

## Success Stories and Testimonials 2016

### The Bridge Family Resource Center, Amherst

#### *Success Story 1*

Two days before Christmas, a request came in through the FRC website. A mom who had just moved her family from a domestic violence center asked for help in getting supports for her two little girls, as well as in finding a place for church and dinner on Christmas Day. She also wanted to know about recovery groups for children who experienced trauma, early intervention, and daycare options.

We were able to find her a place to go for Christmas dinner, and provided some toys for each child from a drop-off we had onsite. Plans were made to follow-up with the additional services that had been requested by the mother.

#### *Success Story 2*

The mother in this family came to the center on our Grand Opening Day in April 2015. She was brought by their family partner to see the center. She was asked her about her children and what kind of things they liked to do. She mentioned that they all liked doing arts and crafts and we told her we would be having a kid's art class the following week and that she should come back and bring her children.

We learned about what the needs of this family were over time and discovered that all four of the children had been removed by DCF in the past and that a recent 51A had been filed due to medical neglect because the oldest daughter in the family was not taking her prescribed medications. The family was getting help from CBHI including IHT and ICC but the mother was still struggling to meet the needs of her kids, especially her oldest daughter who had recently been hospitalized for depression and suicidal thoughts. The entire family was struggling with the effects of trauma from the DCF removal and domestic violence from the mom's past relationship with one of their fathers.

As we got to know this family we were able to offer a variety of supports. The oldest daughter has received CRA assessment and services. After she left the hospital we helped get her connected to a partial hospitalization program and she is now seeing an individual therapist who she is making progress with. She is also participating in our teen leadership group, and continues to receive help from our school liaison to encourage and support school attendance. The second oldest daughter has come out as gay in the last year and has begun coming to our monthly LGBT youth meet up; she also received homework support at the center and has participated in several community service projects we have hosted including being a volunteer at a recent food drive. The youngest of the four children is an 8-year-old boy who has been a part of two of our youth groups and often calls the center "his second home." The oldest child in the family started college and has moved out. He stops by the center on every holiday break to give us updates about his success in school. The most changed person in the family however is mom. She holds her head up now and looks people in the eye when she talks with them. She has completed Parenting Journey 1 and is currently enrolled in Parenting Journey 2. She has taken Active

Parenting of Teens and Guiding Good Choices. She is an active member of our parent advisory committee and volunteers with us 10 hours a week.

We have helped her with navigating housing issues when she faced an eviction, helped her get financial help when her electricity was shut off, and helped her navigate MassHealth when her oldest son lost his coverage. She now runs the art class that she once timidly brought her children to. Each week she plans a unique art project and leads a group of kids through making a new creation. She insists that the children's parents "relax and have a cup of coffee" while she is working with their children and is always telling them how great their kids do in the class. She is a totally different person then when she walked in the door. She is now getting therapy to help her manage her past trauma and is a role model for other parents. Things are not perfect. Her oldest daughter was recently diagnosed with a seizure disorder and her medical needs have been a big stress on the family. The biggest difference is that mom knows how to ask for help and she is teaching her kids how to do that as well. The transformation for this family has been incredible and humbling to witness.

### *Testimonials*

"I was pleased that the FRC clinician came to the school and took part in the reintegration meetings after the long-term suspension of several students."

– Community Partner

"I referred a young lady to the FRC who has been struggling with mental health issues and issues with her father. She is transgender and the FRC staff have shown a tremendous amount of compassion and support for her."

– Community Partner

## **Boston-Suffolk County Family Resource Center**

### ***Success Story 1***

The Boston-Suffolk County Family Resource Center at the Home for Little Wanderers was featured in a back-to-school story on [Fox 25 News](#).

The Center holds a uniform swap to help families better manage the costs of getting ready for the new school year. Program Director Amy McCarthy spoke about the initiative as part of the segment.

### ***Success Story 2***

The FRC met with a father who had his five children dropped off at his home by their mother who reported being overwhelmed and could no longer care for them. The father lived in a studio apartment, and was uncertain on where the children's schools were. The father was desperate for a place to get support and help in navigating systems. He began working with our family partner, who supported the father in getting access to a scattered site housing placement, so he and his children had the room they needed to live together. They also worked to make a plan to get the children to school, and talked with the courts about making his custody legal. The family recently attended our family Halloween event, six months after they first began their work with us. They reported adjusting to their "new normal" well, and are so appreciative for having a place to turn to during a very challenging time for their family.

### ***Success Story 3***

A family that we have served since September 2015 has been successfully housed after being homeless for over a year. The family was introduced to the FRC last September when they joined the Parenting Journey series. Since then the mother and her five children have attended family events, Yoga for Teen Girls, Yoga for 5-7 year olds, Job Readiness groups, Communication Skills groups, Family Art Circle, and more.

