CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE
BUILDING SAFE, HEALTHY, CARING COMMUNITIES AND INSPIRING PEOPLE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS PRODUCTIVE AND VALUED CITIZENS.
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Chief Financial Officer
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Chief Strategy Officer
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Chief Program Officer
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Director of Family Support Services
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Director of Community Justice Services
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE CONNECTION’S 2018 ANNUAL REPORT. DURING THIS YEAR, HUNDREDS OF STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND STATE AND NATIONAL LEADERS SUPPLIED CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK TO SHAPE THE CONNECTION’S STRATEGIC PLAN.

The strategic plan, titled Creating Positive Change, represents the shared aspirations of the agency’s leadership, staff and Boards of Directors and will guide our organization for the next three years. We’re pleased to share excerpts of this product within this report.

Established in 1972, The Connection has grown to be a state leader in the provision of housing, case management, and treatment services for the homeless, mentally ill, substance addicted, and for the preservation of families and individuals restarting their lives after incarceration. Our mission is to be responsive to our clients, our staff and our communities with quality, cost effective services that address these important societal and community safety concerns. We strive to do great work and seek to continually strengthen the agency’s program profile and infrastructure.

As a private, nonprofit organization, our work is evolving by constant changes in the external landscape. The Connection’s vision to be the most trusted provider in the communities we serve is more important than ever. To do this, it is imperative that we continue to adapt our programs, improve our financial sustainability, partner with others, strengthen our culture and internal operations and evolve our board leadership. It’s always been our mission to improve the lives and promote the well-being of every person who seeks our services. As populations shift, technology advances, and new societal concerns emerge, we’re responding to new challenges every day.

As we move forward it will be exciting to see how our system will expand upon the excellence in service provision we’re known for. It’s imperative that we continue to leverage our unique strengths. Our new leadership is strong and proactively responding to community needs. We are remaining committed to building upon the innovation of our work, our research to practice model, the passion and dedication of our talented staff, the partnerships we’ve developed and the unmatched quality of the care we provide to realize our goals. This plan reflects the revitalization necessary to prepare The Connection for a service delivery system better equipped to assist today’s most vulnerable citizens. Thank you for supporting us in this strength-building journey. We look forward to creating positive change in our communities.

Sincerely,

Gloster Aaron, Ph.D., Chair, The Connection, Inc.
Stephen Angle, Ph.D., Chair, The Connection Fund, Inc.
IN FISCAL YEAR 2018, WE SAW MORE CLIENTS UTILIZING OUR CONTINUUM OF CARE THAN EVER BEFORE. MANY OF OUR CLIENTS ARE STRUGGLING WITH SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL ILLNESS, HOMELESSNESS AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE ISSUES, AND MAY EXPERIENCE MORE THAN ONE OF THOSE CHALLENGES.

The Connection served 12,158 unique individuals throughout Connecticut, across all our programs and services. Our programs are prepared to meet people where they are when they become engaged with our organization, and we have programs in place to assist our clients as they grow, heal and move through the recovery process.

**Unique Challenges + Dynamic Engagement = Meeting the Needs**

**Behavioral Health Clients**
**Family Support Services Clients**
**Community Justice Clients**

12,158 Individuals Served
Problem gambling is often referred to as the “hidden addiction.” Family members can be affected by problem gambling in many ways — which can include financial impact as well as emotional impact. Problem gambling can also lead to or co-occur with domestic violence and other types of abuse.

The Connection’s Bettor Choice program has the only support group in the state of Connecticut specifically designed for family members. Parents, spouses, siblings and adult children of problem gamblers come together bi-weekly to support each other at our family support group. Family members are also able to access one on one or family treatment with no out of pocket costs, available to any client utilizing the Bettor Choice program.

Our program staff includes two staff members with lived experience surrounding problem gambling, both from the perspective of problem gamblers and how it can affect family members. This access to unique lived peer experience leads to an enriching process for the people receiving our services.

