

# 2015 Annual Report

## Growing Healthy and Growing Strong





# Nurturing Families Network

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects in a woman or man's life happens when they become a parent. This challenge coupled with the everyday stresses of school, work and money can lead to stresses in parenting. Enter Family CT's Nurturing Families Network program (NFN). This curriculum-based early childhood parent education and family support program is designed for families from pregnancy through kindergarten to give parents the information and support they need to help their children develop optimally during the early years of life.

Parents who participate in NFN build upon their strengths with the realization that there is no "one-way" to parent, each family is individual and the successes are built upon recognizing their strengths as a family.

An important aspect of the NFN program is the involvement of dad in the building of a secure parent child attachment, from play to care giving

## *A Family Hike Leads to a Lifetime of Activity*

New parents and NFN participants Kayla and Luis have always loved the outdoors. They enjoy walking trails, hiking and exploring new state parks. When they welcomed their baby girl Arianna into their family they couldn't wait until she was old enough to start hiking with them. Arianna went on her first hike in Luis' arms when she was only a few months old. Her mom and dad talked to her about nature and showed her how important family time is to them. A special donation to Family CT made it possible to gift a hiking backpack to the family.

"Thank you so much for getting our family the hiking backpack, Now we can do more activities with our daughter.....We are so excited and thankful....God Bless you forever and always, we can't thank you enough."





# Care Coordination for Children and Youth with Disabilities

*Care coordination is the process of linking families with supports and services, facilitating communication between providers, and ensuring that the appropriate services are being delivered to promote good health.*

Helping a child and family live with a chronic condition – whether it is medical, behavioral or developmental - sometimes feels daunting. Family CT's Care Coordinators partner with families to develop and implement a Care Plan that identifies needs related to the child or youth's care and details how and when the services or resources will be accessed. With the family's permission, the care plan is shared with the primary care doctor, specialists, school, and any other organization involved in the child or youth's care. Care Coordinators also facilitate and improve communication between families and providers, attend educational meetings, plan and convene family-provider meetings to develop shared goals and provide information and support to the family. Home visits, phone calls and medical office visits all provide opportunities for families to "share their stories" and talk about how they are coping with daily life experiences.

The program, based on a "medical home" model of care, believes that the family is the expert in the child's care and must be involved in decision-making. A coordinated approach to care provides many benefits to the child and family ranging from reduced hospital stays and emergency department visits, coordinated services and care, and perhaps most importantly a compassionate focus on the well-being of the child and family.

## *A note from a parent...*

"My daughter has nephrotic syndrome and high blood pressure and had missed many days of school due to doctor appointments and subsequent admissions to the hospital. Because of the absences, she was regarded as truant. I was at a loss, it was a crazy time and I was not able to handle all the coordination between the school system and hospital. My daughters' care required so much coordination and the Care Coordinators were wonderful. They met with me and the doctors to set up a schedule that met my work schedule, then the coordinators worked with the school social worker and staff to put together a 504 plan. Putting together the 504 plan was a challenge; the school had to make accommodations for her meals and school work that would be sent home when she was in the hospital. The outcome has been wonderful, my daughter and I now have a great team working together to make sure that her medical and educational needs are getting met."

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### In Memory of: Sally Feldman

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### Spring Cocktail Party and Auction

#### Auction/Raffle Donors

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 Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center  
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# Spring Cocktail Party & Auction

Family Centered Services of CT honored Dean M. Esserman, Chief of the New Haven Department of Police Service with the Richard Manware Award at the annual Spring Cocktail Party & Auction. The Manware Award is named in honor of Richard Manware, a longtime member of the Board of Directors until his sudden death in 1998.

The theme, "Opening Doors" recognized that so much of what happens to victims of child abuse and domestic violence happens behind closed doors. Chief Esserman was selected as recipient because of his advocacy on behalf of victims of domestic violence and his community collaborations. As Chief he has opened the doors of the police station to Family Centered Services of CT and other agencies, allowing victims to access services on site.