The youth in the family had witnessed community violence in a past shelter, and the two youngest children live with very clear symptoms of PTSD and Separation Anxiety Disorder. The youngest child now feels comfortable with our staff and will even stay in childcare for 30 minutes now (a major accomplishment given the level of fear she initially presented with). The children identify the FRC (and the services they have been connected to) as a place they feel safe, and can have fun — not just a place they process the traumatic events they have endured. While they have not returned to their home community after their housing crisis, they identify as having had a community to be a part of since their move to Boston.

## The Family Center – Community Connections of Brockton

### *Success Story 1*

In December 2015, the FRC hosted an evening of gratitude. The evening's festivities were dedicated to staff and vendors who helped the center move from its previous location at 18 Perkins Street to 1367 Main Street which is attached to the Converge Christian Center. "Our move was a huge project and once we set up in our new home, we discovered that we needed to do a lot of updating so that we would be able to effectively help our communities. From the movers, to the phone system installers, computer technicians, and electrician, we thank you," stated Dawn Fontaine, Program Manager.

To show appreciation, as well as to demonstrate what the Center does, all of the vendors and the new neighbors in the building were invited to dinner to meet some of the families helped throughout the year.

In addition, the FRC received support from Macy's Department Store and United Way of Greater Plymouth County who collaborated to provide new coats and snow boots to 115 children.

There was dinner, dessert, activities for the children, and most importantly, smiling faces. One four-year old little girl received a pair of purple boots and had to try them on immediately. As she kicked up her heels she yelled "*Me quedaron perfecto!*" "Thanks to all of the staff at The Family Center, Macy's and The United Way of Greater Plymouth County for making this all possible," said Fontaine.

The event was enjoyed by all who attended and the holiday season was made a little brighter through generosity, dedication and passion to help others in the community.

### *Success Story 2*

We had a client who had been diagnosed with cancer a second time. The client came in feeling hopeless regarding the care he was receiving. We were able to transfer the client to the Dana Farber Cancer Inst in Boston and also coordinate front door transportation, instead of the client having to take two buses and a train. The client is very happy with the results.

## Fall River Family Service Association

### *Success Story*

A family was initially referred to the FRC by a Fall River Middle School Attendance Officer in May 2016 due to a child having many absences from school. Initially, the mom came to the FRC with her husband and their five children to meet with our family support worker. At that time, mom said the major concern happening for the family was financial difficulties due to her husband being out of work. The family support worker supported the family by connecting them to local agencies to provide financial assistance.

A “Gifts to Give” order was placed to provide needed clothes and toys for each of the children. Another follow-up meeting was scheduled with our school liaison to assist mom with her daughter’s school attendance and educational issues, and she was able to provide guidance and support. During a follow-up call to the family shortly after the meeting, the FRC staff were informed the family moved to California for a fresh start.

In July 2016, the mom returned to the FRC with her children. She reported that due to some unfortunate circumstances, they had to move back to this area and had to leave everything behind in California. She stated that the FRC had been very helpful in the past and that they were in desperate need of assistance again. She said she felt so relieved to know that the FRC was here to assist her and her family. We were able to find resources to assist the family with furnishing their new apartment, providing household items, assistance with school navigation, connecting them to the CSA program, and replacing the clothes and toys for the five children. The family continues to participate in many FRC activities like our Evidence-Based Parenting Classes, Children’s Reading Groups, Parent Support Group, and seeking staff support and guidance as needed. The mom said she and her family are very appreciative and thankful for all of the support and guidance they received from the FRC.

### *Testimonials*

“Very well taught and I learned things we will actually use!”

– Parent attending Nurturing Families Group for Parents of School Age Children 5-11 years old

“I loved how willing and open everyone was about trying to help and actually listened to us. They taught us a lot and really helped us see how we can improve without judgement.”

– Parent attending Nurturing Families Group for Parents of School Age Children 5-11 years old

“I enjoyed coming to class every Thursday for the last 12 weeks! The trainers have taught me a lot of ways to parent and handle situations in a better way. Thank you for your time and support!”

– Parent attending Nurturing Families Group for Parents of School Age Children 5-11 years old

“This class was great! I learned so, so much and I learned more than I can explain. I actually appreciate the class a whole lot. Thanks to all for the support.”

– Parent attending Nurturing Families Group for Parents of School Age Children 5-11 years old

“I have attended the parenting class and I have learned so much during these six weeks. Being a teenager is not easy in this day and age. I’ve learned how to communicate at a better level with my 14-year-old son and learned communication is key to a good relationship with a teen!!! The two teachers have done an excellent job! Thank you for all your hard work!!!”

– Parent attending Active Parenting of Teens Group

“I feel this group was awesome, I wish it could have gone on longer. I walk away with knowledge on how to handle the kids of today. And by having a 14-year-old I really needed it. The staff is beautiful and caring and it was an absolute pleasure being a part of this group. I never joined a parenting group before and I am so glad I had the opportunity to join this one. Thank you!”

