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## Tri County Community Connections

From the Desk of...

James Parauda, CEO

Welcome to the new year where everything is



I wanted to touch base about the finish of last year, as well as what to look forward to this year. Well, we closed out the year on a strong note with a wonderful holiday party for our families (see page 3). We had a record number of family members attend. They enjoyed great food, music, Toy Story's Woody and Jessie, and of course great conversation. Thank you to all the family members who attended and to the staff of the CMO and FSO for arranging such a great holiday event.

Here are some other highlights for the agency during 2019:

- The agency held an internal staff Autism Awareness fundraiser and collected over \$800.
- In May, the agency participated in Mental Health Awareness events in each of the three counties we serve.
- The annual agency-sponsored family picnic had its largest attendance in the 7-year history of the event with 680 attendees. We look forward to an equally impressive turnout in 2020.
- The agency sponsored five Nurtured Heart Approach® trainings for family members as well as worked with six Out-of-Home providers in implementing 6 Core Strategies within their agencies.

This upcoming year we also have very exciting things planned. Please read about the Nurtured Heart Approach® trainings we are offering throughout the first quarter of the new year. We will be sponsoring Mental Health Awareness events during the month of May. As always, we, along with the FSO, will be sponsoring the family picnic at Forest Lodge in June and will be having many other great trainings and events throughout the year. Please continue to look for updates about these happenings in future newsletters. Happy 2020 to all of you.

James Parauda, LSW  
Chief Executive Officer

## Youth Success Story



One of the greatest joys of being a Care Manager is watching our youth become better versions of themselves. Care Manager Tina O'Sullivan watched Nathaniel grow from a shy boy who found it challenging to speak up at Child Family Team meetings to a self-sufficient young man who excels at performing and public speaking. Nathaniel's path in life was not a simple one, but it led him to people and places that supported him in making the best he could out of a difficult situation. As Nathaniel's team grew, so did his success. From his family, Tina, to his therapeutic and residential treatment providers, Nathaniel always had a solid team advocating for his needs until he was able to develop his own voice and self-advocacy skills. Nathaniel now uses his voice to speak on behalf of other young people; he was recently invited to speak at the Promising Pathways to Success conference, where he openly shared his experiences with the New Jersey Children's System of Care before a crowd of 300+ attendees. Nathaniel is no longer a quiet and reserved child with his head down at a team meeting, but that hasn't stopped him from being a voice for other young people so that they may have the same opportunities that he had. Nathaniel is enjoying independent living and just made the first rent payment on his own apartment! While he has found a new community to call home, he remains involved with his family and the church in his hometown, where he uses his voice to make beautiful music. We at Tri County CMO hope that Nathaniel's story can serve as inspiration to youth who are still finding their voices and their paths in life.

## February is Black History Month

Black History Month was first celebrated in the United States in 1926. Historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History declared the second week of February to be "Negro History Week." This week was chosen because it corresponds with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln on February 12th and Frederick Douglass on February 14th. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Since 1976, each American president has designated February as Black History Month and chose a specific theme. This year's theme will honor African Americans and their right to vote. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, which gave black men the right to vote following the Civil War. Black History Month is a way our nation recognizes the sacrifices and achievements African Americans have made and will continue to make in the future.

## Tri County CMO Shout Out!

Several TCCMO families participated in Target of Bridgewater's 2019 December Heroes & Helpers event. Bridgewater Police Department supported this initiative with Target to bring holiday spirit to their local neighborhoods. This event promotes positive interactions between youth and the public safety officials from their neighborhoods by pairing them together for holiday shopping sprees in many Target stores. Each child was provided with a \$100 Target gift card to help them get gifts or other items they may need, while being able to shop with their assigned police officer. See picture on the right of three brothers Riley(Left), Oliver(Middle) and Lyle(Right) with their assigned police officer and Bullseye.