Family member Annemarie describes her experience in the family support group for problem gambling:

“I feel blessed to have found a gambling support program that has helped me enter into my own recovery. It is my hope that if I help myself, it will eventually help the problem gambler. I feel that the quality of my life has improved. I still worry, but I’m not constantly consumed by thoughts of the problem gambler. The strategies that I learn in small group are applicable to all other areas of my life, not just with problem gambling. It’s very comforting to meet with a group of people who are going through the same thing that I’m going through. It’s a safe and non-judgmental environment. I look forward to attending my meetings, learning more each time and working hard to maintain my own recovery.”

The Bettor Choice program interventions are tailored to the individual needs of each client, but can include financial counseling, problem gambling education, and assisting with strategies to help minimize the impact of problem gambling to affected people. The program also provides community outreach to promote awareness, education and prevention as it relates to gambling disorders.
Outcome data from the previous fiscal year of the Start Program shows that...

142 HOMELESS YOUTH WERE PROVIDED WITH SHELTER AND/OR TIME-LIMITED HOUSING THROUGHOUT THE STATE;
98% OF HOMELESS YOUTH EXITING THE PROGRAM WERE DISCHARGED TO STABLE HOUSING;
<3% OF YOUTH THAT DISCHARGE FROM THE START PROGRAM EVER ENTER THE HOMELESS SYSTEM AGAIN.

THE START PROGRAM

Homeless young adults aged 18–24 are the fastest growing homeless sub-population throughout Connecticut and the nation. Despite this surge in numbers, homeless young adults do not seek shelter and housing services through existing options as these programs fail to meet the unique developmental needs of young adults.

This means homeless young adults are choosing to stay in unsafe environments, being exploited, and even sleeping outside. Youth facing these choices lead to increases in the length of time youth are homeless and increased interactions with high-cost systems (such as the criminal justice system and child welfare systems).

The Start Program was developed as a small pilot program in 2011 in conjunction with the Department of Children & Families to answer this need. The program provides intensive case management services combined with short-term housing and emergency housing services to homeless youth age 18–24. The program provides youth-specific shelter and housing options that are safe, along with opportunities for skill development, and connections to reliable community supports to homeless youth throughout the state. Staff provide weekly in-home/community-based visits with young adults in the program, targeted towards the areas of housing stabilization, money management, and employment skills.

The overarching program goal being that the young adults we serve can become self-sufficient, confident in their skills, and as a result not return to homelessness.

The Connection 2018 Annual Report
Better, More Stable Options + Skill Building = Our Impact

09
This federally-funded demonstration project capitalized on a longstanding statewide program at The Connection, Supportive Housing for Families (SHF). A Housing and Child Welfare Collaborative co-chaired by state leaders served as the project advisory board; this group informed, oversaw, promoted, and supported project aims and led efforts toward systems integration and sustainability, policy and legislation, and family economic security and well-being.

The project evaluated Intensive Supportive Housing for Families clients who had access to evidence-based interventions for parenting, trauma, and other mental health challenges, substance abuse, health, housing, and employment preparedness. Triage and assessment prompted team-based services, engaging parents as full members. Interdisciplinary teams included the parent, case manager, and representatives from support providers. ISHF families were evaluated alongside families receiving the traditional service components of SHF. Families who remained on the SHF wait list and did not receive services beyond involvement from their DCF caseworkers functioned as a control group.

Results of the impact analysis revealed that access to a service model containing a combination of supportive housing and case management was associated with both short- and long-term benefits through two years.

Comparing families enrolled in both treatment groups (ISHF and SHF) to controls, a greater proportion of children (30% vs. 9%) were reunified with their families (among reunification cases) and a lower proportion of children (9% vs. 40%) were removed from their families or experienced an incident of substantiated maltreatment (among preservation cases).

When comparing ISHF and SHF families, the research team found that the intensity of the service model had minimal impacts on children and families. Ultimately, these findings highlight supportive housing as an essential component of any intervention model to promote child and family well-being, particularly for families involved in the child welfare system and at risk of housing instability and homelessness.
The Connection Center for Behavioral Health provides a comprehensive array of services that are client centered, strength-based, trauma-informed and aim to treat clients at the least restrictive level of care possible. Services are available to treat substance abuse, mental health and co-occurring disorders, and include individual, group, and family therapy, medication management and intensive outpatient care.