– Parent attending Active Parenting of Teens Group

“I believe that this class was very helpful because it allowed me to really think about myself and how I should raise my children. I also feel the staff did a very good job in teaching the class. Very nice job and thank you.”

– Parent attending Active Parenting of Teens Group

## MOC Fitchburg Family Resource Center

### *Success Story 1*

A family moved to the area, with plans to live with a relative until the parents found jobs and a place to live. When they arrived, they found the relative had moved without telling them. The FRC provided them with a meal and a lead on a job for the dad, and organized, with the help of local churches, a safe shelter to live in while they were getting back on the feet. The dad got the job and the family rented an apartment. The children are now assimilating well into the community.

### *Success Story 23*

The FRC hosted and facilitated its third “Clothing and Other Articles Give Away” event in August. Many of the families helped by the Center had the opportunity to pick up clothing as well as car seats, booster seats, and toiletries.

This event provided some much need help for families given the fact that the school year was starting. They were also able to enroll mothers and fathers for their curriculum-based support group.

### *Success Story 3*

The grandmother of a three-year-old boy who is blind and paralyzed was referred to our Center by another community family. She was new to the area, had no resources for herself and her grandson, and was homeless.

After a warm cup of chocolate and a conversation about what got her to this area, and the medical condition of her grandson, the grandmother shared that her grandchild was given about a year more to live. We assessed what the priority needs of the family were through our conversation, and what services needed to be in place.

She had all the medical records for her grandson from another state, but needed to connect with a pediatrician and to apply for MassHealth. We were able to connect her to one of our community partner organizations (Action) which helps families to apply for MassHealth, and we were able to connect her to a local pediatrician (Medical Associates) who was willing to see the child prior to MassHealth approval.

The other critical situation was that they were homeless. The FRC staff worked closely with our MOC Emergency Housing and Energy Specialist to see what shelter services or housing funds would be available.

It so happened that MOC had some funding available to assist the family. We were able to secure funds for first month and security deposit for the family. We also assisted the family in locating a handicap accessible apartment. MOC was able to pay two days at a local motel until the rent paperwork was completed.

Our sub-contracting partner, Community Healthlink, responded to an email we sent out requesting a

bed for the child. One of the staff at CHL donated the bed, and even delivered it. We also referred the family to the Household Goods Recycling Ministry for additional furniture.

Medical Associates helped this grandmother obtain a better wheelchair for her grandson. She is now living with her grandson and youngest daughter in her own apartment, and all medical services and financial services are in place for the family. She expressed she is grateful to the MOC Fitchburg FRC for helping her to connect with the services that the family needed.

### *Testimonials*

“I was at the Leominster Roundtable meeting today and you were a big hit with the school folks, many of whom did not know about your Center. So again, thank you so much for presenting and bringing staff with you. I heard from Gina Wironen that you then followed-up with a presentation for all the schools in the district. One Middle School Dean of Students said since referring several students to the FRC, their behavior and situations have greatly improved! Well done.”

– M. Julie Mahoney Lesure, Assistant DA, Office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

## Cape Cod Family Resource Center, Hyannis/Barnstable

### *Success Story*

A homeless family we worked with over the summer and into the fall is one of our great success stories.

A single mother and her two children were living in various campgrounds (they would overstay their welcome at one, then move to another). We were contacted by the Barnstable school district. School social workers and teachers were concerned for the family. We first met the mother at the school and then ended up supporting her and her family in their quest for housing.

By leveraging our relationships in the community, we were able to get Not your Average Joes to provide dinner for the family one night, the Salvation Army provided two weeks' worth of food for the family, Kmart provided a camp stove and propane so that the family could prepare their own meals, Katelynn's Closet provided clothes for the children, and Cumberland Farms donated gas cards so that the mother could get back and forth to work. Lastly, concrete items were given to the family such as laundry detergent, books, toys, dog food, and blankets. Today, the family is housed and has not reached back out to us for further support since we last saw them early in the fall.

## **Community Action Family Center, Greenfield**

### ***Success Story***

In August we placed a client, recently out of a domestic violence situation and who had relocated to Franklin County, with a family social worker. She was nine months pregnant and had a 9-year-old. We helped the client access resources, housing and build her support system for her upcoming birth, as she did not identify any natural supports of her own. The family social worker and manager collaborated with many local institutions to coordinate care during her labor and postpartum time and transition back into temporary housing. Because of the closely coordinated care, more community members and institutions now understand the role of family social workers and the FRC.

## Family & Community Resource Center, Lawrence

### *Success Story 1*

A mom with severe health issues was concerned about her family's financial situation, and contacted the FRC for help. One of her four children, a 14-year-old boy, was excelling academically in a private school. His tuition was partially subsidized by the school, but the mom was not going to be able to pay her portion going forward. Her son was upset because he didn't want to leave the school.

The FRC, in collaboration with other partners, were able to get the remainder of the tuition covered for the rest of the academic year. The family, and in particular the son, is very happy and relieved. The family also received a number of Christmas gifts through the generosity of all the groups involved.