**This year's event raised over \$15,000. Thank you to the following sponsors:**

## Leadership Sponsor:

**Yale-New Haven Hospital**

## Silver Sponsors:

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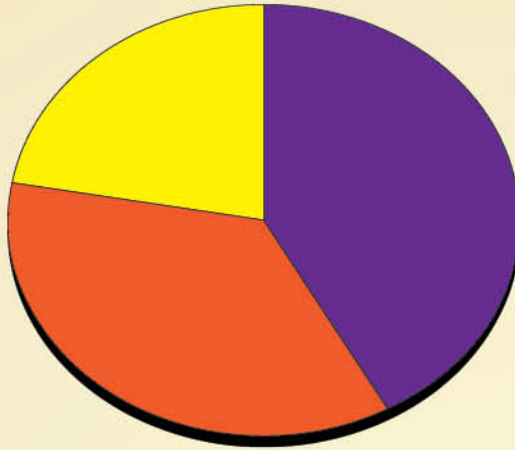
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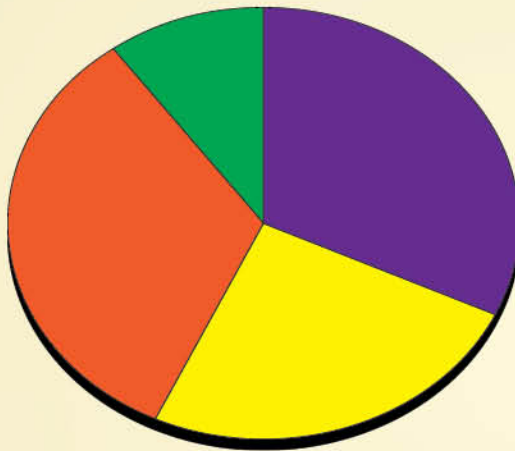


## Who we served:



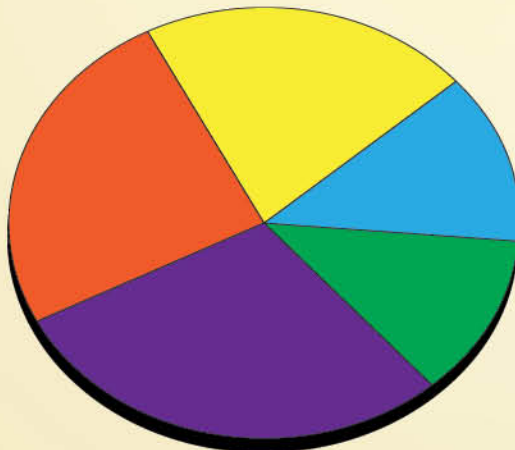
### Children's Ages:

Birth-5	42%
6-12	36%
13-17	22%



### Ethnicity:

Hispanic	33%
African American	32%
Caucasian	25%
Other	10%



### Reason for Referral:

Domestic Violence	29%
Family Strengthening	25%
Care Coordination	21%
Youth Empowerment	13%
Other	12%

Family Centered Services of CT served 1607 families from July 2104-June 2015. Our families come from 35 communities; they are our neighbors, co-workers and friends. Quite often they suffer in silence, reluctant to speak about abuse, neglect or the violence that is occurring in their lives. It is our mission to ensure that families are safe and nurturing places where children can succeed.



## FYE 6.30.2015 Income & Expense (Unaudited)

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Department of Children and Families	2,182,081
Department of Public Health	274,592
Department of Mental Health/Addiction Services	76,562
Department of Social Services	657,333
Office of Victim Services	305,136
Subcontract with New Reach	85,106
Foundations	26,177
Restricted donations	1,837
Fund Raising & Special Events	41,834
	<hr/>
	3,650,658

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Salaries	2,178,863
Fringe Benefits	229,251
Program Supplies, travel, training, IT & Network	302,713
Subcontractors	350,686
Facility Costs	137,868
Administrative Expenses	441,282
Fund Raising & Special Event Expenses	9,995
	<hr/>
	3,650,658

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## **6 Reasons to Give to Family Centered Services of CT**

- We are a local organization with deep roots in the community providing free services to women, children and families.
- Our staff has broad expertise regarding community providers, issues and needs.
- We are a community leader, convening agencies and coordinating resources to create positive change.
- We focus on restoring, repairing and healing family relationships.
- We ensure that basic needs are met through our food bank, clothing, diapers and emergency fund. Staff members often go above and beyond for families providing transportation to specialized services and court, school or medical appointments.
- We nurture families from pregnancy through kindergarten to give parents the information and support they need to help their children develop optimally during the early years of life.

## Our Vision

Family CT envisions a world of healthy families, where children grow up to be confident and caring adults and contributing members of their community

## Our Mission

Family CT works with families to ensure that they are safe and nurturing places where children can succeed

Growing healthy and growing strong is the theme of this year's Annual Report. On the pages that follow you will read about the many programs that are provided by Family Centered Services of CT that enable our families to overcome adversity and thrive. Early intervention and education are the keys to breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect. Family Centered Services of CT's innovative programs rise to the challenge of our mission ensuring that families are safe and nurturing places where children can succeed.





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# Message from the 2014 Board Chair and Executive Director

Who can't resist a little baby? Whether you are on the street, in the grocery store or rushing to keep an appointment, we all gawk a little when we see a kiddo. We don't know what happens to them when we turn away, but of course we hope for a happy and healthy childhood for each one.

