

Cambridge Family & Children's Service

# Impact Report

2020



## A Letter from Bob

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the CFCS 2020 Impact Report. To say that this has been a uniquely trying year is an understatement. It's hard to believe that at the beginning of our 2020 fiscal year, in July 2019, we had never heard of COVID-19. But as the world changed and we adapted our practices to the needs of the pandemic, one thing remained the same: we at CFCS never stopped serving our clients!

Although we closed our office in March, our staff never took a break. Notwithstanding the upheaval in their own lives, they made sure that their clients' needs were met.

In the early days of the pandemic, when it was not advised to see clients in-person, **our social workers quickly moved to mobile electronic communication and maintained contact** over email, text, and video and phone calls.

When necessary to ensure client safety, we continued to make in-person visits.

When the youth living in our group homes needed reliable technology to maintain their studies and keep in touch with their families, **we provided new computers for them.**

**When training future foster and adoptive parents in person was not feasible, our staff quickly adapted** and moved our hugely important and popular Massachusetts Partnership in Parenting trainings online.

Since March, **we have ensured that every family we serve, especially families caring for medically sensitive children, has the PPE necessary** to keep themselves and others safe as they go about their daily lives.

I am so proud of the CFCS staff and their determination to provide our clients with the best possible care!

I hope when you read this report you'll appreciate the impact that we have made – that YOU have made – on the lives of our children and families.

We could not do it without the support of all the foundations who awarded us grants to fund our important Permanency Priority. We could not have done it without the support of so many members of our corporate community who contributed even after we were forced to cancel our annual fundraising gala. And, of course, we could never do our work without donors like you. I can't say how much we appreciate your dedicated support, especially in time like these.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the support, advice and friendship that you give CFCS and the children and families we protect and nurture.



Sincerely,

Robert Gittens  
Executive Director

# Program Reviews

# Adoption

Cambridge Family & Children's Service has provided adoption services since the 1870's. Today we manage cases of children and teens in the custody of the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). We work with children who face the greatest challenges to adoption including older children and teens, sibling groups and children with significant medical, developmental, emotional and/or behavioral needs.

## Adoption's Year-at-a-Glance

FY20 was a year marked by some remarkable successes and incredible challenges for our Adoption program. These challenges came in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing concern of institutional racism.

Many of our children and families have been disproportionately affected by the state's stay-at-home advisories; children have been unable to visit their birth families and siblings in person for many months, creating fear, anxiety and sadness for many.

The pandemic has also created significant difficulties for parents who need to work from home while simultaneously providing child care and supporting their children's remote learning needs, and parents of children with more significant behavioral challenges have struggled to find any respite or relief during this time.

Despite these (at times overwhelming) challenges, our staff collaborated with parents and other providers to ensure that children were safe and well cared for. To date, **none of our clients or their caregivers in the Adoption program have contracted COVID, and our staff have also remained safe and well.**



With the death of George Floyd in May, a growing awareness and acknowledgment of institutional racism has taken center stage for many Americans. Many of the children and families we work with have been deeply impacted by these events. Parents of all races and backgrounds have shared their worries for their children with us. White adoptive parents of children of color have expressed their desire to help their children make sense of these events, yet often feel ill-equipped to do so. While this work will unfold throughout our lives, **we've begun to reflect on how we support children and families while addressing these important issues more directly.**

## Our Year, By the Numbers



**232**

*clients were served by our Adoption program this year*



**16**

*children were placed in pre-adoptive homes*



**17**

*groups of siblings were served by our Adoption program*



**10**

*adoptions were legalized*

## A Permanency Success Story: Family Teaming

Adam (age 13), Karley (age 8) and Charlie (age 5) are siblings who had been separated when they entered foster care four years ago. Because the children weren't yet living with a permanent family when they were referred to CFCS, our job was to find an adoptive family able to raise all three children together. The children's maternal grandmother expressed her strong desire to care for the siblings, but because she had experienced serious health difficulties and was living in a nursing facility at that time, we were unable to approve her adoption application.

No other relatives were able to care for Adam, Karley and Charlie, so our efforts to recruit an unrelated family began. The children were registered with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) and were presented at local and regional matching meetings. Through our recruitment efforts, we identified a prospective adoptive family, Amy and Ben. Because the couple already had 2 young children, we were hesitant to consider adding a sibling group of three to their household, but Amy and Ben's exceptional skills and experience as foster parents soon convinced us. After much discussion and review, we formally identified Amy and Ben as the adoptive family for Adam, Karley and Charlie.

In the meantime, the children's grandmother had been discharged from her nursing facility and moved into an apartment with sufficient space for the children. She again asked to be considered. Knowing that she had always been involved in her grandchildren's lives and that remaining with family members is almost always the best plan for children, we began her adoption homestudy. Through the homestudy process, it became clear that while her health had improved greatly, she still could not assume permanent care of three children and we were unable to approve her homestudy. She contested this decision, and ultimately the choice between Amy and Ben and the children's grandmother would be made by the court. The potential for heartbreak for everyone involved was great.