### *Success Story 2*

A couple came to the FRC seeking parenting education and support. The mother shared that she is the friend of one of the couples that have been receiving services and support at the program for a long time. She said that the reason she convinced her husband to come here to get help is because they are struggling with their 10-year-old son, and she has seen the "big change" with her friend, her husband and their children. She shared that she is impressed with how the entire family has positively changed.

### *Success Story 3*

A father was referred to the program from the Lawrence Public Schools (Lawrence High School). He had decided that he was going to file a CRA as both his children had been skipping school and not following rules at home and school. Our family partner and school liaison have been working with the younger daughter and the father reported that he has observed a very positive change in her. Then he decided to file the CRA only for the older one. However, two weeks later he reported that he was going to wait because he was starting to see some change on her as well. The father also just graduated from our most recent Parenting Wisely program for parents of teenagers.

### *Success Story 4*

One big success we had was a phone call that we received from the Courthouse. They had a Spanish speaking mother who went to file a CRA. The court contacted us and had the mother talk to us. This is a big accomplishment as it shows that our efforts in building awareness of our services at the courthouse are generating some positive results.

## NFI Family Resource Center of Greater Lowell

### *Success Story 1*

The FRC participated in a local awareness campaign to keep Lowell public school students in the classroom.

The campaign was in partnership with Middlesex District Attorney's Office, Lowell police, the Lowell Youth Development Collaborative, Lowell Juvenile Court, and the Department of Children and Families. More information about it is available in the [Lowell Sun](#).

### *Success Story 2*

In a [Lowell Sun article](#), the FRC is mentioned as one of the initiatives that has helped the city's public schools reduce chronic absentee rates for the second straight year.

Rachel Pronovost, Program Director, said "My team and especially Adam (Murray) has done such great work on this initiative."

### *Success Story 3*

A member we have been working with since October 2015 had a huge success in March. This member has severe epilepsy as well as mental health issues. Since October, we have connected him to Mass Rehab and they are assisting with school costs. We also assisted with connecting him with PARA for transportation to and from school and with transitioning from an unhealthy living situation to a better one. We also helped with job applications and connected him to SNAP.

In March, he completed his program at the Salter School for medical assisting and is starting an internship at an area hospital. We continuing to work with him on getting his disability assistance increased so he can live on his own.

### *Success Story 4*

A new family, working towards reunification, has been having DCF visitations at the Center. The young boy is autistic and was having trouble in the environment of the DCF office, so they started visitations here. The young boy and his mom were supported with games and materials to play and interact with. The boy loves coming here and is very comfortable here. We also gave him one game that he loves.

### *Testimonials*

"I want to give my thanks to the NFI Family Resource Center for helping me and my daughter out with the services we needed. Thank you for helping me study for my permit, holiday help, counseling for my daughter and all the different workshops. Thank you for taking the time to help me and my children get the resources we need. You have been a big help! Thank You!"

– Mother

“To the staff of the NFI Family Resource Center: Thank you so much for the wonderful family event that you held on December 18<sup>th</sup>. My daughter and I so enjoyed the delicious dinner and all of the family activities. Thank you also for all the holiday assistance you gave to me. It made my daughters’ holiday. Thank you from the bottom of my heart”.

– Mother

“I am so grateful and I cannot say enough about how much NFI and (Jen) personally have helped me. Whenever I start to lose it, which is usually several times a day, I close my ... eyes and envision myself sitting and talking to (Jen) and Audrey and Gabriel and the rest of (Jen’s) team and the energy at NFI, and it really calms me.”

– Mother

## Lynn Family Forward Resource Center

### *Success Story 1*

In September, a young man walked into the FRC by himself and asked if they had sneakers for teens whose parents can't afford to buy any. His mom hadn't been able to buy him anything new because times had been tough since his dad left the family a couple of years ago.

Thanks to Jason Chiapinni, one of the Center's amazing employees, this young man was able to have a new pair of sneakers for school.

The poignant part of the story is the sneakers he received were identical to a pair his dad bought for him when he was younger, before he left the family. So the sneakers meant everything to this young man.

After the young man spoke to Jason on the phone, thanking him personally, he couldn't stop smiling. The Center called his mom to tell her the great news and they all cried together. Jason and the whole team made a difference in this young man's life.

### *Success Story 2*

We met a mom and her family during our Halloween Costume Drive in 2015. She is a married woman with three children under the age of 11. She and her children were placed in a scattered site shelter after being homeless for six months. Her husband could only visit during visiting times and spent his nights sleeping on the streets. She depends on her husband for support because she is legally blind in her right eye.

The youngest son is autistic and the oldest child was struggling with his behavior in school. We have supported the family by providing them with winter clothing, Christmas toys, and birthday boxes for the children. The dad was given information on shelters he could sleep at during the night hours and help with finding a job. The mom was connected with the Mass Commission for the Blind for support with her disability. We have supported her with both of her sons' IEPs and connecting her with Northeast Arc to support her autistic son.

