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Tri County Community Connections

Youth Success Story



It is always exciting and inspiring to see a young adult turn their life around and make changes in their lifestyle to better themselves. David has come a long way in multiple aspects of his life and has been able to reflect on his past decisions and make changes that have brought him to his current happy and healthy state. In the past, David had found himself getting into trouble, failing school, and not focusing on his future. He was able to overcome those barriers and now, David is a Senior in high school, looking into colleges. He has found employment at GameStop. David did not let his uneasy childhood define his future. David's Care Manager, Lamar Scott stated, "When thinking about David this quote comes to mind, 'Struggling is not the identity. You must learn to live while you struggle, such that anyone who sees you can separate the struggle from your life.' David is a young man that has had his share of struggles but through struggle is where he saw how strong he really is as a person." It is important for all of us to remember, especially in times like these, that when we face hardships in life there are always opportunities to learn and grow. We at TCCMO hope that David continues to turn his challenges into motivation to

continue this path to success!

From the Desk of... James Parauda, CEO



The importance of the Children's System of Care to the community

The Children's System of Care started in New Jersey as a grassroots effort of parents with children suffering from mental health illnesses wanting more from local services. Many of them felt their children were getting lost in a system that was overwhelmed and lacked resources to assist. In seeing how our agency's work has changed during COVID-19, I have had time to reflect on the changes in our services and what that has meant to families. Our forced change to a virtual platform for face-to-face visits was a creative way to keep our services going during a difficult time.

What we noticed during this change is that families rely on us to connect to their greater community. The resources we connect them to assist their children in getting through the daily challenges that they face with mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities. We take pride in connecting with our youth and becoming part of their life for the betterment of the entire family, even if it is only for a short period of time. Therefore, we realize the importance of a strong and lasting connections to their community as a long-term survival kit. For many families, overcoming the fear, shame and stigma associated with their everyday challenges keeps them from reaching out to capable providers in the community. A big part of our model focuses on assisting caregivers with overcoming these barriers and educating them on how a community can support them in their lifelong journey.

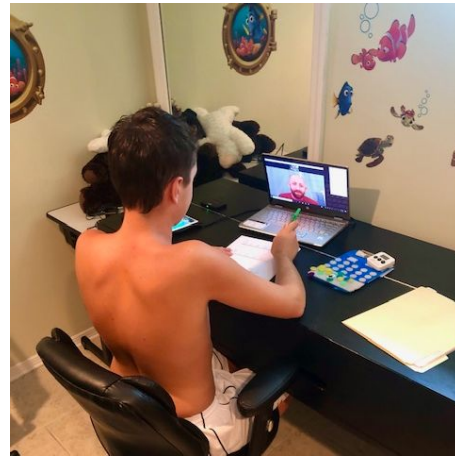
We are all familiar with the cliché "you don't know what you've got until it's gone". The large interruption to the system of care due to the pandemic, has demonstrated what a powerful system is in place for families in New Jersey. We have spent over 20 years building this system into a great web of services and have continually pushed for an even greater system than we have right now. Many of these services existed; however, the power of the system was the ability to create system integration and collaboration where it may not have existed before. We have connected families to these services to meet their individualized needs, based on the input of their child and family teams, who have expressed confidence that these were the right services for their youth. Unfortunately, witnessing how the lack of access to systems and services during COVID-19 has set families back, has proven to us how vital our work is.

Sitting back and reflecting on what we didn't have in this time of need made me realize how great a system we have built in New Jersey, and how vital all the services we provide to thousands of youth and families are. The originators of this system must be proud that their dream of improving and saving lives has come to fruition. We thank them for their insight and vision, and plan to continue their efforts for many years to come.

James Parauda, LSW
Chief Executive Officer

Back to School!!

We asked to see how you and your families are heading back to school this year!! These are our participating recipients of a gift card! From virtual, to in person and a hybrid model it looked like all smiles!! Enjoy!





