



Family Services

communities without limits

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NEWS & UPDATES

July/August 2023

A Note from Our CEO

Kindness

by Leah Feldman



Last month our Leadership Team welcomed summer by **sharing a meal with the youth** who call the Family Partnership Center home at our Teen Resource Activity Center (TRAC). When talking with one child about all the delicious food had been prepared and cooked just for them, he said **“this makes us feel really special.”**

That simple phrase reminded me of the impact of **kindness** and its ability to help foster a sense of **belonging** and **purpose**. When we are **kind**, it reminds us that we have the **power to make a positive impact** in the lives of others, even if it's in a small way.

I am so thankful to our donors and supporters who show us **kindness** by giving of their **time, talents, and resources**. Giving to Family Services can be done in many ways – the offering of time and talents through serving on our Board of Directors or **volunteering** to mentor youth, answering crisis calls on our 24-hour hotlines, or arranging a drive to collect basic needs items. Recently, M&T Bank collected food for our Center for Victim Safety and Support's food pantry. This was organized by a manager who empowered 13 local branches to participate—**an act of kindness**. Monetary giving helps us to close important gaps in funding

to sustain our critical assistance to the community. Our donors and supporters bring **tremendous value** to the people who rely on us for support.

I was strengthened by the collective **inspiration** and **positive energy** in the room at our annual Family of the Year Awards Dinner this month. **Over 350 people came together** to celebrate two incredible Hudson Valley families. Alex Reese and Alison Spear, honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Michael Fleischer and Michael Dupree, honored with the Quality of Life Award. Our community was **uplifted** through the **support** and **generosity** of so many.

When you give to Family Services, **you invest in people** and ensure the community can **thrive** for generations to come. **Kindness** gives us the **courage** to stand up for what's right. It's a wonderful feeling to know that we are contributing to **making the world a better place**.

Thank you for your kindness and inspiration.



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Family of the Year 2023!

We are delighted to share the tremendous success of the 2023 Family of the Year Dinner. It was an evening filled with enthusiastic good wishes, philanthropy, and a vibrant celebration of our mission. The dinner surpassed all expectations and proved to be “the event of the summer!” The evening was a true testament to the collaborative efforts and dedication of our entire team who worked so hard to put this evening together! It was a tireless effort by our Philanthropy, Events, and Marketing team led by Kerri Minet and Trish Prunty with huge support from our Finance team led by Ranjeet Sivaraman and Lynne Murray and our Board of Directors and Leadership team. We had tremendous support from a committee of community volunteers and were assisted by our consultants Michelle Barone Media. We were privileged to honor truly wonderful families! Alex Reese and Alison Spear & Michael Dupree and Michael Fleischer showed the best of humanity.

For those of you who contributed, your presence and support made the event truly remarkable, and we are grateful for your continued commitment to Family Services.

Most notably, the highlight of the evening was honoring those we serve through a moving documentary about our SNUG Steppers created in partnership with Drake Creative. We are thrilled to announce that we raised a total of **\$355,000** which is an increase of **105%** over last year!

We are thankful for your belief in us, and your belief in those we serve. Thank you for being an inspiration for all. We have a bright future ahead!



July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

BIPOC Mental Health Month

by: Stephanie Hughes



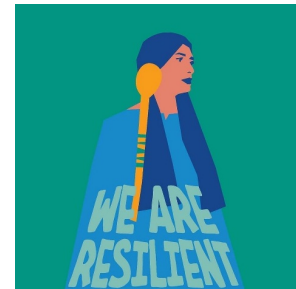
July is Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Mental Health Month, focusing on the unique mental health challenges and needs of historically disenfranchised or oppressed racial and ethnic groups in America

According to Columbia University, research suggests that the adult Black community is 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems, such as Major Depressive Disorder or Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Additionally, there are systematic barriers for BIPOC communities in healthcare, such as decreased access to services, lack of resources, language barriers, and even discrimination. African Americans further experience cultural barriers to seeking help. This may for instance be due to stigma, the experience of racism, of feeling they have to be "correct/proper" at all times, as well as being seen as "strong".

According to Mental Health America, the suicide death rate for Native/Indigenous people in America between the ages of 15-19 years is more than double that of non-Hispanic whites. Native/Indigenous people in America use and abuse alcohol at younger ages, and at higher rates, than all other ethnic groups. It is essential to understand the history of trauma and culture that affect these communities, when thinking about mental health. Lack of resources and funding allocated to those living on Native American reservations, and the increased experiences of poverty of Native/Indigenous people contribute to increased mental health challenges and create barriers to accessing care.



These concerning statistics can be attributed to many different experiences and realities facing BIPOC communities including racism, discrimination, and a narrative of inferiority. BIPOC communities are processing a history of being taught of their inability to do, to have, and to exist and fabrication of negative imagery and propaganda. Colonization, slavery, the whitewashing of culture, language, and history, have effects felt even in present day.