## Community Corner

### *Joseph H. Firth Youth Center – Phillipsburg*

Joseph H. Firth Youth Center (FYC) is a non-profit recreational center devoted to serving the youth of Phillipsburg through a wide variety of dynamic programming and educational and athletic opportunities. Since opening its doors 65 years ago, FYC has consistently expanded offerings to include diverse programs during the evenings, weekends, school closure days, and throughout the summer break. A few examples include Before and After School Care, Summer Camp, Big Brother/Big Sister Mentoring, bi-monthly youth yoga sessions, dance classes with recitals, gardening events, and an after-school chess club. FYC is also the home gym to nearly 30 youth basketball teams and 4 youth wrestling teams to engender improved health and fitness. Within the past two years, there has been a significant expansion of hours of operation and collaborative efforts to diversify activities through partnerships including but not limited to Catholic Charities Mobile Response and Stabilization Services, Tri County Care Management Organization, the Family Support Organization, Traditions Family Success Center of Norwescap, and School Based Youth Services within the Phillipsburg School District. For more information or to arrange a tour, visit <https://www.firthyouthcenter.com/>.

### *LEE Services – Phillipsburg*

LEE Services' (Learning Enrichment Experiences) mission is to provide learning enrichment experiences for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. Its emphasis is on creating a social environment geared towards providing opportunities for enhanced relationship and connections with others who may or may not have IDD challenges. With its focus on skill-building that assists participants navigate the world, LEE is committed to providing community-based education opportunities and offers day habilitation services, community-based supports, community inclusion services, pre-vocational services, transition programming, respite and transportation. Additional offerings include music therapy, nutrition classes, Qi Gong fitness classes, and upcoming caregiver education series. LEE Services provides enrichment activities and in-community experiences that focus on family driven values with respect for each person's cultural and linguistic competency. All services are delivered through individualized person-centered approaches. For more information or to arrange a tour, visit <https://providinglee.com/>.

## Tri County CMO & FSO Holiday Open House

On December 6, Tri County CMO and FSO held their annual Holiday Open House at the Elks Lodge in Flemington. Families came together to share smiles, laughter, and holiday cheer with each other and enjoyed special appearances from Toy Story's Woody and Jessie. The sensory room offered activities such as fidget spinners, noise putty, as well as arts and crafts. Dinner was provided, families left with generous gifts, and a great time was had by all! A huge thank you shout out to the following donors: ShopRite, Wegmans, Wawa, Dunkin Donuts, Italian Bakery & Café, Weis, Pasta Grill, Stop & Shop, Just Subs.



## Add to Your Parent Toolbox with the Nurtured Heart Approach®



Parenting doesn't come with an instruction manual, though couldn't we all use one sometimes. Add some challenging behaviors and mental health needs to the constant stimulation in the modern technological age, and we find ourselves lacking the tools to feel effective as parents and help our kids succeed. So here's something else you can try. The Nurtured Heart Approach® is a relationship-focused methodology founded strategically in The 3 Stands™ for helping children (and adults) build their Inner Wealth™ and use their intensity in successful ways. It has become a powerful way of awakening the inherent greatness in all children while facilitating parenting success.

The Nurtured Heart Approach® has been shown to create transformative changes in children diagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Reactive Attachment Disorder and other behavioral, emotional and anxiety related symptoms – often times without the need for long-term mental health treatment. Even children experiencing social cognitive challenges, like Autism Spectrum Disorder greatly benefit from the approach, reducing the need for traditional mental health and medical interventions.

Traditional approaches often fall short of promoting the Inner Wealth™ essential for children to build successful relationships. This method has helped thousands of families, educators, and child advocates channel a child's intensity in beautifully creative and constructive ways – helping children achieve new emotional portfolios of confidence and enduring levels of competency.

The approach is simple and accessible. Using resources like books, online courses, and certification training, we hope to show you how utterly easy it is to not only improve your situation with a challenging or intense child, but to transform the child through the awareness that their intensity is actually the source

of their greatness. Tri County CMO has five Certified Nurtured Heart Approach® trainers and will be providing 2 monthly FREE trainings for parents and providers. Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn the approach and inject some positive energy into parenting. Please RSVP to Stephanie Suriani at [ssuriani@tricitycmo.org](mailto:ssuriani@tricitycmo.org).