Pride in Partnership

The Joseph Firth Youth Center is implementing the SPORT Prevention Plus Wellness (SPORT-PPW) curriculum for Phillipsburg youth this Fall. SPORT-PPW is an evidence-based curriculum focused on preventing substance abuse while encouraging healthy initiatives. This practical, single-lesson program is designed to help youth feel and be more active, fit, and healthy. Certified instructors will use SPORT-PPW to teach youth how alcohol and drug use interferes with positive behavior and achievement necessary for experiencing a healthy and successful life. Through the program, instructors will teach youth how to increase wellness behaviors, identify drug use habits that interfere with reaching wellness goals, help youth become more aware of positive self-images, and teach them how to make commitments to set goals in order to increase wellness and promote healthy behaviors while avoiding harmful substance use.



After each program is enforced, Firth Youth Center instructors are equipped with follow up materials for each child along with a series of messages to reinforce positive self-image, behavior communication, and promote goal achievement. A highlight of the curriculum is that youth are taught to write attainable health-related goals. They then follow-up with instructors periodically to evaluate their progress and learn how to make modifications along the way. The youth goal achievement will be an indicator for the success of the program.

The SPORT-PPW program is funded in part by community development funds awarded by the NJ Children's System of Care – Tri County Care Management Organization. It will be held with support from local youth sports organizations starting in September 2020. Additional dates will be made available virtually in October & November for any interested youth. For more information or to be put on an email list for program announcements, please contact Gabriella Razzano at [*gabriella@firthyouthcenter.com*](mailto:gabriella@firthyouthcenter.com).

Getting to Know TCCMO... Team Mora!!

At Tri County CMO, Team Mora is admired for their language skills, dedication to serving families in the community, incomparable ability to support one another and their passion for food. The bilingual team which is overseen by Ms. Mora, is composed of five Spanish-speaking care managers with backgrounds ranging from Central to South America, the Caribbean to Asia. Ms. Gonzalez, who is the team's lead care manager, bears the responsibility of training new care managers to the team, as well as leading the team in the absence of the supervisor. Team Mora also contributes to the agency's goal of working in collaboration with colleges and universities around the state to provide internship opportunities for a limited number of students looking to gain insight in the field of social



TEAM MORA



work and care management. This year, Ms. Cespedes, who is pursuing a graduate degree at Rutgers University, has been assigned to the team.

Team Mora serves families who need assistance with the language barrier as well as focuses on the youths presenting needs in areas of substance abuse, mental health, behavioral disorders, legal/justice involvement and/or developmentally disabled.

Team Mora recognizes that the world we currently live in are faced with many uncertainties, with the primary concern of safety surrounding the pandemic,

however, this team has pledged to continue to serve the community by providing support to our youth seeking guidance to ensure that each and every one of them are given an opportunity to excel in every area of life.

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OUR "MY WHY" TREE

The "My Why" Tree is the brainchild of Deja Amos, Operations Manager for the Tri County CMO and certified Nurtured Heart Approach® trainer. Deja wanted each office to have a space where we as employees could showcase what it is that drives us to do the very important work that we do. This job can be challenging sometimes, so having a visual reminder of what inspired us to get involved in the first place can nudge us back on track during those moments when we may feel directionless or overwhelmed.

I was given the task of bringing Deja's vision to life in the Washington Office. As someone who enjoys making art, I was thrilled to be able to paint on the walls at work! The focal point of the mural is, of course, the Why Tree, upon which myself and my colleagues will add leaves with our reasons for doing the work we do. I also added two children at the base of the tree, as an additional reminder to ourselves that our goal is to help children and their families live their healthiest and happiest lives. The mother bird and her eggs in the nest are symbolic of the nurturing nature we all share, while the caterpillar represents the potential for growth that we see in all of our children as well as one another. There is a hole in the tree itself to show that even though we may have emotional wounds that leave us feeling weak or incomplete, we can still grow tall and beautiful if our roots are strong

and our base is solid. The tree is an especially fitting symbol for Tri County CMO and our philosophy of linking children and families to wraparound services in their own communities. The many branches of the tree represent the fact that it often takes a village of supports to not only raise a child, but help them be the best they can be.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to create something that I hope will lift the spirits of my coworkers and others who visit our office. I look forward to watching the tree grow as my colleagues add their leaves and their “Whys” to the tree.