A year later and the family is now in stable housing, the dad is currently employed, and the children are doing well in school. The mom continues to get support from us with filling out any paperwork she doesn't understand. We referred her to the Mass Coalition for the Homeless for furniture and continuing advocacy support. She has expressed that without the support of the FRC staff, she would not know any of the resources that she has been given.

## Nantucket Family Resource Center

### *Success Story*

A family of three (mom, dad and school-age child) came to the FRC initially in need of a child assessment. After the assessment, a referral was made for the child to receive CBHI services and ICC services through JRI. It was also determined that the mom could use some mental health support.

As a result of meeting with our FRC team, the parents were educated about the Parenting Journey program, which they both enrolled in and are actively engaged in. Mom has since been in one-on-one outpatient services as well. The family is happily engaged in services and measured improvements are already being seen. Their outlook is bright and they feel that they now have the tools to have a stronger marriage and healthier family structure. The child is also experiencing great improvements at school.

## The Family Resource and Development Center, New Bedford

### *Success Story*

One of our court-referred CRA cases has done a complete turnaround as a result of supports from our clinician and our family partner. This family was living in a very volatile domestic violence situation. The mom was supported by the clinician and family partner, and the family has moved to their own apartment, the son made the New Bedford High School basketball team, mom has a job, and all are doing very well. This is our best CRA success story thus far.

## The Family Place, North Adams

### *Success Story 1*

In our Parenting Journey group, we had a father who has struggled with addiction. Taking this class, he decided to join in on a few Narcotics Anonymous meetings so he doesn't have to rely on Suboxone. Two other parents in this group supported him with appropriate information, contacts, and resources so that he can pursue his recovery.

### *Success Story 2*

In February, we had a mother of two young girls taking the Parenting Journey class. Her daughters were in her mother-in-law's custody at that time because mom was in a very abusive relationship and struggled with alcohol. During the group, this mother demonstrated an open and honest approach to her parenting, as well as acknowledged the mistakes that she felt she had made. She was a source of encouragement for the other parents battling with addiction, and was able to connect one of the dads who attended with a sponsor for a local Narcotics Anonymous group. Since the group ended, she called to let us know that both of her daughters were coming back home to her in April.

### *Success Story 3*

We served a single mom and her four children, all under the age of six. This mom was new to our community this past year and experienced the death of her husband last fall. The children have significant struggles with mental health and school, as well as behavior at home. When we first met the mom, it was after she had been referred to us on several occasions prior and had allowed no one in her home for services.

Since the initial meeting, our staff have been able to successfully support mom in walking through a crisis situation, and have made several home visits with the family, as well as work with mom on how to use hand-made materials that model the language prompts that one of the children use in school. This is helping the mom to be more in control of the child's schedule and communicate with an almost non-verbal autistic child in her own home.

## Island Wide Youth Collaborative: A Massachusetts Family Resource Center (Oak Bluffs/Martha's Vineyard)

### *Testimonial*

"I was a born and raised island girl who had got caught up in the midst of addiction. My mental health was uncared for and I was a girl silently screaming for help. That was when I moved to finally take care of the person I once loved but had lost a long time ago. I was lucky to get all the help I did but I still became pregnant very early in my recovery. I don't recommend to anyone who is truly trying to better themselves to get tied up in such a complicated situation! But there I was — three months sober, in a relationship with a guy who claimed to love me, and yet I was still searching for myself. Maybe it wasn't the brightest idea to go through with this pregnancy but for some reason, as scared as I was, I knew I was going to go through with it. Had I expected to get into an abusive relationship, had I known I would become homeless with nothing to put in my stomach, maybe, just maybe, I wouldn't have ended up where I once was so terrified to be. My home became my rock bottom; to go back to that place I thought I could never be the mother I set out to be.

"When I walked into IWYC I appeared hopeless, helpless, and empty. Well, that is exactly what I was, I just didn't want to face the facts this was really where I was once again. I also had realized at that moment that I was a single soon-to-be mother with not even a bed to sleep in. I didn't understand how I let things get so bad, how I let them get so far. But here I was running back to the only place I knew and could call home.

"When I was referred to IWYC I didn't have much of anything left. I was scared. I was alone and I didn't know what was going to be the future, that I once held so firmly in my hands, for my son anymore. IWYC may not have known it but they saved my life. They saved me from my own worst nightmare: myself. I wanted so badly to give up, to throw in the towel and believe I was no longer capable of bringing into the world such a fragile and beautiful miracle that I felt I no longer deserved because I couldn't be the mother I once saw myself being. The things they did, the feelings I felt again, the moments I wished of having, started to not be so foggy in my memory anymore. They gave me the faith that I didn't know existed, the love I didn't know how to give because at the end of the day they didn't expect anything in return. They helped me to love myself because all along they loved me until I learned again. They helped me get all my necessities and more. To bend over backwards for someone who couldn't even give anything back in return, they showed me the true value of gratitude. Even though it was their job, they never once let me down as a person. On or off the clock they took my phone call. And for that I could never thank them enough.

