff members managed their cases from their homes and kept close track of the children through Zoom and phone calls. The courts creatively tackled closure by conducting "sidewalk adoptions" during which the families came to the courthouse door and a court clerk brought them their adoption paperwork signed by a judge. Pictured here is



Savannah, who participated in CF's first sidewalk adoption and now shares a permanent home with her family.

In-Home Therapy and the **Ellsworth Child and Family Counseling Center** made a seamless transition to telehealth for individual, family, and group therapy; and psychiatric medication. CF clinicians and business staff did a commendable job supporting the families and keeping the clinic in operation.

The **Carriage House**, a Center for Grieving Children and Families launched a Community Grief Support project to meets the needs of people grieving deaths that occurred during the pandemic when social isolation made the norms of grief and mourning impossible. Clinicians from YOU, Inc. and Family Services of Central Massachusetts have joined CF on the project made possible with a generous grant from the Reliant Foundation.

FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS (FSCM)

FSCM staff and programs are meeting the challenges of COVID-19 head-on and are creating services that are quite remarkable given the circumstances.

The **Counseling Program** quickly transitioned all services to teletherapy sessions within a week of the outbreak. FSCM clinicians adapted the in-person training program, **Parents Apart**, to a virtual platform in August.

In August, the **Senior Companion Program (SCP)** began a telephone reassurance initiative for home-bound seniors who could benefit from a weekly phone call from a trained senior volunteer. Please email Senior Companion Program Director Joy Rehfeld at jrehfeld@fscm.org if you or someone you know is interested.

Senior volunteers at **RSVP Volunteers of Central MA** have been busy making food for Meals on Wheels, providing

pick-up and delivery for the Rachel's Table mission to feed the homeless, and virtually tutoring ESL students or scheduling regular phone calls with the children for whom they advocate through CASA. RSVP continues to be a Bombas Giving Partner, distributing 2,500 pairs of socks to the homeless.



The **Summer Literacy Initiative** worked with nine community partners and nine literacy specialists at ten program sites using three scenarios: directly in class, virtually in class, and virtually in home. Literacy specialists had a library of new storybooks purchased through the United Way grant. The initiative is collecting information on each site's operation to learn about the challenges and benefits of the three different delivery models.



In June, the **Center for Child Care Careers** wrapped up Building Resilient Children (BRC), a childcare training and coaching program focused on addressing young children and trauma. The program offered 12 trainings and biweekly coaching to 12 classrooms in 7 different childcare centers. In July, the BRC team and UMass Medical School staff made a presentation to Senator Harriette Chandler and the Massachusetts Office of the Child Advocate. Promising outcomes have resulted in additional funding in next year's state budget to expand the project to other regions of the state.

The **Mediation Department** developed a virtual relationship with the Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) to address immediate needs of residents during COVID-19. Mediation staff created and presented a Conflict Presentation, which the WHA has requested to be recorded for use in their curriculum, A Better Life. The Mediation Department has also put on two Financial Literacy presentations to address concerns of both employees and clients during these uncertain times.

OPEN DOOR ARTS (ODA)

ODA students love and need the arts, so after their schools switched to remote learning, staff made sure all 1,200 of its **COOL Schools** students continued to interact through live Zoom classes, pre-recorded videos, and interactive packets. ODA teamed with partners to get **8,000 art kits** in the hands of Boston Public School students so they could participate in arts learning at home.

ODA supported teachers as well, ensuring the adaptation to remote instruction by **training over 300 arts educators** around the country to use the arts for processing trauma, healing, and inclusion.

Accessible virtual gallery tours were created when our **Open Door Galleries** in Boston and Worcester closed. ODA's amazing partnership with the Worcester Art Museum brought the work of Sam Tomasiello and Rachel Bird to our visitor's homes. Art studio opportunities for artists with disabilities continued through pre-recorded weekly lessons.

The pandemic exposed community inequities and exclusion, yet it also demonstrated the importance of creativity and resourcefulness to solve problems, the value of partnership and collaboration, and the unique ways that the arts promote equity, process trauma, cultivate creative expression, and promote wellbeing. Amid uncertainty and isolation, the arts provide a critical opportunity to move forward, reconnect our common humanity, and create a more joyful and equitable future for us all.

STETSON SCHOOL

Stetson School staff and youth have weathered the pandemic storm remarkably well. Collaborative efforts have kept morale, safety, and teamwork at all-time highs, leading to fantastic outcomes, creative outputs, and opportunities to give back to the Barre community.



Stetson youth have channeled their collective energy into their **Community Giving Fund**, which awards \$10,000 annually to nonprofit organizations, municipalities, or other community initiatives in Barre and the Quabbin

Regional School District that support community social good. This year, the youth presented a check to the **Barre Fire Department** for its tremendous efforts to keep everyone safe during the pandemic, and the **Barre/Hardwick Senior Center** to assist in funding its professional entertainment lineup for the center's participants.

YOU, INC. (YI)

YOU, Inc. has redesigned and expanded its **Psychiatry** practice at a time when Child Psychiatry practitioners are in very short supply. To address this critical shortage, YOU, Inc. is building on existing professional partnerships to recruit staff, and to make significant investments in planning and technology to support telepsychiatry services. This foresight has led to the hiring of child psychiatrists, and telepsychiatry offered to clients with transportation and other barriers to care.

IT and clinical leadership teams succeeded in providing **17,737** telehealth services across all program areas from March 17 through July 31. **Dr. Allison Beckler**, medical director, consults with her colleagues via the UMass Child Psychiatry Fellows program and other associations to share our expertise in designing and implementing telepsychiatry practices during these challenging times.

Dynamy Youth Academy and **Bruce Wells Scholars Upward Bound** college access programs continue to host weekly workshops, Saturday Freshman seminars, MCAS and SAT prep sessions for English Language Arts, Group and Individual Advising, Senior Seminars, technology and academic supply drop off, and a range of virtual recreation programs via Google Classroom and Zoom.

The **College Access** and **Career Pathways** programs serve promising students whose socio-economic or life



circumstances may prevent them from reaching their full academic and career potential. Despite statewide closure, YOU, Inc.'s Education teams have delivered classroom instruction, out-of-school tutoring, one-to-one mentoring, and community-based experiences that are all essential to the students' success.

Career Pathways offered virtual HiSet tutoring and testing, vocational training consultation, and personal advising services to students enrolled at all four program locations throughout the spring. The program's classrooms, which feature very low student-to-teacher ratios, have reopened and are operating safely within all CDC guidelines.

Behavioral Health Centers offer outpatient behavioral health and care coordination support in Gardner, Southbridge, Milford, and Worcester. Under the direction of **Joanna Cyr**, LICSW, the **Milford Behavioral Health Center** successfully completed Department of Public Health licensure as a behavioral health clinic/satellite site. YOU, Inc. is the Community Service Agency for the South Central and Blackstone Valley areas of Central MA, offering intensive care coordination and family support services at the Milford site. With this new licensure, the center will offer outpatient counseling services for individuals, couples, and families in the Milford/Franklin area where there is a significant need for these services.



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sevenhills.org

Thank You for Your Support!



A glorious fall day set the stage for the **32nd Annual New Beginnings Charity Golf Tournament** as more than 100 golfers teed up to benefit the Seven Hills Community Connections program. The collective participation of our golfers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers provides over 1,800 families with access to opportunities in the community for their loved ones with disabilities. During these uncertain times, they needed your support NOW more than ever—and you turned out to WOW us all with your energy and enthusiasm. Seven Hills is profoundly grateful for your unwavering connection to the people we support and the New Beginnings they experience because of you.



MAKING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.