Designed and Reported by
Kristen Rivoli, MA
Care Manager Specialist



ZERO Suicide

IN HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

In mid-September, a “team” of people from Tri County CMO from management to care manager level, had the fortunate opportunity to participate in the Zero Suicide Academy®. The foundational belief of Zero Suicide is that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. Zero Suicide Institute® is a home

for training, consultation, and tools to support Zero Suicide implementation and safer suicide care practices.

In the recent training, we learned about the Zero Suicide Toolkit and can use these resources to inform the practices in providing care management for our youth. The parts of the toolkit involve:

- Leading system-wide culture change committed to reducing suicides
- Training a competent, confident, and caring workforce
- Identifying patients with suicide risk via comprehensive screenings and assessment
- Engaging all individuals at-risk of suicide using a suicide care management plan
- Treating all suicidal thoughts and behaviors using evidence-based treatments
- Transitioning individuals through care with warm hand-offs and supportive contacts
- Improving policies and procedures through continuous quality improvement efforts

We look forward to taking the knowledge that we learned in this intensive, 3-day training to create better training, treatment and policies for our staff, youth and families who have grappled with the serious issue of suicide. We can make a difference. Statistics show that 19% of people who died by suicide had contact with mental health services in the month prior to their death, and also that the risk of suicide attempt or death is highest within 30 days of discharge from an emergency room or inpatient psychiatric unit. In line with Zero Suicide, TCCMO is demonstrating an organizational commitment to safer suicide care.

Upcoming Virtual Events!



Tri County
ResourceNet

[Visit our website](#)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21st AT 7:30PM

Non-Medical Treatment of Tics: An overview of CBIT and the Rutgers Tourette Syndrome Clinic

The New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome is holding a webinar that will provide an overview of Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT),

a structured evidenced-based non-medical intervention for tics based on cognitive behavioral therapy which helps individuals of all ages learn tic management strategies and reduce tic symptoms. There will also be a discussion about how CBIT can be best integrated with other psychological, medical, and educational interventions. To register please visit,

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7672334272361257999?event_date=2020-10-21

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23rd AT 10:00AM

The Pursuit of Happiness: Transition Planning for a Meaningful Life A Two-Part Workshop

Children's Specialized Hospital and Center for Discovery, Innovation and Development is hosting a training that will discuss how to put the plan into action, including how to survey what is available within community as well as exploring eligibility-based supports, and get an overview of the eligibility process and the services available through the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) as well as the role of the support coordinator. To register please visit,

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1504296142198689295?fbclid=IwAR3SRJJy5oxRuRwd1JzGooq1UntXVE0EDO6_2pTIPesK3wrBeT5Wd6g3ygo

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12th AT 8:30AM

Creating a Trauma Informed Community: Fall Conference

The Center for Prevention and Counseling is hosting a virtual conference to explore how Adverse Childhood Experiences impact behavioral health and substance use. Donna Jackson Nakazawa, the key-note speaker is also an award-winning journalist and internationally recognized speaker whose work explores the intersection of neuroscience, immunology, and human emotion. Her mission is to translate emerging science in a way that helps those with chronic conditions find healing. To register please visit,

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Check-out-our-Fall-Conference.html?soid=1128690141362&aid=imlivld2qxl>

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13th AT 11:00AM

Feminist Relational Perspectives & Beyond: Lessons Learned

The Renfrew Center Foundation is hosting a virtual conference highlighting 3 keynote presentations, breakout sessions and networking activities. The conference will focus on eating disorders and its connection through trauma, social justice issues, marginalized populations, LGBTQIA, genetics and neuroscience, binge eating disorders (BED), food exposure and ARFID and compassion fatigue. To register please visit,