*Continued on next page*

## Families United Through Adoption



Paolo and his three grandsons Nathan, Ricky and Jonathan, all of whom he's adopted, on Nathan's adoption day in November 2019. Their cousin Josiah also joined them to celebrate.

Knowing that Adam, Karley and Charlie would truly benefit from having both families in their lives as they grew up, we introduced their grandmother to Amy and Ben and began helping the two families build a relationship. Both parties approached each other with caring and respect. When the court later decided that the children should be placed with Amy and Ben, the couple immediately reached out to the children's grandmother to reassure her that they genuinely valued her place in her grandchildren's lives.

Adam, Karley and Charlie moved into Amy and Ben's home last fall, and their close relationship with their grandmother has continued, with regular visits and phone calls. All the adults involved in the siblings' lives have begun to think of each other as one large extended family. Adam, Karley and Charlie will grow up with an adoptive family that loves and supports them, and with a grandmother who adores them, ensuring that they remain connected to their birth family throughout their lives.

## Looking Forward

We enter FY21 during uncertain times. While it's difficult to predict the ways in which our work will be affected by the course of the COVID-19 virus in the coming months, our staff has demonstrated their ability to think creatively, to quickly change course when needed, and to do what is necessary to meet the needs of those we serve. We have learned that connecting with families virtually can happen in a meaningful way, and that children and families can accept and utilize assistance that arrives in different formats. This should allow us to provide our clients with a greater degree of support and guidance as we move through the coming year.



Zorie celebrates her adoption of her paternal nephew Jayden with her two sisters.

# Developmental Disabilities Program

Our Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) provides over 10,000 hours a year of training, resources, support and social opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

## DDP's Year-at-a-Glance

Our DDP team assisted over 300 individuals with case management services this year. The supports we provide include a range of different services, and are tailored to suit each families' needs.

### The services we provided to clients include:

- Helping individuals and families set goals and work toward achieving them
- Preparing Expenditure and Spending Plans
- Assisting clients in applications for benefits
- Attending IEP and ISP meetings for children with disabilities
- Support individuals and families during guardianship proceedings
- Attending court hearings as support
- Assisting in housing issues
- Providing guidance in spending stipends and DDS/DESE funding



*Executive Director Bob Gittens shakes hands with a DDP client at our Giving Back event in December 2019. Members of our Adult Social Group purchased gifts for youth and families in different CFCS programs, decorated gift packages and presented them to our programs.*

## COVID-19



Although Family Support Center activities and trainings could not be provided, the DDP team continued to support our clients and families at a very high level. As would be expected, significant time was spent providing emotional support. DDP staff helped families navigate remote learning for their children, including how to address concerns with the school system. iPads were purchased for individuals using their stipends to assist with remote learning. DDP staff kept families up-to-date on the eviction moratorium and their rights as renters. And we regularly purchased cleaning supplies, PPE and other pandemic essentials for families.

Our case management work, which we've provided entirely remotely in the second half of FY20, has nonetheless been extremely effective. DDP staff responded to the unanticipated and unique needs of families with compassion and professionalism. We not only adapted to COVID-19 and new technology, but walked individuals and families through new processes to continue to receive the support and services they need.

## Our Year, By the Numbers



# 167

*children were served this year by our DDP program*



# 431

*families received services from our Developmental Disabilities Program to help them stay stable and healthy*



# 699

*adults received services from our Developmental Disabilities Program to help them stay stable and healthy*



*Before the pandemic, our Adult Social Group enjoyed gathering together at the Family Support Center. Here, clinical case manager Natalie shares a laugh with a client at a Bingo game.*



## A Permanency Success Story: Family Engagement

Carol is a young adult who lives with her family. As much as she loves them, Carol has wanted to live in a setting with people closer to her own age for a while. However, her mother has not been supportive of this goal, and this has caused friction between them.

Meanwhile, Carol's brother has become more involved in her life and has been working to bridge the gap between Carol and her mother. In conversations with her two children, Carol's mother eventually accepted that Carol wants to move away from the house, but not away from her. She wants her mother in her life, but not 24/7.

Carol is much happier now. She is planning to move into a group home in the near future, and has already begun talking with her future roommate. The two are getting to know each other and working together to plan what each will bring to their living space. Carol will soon begin to have transportation training as well, which will give her more independence. Carol is not losing her family, but rather she is expanding what family will mean to her: her mother, her brother, her friends, the people she works with and soon, her roommate. We look forward to seeing Carol's joie de vivre expand as she continues to participate in the community she is building around her.

## Looking Forward

During this time of uncertainty, DDP staff have become accustomed to working offsite and have been very productive. As we see it, the belief that one must be in the office often is no longer realistic. The time we used to spend traveling between the office and off-site meetings is now used to provide additional support to individuals and families.