The Center for Behavioral Health has rolled out an open access policy at all locations. New clients can come during open access hours to complete a behavioral health evaluation, eliminating wait times for scheduled appointments and allowing treatment to begin right away. As a result, the Centers have seen a 67% increase in the number of new intake sessions compared to the six months prior to launching open access.

The Center for Behavioral Health in New Haven offers medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. Clients receive behavioral health treatment, medication, and care management from one integrated team of providers. The MAT Care Manager provides strength-based case management support for The Centers for Behavioral Health Medication Assisted Treatment Program. In addition to case management functions, the care manager assists clinicians and collaborates with other team members in the treatment of adults suffering from substance abuse and/or mental health disorders, in a community-based outpatient treatment setting. With the support of DMHAS funds, The Center for Behavioral Health has increased capacity in New Haven.
RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS
THE CONNECTION SHOWING SUCCESS ACROSS THE STATE

The United States locks up a greater portion of its population than nearly any other country in the world, but the total number of people imprisoned has fallen slowly from its peak in the early 2000s. According to new data from the federal government’s Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of people incarcerated decreased 1 percent to 1,505,400 people by the end of 2016.

Recently the state of Connecticut began a mission of “decarceration.” The Office of Policy and Management projects a conservative decrease of 445 people in the state’s prison population over the next year. In order to achieve this goal residents must leave incarceration and not go back. Our programs prepare participants to leave incarceration and not come back.

The Connection has 322 re-entry beds in its programs, which include the only work release program designed specifically for women. These programs measure a participant’s overall risk of recidivism by using an assessment tool to evaluate specific areas of a participant’s life that increase probability of reincarceration such as mental health, substance abuse, positive supports, and employment to name a few. Once identified, participants work with the program on a plan to better these areas and decrease the risk of recidivism.

What re-entry program graduate David says about his experience in our program:

I truly believe that part of the reason that I succeeded in my endeavors was due to the trainings and positive relationship and role models that I encountered while at Roger Sherman. I took a lot of these experiences and exercises with me and I do not know how I could have done it without them.

>60% OF PEOPLE FROM OUR RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS, LIKE DAVID, FIND EMPLOYMENT AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE PROGRAM. THESE TWO OUTCOMES ALONE STRENGTHEN FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOSE WHO RESIDE IN CONNECTICUT.

Visit our website to find more information about David’s story and listen to his podcast episode: theconnectioninc.org/david-is-creating-positive-change
CONNECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JOEY LOGANO FOUNDATION

At The Connection, we believe that children belong in families and deserve to live in homes where they can feel safe, valued, and loved in a nurturing environment. In our Therapeutic Foster Care program, Connecting Children and Families, we match youth of all ages with dedicated therapeutic foster parents, who open their hearts and their homes to a child.

In May of 2018 the agency partnered with the Joey Logano Foundation to launch a public awareness campaign for therapeutic foster care in the state of Connecticut. The campaign featured digital billboards across the state, TV spots featuring Joey Logano that aired on Fox61, and several media appearances on radio and TV.

Founded in 2013 by NASCAR driver Joey Logano and his wife, Brittany Logano, The Joey Logano Foundation invests in organizations offering second chances to children and young adults during times of crisis and works to inspire others to live a life of generosity. Through grant making, charity events, and fan club participation, The Joey Logano Foundation continues to make a profound difference in the lives of children and adults in need across the country.
2018 EVENTS

2018 was a busy year for special events at The Connection with the launch of our 1st Annual Golf Tournament, taking place at H. Smith Richardson Golf Course in Fairfield. More than $60,000 was raised to support The Connection’s clients and programs at our special events throughout the year. In addition to the Golf Tournament, our events this year included the 2018 Masquerade Ball, the CFA Society Corporate 5K in Hartford, and the annual Connection Conference. The 2018 Conference theme was Meaningful Connections: Exploring Engagement in Human Services.

Our special events are an excellent way to learn more about our programs and the ways in which we help our communities. Please join us for an event in 2019!