<https://www.renfrewconference.com/2020/>

**TCCMO Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15th-October 15th, as well as Global
Diversity Awareness Month!**

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



"Don't let anyone call you a minority if you're black or Hispanic or belong to some other ethnic group. You're not less than anybody else." - Gwendolyn Brooks, American Poet

The cultural diversity committee would like to recognize that September 15- October 15 is devoted to honoring the generations of Hispanic Americans who have positively influenced and enriched our nation and society. It is a time to celebrate the contributions, diverse cultures, and history of the community. The month also celebrates the independence of various Latino countries including: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th, Mexico on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th. Inspirational figures of National Hispanic Heritage Month include: Rita Moreno, actress, singer, and dancer- first Latino to win an Oscar for Best supporting actress and one of only 11 people to have received the four major entertainment honors—Emmy, Oscar, Tony, and Grammy awards. Macario Garcia, became the first Mexican immigrant to receive the Medal of Honor, the United States' highest military decoration. Roberto Clemente, the first Latin American and Caribbean player to be enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. And Dr. Ellen Ochoa, the first Hispanic woman to go to space as well as Johnson Space Center's first Hispanic director and only its second female director.



October is Global Diversity Awareness Month, devoted to celebrating what makes an individual unique. Recognition of Global Diversity shows appreciation for gender equity, cultural diversity, differences in religion, ideologies, and overall uniqueness while also supporting an inclusive society worldwide. Here's to celebrating the diversity within our agency and our families ♥.

For Your Information...



The year of 2020 has been a unique one and that does not stop with how Americans will be voting in the General Election this November. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2020 and due to COVID-19 voting will look quite different this year. Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order that states the November General Election is to be conducted primarily by vote-by-mail ballots. Every “Active” registered voter has been sent a mail-in-ballot starting the last week of September. If you are unsure of your voter status you can check on the NJ Division of Elections website <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/registration-check> . If you have not received your mail-in-ballot and your voter status is “Active”, then you should reach out to your County Board of Elections office.

Once you complete your mail-in ballot you have **four** options on how to return it.

1. Each vote-by-mail ballot will come with a return envelope that will have prepaid First-Class postage. This means that you can complete your ballot and place it in a mailbox for pickup.
2. Next, you have the option to drop off your mail-in ballot in person at your respective County Board of Elections office up to and on Election Day.
3. Thirdly, the state announced that there will be secure drop boxes placed around the state for voters to place their ballots. According to Governor Murphy’s executive order, each county should have at least 10 ballot drop boxes.
4. Lastly, you may turn in your ballot at your designated polling place. Additionally, you can check the status of your submitted mail-in ballot once you set up a New Jersey Voter Registration System account (<https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/auth/sign-in?forgotPasswordSuccess=true>).

It is strongly encouraged that all voters return their mail-in ballot as soon as possible so election officials receive it by the deadline.

Furthermore, provisional paper ballots will be available for those who wish to vote in person. Those who need an ADA-accessible machine will have access to one at their designated polling location. In order to find your designated polling place, you can search using your address on the state elections website <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/polling-place-search> .

It is unclear if voter information will continue to change, so be sure to stay up to date on rules and information for your county by viewing your County Board of Elections Website or the NJ Division of Elections website. Your vote matters, so whether you vote in person or by mail be sure to cast your vote!

NJ Division of Elections- <https://nj.gov/state/elections/index.shtml>

Somerset County Board of Elections-

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/affiliated-agencies/election-board>

Hunterdon County Board of Elections-

<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/electionboard.htm>

Warren County Board of Elections <http://www.co.warren.nj.us/election.html>

A helpful article for drop box locations-

<https://www.nj.com/politics/2020/09/heres-where-you-can-find-your-countys-secure-drop-boxes-for-mail-in-ballots.html>

Our Board Members

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Beth Fischer
Lynne Eaton
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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)



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