It is unknown when COVID-19 will be under control or gone. Regardless, we will apply what we have learned from the past five months to continue improving our case management, whether it be remote or in-person. We will continue to provide activities and trainings through the Family Support Center. We will continue to visit with our families. And we will continue to work with our families on their goals and aspirations for the future. We are looking forward to returning to whatever the 'new normal' will be, appreciating the fact that we and our families are here to enjoy it.



# Family Services

The Family Services Program recruits, trains and assesses families and individuals interested in providing intensive foster care and pre-adoptive care to children in the custody of DCF.

## Year At-a-Glance

The Family Services team began this year strong, with plans to increase the number of Massachusetts Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) trainings offered to potential foster and pre-adoptive parents, increase recruitment activities in collaboration with state partners and local churches, and continue offering high-quality, responsive and customized support to our families in all stages of the process. With a strong team and increased capacity, many of these goals were accomplished.



*Family Services Program Director Sarah Medrano-Palmer was recognized for Outstanding Family Resource Collaboration by the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange.*

## Recruitment

The Department of Children and Families referred over 1,060 youth to CFCS needing foster placement this year, so we continue to recruit for caring and supportive individuals and families open to fostering through our IFC program. We received 11 new foster parent applicants this year and licensed two new homes. In addition, we have 5 families that started the licensing process in FY20 that we expect to complete in early FY21.

## Weekend Family Connections (WFC)

After many years of collaboration between MARE, DCF and CFCS, this year we officially opened the Weekend Family Connections Program. Through Weekend Family Connections, youth in residential settings with the goal of adoption are matched with a “Weekend Family”. This family commits to have one youth join their family two weekends per month. Families involved in the program become a part of the youth’s permanency team and work to promote adoption within their community and create new relationships and connections for the youth they are matched with. In FY20, our Family Service team worked with MARE to develop the program, recruit WFC families and design a training curriculum. By the end of FY20, three families had been enrolled in our first training program.

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic and the stay-at-home advisory had a significant impact on the Family Services program. In March 2020, the team quickly needed to rethink our approach to our work. We learned to use virtual platforms to connect with clients, offer parenting support and guidance and facilitate trainings and support groups. We collaborated with DCF to become one of the first agencies to offer our MAPP trainings virtually. We also helped move our support groups for foster parents to a virtual format.

**Despite the often overwhelming challenges that families faced during this time, every child in a Family Services placement remained stable in that placement.** During the stay-at-home advisory, there were no children discharged from the IFC program and no disruptions for pre-adoptive placements. Many pre-adoptive and IFC families expressed fear about the possibility of accepting a new placement during quarantine. Nonetheless, two pre-adoptive families welcomed children into their homes, successfully completing that transition with the help of Zoom!

COVID-19 was a significant source of fear and stress for pre-adoptive and foster families at CFCS. Many families experienced job loss and reduced incomes. Others had to cope with the challenges of working while parenting and in many cases, the children they were caring for were also experiencing an increase in challenging behaviors attributable to all of the changes and losses they had experienced in their lives. The Family Services team responded with increased support across many domains; we provided information and referrals for food banks and free meals, helped families apply for United Way funding to help with utility bills, rents and mortgages, helped families access new, virtual therapeutic services and provided guidance and support as families worked to keep children stable and well. We also worked closely with families to help develop strategies to nurture children's relationships with birth parents, siblings and other important people via video conferencing, letter writing and phone calls when in-person visits were not possible.



## Our Year, By the Numbers



29

families completed MAPP training courses taught by our Family Services program



10

families were approved to adopt



3

beds for youth in foster care were added to our program



2

families were approved to foster

## A Permanency Success Story: Family Teaming

The Bryce family, a couple from Somerville, Massachusetts, has been fostering youth with CFCS for over 20 years. The couple had recently taken a break from foster care to focus on supporting their extended family, but returned to being foster parents this year. They accepted placement of two siblings: Henry, age 3, and Rebecca, age 4.

Despite their years of experience caring for numerous children in the custody of the state, the Bryces report that their skills and knowledge of trauma-informed parenting had never been tested as profoundly as it was with Henry and Rebecca. Both siblings presented behaviors that required almost constant supervision and intervention in order to keep them safe and well.

The young brother and sister were able to stabilize in their IFC home and develop strong relationships with both of their foster parents. Over time, as the family remained flexible and adapted their approach as needed, they saw the children making gains in their home.

Meanwhile, the children's IFC social worker and adoption social worker continued the work of formulating a permanent plan for the children. A new pre-adoptive home was identified. Together, the foster parents and the CFCS team developed a transition plan that would allow Henry and Rebecca to feel safe and nurtured by their caregivers during their transition, which can be very stressful for young children. The Bryces opened their home to the new adoptive family, got to know them and demonstrated to the children that their new parents were safe, trustworthy people. After the children officially moved on to their new home, their foster parents remained involved; they offered parenting support and guidance to the new family and continued to let the children know that they loved them and had not disappeared from their lives.