Here at Family CT, we see families struggle to provide this for their children when faced with the economic, educational and psychological challenges brought on by poverty, stress and trauma. Sadly, so many parents have never been nurtured themselves, been given good information, had positive role models or a support network and this makes it even more difficult for them to raise their own children to be healthy and strong. We applaud the work they do with us, and share their joy as they learn to delight in their children while offering the necessary nurturance and protection. You will read some of their stories in this Report.

We would also like to take these pages to share our own story of growth. Our move three years ago to the Marlin Business Center has given us the space we needed to implement four new programs and offer children and families a much more comprehensive array of services. You will read about those programs here too. The addition of 17 employees has brought new energy to our workplace and it is an exciting place to be. If you would like to visit and learn more, please contact us or visit our website at [www.familyct.org](http://www.familyct.org).

To our friends, supporters and grantors, we thank you for your encouragement, financial support and dedication to the causes of child abuse prevention and family empowerment. We truly could not do it without you.



Cheryl Burack, M.S.  
Executive Director



Pamela Matocha  
Chair, Board of Directors





# Growing Up Healthy and Strong

The theme of this year's Annual Report is Growing Up Healthy and Strong. As part of the community for 37 years Family Centered Services has been involved in providing programs and services to meet the ever changing problems that face our children and families. With advances in neuroscience and behavioral research, our knowledge about child development is continually increasing. We now have a scientific basis for understanding that a child's early experiences and environment affect the architecture of the developing brain and thus the learning, health and behavior that follow. In fact, what takes place during the first 1000 days of a child's life is now recognized as critical to the lifelong health, mental health and development of the child. The stakes remain high as the child grows and continues to need the support, guidance and skill building that will contribute to his or her ability to live an independent, productive and loving life.

Children who are being raised in unsafe and unpredictable environments often experience trauma in the form of child abuse or neglect and are often exposed to intimate partner violence and community violence. Without intervention, these negative experiences can lead to persistent physical, emotional, behavioral and learning problems. Understanding the factors that contribute to either strong or fragile development provides an exciting window of opportunity to parents, caregivers and communities so that children achieve their fullest potential.



# Caregiver Support

*Imagine getting a call in the middle of the night from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) asking you to take in your grandchildren because their parents can no longer care for them! As a grandparent you want to help but how can you?*

Fortunately, Family Centered Services of CT now has a Caregiver Support Team (CST) to meet the needs of families facing just this type of situation.

The Caregiver Support Team (CST) is an intensive in-home service that provides family and child focused services to family members who have become licensed to provide foster care to a relative. Known as kinship caregivers, their needs differ from those of traditional foster families. They are often called upon in a crisis without the resources or time to prepare for the placement as a family. They take on a dual role as foster parent in addition to grandma, aunt or cousin and deal with complicated family dynamics.

The goal of the program is to prevent the disruption of placements and increase stability and permanency while providing support to families that may include securing community resources, parenting skill education, child developmental education, encouraging co-parenting with birth parents, providing therapeutic support surrounding grief, loss, attachment and trauma and identifying and assisting in ways to reduce caregiver stress.

*“It is the obligation to do everything possible to keep children within the family system. To this end, I am making it the expectation that all children in our care be placed with relatives and the exception that they go into non relative care. In other words, to use language with which I am most familiar, the presumption is that they be placed with relatives. This is the culture and a norm that the children need us to operationalize immediately in our practice.” DCF Commissioner Joette Katz*



# Intimate Partner Violence-Family Assessment Intervention Response

*Statistics indicate that there are 5.8 million victimizations of women by their intimate partners in the United States each year. A woman is assaulted in the United States every 9 seconds with domestic violence accounting for 15% of all violent crimes. In Connecticut, there are approximately 20,000 family violence incidents annually resulting in at least one arrest. Children who witness intimate partner violence are at an increased risk for child abuse and neglect and are more likely than their peers to experience a wide range of difficulties. Family Centered Services is on the cutting edge offering a new trauma-informed and family focused program designed to work with the entire family including victim, offender and children.*

The Intimate Partner Violence-Fair program, funded by the Department of Children and Families, offers a comprehensive array of clinical and supportive services to families impacted by intimate partner violence including family engagement, trauma screening and assessment, safety planning, parenting education and skill building, trauma focused and relationship-focused therapy and community linkages.

A Fatherhood component for fathers with young children addresses the intersection of substance abuse and intimate partner violence and offers cognitive behavioral therapy, co-parenting sessions when appropriate and restorative child-parent psychotherapy. Fathers are helped to understand how their own childhood experiences affect parenting, develop coping skills, explore their wishes about the kind of father they would like to be and eliminate negative parenting practices. Called Fathers for Change, this component of the program focuses on men's roles as fathers and their wishes for their children as motivation for change.