(Whitewashing is the removal of contributions and even the existence of non-white people and cultures in society, history, and the like)

In particular, negative imagery has a profound and harmful effect on the mental well-being of BIPOC communities. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), negative imagery is mental images that incorporate sensations of performance errors, unwanted outcomes, demotivation, or self-degradation. This can be seen in negative imagery in media, education, and scientific racism. *(Scientific racism is a science to justify racial inequality.)*

In race-conscious societies, the acceptance of negative cultural stereotypes of BIPOC people can lead to negative self-evaluations that have harmful effects on psychological well-being. If a person or a culture believes that they are "incapable" and have limited rights, they will never believe they can attain higher. The BIPOC community has the chore of unlearning, reprogramming, and processing the trauma of negative imagery, false stories, false science,



and propaganda. If left unchecked, the results of living under racism, through slavery, colonization, and the like can significantly affect one's mental health, throughout generations. Studies have found that intrusive memories and images are ubiquitous in depression and that these intrusions are related to strong emotions, such as sadness or fear, and high levels of distress. Although we have come a long way, the legacy of inequality thrives to this day.

It is important that BIPOC communities understand the importance of how mental health affects the trajectory of generations to come. At the same time, it is crucial for healthcare providers to understand the unique dynamic of BIPOC communities' experiences in America, how those realities affect their mental health, and how to provide more trauma informed, culturally sensitive and inclusive care.

Here at Family Services, our passion for continuous education and learning around diversity, equity, and inclusion is at the heart of all the services we offer. Within our many community programs and Behavioral Health Centers, we are committed to ensuring the treatment we provide recognizes and incorporates the lived experience of the communities we serve. It is vital that we acknowledge the history and challenges we face in this country, to create a healthier and more equitable future. We must rise to support each other and take the time to understand the American experience for BIPOC communities, and together, we can begin to heal.

Resources:

Addressing mental health in the Black Community. Columbia University Department of Psychiatry. (2019, February 8).

<https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/addressing-mental-health-black-community>

*American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Apa Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association.*

<https://dictionary.apa.org/negative-imagery>

Black and African American communities and Mental Health. Mental Health America. (n.d.). <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/black-and-african-american-communities-and-mental-health>

Native and indigenous communities and mental health. Mental Health America. (n.d.). <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/native-and-indigenous-communities-and-mental-health>

*Williams, D. R., & Williams-Morris, R. (2010, July 1). *Racism and mental health: The African American Experience*.*

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713667453>

Summer Camp is in Full Swing at The Family Partnership Center!



**This summer over 150 youth are at Family Partnership Center!
5 free Summer Camps for kids of all ages!**

The TRAC (Teen Resource Activity Center) Summer Program operates from Tuesday – Friday from 1pm to 8pm for youth ages 11 – 18. Activities include Podcasting, Basketball, DJing, Acting, Volleyball, Music Production, Step, Gaming, Coding, Fieldtrips, and opportunities for youth employment.

The Love Quest Foundation is offering a 2023 Introspective Rhythm Youth Summer Workshop for youth ages 11 to 18. Activities include music production, introduction to songwriting, journal writing, creative writing, mindfulness, selfcare, fitness, audio visual projects, and field trips. This camp is runs from Monday through Friday, from 10am to 2pm beginning on July 5 and ending on August 18th.

Finish Strong Wellness Center provides a summer camp for youth ages 7-15. Activities includes weekly field trips to Splash Down Water Park, the Vassar Ecological Preserve, and more. Kids who participate receive lessons in non-

contact boxing, access to technology and gaming, arts & crafts, basketball clinics hosted by the Vassar Men's Basketball Team, as well as soccer, volleyball, and other sports. Finish Strong also provides Poughkeepsie High School students with an opportunity to earn money and learn professional development as they work as Recreational Counselors and Youth Mentors. The camp runs Tuesday to Friday, from 10am to 3pm. Lunch and snacks are provided at no expense to the families.

Real Skills Network is providing youth with the R.E.A.L. Summer Learning Academy. This 6-week summer camp operates Monday through Friday, from 9am to 3pm. Activities include fitness, drumming, dancing, poetry, participating in the NYS Summer Reading Program and visits to the Poughkeepsie Library District's Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Library, in addition to community tours, park outings, and field trips.

The Mighty Young Techs is a free after-school program that provides elementary- school-aged kids with an education in S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math). Their summer camp ensures that kids continue to learn and expand their knowledge in community science, as well as have fun while they engage in a vast array of recreational activities and field trips throughout the summer.



**Thank you to
Councilwoman Lorraine
Johnson for providing**



outdoor tents and furniture for over 150 youth participating in summer camps at the Family Partnership Center!

Important Upcoming Holiday Closings!



Family Services & The Family Partnership Center will be closed on Monday, September 4th in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.

About Us

[Our Leadership Team](#)

[Our Board of Directors](#)

Join Our Family Tree

By joining our Family Tree, you are supporting our vision of stronger, safer communities where everyone has access to critical resources when they need it most.

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Thank You 2023 Annual Partners

LEADERSHIP



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HOPE



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communities without limits

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