## Looking Forward



Despite the many challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, there have also been silver linings. Staff and foster parents have demonstrated great resilience and commitment to our mission. They rose to the challenge and created safety and stability for youth during a scary and confusing time. We will continue to lean on that resilience as we move forward through this pandemic.

Family Services is looking forward to adapting our recruitment strategy to continue to bring in new families. In early spring of 2020, just as the Governor's stay-at-home advisory began, the Family Services program began to see an increase in inquiries from potential foster parents, while inquiries from potential adoptive parents remained steady. The Family Services team has been working closely to bring these families through the training and licensing process and are hopeful that there will be new homes approved in FY21 as a result.

# Family Support & Stabilization

The Family Support and Stabilization Department consists of five services designed to stabilize youth and families and ensure that they have the skills, resources and family connections they need to be successful. Our FSS team has multi-lingual capacity and serves families in the Greater Boston area.

## FSS's Year-at-a-Glance

This past year has been full of growth in the FSS program. Across each of our services, FSS has continued to make permanency a priority. Whether we are keeping a family intact, supporting a family through hard times, strengthening a parents' resilience, helping resolve conflict, increasing social and community connections or supporting a reunification, permanency practices are embedded in all that we do.

## Young Parents Support

Our Young Parents Support (YPS) program, which began operating in March of 2018 and serves parents under 23 years old, continues to thrive. This year, YPS adapted our Parent's Night Out events to better meet the interests and needs of our parents. After making these adjustments, we saw increased participation and engagement from our young parents. These nights were translated to virtual events once quarantine became necessary. Over this past year, we have continued to develop and improve program policies and service delivery. We have enrolled 33 new parents over the course of the year, with 27 enrolled at the end of FY19.



*An FSS team member embraces a Parenting Journey graduate and her child at a Parenting Journey graduation ceremony.*

## Independent Living

The Independent Living (IL) program, which provides apartments to youth ages 18 to 22 transitioning out of foster care, has shown continued progress over the course of FY20 and has broadened the team to include a full-time IL Support Specialist and a Clinical Intern. Our IL Support Specialist helped stabilize and organize the program to better position us for growth. Our Clinical Intern will support the program treatment model and ongoing permanency efforts. Our IL clients have continued to progress and thrive despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. All seven clients were gainfully employed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they all either maintained employment or successfully navigated the unemployment process. We also added a two-bedroom apartment which has proved to be a successful addition. The first two occupants enjoy living in a shared space together.

## COVID-19

COVID-19 impacted all our clients in FSS. We have adjusted to supporting families by first recognizing their concerns and stressors, while making sure parents and children feel validated and know that they are not alone. We're helping our families understand that acknowledging their anxieties and needs is important during this time.

Providing resources, age appropriate tools, coping skills, and helping our families stay connected with friends and family virtually, has been a priority. The program has seen parents struggling to balance work, childcare, and keeping up with structure and routine for their families. Evaluating our families' situations with a compassionate and empathetic lens, while providing a strength-based approach to supporting them, has helped us serve these families effectively.

Unfortunately, one individual we work with passed away from COVID-19 this year. The FSS staff worked closely with their family and DCF to ensure that the family was fully supported, financially and emotionally, during this tragedy.

## Our Year, By the Numbers



190

families were served by our FSS program this year



504

individuals benefited from our FSS program



15

parents graduated from our Parenting Journey parenting skills class series



A virtual Parenting Journey graduation celebration during quarantine

## A Permanency Success Story: Family Reunification

When the FSS program first met the Hamilton family, Sarah Hamilton was working toward reunifying with her son, Daniel. Daniel was in a foster care placement with his grandmother, Sarah's mother Renee. Two of our Family Support Specialists, Maggie and Jasmine, took on the family's case together. They immediately recognized that the Hamiltons needed the opportunity to explore healthy coping skills, build their social supports and expand their knowledge of parenting and child development.

Sarah was open to learning everything we offered, and quickly implemented new techniques with Daniel to ensure he'd have a smooth transition when he reunited with her. Maggie also worked with Sarah to create plans to incorporate self-care in her daily routine, build healthy routines for her and her son and respond to emergency situations. Meanwhile, Jasmine worked with Daniel to identify his emotions and learn positive coping skills to manage his strong emotions when in school.

Maggie and Jasmine, seeing that Sarah and Renee needed to work on their relationship, held a family session that focused on building a healthy bond between mother and daughter. Sarah said that her mother is ambitious, brave and conscientious. Renee in turn said her daughter is wise, kind, disciplined and ambitious. And they both said they wanted to spend more time together. This was a breakthrough for them, as the two had had a strained relationship in the past.

For the four months they worked together, Sarah responded positively and eagerly to Maggie and Jasmine's support. Sarah also took a Parenting Journey class through CFCS, where Maggie was a co-facilitator. Through the work Maggie and Jasmine did with the Hamiltons, the family was able to successfully reunify!