"Little do they know they saved not only my life but my son's life because now I get to give my son the world, something I never imagined possible even existing. Everything I once was so scared to live for. Everything I thought I was never capable of is now a dream come true. I'm not only a daughter, a sister, a friend or a woman in recovery. I am a mother and without IWYC I don't think that I would have realized how strong of a woman I truly am. I'm forever one thankful person because of IWYC — because of them I can live the life I truly believe I deserve to live today!"

— A mother

## Family Resource Center, Berkshire Children and Families, Pittsfield

### *Success Story 1*

A single mom came into the FRC seeking support for her teenage son who was having extreme difficulties following rules at home and also had significant challenges in school. Mom is a domestic violence survivor and identified her inability to handle confrontational situations and lack of confidence to have her voice heard as a result.

The family partner worked with the mom on building her confidence and increasing self-care practices. Mom was referred to the Parenting Children with Difficult Behaviors Support Group offered by the FRC clinician and family partner, and has been an active member every week. A referral was also made to the Brien Center for the Intensive Care Coordination program (ICC) to support the youth involved. Since the family partner is employed through the FRC subcontract with the Brien Center, the mom was able to continue working with the FRC staff that she already developed a relationship with. This made the family's transition into ICC services easier for her and her son. Mom continued to receive interim therapy support with the FRC Clinician as her son received support from Brien Center programming.

Mother and son recently graduated from the ICC program. The youth is now performing better in school, receiving improved grades as well as demonstrating increased cooperation at home. He continues individual therapy as well as in-home therapy. Mom is now feeling more confident advocating for herself and the needs of her family. Mom also continues to attend weekly support groups and has been able to make social connections that she did not have before.

### *Success Story 2*

A father who emerged as a leader in the Male Caregiver group applied for and was hired to fill an open family support worker position. He will continue to lead the support group as well as be trained in the Nurturing Fathers Curriculum to help further expand our work with male caregivers. The support group hosted a Car Show, which was a parent-child craft event, and gained interest from new fathers wanting to join the group.

## Quincy Family Resource Center

### *Success Story 1*

A mother and adult son arrived at the FRC after being referred to us by staff at Quincy City Hall. The pair had arrived in the area a day before by bus from Cape Cod and stayed at the Pine St. Inn that night. They wanted to live in the Quincy area and had a transportable Section 8 voucher in the amount of \$1,600 and needed assistance searching for housing.

Both individuals suffer from significant health issues. The mother has diabetes and must administer two different types of insulin four times daily as well as having mental health issues. The adult son is a recovering addict and on Suboxone. This family presented us with several pressing challenges: shelter, temporary and long term, support around maintaining sobriety, hunger, mental health, medical and financial needs.

We offered them coffee, fed them lunch, and were able to find them shelter at Father Bill's for the night. We then explained to them that the next morning they would present themselves at DTA in Brockton for placement and explained the process to them. When this family was leaving the FRC they were fed, rested, and they had a plan for shelter and food. They expressed how very grateful they were for the kind, respectful way they were treated, and the resources we were able to provide.

### *Success Story 2*

A young man in his early twenties came to the FRC with a multitude of struggles, including substance use, unemployment, relationship issues, homelessness, mental health issues, financial instability, and becoming acclimated to society following release from incarceration. He was living in Father Bill's Homeless Shelter in Quincy, but needed to find different housing.

The client explained that being at Father Bill's was very difficult because it is a wet shelter; there are people there using substances all the time, and it was hard for him to maintain his sobriety while there. He did not have a large support system, and was still involved in an unhealthy relationship. This client and the family social worker talked about staying away from negative, stressful influences, and staying focused on positive, healthy things that will improve the quality of his life. He also described his usual pattern of getting out of prison, staying sober for a while, then falling into old habits after a short period and ending up back in prison. It was a struggle for him to stay on track. It was determined that the structure of a halfway house would be good for him, and his peers there would make for a strong support network.

In collaboration with his case manager, the family social worker gave him a list of halfway houses in and near the Boston area, and explained the referral process. The family social worker explained to the client what he could expect when living in a halfway house environment, having had experience working in one. His case manager started the referral process, and our client was scheduled to interview for placement at a recovery home in Quincy.

The client called the family social worker with such enthusiasm to report that that he was accepted to the recovery home, and he was very happy to be there. He thanked the family social worker for helping him, and he said that he would like to stay in touch.

### ***Success Story 3***

A mother and daughter, who had been referred to us over the summer of 2015 from her social worker at Boston Medical Center as well as her probation officer at Quincy Juvenile Court, had been hesitant to access FRC services. They had shared being weary of new providers. We continued to reach out periodically to check in. The youth received a new backpack which was delivered by her social worker in the fall of 2015, and the mother was able to benefit from our holiday toy drive to supplement the cost of the holidays so that she would have gifts for her daughter. Early in 2016, the mother reached out to the FRC to enroll her daughter in our #likeagirl group. The mother brings her daughter to the group weekly and while group is going on the mother enjoys quiet time at the FRC.