**January 30, 10am-1pm**

Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen  
6 Park Avenue  
Flemington, NJ 08822

\*Facilitated by Deja Amos & Tina O'Sullivan

**February 13, 10am-1pm**

Tri County Care Management Organization  
3040 Rt. 22 West, Suite 210  
Branchburg, NJ 08876

\*Facilitated by Stephanie Suriani & Nicole Del Duca

**February 20, 6pm-8:30pm**

Tri County Care Management Organization  
3040 Rt. 22 West, Suite 210  
Branchburg, NJ 08876

\*Facilitated by Deja Amos & Deb Ramos

**March 11, 10am-1pm**

Tri County Care Management Organization  
315 West Washington Ave. Suite 1  
Washington, NJ 07882

\*Facilitated by Deja Amos & Deb Ramos

**March 17, 6pm-8:30pm**

Tri County Care Management Organization  
315 West Washington Ave. Suite 1  
Washington, NJ 07882

\*Facilitated by Stephanie Suriani & Nicole Del Duca

## Pride in Partnership

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties (CASA SHaW) is a nonprofit child advocacy group that provides volunteer advocates in court for children in the foster care system. Since the first child was appointed to CASA in January of 2006, these advocates have provided Family Court judges with child-centric reports and child-specific recommendations for nearly 900 children. CASA advocates' knowledge of the child's history and needs have made them an important partner of Tri County CMO.



CASA advocates are appointed by court order to serve in this capacity by a judge and usually remain appointed to that child until the child finds their "forever family," whether it is their family of origin, an adoptive family, or permanent placement with someone else. The advocates visit with their appointed child(ren) every month, but far more of their time is spent gathering information from many different people in the child's life – teachers, guidance counselors, CMO and DCPD caseworkers, biological parents, resource parents, and others - in order to provide the judge with an objective picture of how the child is doing overall, assess what is working well, and make recommendations to address outstanding needs. CASA volunteers' overarching objectives are to stabilize children while in care and help facilitate permanency for them.

CASA's mission extends to providing community education about the needs and challenges facing children in foster care. At present, they are working with Resilient Youth Somerset to provide free trainings on the impacts of trauma on children's brain development. CASA also provides children with academic challenges with free, in-home tutors and is developing a youth mentoring program. CASA often provides kids in foster care with something too many lack – a caring, consistent, stable, and engaged

adult who cares about what happens to them. That is something every child deserves. For more information about CASA SHaW, visit [www.casashaw.org](http://www.casashaw.org).

Written by Tracey L. Heisler, Executive Director of CASA of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren.

## For Your Information

During the month of February, awareness of Eating Disorders is observed at both a state and national level. The National Eating Disorder Association has designated February 24-March 1, 2020 as Eating Disorder Awareness Week. This year the theme of, Come As You Are: Hindsight is 20/20 is embraced. The campaign is to begin changing the conversation around food, body image and eating disorders. With hashtags like #NEDAawareness, #ComeAsYouAre & #Inclusivity, NEDA is bringing the conversation into social media prominence. Visit [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) for further information on screening, info on access to treatment, and events such as, walks, legislative advocacy, regional conferences and more.

## Board Members

Dan Puntillo – Chair  
Dana Goodman- Vice Chair  
Walter Dudzinski– Treasurer  
Erin Karl – Secretary  
Tanya Romasz-McDonald  
Danielle Zurawiecki  
Leslie Brusser



## How to Get Referred to Tri County CMO

PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to Children’s System of Care services. PerformCare staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide assessment and guidance to families facing challenges to their functioning and well-being.

PerformCare / Contracted Systems Administrator (CSA)

1-877-652-7624

<http://www.performcarenj.org/>

<http://www.performcarenj.org/families/index.aspx> (video guide)



Tri County CMO

Tri County ResourceNet

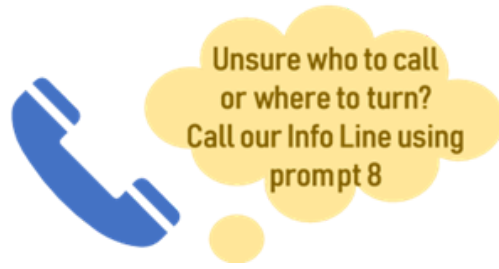
How To Submit A Resource To The Tri County ResourceNet

Sign Up For Future Newsletters

Regístrese para futuros boletines

**Branchburg Office**  
3040 Route 22 West, Suite 210  
Branchburg, NJ 08876

**Washington Office**  
315 West Washington Avenue, Suite 1  
Washington, NJ 07882



Tri County Care Management Organization | [info@tricityresources.net](mailto:info@tricityresources.net) | [tricityresources.net](http://tricityresources.net)