## Looking Forward

FY20 brought many adjustments and new opportunities for the FSS program, which led us to implement new and innovative tools to better serve our families. One major success was our ability to reconfigure and offer our Parent Journey series virtually. FSS hopes to continue to provide both virtual and in person workshops in order to increase our ability to connect with additional families.



We look forward to expanding our collaboration with other programs at CFCS to ensure that permanency is achieved for all clients served by our agency. We'll continue to provide continuity of care for youth by working closely with other programs to ensure that when they leave our IFC or Residential programs and transition to working with FSS, youth and families have a worker from their previous program paired with their Family Support Specialist. Over the past year, this continuity has shown to improve outcomes for our youth and families and further demonstrates that CFCS is a leader in permanency work.



# Intensive Foster Care

Our Intensive Foster Care (IFC) Program finds caring and nurturing foster homes for children who were born exposed to substances, were subjected to abuse and/or neglect or have complex medical needs.

## IFC's Year-at-a-Glance

Following the departure of IFC Program Director, Jillian Nebesar, we restructured the IFC program in FY20. The program is now led by Program Manager Colleen McGowan, who directly reports to the Director of Family Services & Intensive Foster Care, Sarah Medrano-Palmer. This new structure allows for stronger collaboration between the Family Services and IFC Programs. In addition, we believe this will support additional program growth with increased staffing capacity, as the IFC Manager will hold up to a half caseload.

Our IFC Program continues to collaborate with other agency programs whenever possible to strengthen the continuity of care that is offered at CFCS. This collaboration can entail our FSS program working with youths' birth family upon reunification, or children in our Adoption program being placed in a nurturing IFC home.

Due to the upcoming implementation of the Family First Act and the Department of Children and Families' increased permanency focus, children in foster care are reunifying or placed with kin whenever possible. Due to the impact going through multiple placements can have on youth in foster care, we believe that careful, thorough matching of youth with foster homes must occur in order to ensure high quality placement for our youth.

Developing and implementing this thorough process may result in foster homes waiting longer for youth to be placed with them, but it will ultimately yield longer continuous foster care placements and better outcomes for youth.



*Paula Hinds (left) and her mother Veronica were recognized this year for their exceptional work as foster parents with the Vivienne Campbell Award.*



## COVID-19

Our social workers worked hard at quickly adapting to work during quarantine. We worked with the Family Services team on ensuring that foster parents and youth had resources to draw on in order for youth to stay occupied and safe during the stay-at-home order. We worked to ensure that youth in our care could complete their remote school work and stay connected to their birth families. Our social workers supported permanency connections by planning and encouraging phone calls, Zoom visits and virtual activities between youth and their families. And our social workers ensured that they still visually saw their clients each week through tele-visits.

## Our Year, By the Numbers



**29**

*children placed in safe, nurturing foster homes*



**10.1 months**

*the average length of a child's stay in foster care with CFCS*



**6**

*youth discharged from our program were reunited with birth family*



*Justice, a 19-year-old young man in foster care, has adapted to life during the pandemic admirably. Here he's pictured with a new bike, the only gift he requested to celebrate his recently graduating high school.*

## A Permanency Success Story: Permanency Preparedness

This year we took on the case of 12-year-old Libby who, in the past, was extremely resistant to engaging with both social workers and foster families. Libby made it very clear to all she came in contact with that she did not want to be with anyone who was not her biological family. It was this resistance, which was often demonstrated through behavioral concerns, that brought her to our Intensive Foster Care program.

In the first weeks of her placement with her CFCS foster family, Libby would regularly verbally express disdain for her foster mother and sister. But her foster mother, Trina, didn't take it too personally. She began her work with Libby by making sure that Libby was able to contact her biological siblings and talk regularly on the phone with them. Trina also made sure Libby saw her siblings in person. For Libby's 13th birthday, Trina took Libby and her siblings out to dinner together. Trina fought hard to help Libby feel safe, included and as though she was part of the family, even if Libby expressed otherwise.

In January of 2020, Libby was reunified with her biological mother. Since then, Libby has frequently called Trina to check in and talk. Trina reports that their discussions have revolved around coping during the pandemic and how Libby is doing since the reunification. Trina continues to be a regular support for Libby through this difficult time.



## Looking Forward



The IFC Team is looking forward to a busy year ahead in FY21 as we continue to respond to a changing landscape as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We anticipate new challenges for the youth in our program as they embark on an academic year that will lean heavily on remote learning. This has serious implications for working parents with limited childcare options and youth with special needs who may struggle to access a high quality education via video conferencing. The team is prepared to use creative problem solving and collaborate with community partners to ensure that all of the youth in the program remain stable and have all of their needs met under these challenging circumstances.

The work of permanency planning remains paramount for youth in IFC. The pandemic has caused us to rethink our approach to this work. The team looks forward to further expanding our use of video conferencing and other safe communication methods. Most importantly, we are looking forward to supporting our youth and their families as they adjust to this “new normal” in the year ahead.

