

turn to us!

Family & Children's Receives Home Care Grant

Family & Children's Society recently received a \$3,000 capital grant from the Good Shepherd Communities Foundation. The foundation, based in Endwell, fulfills Good Shepherd Communities' vision to enhance the lives of older adults in the Binghamton area. According to Director of Home Care Services Andrea Quezada, RN, part of the grant will be used to purchase home care aide training materials, including manuals, videos, a mannequin and linens. Family & Children's is in the process of re-certifying its training program with New York State, and a successful program requires new textbooks, workbooks and teaching supplies. Said Quezada, "Since our building was remodeled, we have not been able to run a training class for aides, and we always need to fill aide positions. Some of the training equipment is outdated, and the grant will enable us to replace worn items."

The other half of the grant money will enable the purchase of items for home care nursing staff, such as 2016 drug reference books, blood pressure cuffs, a stethoscope, a pulse oximeter, digital scales and a wheeled bag to transport supplies to home care visits. Adds Quezada, "These items enable our home care staff to be prepared for any situation upon arrival at a client's home. The new pulse oximeter, for example, would allow a nurse to check oxygen levels for a client with shortness of breath."



For more information about the Good Shepherd Communities Foundation, visit gscfoundation.org

Home Care nurse Judy Olson, RN, with the wheeled bag made possible by the grant.

Vocational Incentives Program Introduced

Family & Children's Society introduced the Vocational Incentives Program (VIP) in January 2015. Under a different name, the program was formerly a service of the Broome County Mental Health Department. It is now funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health and the Broome County Mental Health Department.

The mission of VIP is to assist individuals with a mental health diagnosis obtain and maintain employment. Services include guidance in identifying vocational strengths, interests and aptitudes; assistance with resume creation, application completion and interview skills; instruction on accessing job leads and networking, and benefits counseling. Services are available free of charge to Broome County residents 18 or older who have a mental health diagnosis. VIP staff can assist high school juniors and seniors getting ready to embark on their careers as well as retired individuals looking for something to do with their spare time.

A social worker and a vocational case manager with several years of mental health experience have, to date, helped more than 40 clients with diverse educational backgrounds (ranging from individuals without high school diplomas to those with master's degrees) and employment goals.

Said VIP Case Manager Wendy Hitchcock, "A good portion of our clients come to us thinking they have nothing to offer the workforce. We help them realize their potential and think outside the box. We work at each client's pace to reduce anxiety. When they call to say they have submitted a resume or filled out a job application on their own, we call that a success."

VIP staff continue to work with clients as long as wanted or needed, offering one-on-one support, employment maintenance strategies and coping skills tailored to each client's needs. The service is provided without employer notification to avoid the potential stigma related to a mental health diagnosis.

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Family Homes for the Elderly

PROVIDING HAPPY HOMES

Whitney Point resident Linda Fuller's life changed at a yard sale a quarter-century ago. She explains, "I heard about the Family Homes for the Elderly program from a neighbor. It sounded interesting, so I applied." Since then, Fuller and her husband have had more in-home residents than she can remember off-hand – including Richard Hayes, now 81, who has been with them for 15 years.

Family Homes for the Elderly is a program of Family & Children's Society that offers family-style living in private homes – an alternative for families struggling to manage caregiving. Clients are matched with the professionally-trained PCA home care provider that best suits his or her needs. A registered nurse and a case manager direct all services within the program. Clients have private rooms, and receive help with personal care, medication, transportation, housekeeping, laundry and meal prep. "One of the most important aspects is to encourage socialization," said Diane Rossiter, RN, Nurse Case Manager for the program.

Fuller highlights the social aspect when describing the benefits to Hayes: "Richard is like family because he's been with us for so long. Our grandchildren are like his own. When we go out to eat, he comes with us." Fuller also drives Hayes to the Northern Broome Senior Center three times a week so he can keep his shuffleboard and bingo dates, and catch up with friends.

A retired farmhand who spent 40 years on a farm in the Deposit, NY, area, Hayes was in his late sixties when he was admitted to Barnes-Kasson Hospital in Susquehanna, PA, suffering from pneumonia. With no children or other family to take him in or direct his care, social services referred him to Family & Children's, he was placed with Fuller, and the rest is history. Hayes especially enjoys the toolshed Fuller's husband fixed up for him. "He sits out there in the sunshine – he just loves the outdoors," said Fuller, "after all those years on the farm."

If you or someone you know is a Broome County resident and could benefit from this program or if you are interested in becoming a provider for the Family Homes for the Elderly program, call Diane at (607) 231-8364, ext. 343 or email info@familycs.org. There are certain criteria to be eligible for admission into this program – basic requirements for becoming a provider include, but are not limited to, a home in good repair with safety features such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, nightlights and walker-accessible hallways, a private room for each client and willingness to have a home assessment completed.



The Fullers

Staying Power: Long-Term Staff Highlighted

Family & Children's Society is lucky to have a number of long-term staff. We're pleased to profile the three with the longest tenure (they're all clinical social workers), and asked each why they've stayed so long and how they feel they're making a difference. Congratulations and thank you for your dedicated service!