### ***Success Story 4***

A grandparent raising her grandchild contacted the FRC needing assistance for resources for her grandchild. Because of her own medical needs, she is not able to ride public transportation so the FRC team went to see her at her home.

We were able to link her with resources in her area for her and her grandchild, such as play groups, afterschool care, and access to clothing and food. We invited her to our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group which she expressed interest in, and said she would contact us if she wanted to attend so that we could arrange a cab for her. We also invited her to attend the Parent Café and offered to send her back and forth in a cab. When she heard that there was also childcare provided she took us up on the offer. She had a wonderful time and was able to connect with other caregivers during lunch.

### ***Success Story 5***

We have a family whose youth is attending the Teens in Action—Get A Grip—Summer Session. The caregiver brought the youth in and was visibly upset. The family partner asked how she was doing and the caregiver immediately began to cry. She shared that she had just spent all her food stamps, filled up the refrigerator at home with food, and the refrigerator died that night. She lost all the food and had no money to purchase any more food until next month's food stamps arrived. We were able to feed them at that time as we had plenty of food from the group meeting. We gave her a Stop & Shop gift card for food for the next couple of days, and assisted her in reaching out to South Shore Mental Health to have an emergency food drop that day at her home and Interfaith Social Services to sign up with their food pantry. We also helped her in reaching out to SNAP to report what happened and to apply for emergency food stamps. Additionally, we applied to an emergency fund through Bay State Community Services; through that, a refrigerator was purchased and delivered within two days for the family.

### *Testimonials*

“Good morning/afternoon! I just wanted to say thank you for welcoming me/letting me into your group, “Teens In Action!” I thought it was a very informative, helpful and overall interesting group! I enjoyed that the group has almost like a classroom setting, with learning segments, as well as group/social activities. I can't wait till next week for the next meeting! Thank you again!”

– Participant in “Teens In Action” group

“This group is the one place I feel comfortable enough to be myself.”

– Participant in LGBTQ teen group

## The Springfield Family Support Programs Family Resource Center

### *Success Story 1*

A gentleman was referred to the FRC from the Department of Children and Families to start our eight-week parenting class. He started parenting classes January 2016 and received his certificate of completion on March 2, 2016. He was referred from the FRC/DCF Family Advocate to our Nurturing Fathers Program, a substance abuse meeting and a trauma focus group. He started our Nurturing Father Program which he completed, and focused on going to substance abuse meetings. He also engaged in trauma focus groups as part of the referrals.

He says our program went 110% above and beyond to help him with all the services he needed and the knowledge he needed to reunite with his children who are in DCF custody. He said he is very grateful to have been part of the program. He is having unsupervised visits, and purchased a new home — and will reunite with his children in that new home on December 23, 2016. He was also proud to say that one of his children is a part of the Springfield Family Support Resource Center Art therapy group.

### *Success Story 2*

A client was referred to us by the UMass Medical School ASO team. She was in a verbally and mentally abusive relationship. She needed to get out of the house ASAP because it was affecting her older children's psychology.

We contacted the YWCA but had no luck, so we called the Department of Housing and Community Development and Ms. Williams there emailed us an application. We then submitted all the paperwork needed to help this mom. She was placed in a shelter in a matter of 24 hours.

The client is happy now and in the process of getting her own place. She stated how grateful she was and how we helped her family overcome this difficult situation. "I thank you so much for your help. I am in a shelter, but in my own unit and I don't have to share it with nobody. Now I am in the process of completing applications everywhere and hopefully will find a place for me and my kids." The family is doing great, and we are working with her to get a permanent place to live.

### *Testimonials*

"Emily Rodriguez and her staff at the Springfield Family Support Programs Family Resource Center have been amazing to work with. We, on behalf of the 4C (Collaborative Consultative Care Coordination) Program out of Baystate Children's Hospital, are so grateful to have this program as a resource. We are a program that aims to support families that have children with medical complexity. These children often are dependent on life sustaining equipment, have a shortened life expectancy often time, have multiple medical specialists that they work with, etc. Navigating the health care system can be extremely overwhelming and difficult and many of our families often struggle with many social barriers as well such as living in poverty, not having access to adequate resources such as food and transportation, and not having accessible housing.

"Emily has helped a particular family we work with immensely. This family consists of a single mother of nine children living in a market rent apartment (she has been on the waitlist for subsidized housing for quite some time). The only financial support she receives is food stamps and SSI benefits for her son who is a part of our program based on his medical needs. He is a delightful young man who has Down syndrome and has a pacemaker due to cardiac issues. Recently, the family had a bed bug infestation in which they were left without mattresses as they all had to be thrown away. When I heard this information from the family I immediately thought of Emily at the Springfield Family Resource Center. Sure enough, Emily was able to accommodate this family and also arranged a delivery with this mother as she does not have her own means of transportation and limited family support in the area. Thanks to Emily, this family will no longer be sleeping on the floor. It has been such an asset to be able to work with Springfield Family Resource Center!"