# Residential Services: Putnam Place

Putnam Place is a group home for young adults age 16 to 21 who are in the legal custody of DCF and/or the Department of Mental Health (DMH). This program is strengths-based and permanency-focused to help each young adult build skills and enhance family relationships in order to reach their goals.

## Putnam Place's Year-at-a-Glance

This was an exciting year for transitions in and out of Putnam. We had four of our youth transition to Independent Living situations, and we ended FY20 with two residents on track for IL. We had three young men graduate from high school, all of whom were also accepted to college for the fall semester. One of our residents was even accepted to 16 colleges!

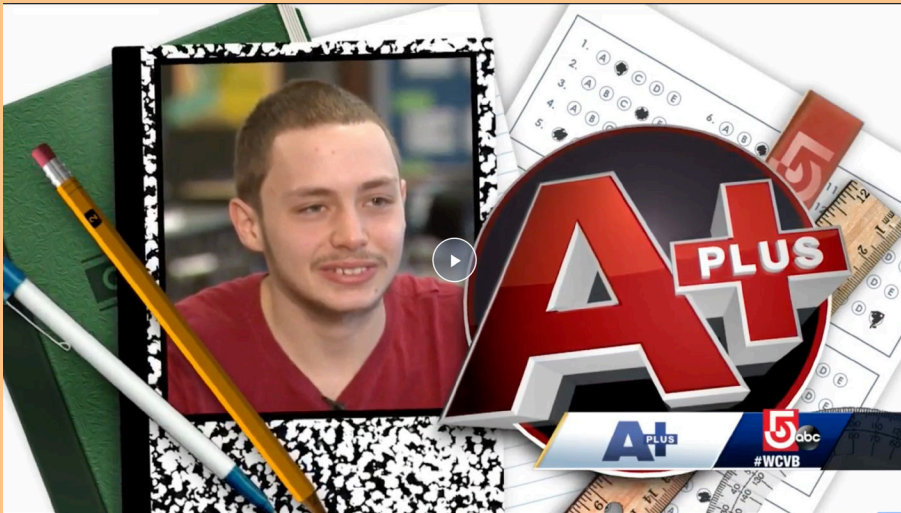
We assisted in reconnecting family members to some of our youth this year. We were able to open the lines of communication between the program and our residents' family members to assist in strengthening the relationships between parents and residents. One youth in particular was barely speaking to his father and mother when he moved to Putnam back in November of 2018. Now he has weekly calls with his father and monthly calls with his mother, and his father was recently part of our first Youth Guided Family Team Meeting.

We were able to create connections with some amazing resources for our youth: Rise Above, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine; Rising Voices; and Catie's Closet. We continued our partnership with agencies like: Silver Lining Mentors; Haley House; Cambridge Saving Bank; and Community Cooks. All of these collaboration enhance the stability and well being of our youth.



*Before the pandemic, residents like Ever, pictured above, enjoyed taking cooking classes from the Haley House Cafe in Roxbury.*

## Scenes from Before and During Quarantine



*Longtime resident Tony was featured in WCVB-TV's A Plus segment for his achievements at school.*



*Putnam residents love cooking dinner together! Personal pizza night is especially popular.*



*Teame made sure to safely connect with his mentor Mary during quarantine.*

## COVID-19

All of the staff at Putnam have done a truly incredible job at keeping the residents and themselves COVID-free up to this point. Staff have worked diligently to ensure all common areas and high traffic areas were and are sanitized frequently. Staff and residents were terrific at supporting each other and finding ways to be productive during times when everyone felt it was hard to be. The residents took this time while on site to unify and get to know each other. The residents coordinated games to play with each other, including daily Uno tournaments between residents and staff. Staff and residents were able to take away many new tools they learned during this time to make their continued career at Putnam much more gratifying.

## Our Year, By the Numbers



**3**

*residents received their high school diplomas*



**5**

*residents got a job*



**2**

*resident enrolled in college*



**4**

*residents transitioned to an Independent Living program*

## Looking Forward

Putnam is looking forward to connecting with other 1:4 group homes and 1:3 programs. This is to open the lines of communication between our group home and other programs, to be able to have more understanding of where a youth is coming from. One goal is to continue to create new community connections for the residents to utilize.

## A Permanency Success Story: Youth Guided Team Meeting

When Mario first came to Putnam a year and a half ago, he did not have a relationship with his biological mother, and had a strained one with his father. When he and his father spoke, the conversation was usually about Mario needing money and his father giving it to him. But after careful intervention on the part of our Clinical Case Manager Derek Burton, Mario's relationship with his family has begun to progress in a positive direction.



Mario has regularly scheduled phone calls with his father every Friday. Both parties have worked hard on focusing their conversations more on what is happening in each other's lives.