- **2nd Annual Golf Tournament** June 24, 2019
- **CFA Society Corporate 5K** August 1, 2019
- **Cultivating Resilience Conference** October 21, 2019
PERCENTAGES ARE CALCULATED BASED ON TOTAL EXPENSES

86% DIRECT Services to clients and communities, including counseling, evaluations, community service work, food, housing, care, guidance, supervision and monitoring.

14% INDIRECT General leadership and management services, including planning, program and fund development, accounting, audits, legal and personnel support, board support and community relations.
2018 SUPPORTERS

A.R. Mazzotta
Employment Specialists
A-1 Toyota
A-Cure LLC
Dr. Gloster B. Aaron, Jr. and Dr. Katherine Allocco
ABC&D, Inc. Early Learning Division
ABH
Access Community Action Agency
ACES Middlesex County Early Head Start
Active Network
Adapt Pharma
Advanced Benefit Strategies
Aetna
Amie Gross Architects
Stephen Angle
Tracy Anhalt
Anne Capano Charitable Foundation for Giving Anonymous
Antiques & Home Furnishings, LLC
Avangrid
Nicole Bajek
Baldwin Media
Jeffrey Baran
Charlie Barber and Laura Radin
Kelly Barclay
Rose Barnes
David Barrett Rich
Samantha Batson
Marie Bayley
Stephen Bayley
Bella Perlina Jewelry
Aurora A. Bernardino
BH Care, Inc.
Claire Bien
Brian Black
Owen and Suzanne Black
Randall Blank
Elizabeth Bobnick
John L. Blocceratella
Donna Bogen
Book Barn
LeeAnne Borkowski
Dr. Harold D. Bornstein, Jr.
Debra and David Borzelino
Raymond and Sandra Bournet
Courtney Jay Brandt
Richard B. Brown Jr.
Laura Bulas
Robert and Deborah Burnside
Caitlin Calder
Ruthanne Canto
Capitol View Apartments
Maureen Carney and John Cox
CBS, a Xerox company
CDW Direct, LLC
Celtic Sheet Metal, Inc.
Center for Compassionate Recovery
Marie Cerino
Richard and Marge Chabak
Chabaso Bakery
Linda J. Chambers
Chebeya Groton Bank
Cheri’s Bakery
Gary Childress
Frank and Susan Cirillo
City of Middletown
City Missionary Association of New Haven
Jane S. Claybaugh & Family
Clinton Crossings Premium Outlets
Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
Community Foundation of Middlesex County
Community Foundation of Middlesex County Mountain Laurel Fund
Cathy A. Corno
Francis X. Conlon II, CPA
Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
Connecticut Court Support Services Division
Connecticut Department of Children and Families
Connecticut Department of Correction
Connecticut Department of Developmental Services
Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Connecticut Department of Social Services
Connecticut Orthopedic Specialists
Beth Connor
Cordant Health Solutions
Beatriz Cordova
Corporate Design
Michael and Betsy Cronin
Barbara Crotty
Angel Cully
Otto and Deborah Curran
Rochelle Currie
Da Legua
Jim DaCunto
Beth Davis
Dawn Davis
Deb Davis
Alissa K. DeJonge, in Loving Memory of Robert and Paula DeJonge
Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore
Johnna DeSantis
Maria Dezi
Michael E. Donahue
Katherine Donovan
Downtown Cabaret Theatre
John Duca
Edward Dzialo, Jr.
Lorie Eadie
Electric Boat Management Association
Enfield Builders, Inc.
Simon Etzel in Honor of Betsy Cronin
Evergreen Fibres, Inc.
Philip M. Failla
Patrick Fallon
Fairfield County’s Community Foundation
Family & Children’s Agency
Thomas Farver
Nicole Fasold
Christopher Ficken
First Church of Christ, Middletown
First Congregational Church, Portland
Fischel Properties
Tom Forschner
Teresa Fox In Memory of Michelle Losty
Francis X. Conlon II, CPA
Scott Fretry
Louise French
Frontline Marketing
Funk Boiler Works
Michelle Giardina
Rachel Gilbert
Daniel Gilhuys In Memory of Michelle Losty
Gianluca’s Bakery
GiveGreater.org
Mary Glynn
Glynn Associates
Goodspeed Musicals
Goody’s Hardware and Paint
Kevin Granger
Vera Grant
Guilford Coffee House
Guilford Mortgage Services
Gumdrops & Lollipops
Marianne Heft
Sandia Hill
Beth Hogan
Cheryl Holmes
Homegoods
Stacy Hooker
Hoopes Morganhalter Rausch & Scaramozza LLC
Kate Houlihan
Amber Hunter
Andrea Hunter
Martina Hutley
Lauren Iacaronio
Ink & Pixel Agency
Inn at Middletown
Inner Light Counseling, LLC
Ion Bank Foundation
Christina D. Jackson
Linda Kelly Jackson
Scott Jackson
JB Sports, LLC
Jewelry of Joy Studio and Gallery
Joyo Logano Charitable Foundation
Genise Jones
Nanci Jutras
Alexis Kahn
First Church of Christ, Portland
Lora Kornegay-Dean
Kramer Portraits
Sheila Kristofak
Frederic and Lynn Kudish
Alex Lahoski
La Moda Fashions
Peter Landsberger
Thomas Larson In Memory of Michelle Losty
LeBlanc Communications
Angela Lee
Raymond and Georgianna Leone
Marco and Lisa Lepore
Susan Lewis
Liberty Bank Foundation
Liberty Community Services
Lori Lloyd
Anne Losty
Marlene Major
Ryan Malarine
Malloves Jewelers
Mark Greenberg Real Estate Company
Kelly L. Martin
Knights of Columbian, Portland
Judith Normandin
Gina O’Connell
O’Connor’s Public House
Off the Streets
Omni Hotel New Haven at Yale
Owens Realty Services
Suzanne and D. William Owens
Generous Hearts • Enabling Care • 2018 Supporters