— Laura DeSousa, LICSW, Baystate Pediatrics 4C Program

"I want to share my experience working with Mrs. Anabel. The one thing I have always experienced in interacting with Mrs. Anabel is that she is very good in helping people. She did not just listen to my problems but took an active role in making a difference in my family's lives. When we had hard times financially, she advised me to seek help with the Social Security Administration and figure out if my children were eligible for their help. She herself called SSA and then told me what steps we should take to get those benefits.

"Another time, Mrs. Anabel let me know about a family dinner with famous psychologist Dr. Hallowell. After attending the meeting I learned a lot of important things about my children's mental health, how to improve their performance in school, and how to help them become more social. Today all our family wants to use this chance to tell Mrs. Anabel how grateful we are for providing our family with all that helpful information, and how much we appreciate her caring and supportive way of providing help and assistance to us."

— Mother

## **Worcester Connections Family Resource Center of YOU, Inc.**

### ***Success Story 1***

A family came in to the Worcester Family Resource, and the clinician met with the mother first and she was going to bring the son in a few days later. The mom casually mentioned that her 12-year-old son was hearing things. Knowing there are long wait lists for services, the clinician put in a referral before meeting with him. When the clinician met with the boy, he admitted that since the beginning of the school year he had been hearing voices. They would tell him to be bad and tell him to kill himself. He was clear that he was not going to kill himself but he would like help with the voices.

The clinician called the agency he had referred to right after the session and they skipped the wait list, assigned the child a therapist while the clinician was on the phone with them, and they discussed the child's situation. A request was made to get the child psychological testing and also to get him his previous therapeutic mentor back — which was his request. The child also reported being bullied at school, and he was willing to let the FRC talk to the school. The school liaison was asked to contact and work with the school to make sure the bullying is addressed and the child gets the supports he needs there.

### ***Success Story 2***

A single mom with a 4-year-old child shared her goal of food security. After discussion it was discovered that the SNAP benefits in Massachusetts could not be started because someone in another state had been fraudulently receiving SNAP under the child's name. Following a lot of intervention from the family support worker at the FRC, the issue was resolved and the family is now receiving the much needed SNAP benefit.

This family is new to our area and the mom had questions about activities for her daughter. With the assistance of the family support worker, the child was enrolled in HeadStart, and mom reports that she really enjoys going every day. Mom also expressed delight that because of HeadStart, mom has made some new friends.

### ***Success Story 3***

A two-parent family currently struggling with housing security presented a 14 days' notice for failure to pay their rent. The family had fallen on rough times because of the birth of their fifth child, rendering the mom unable to work. The family support worker assisted the family in finding employment options that did increase their income. The family support worker negotiated with the landlord to arrange a payment agreement that lowered the rent and allowed the family to catch up on their arrears over a year.

Another layer with this situation is the family had received a notice from the local Housing Authority that they were discharged from the waitlist because the current landlord had not provided a good reference. Through the intervention by the family support worker, an appeal was scheduled. The FRC

staff attended the appeal and the family was placed back on the wait list. Within one week, the Housing Authority had offered the family a unit! Through the intervention of the FRC family support worker, the family completed the verification and application process, and is expected to move into their unit by the beginning of the month. This intervention was complicated because of language barriers with the family.

#### *Success Story 4*

We were referred a family from the courthouse for a CRA filed by the school for behavior. Upon meeting with the family we made referrals for individual counseling, a mentor, and an anger management class. The family reports things have improved significantly and the youth is enjoying his counseling sessions and looks forward to being a role model in his anger management class, the PUNCH program. He is also enthusiastic about having a mentor and is waiting patiently for a match.

#### *Success Story 5*

A family who was assigned to the family partner needed assistance to help mom advocate for the needs of the child. Although the child has an IEP, it seemed like they were missing something because he was failing an important class. The child was expressing a lot of anxiety with his therapist because of school and there was one class in which the child was struggling the most.

The school liaison suggested to Mom that she may want to request a meeting with the school to discuss the concerns with this class and his IEP. The school liaison was invited and attended that meeting with the parents and was able to advocate for the family. Although the school was doing all they could, the child was not receiving the support he needed at home to complete homework and projects. The school liaison expressed that the mom was not able to provide that support – not because she didn't want to or was neglectful – but because she didn't understand English.

It was decided that the child will do homework and projects during school hours and afterschool twice a week. The teachers agreed to stay with him and give him the individual attention he needed. In the meantime, we walked the mom through the transition to high school. Another goal expressed by the child was enrollment into Worcester Tech; with the intervention of the school liaison the student was enrolled. This file has been closed with goals met.