Derek helped Mario set up a meeting where Mario invited people on his team -- biological and foster family, his mentor, therapists, teachers, social workers and other providers -- to discuss how they could all support him in moving towards Independent Living. His father gladly accepted the invitation.

Mario was so anxious at the start of the meeting waiting for his father to join. But once he did, Mario ran the meeting smoothly. Mario had a lot of questions about what his dad was willing to do to support him and whether Mario could count on his father to be there when he needed him. His father answered those questions honestly and reassuringly, easing a lot of the anxiety and pressure Mario was feeling about his future.

Recently, Mario and his father have had some great conversations during their phone calls. And Mario has had some great phone calls with his mom as well! Mario and Derek are already organizing Mario's next team meeting, and this time Mario is ready to invite his mother.

# Residential Services: Teens Learning Choices

Teens Learning Choices (TLC) is a group home for young adults age 16 to 21 who are in the legal custody of DCF and/or DMH. This program is strengths-based and permanency-focused to help each resident build skills and enhance family relationships in order to reach their goals.

## TLC's Year-at-a-Glance

This year, we were thrilled to promote Clinical Case Manager Karlah Paul to Program Director of TLC. Karlah has transitioned into her role promoting positive changes with both staff and residents at TLC. Maddie Summers, previously an intern at TLC, stepped into Karlah's previous role and became our new Clinical Case Manager.

Our new house leadership team has worked hard to build positive changes in the program. Through this work, we have seen a decrease in staff write-ups, a higher commitment to working in the program and increased stability and positive outcomes for our residents.



*Milieu counselor Malene (right) reviews a file with clinical case manager Madison during a rare moment of quiet in the TLC office.*

## COVID-19

Safety, prevention and education are the top priorities for all TLC staff during this pandemic. We've taken extensive measures to keep the house as sanitary as possible, including hand sanitizing stations, hand washing requirements and providing PPE.

Ultimately, although each person faced their own fears about COVID-19, we all knew that we weren't alone and we're going through this together. We understand that there is strength in numbers, and together we're doing the best we could to keep everyone safe, including family members of our staff and residents.

## Our Year, By the Numbers



4

*residents received their high school diplomas*



3

*residents got a job*



1

*resident enrolled in college*



1

*resident transitioned to an Independent Living program*



*TLC residents and staff recently met with the Malden police department to discuss ways the police can collaborate with TLC and the greater Malden community to reduce police brutality and help citizens feel safer. You can read the full story on the CFCS blog.*

## A Permanency Success Story: Youth Preparedness & Family Engagement

Yolanda came to TLC with a guarded heart and a distrust of people. She had a strong presence and a bold personality, but often shut everyone out of her world. Although she still maintained a normal routine, attending school, completing daily tasks and participating in life skills activities, Yolanda acknowledged that she wasn't very good at building long-term connections and knew that she had to work on her interpersonal skills. She quickly learned that being mad at the world and keeping everyone at arm's length would not benefit her long-term, so with our support, she decided to do something about it.

Yolanda has all the characteristics of a true leader. She is motivated and passionate, but she needed to figure out her path on her own. Yolanda understood that her relationship with her mom and the absence of her father impacts her other relationships and how she views them. So she made an effort every day to express her feelings, react in an appropriate manner to unexpected things, and change certain behavior patterns that she wanted to be free of.

One of Yolanda's goals was to build and strengthen her relationship with her mother. Her mother has always been a support to her; however, they often do not see eye to eye, which hindered their relationship. With much growth, tears, and hard work with the support of TLC, Yolanda has made extensive strides in developing a more positive relationship with her mom. Now, they are able to communicate better with one another and have in-depth conversations about life. Everyday isn't always perfect; however, Yolanda sees the value and importance of family and what having positive relationships with family can look and feel like. She has noticed positive changes in herself, and others have noticed those changes as well.

Today, Yolanda wants to continue to build her relationship with mom as she transitions into adulthood. There are days when she feels like giving up, but she never stops trying.