D. William Owens
Owens Realty Services

E. Merritt McDonough Jr.
John and Nancy Meyers
Middlefield Federated Church
Middlesex Hospital Marketing
Middlesex United Way
Minuteman Press, New England
Mohegan Sun
Kathleen Mone
Robert and Amalie Moortream
Thomas Moran
Mr. J Asian Bistro
Karen Murphy
Allen and Judy Myrick
N.E.P. Inc.
NAMI of Elm City
Nathan Accounting Group
Near and Far Aid
Network for Good
Mart Newbury
Newman Architects
Niantic Cinemas
Thomas Niles

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DR. EDWARD FRIEDMAN
HONORING AN EARLY CHAMPION FOR THE CONNECTION

Since Kätchen Coley founded The Connection in 1972, the agency has since grown to a staff of more than 400 and operates 45 programs. Her innovative vision of community based programs would not have come to fruition without the support of Dr. Edward Friedman, who died on January 30, 2019 at the age of 94.

In the early 1970s, Kätchen Coley volunteered in the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service at Connecticut Valley Hospital, which Dr. Friedman, a psychologist, directed. In working with the patients on the unit, she was alarmed by how quickly they were readmitted after what appeared to be a successful treatment episode and discharge. She soon realized that the discharging clients had no adequate housing and supports to go to, and often quickly relapsed, precipitating their return to the hospital.

Kätchen Coley thought there might be a relatively straightforward answer to the problem. If she could only get a house, somewhere in Middletown, which would serve as a supportive home to former patients, she could help stop this expensive and painful revolving door. While simple, her idea was radical. In that era, there was virtually no supportive housing in the community for people with substance abuse and behavioral health needs. To bring her idea to practice, she needed a champion in the mental healthcare field.

That’s where Dr. Friedman came in. He enthusiastically endorsed Kätchen Coley’s radical idea and wrote letters of support for the first grant awarded to The Connection, a $30,000 federal award to purchase a dilapidated house on Washington Street in Middletown, near Wesleyan University. Dr. Friedman also agreed to be a member of the Board of Directors of the incipient organization. Without his backing (and role in making CVH a referral source), the agency would never have gotten off the ground. Many medical professionals of that era would not have subscribed to Kätchen Coley’s risky and untested vision, but Dr. Friedman intuitively understood that his patients needed a home, and perhaps more important than that, a community.

Almost fifty years later, the agency is indebted to both Dr. Edward Friedman for his prescient and courageous vision and to our brave founder, Kätchen Coley.