



Child and Family Services

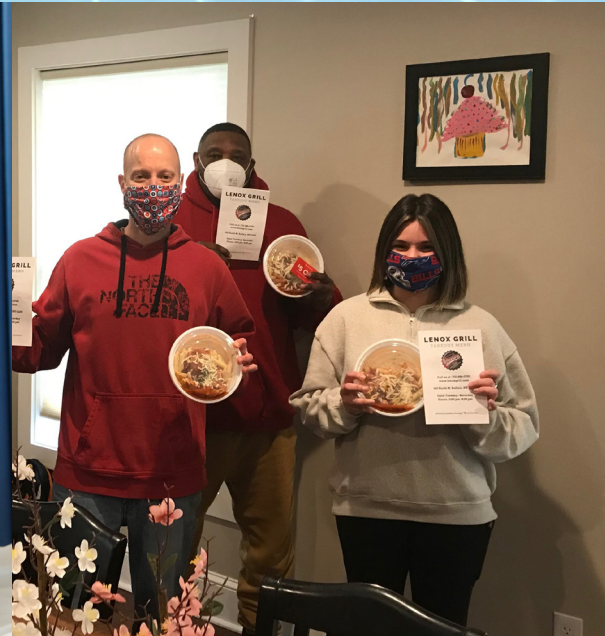
Portraits of Hope

Summer 2020

A Thank You to Our Supporters!

Through your donations and efforts, you have helped your WNY neighbors through some of their most difficult times.

See inside to read a few of the ways your contributions have made a difference!



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, ELIZABETH MCPARTLAND



How can one possibly encapsulate the last six months?

We have all been through so much. The COVID-19 pandemic completely changed the way we experience our day-to-day lives, while the racial justice movement has spotlighted systemic inequities in our society. The intersection between COVID-19 and racial inequities highlight concepts that may challenge our beliefs, behaviors, relationships, and preparations for the future. At C&FS, this notion can be consolidated into one question: How can we create a safe, healthy, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community?

Change is not easy. After never before needing to wear a mask in public, the urgency to do so might be jarring. It has been difficult to go months without seeing loved ones in person; or refrain from hugging those we do see; and it can be heartbreaking to recognize and acknowledge that within our own community, individual, institutional, and societal racism perpetuates inequities for persons of color.

No, change is not easy. But, change is necessary, and we will work together to create change. As a response to COVID-19, Child & Family Services and the Stanley G. Falk School teams have tailored our approach to how we provide education, prevention, intervention, and advocacy. Telehealth services are offered as an alternative to on-site counseling for those who are not yet ready to return to public settings. Telehealth services also enable us to connect with those who have challenges with transportation, child care, and complex work schedules. Mediation services are held remotely, allowing all parties to participate from the safety and comfort of their homes. The Stanley G. Falk School recently completed its first summer school facilitated through remote instruction, and our dedicated educators continue to conduct socially distant visits with their students. We have also significantly reduced the number of people working on-site throughout the organization to support a healthy environment.

In addition to these physical and programmatic changes, we are expanding our efforts to understand and actively combat racial inequities. This work is occurring across the organization, including via our Board of Directors, our Senior Management Team, and each of our departments. We have held Racial Healing Circles with staff and are in the process of hiring our first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are leading efforts with statewide coalition members to ensure our advocacy efforts are inclusive and support equity for children and families of color. These changes will take time, persistence, and resources.

We know you are there to support us through all of these changes. On July 16, we held our first Raise 716 Day online fundraiser. This campaign raised nearly \$28,000 to aid us as we make necessary changes to serve our community. We are grateful for your support, whether it is through financial means, or by making masks for our staff and clients, or by sharing our stories on social media. Your kindness helps to fuel our work. As you have been here for us, we promise to be here for you and to continue working toward positive change for our community.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth McPartland



"C&FS was the non-profit missing from the HSBC family and our volunteer experience so far has been nothing short of amazing. We were very lucky to be a part of two wonderful events, the Fashion Show with a Twist and Adopt-a-Family. Both taught us the importance of giving back to the community and how well we can bring our own internal team together to participate for a wonderful cause. This truly warms our hearts and thank you to C&FS for bringing HSBC together. Our volunteer experience has taught us to see the bright spots in difficult situations."

- HSBC Volunteers Carrie Stromecki and Linda Takac

RAISE 716 ELEVATES COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR C&FS

The pandemic has highlighted the need for our services and the importance of community support. Raise 716 encouraged supporters to donate money to benefit the entire Agency. This is invaluable when making rapid changes needed to meet demands created by the coronavirus crisis.

Kari Bonaro was one of the early supporters of the Raise 716 campaign. Much has changed for all of us since she gave, and now she's glad to know how much her gift made a difference. She explained why she chose to participate, "In any community, but especially in our community, there are so many people who need a lot of different types of help and support. Child & Family Services does that, especially for women and children, and that has always meant a lot for me."

Her commitment grew over time. She decided, with her family, to help a family we serve for Adopt-a-Family during the holidays. She explained "We don't know the families, but we do know that there's something special that someone is hoping to get and we can give that to them. It's just an incredible feeling."

This summer, we saw our generous community come forward in trying times. July 16 became Raise 716 Day, a one-day giving campaign for all of the programs at Child & Family Services. Local celebrities, including Rick Jeanneret of the Buffalo Sabres, shared their time and talents virtually to help Raise 716 succeed. We would like to thank everyone who participated on Raise 716 Day, including corporate gifts from KeyBank Foundation and Transitowne Automotive Group.

Learn more about how you can help Raise 716 at cfsbny.org/raise716.



Kari Bonaro and her son volunteering at C&FS.



HAMISTER GRANT HELPS STANLEY G. FALK SCHOOL IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY

"Preparing for school to reopen has consumed most of our time, attention, and focus, but amidst all of this I am proud that we have been able to continue to work on positive school improvements for students – such as the STEAM lab," said Laura Collins, principal of the Stanley G. Falk School Roosevelt campus. "We are ready and eager to welcome back all of our students!"

The conversion of the Roosevelt campus library into a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) learning center is one of the projects funded by a grant awarded to the Falk School by the Hamister Group. This lab opens a world of innovative learning for students by giving them a hub with diverse offerings. Experimental learning will now be available to music lovers, budding coders, aspiring mathematicians, chemists, and more.

The STEAM Center will help to create a culture where students are leaders of learning and teachers are facilitators. This will lead to increased participation in local, state and global collaborations – such as the WNY Maker Expo, Robo Rave,

Hour of Code – where students present their creations and findings to peers. "I am very grateful that students will have an inspiring space in which they will have the opportunity to discover, plan, problem solve, build, and create," said Principal Collins. "The STEAM lab project is now complete; it features flexible seating, and is a bright and child-friendly space."

The Hamister grant will also have a significant impact on Falk athletics. The biggest portion of the athletic funds were used to purchase retractable bleachers for the gymnasium at the Cambridge school. Previously, staff needed to set up folding chairs for all school-wide sporting events and assemblies. The Falk School was also able to purchase basketball padding and backboards, soccer nets, and twenty uniforms for their high school soccer team.

We want to extend our sincere gratitude to the Hamister Group for the grant that made all of this possible.

Thank You to Our 2019-2020 Donors!

Child & Family Services extends a sincere thank you to the following donors who gave financial contributions totalling \$100 or more during the 2019-20 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020). All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Please call (716) 335-7234 with any questions or corrections.



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