### Looking Forward



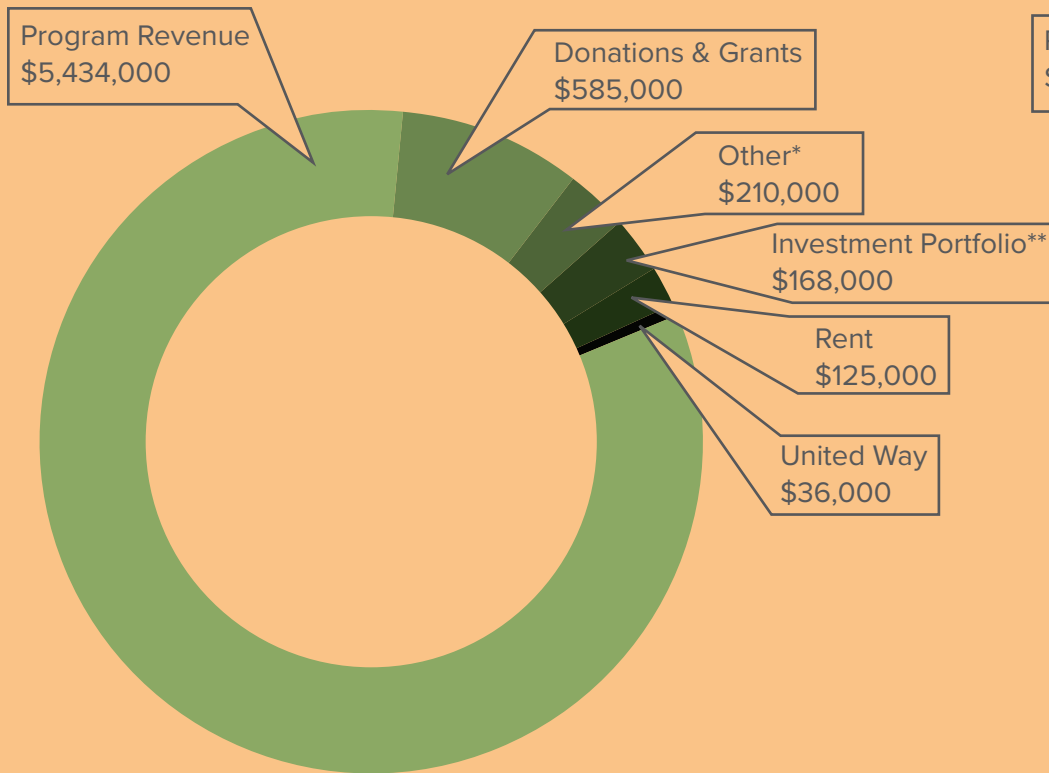
TLC is looking forward to conducting more community outreach, creating a better relationship with the Malden PD, our local fire department, our YMCA, schools and other community resources. Furthermore, TLC has begun collaborating with another agency in adopting the ARC framework, which will provide training and help support staff to better assist youth who have complex trauma. While TLC receives training on how to best support our youth, we are hoping that our community also joins hands with us in providing a safe environment for our residents to live in and become a part of.



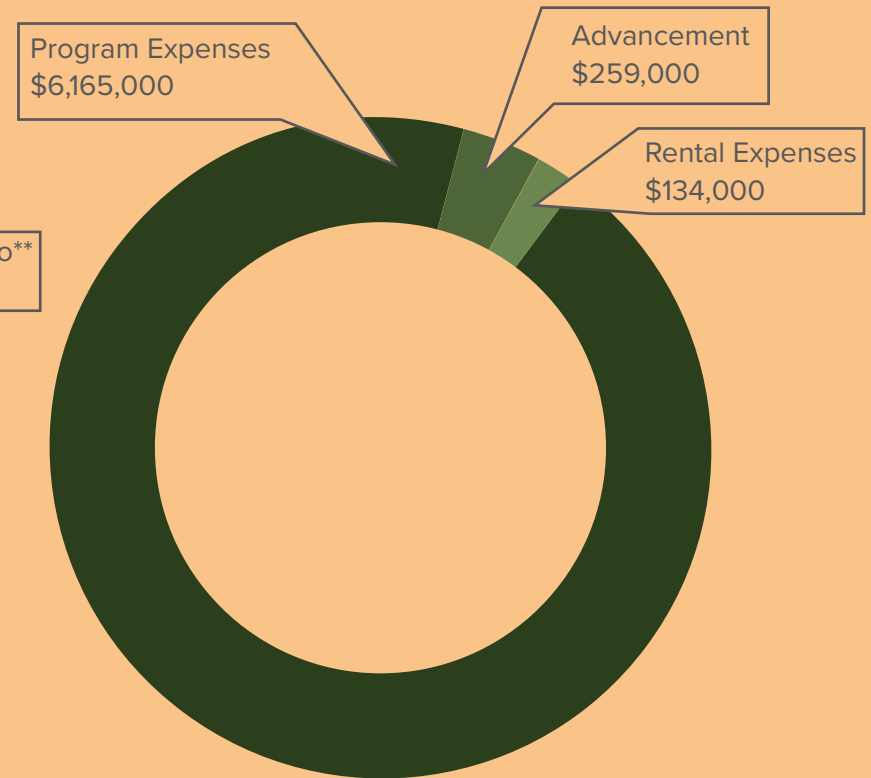
# Finance Review

# 2020 Financials

Sources of funds & expenses for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2020.



**Total Funds: \$6,558,000**



**Total Expenses: \$6,558,000**

*\*The agency received a Paycheck Protection Program loan from the Small Business Administration and expects that this loan will be forgiven according to the terms of that program.*

*\*\*The agency maintains funds in an investment portfolio with an annual draw down of 4.75% of the previous 3 years balance.*

*An annual audit is available upon request.*

## Our FY20 Board of Directors

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## Thank You to Our FY20 Visionary Partners!

