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Volume 2 | Spring 2018

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Tri County Community Connections

From the Desk of...

Thank you again for taking the time to read this newsletter. We have many exciting things happening at Tri County CMO. Let me touch on three of them for this newsletter.

CMO's were originally founded to assist children with mental health challenges. Therefore, **Children's Mental Health Day** is a special celebration for us as an agency. In the Save-the-Date section of this newsletter, you will find the specifics of an event we will be co-sponsoring related to suicide prevention.

Our tri-county area has embarked on a new positive approach to the work we do with youth receiving our services. In conjunction with the Children's System of Care (CSOC), Tri County CMO embraces the **Nurtured Heart Approach**. This is a sensible approach to treating youth with dignity, respect and care as we deliver our services. This approach is more inclusive for youth and families and has shown positive outcomes for youth. You can read more about it at:

<https://childrenssuccessfoundation.com/about-nurtured-heart-approach/>

For the past five years, Tri County CMO and FSO have sponsored a **Community Picnic** for the youth and families of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties. We will be holding our next picnic at Forest Lodge on June 25th, 2018. All youth receiving mental health, developmental disability or substance use services in these counties are invited to attend the community picnic along with their families. Attendees can enjoy the pool, play in the fields or on the basketball court, dance to music and compete for prizes in games organized by Forest Lodge staff. This event is near and dear to my heart because it allows us to celebrate families with no need to worry about us initiating conversations about the services they get throughout the year.

Family Sign Up: tinyurl.com/yc755f38

Provider Sign Up: tinyurl.com/y9chwcw6

James Parauda, LSW
Executive Director

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Youth Success Story



Allen was brought into the home of his now-adoptive parents, Penny and Jeff, at the age of nine, after enduring years of abuse and neglect. With the patient support of his loving family and help from DCP&P, CMO, FSO, in-home providers, his school team, and countless community supports, Allen grew from an anxious child into a charming, creative, and active young man. Although Allen has developmental delays, his parents never saw this as a reason to limit their son.

His family's relentless advocacy and willingness to accept help provided Allen with opportunities he may not have had otherwise. He was able to transition to Warren Hills Middle School from a special needs classroom at Great Meadows, and the child-study team is looking to mainstream him in more classes next school year.



A six-time gold medalist for the Special Olympics, Allen also runs track for his middle school and is an active participant in Hunterdon Outreach Programs (HOPs) free sports programs, where his father is also a board member. Penny noticed early on that Allen had an interest in music; he took delight in sitting on the porch and hitting empty containers with sticks. She signed him up for weekly drum lessons at Mr. Music, where he and his instructor have been writing their own music. He has since traded in his buckets and sticks for a real drum set, acquired with help from the FSO.

Allen is truly a shining example of how much a child can achieve with unconditional love, wraparound support, and a family who recognizes and encourages his strengths.

Save the Date

Tri County CMO, FSO, and CMRSS will be hosting **Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Event** on Monday, May 7th at Raritan Valley Community College. As a finalist for the People's Choice Award, we are excited to announce that Attitudes In Reverse (AIR) will be presenting at this event. AIR's mission is to provide unlimited mental health awareness and suicide prevention programs to youth and young adults regardless of ability to pay.

AIR will be showcasing their "In Their Shoes" exhibit, a powerful program to increase understanding, empathy and kindness towards those who might be struggling in silence and encourage them to seek help. The event will be held from 5:30PM to 8PM in RVCC's Grand Conference Room. Light refreshments and dinner will be served. Parents and teens, please join us!



Pride in Partnership



A crisis is defined by an individual or family. Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (CMRSS) of Catholic Charities Diocese Of Metuchen provides immediate crisis response on-site (home, school, or community) and coordinates subsequent stabilization services to youth, their families, and caregivers. In addition, CMRSS assists families with identifying informal supports that can further help to aide a family in a time of need. CMRSS is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year and can offer up to eight weeks of stabilization services. A parent or legal guardian must call PerformCare (877-652-7624) to have their child's needs evaluated. As part of 8-week stabilization management, continued services to prevent re-escalation of behaviors can be provided and coordinated by CMRSS.

To ensure continuity of care and prevent reoccurrence of future crisis events or behavioral problems, referrals can be made for care management services through CMO. Determination of the appropriate post crisis disposition may involve: referral and transition to formal stabilization services and/or referral and connection to community resources.

If you have questions regarding CMRSS, you can call our warm-line at 908-782-7905.

Community Corner

Somerset County Department of Human Services

Effective this year, Substance Use Navigators (SUNs) became available to consult and collaborate with system partners and the broader stakeholder community to increase knowledge regarding adolescent substance use needs and available community services.



At a February TCCMO Operations Team meeting, the tri-county (Somerset, Warren, Hunterdon) SUNs Michael Calderon, LCSW, LCADC and Carolyn Reynolds, MSW, LSW engaged staff to introduce their role and facilitated a productive dialogue to support collaboration.

Care managers and supervisors provided extensive feedback to inform the navigators' focus on supporting seamless access to substance use services as well as continuum of treatment needs of both adolescent and transition age youth.

For Your Information

April is Alcohol Awareness Month.

Did you know that kids who start drinking alcohol before age 15 are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol abuse or dependence than people who first used alcohol at age 21 or older? If you think your child may be using alcohol or drugs, there are behavioral, psychological and physical signs.

For more information and help, check out the National Council for Alcohol and Drug Dependence website at <https://www.ncadd.org>.

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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/>

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