## Multisystemic Therapy – Building Stronger Families

Parental substance abuse can be a major contributing factor in child abuse and neglect, and the CT Department of Children and Families has funded a new evidence-based program to address this. Mutisystemic Therapy- Building Stronger Families (MST-BSF) is designed to eliminate parental substance misuse, prevent child abuse and neglect, improve child and parent mental health and increase natural social supports. Available to families when there has been a report of child abuse and neglect by a substance dependent caregiver, it offers intensive home-based clinical services that include substance abuse treatment, trauma treatments, education about parent management practices, family communication and problem-solving skills and case management. This strength based program strives to help families become less dependent on institutions and begin to utilize natural support systems with the aim of creating generalizable skills that will help families to problem solve within the family. Research has shown that participating parents show significant decreases in alcohol and drug use, depression and aggression, youth showed significant decreases in anxiety, and families were three times less likely to have a substantiated new incident of abuse or neglect.





# Positive Parenting Program

*Providing strategies that work and are practical enables parents to succeed.*

The Positive Parenting Program known as Triple P teaches parents skills to become resourceful problem solvers and manage the big and small problems that are part of everyday family life. It utilizes an evidence-based parenting curriculum, which means that research has shown it to be effective, and serves families with children up to age 18.

The Triple P focuses on 5 Positive Parenting Principles:

1. Creating a safe and interesting environment for children;
2. Creating a positive learning environment;
3. Using assertive discipline;
4. Having realistic expectations;
5. Taking care of yourself as a parent

Triple P materials are “user friendly.” From discussion to information sharing, homework assignments to reading, videos to informational “tip sheets”, the parent involvement is the key to the success and leads to positive outcomes with their child.

Perhaps one of the greatest testaments to the success of the program is that 79% of parents completing pre/post Triple P questionnaires reported; a) a decrease in child behavior problems; b) improvement in their disciplinary style; c) a decrease in their depression, anxiety, and/or stress. 100% completing a satisfaction survey were satisfied with services.

## *A note from a parent...*

“I never thought that I could have learned and gained so much from a parenting program. Having Monica come into the life of my family was a true blessing. Triple P was a learning tool for my husband and me. Monica wasn’t the teacher; she was a guide, a guide helping me make it through the different chapters of what I called the Parenting Bible. The Triple P manual, a mere book, has so many different ways to approach and handle situations that arise with your children. Speaking for myself, it was amazing that this book helped me handle behavioral issues with our children without having to implement physical discipline. Consistency is the key that I found most difficult to follow. As a parent, we try our best but sometimes we need help.

As part of the program we keep the workbook, for me it is a great guide; with me all the time from a purse keeper to vacation keeper. The Triple P program and Monica provided the tools and my husband and I used them effectively. Sometimes parents need somewhere to turn to. It’s not all peaches and cream, however, when my son does something wrong we now have a system that we follow. I know that the Triple P program CAN change the home of parents who need extra guidance: my family is proof that it works. Thank you, Triple P and Monica.”



# Celebrating a Renaissance Man...

## Jack Levine, Board Member

### Family Centered Services of CT



Board Member Jack Levine is truly a renaissance man, a man of many passions and commitments, a man who travels the world to take care of those in need. Twenty years ago a patient and former Family CT board member invited Jack to attend one of the board meetings. He liked what he heard at the board meeting and became a member of the board; little did he know that this first encounter would lead him to a life time of leadership and dedication to families and children of the Greater New Haven community.

As a resident of the New Haven community Jack knew about the problems that were facing the children of New Haven. The ongoing cycle of poverty, violence, abuse, and neglect of those who were the most vulnerable were pervasive and Family Centered Services of CT was providing much needed programs to meet the needs of those children and families. When he joined the board of directors the agency was much smaller and had a different name. However, his longevity on the board has enabled Jack to be involved in the progressive movement of Family Centered Services of CT from the physical move of the agency to our name change, to the addition of programs and services to meet the changing needs of the families and children served. His enthusiasm and commitment to Family CT has been a driving force in leading the agency advancements.

Jack's passions are many, from his professional memberships in the American Dental Association, American Public Health Association and Health Volunteers

Overseas, serving as an international volunteer dentist in Jamaica, Haiti, Uganda and Tanzania or leading volunteers in the rebuilding of roads in Jamaica after Hurricane Gilbert. His commitment to the betterment of mankind is always in the forefront. To quote Jack, "I am excited about this time in my life, I am living a life well balanced and I want to continue to do the work that I love, and make a difference in other people's lives. I live my life with integrity, accountability and responsibility."