Bob Ruchames started in May of 1984, giving him 31 years of service. He's spent his entire career with Family & Children's, and when he's ready, plans to retire from the organization as well. He cites seeing his clients as the best part about working for Family & Children's: "I love my clients and the people I work with. I feel like I've made a difference by helping people work through roadblocks and traumatic losses in their lives."



Judy Vieux began at Family & Children's in 1985 (she left briefly in the late 1980s to work for the Binghamton School District and then returned), 30 years ago. She had hopes of a long tenure when she began, and says it's a continued gift to enjoy coming to work every morning at a job she loves. She highlights the increased complexity of client needs as the biggest change during her career: "A larger percentage of our clients have more difficult challenges in their daily lives than was the case in my earlier years, but I work hard and try my best to determine how to help clients achieve a better life. I think the friendly, caring environment for staff and clients alike helps us do that for people."



Paul Komatinsky began in July 1989, and has 26 years of service under his belt. He didn't expect to remain with one agency for so long, but was motivated to stay due to the support of his co-workers and supervisors as well as the quality of the services provided by the organization. Komatinsky began his professional life as an electrical/systems engineer at GE in Johnson City, then pursued an MSW. He was offered a job following a field placement with the organization during his MSW program. Over the years he has found fulfillment in working with clients in different programs including the child abuse treatment program, the sexual abuse treatment program and the batterer's intervention program.

Spotlight on Family & Children's Society's Family Mental Health Clinic

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SOCIETY'S FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC SERVES ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN THE ORGANIZATION'S BINGHAMTON OFFICE ON MAIN STREET.

Priority is given to adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses and children/adolescents with serious emotional disturbances. The program's goal is to help clients reduce symptoms, improve functioning and provide ongoing support.

The program's 19 therapists are all licensed social workers holding LMSW, LCSW or LCSW-R licenses via the New York State Department of Education. The therapists are supported by five psychiatric nurse practitioners and three psychiatrists.

The clinic was recently re-licensed by the Office of Mental Health following a full-day on-site review. Surveyors looked at charts for closed and ongoing cases, reviewed policy and procedure manuals and personnel files, interviewed staff and toured the facility. Read on to learn how the clinic has made and continues to make a difference for real people in our community.

Financial support to Family & Children's helps us continue to provide exceptional service like this. The Family Mental Health Clinic's current needs include funds to cover computer hardware and software upgrades as well as additional office space. To make a contribution, contact Diane Kubik at (607) 729-6206.



At a Glance:

Program founded: 2010

Open to: Broome County residents

Clients served per year: In 2014, 946 individuals were served with a total of 10,284 appointments. From January through July 2015, 986 individuals were served with 9,067 appointments.

Staff: 19 therapists, six focusing on children, 12 focusing on adults and one who sees both

Primary referral sources: All avenues – self-referrals, parents, friends, family, medical providers, probation officers, hospitals, residential treatment centers and more.

Client Testimonial: Mental Health Clinic

Family & Children's clinical social worker Kyle Webb made – and continues to make – a difference for counseling client Mary, who shares her story here.

"I started seeing Kyle for talk therapy shortly after my brother died in May 2011, and I'm still seeing her. She's been instrumental in getting me through some of the difficult times I've had. I began counseling with her when she was at the Broome County Mental Health Department, and followed her to Family & Children's. I wasn't willing to see anyone else at that point – I would be lost without her. In fact, if Family & Children's hadn't picked up the service, I wouldn't have looked for another counselor – I was unwilling to start over.

I can't even fully describe the impact that counseling with Kyle has had on my life. She lets me talk and lets me grieve, and is aware that it's a long process – it's not a two-week thing and you're done and everything's great. I like that she doesn't act like she's better than anyone, which I think helps. Counseling with Kyle plus how far I've come in my faith has given me a better outlook on the world. Wendy Hitchcock at the Riverside Drive office has also been really helpful.

It's truly enlightening, and I can honestly say that I feel better today than I have in 10 years. I'm much stronger emotionally, and I have much more patience and hope than I did prior. I think if the client is willing to put in the work, all the employees are willing to put in the effort to help you along. Family & Children's is definitely the agency to go to – I've seen a lot of counselors in my day, and I've had great success there."

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Vocational Incentives Program Introduced

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Hitchcock highlights a recent success: "The first individual we assisted had been self-employed, and was looking for a steady paycheck. She had diverse work experience, but couldn't provide dates to back it up. This was a barrier when completing online job applications, as well as a resume. She also lacked a high school diploma or GED. We did a lot of brainstorming and finally came up with a position in home care that did not require any of the missing information. She was hired and loves every minute of it!"

For more information about the VIP program, contact Hitchcock at whitchcock@familycs.org or call (607) 231-8364, ext. 316.



Happy 75th, Family & Children's!

Family & Children's will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a gala event at 6 PM on Friday, May 20, 2016. Mark your calendar and watch for more details!

Let us help you or a member of your family.

We provide expertise in the following areas, and most services are covered and paid for by insurance, Medicare or Medicaid. The Family & Children's Society offers:

- Advantage After-School Program
- Counseling – Individual, Couples, Family, Elder, Employee Assistance Program
- Family Homes for the Elderly
- Family Mental Health Program
- Home Care – Home Care Aide Service, Health Homes, In-Home Mental Health, Vocational Incentives

- Nursing Home Transition & Diversion Waiver Program
- School-Based Programs
- Sexual Abuse Treatment