

Spring 2021

c&fs

Child and Family Services

# Portraits of Hope



## Starting the Year by Making a Difference

Catch up on news coming out of C&FS and see what projects we have been working on.





## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, ELIZABETH MCPARTLAND



*“As we work to create light for others, we naturally light our own way.”  
– author Mary Anne Radmacher*

In the long, dark months of winter, we can sometimes feel alone. This is particularly true as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, so we must create light for those who need it.

At Child & Family Services we help people find ways to produce light for themselves if they are in the darkness. As the above quote states, doing this allows us to find our own path and discover opportunities to support others in ways that we and they had not previously seen. We are constantly evolving to meet the needs of our community. Haven House’s new rapid rehousing program assists survivors of domestic violence in finding a place to live as they begin the next phase of their lives; our new Education Specialist is nurturing the minds of children in Residential Treatment by demonstrating that learning continues even when they step outside of

the classroom; telehealth services have expanded our ability to support the mental health needs of our WNY neighbors.

Agency policies and practices also continue to change in order to create a more equitable organization and community. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) remain at the forefront of Child & Family Services’ organizational values. To develop these principles further, we welcomed Chantele Thompson as our Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and as a member of our Senior Leadership Team. Advancing DEI initiatives will better enable C&FS team members to shine a light on systemic, institutional, and individual barriers that enable racial inequities, and to cultivate relationships based on authenticity and empathy.

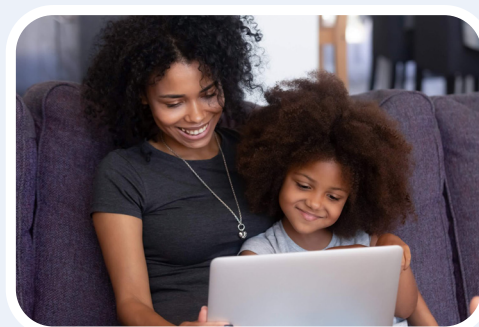
The efforts of our C&FS team never cease to astound me. I take great pride in the fact that our staff goes above-and-beyond to help others find light in their lives. Light is not singular, though – when one of us sees it, we can all see more clearly.

Spring is right around the corner, and with it comes more light for us all.

*Elizabeth McPartland*

## MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

Iris\* was going through a lot. Her daughter, Jackie,\* formerly a straight-A student, was struggling to adjust to virtual learning. Jackie was not focusing well during her lessons and assignments remained incomplete. Iris saw that her daughter needed more guidance, so she took a leave of absence from her job in order to devote more time to Jackie’s education. She felt overwhelmed. Understanding her situation, Iris’ company referred her to Child & Family Services’ Employee Assistance Program (EAP).



EAP provides services to organizations, employees, and their households in an effort to support and preserve employment, knowing that this will have a direct impact on mental and emotional health. Over this past year, there has been a collective loss of normalcy including family, work, school, and social life disruptions. The resulting isolation, and emotional strain causes us all risk for mental and emotional health concerns. According to a recent report,<sup>1</sup> 41% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, a figure that has been consistent since spring 2020. “The longevity has worn us out, but we have to look at our respective situations holistically,” said Megan Andrews, Assistant Director of EAP. “When we resolve personal issues – whether it is child care, legal, financial, nutritional, job-related – we support our mental health.”

During telehealth conferences with her EAP counselor, Iris discussed the roots of her anxiety – her daughter’s welfare, financial concerns, and the loss of her normal life. The EAP counselor reviewed ways to release stress while remaining at home. She suggested creative outlets involving art and music, exercises, and meditation practices for Iris and Jackie to utilize when they were feeling anxious. Jackie also spoke with the counselor about her difficulty concentrating. Equipped with tips to practice, Jackie began to improve. She completed all of her assignments, and her grades began to rise. Seeing her daughter’s improvement, Iris felt comfortable enough to return to work. Iris now says that she is in a better mental state than she had been in a long time.

If you or someone you know is facing a situation like Iris’, EAP is here to help. To find EAP webinars on mental health, social, financial, and physical wellbeing, visit [eap.cfsbny.org/employees/webinars](https://eap.cfsbny.org/employees/webinars).

## ANNOUNCING TWO NEW MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Child & Family Services is pleased to welcome Magdalena (Maggie) Nichols and Jin Yun to the Board of Directors.

Maggie Nichols is the Chief Operating Officer at Jericho Road Community Health Center. Maggie's connection with Child & Family Services is both personal and professional. She was introduced to C&FS by a colleague when looking for information regarding the legal guardianship process for her niece, who is now under Maggie's care. After seeing the quality of our programming, Maggie now frequently refers friends and family to C&FS.

When asked what she hopes to see in the future for C&FS, Maggie said, "I would love to see the organization continue to move in a direction that incorporates social determinants of health factors into existing programs. This will establish preventive measures for clients that, eventually, will hopefully mean they no longer need the services provided by C&FS."

Jin Yun has worked various Risk Management positions in the banking industry and is now the Commercial Data Steward at M&T Bank. He was a member of C&FS' Ambassador Committee for several years. During his time as an Ambassador, he spent time cooking meals with the young men at Morey House. Jin has even walked the runway at Fashion Show with a Twist in 2018.

"I have enjoyed volunteering at Heartlight and Fashion Show with a Twist events," said Jin. "I get to walk in the shoes of C&FS colleagues who always go the extra mile for their clients. I also enjoy meeting supporters of C&FS' mission at those events. They are so warm and caring that it energizes me to want to do more."

We are thrilled to have Maggie and Jin join our Board of Directors!



### A PASSION TO LEARN: BUILDING LIFE SKILLS FOR CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

"I love what I do. I see the progress these kids make to become their own individual beings, understanding how it makes a difference in their lives – it just drives me."

Antione Holmes' passion is tangible when he speaks about his work. As the Education Coordinator at the Residential Treatment Center, Antione works on helping children continue their learning outside of the classroom. He developed an on-site learning center for the kids' tutoring sessions, which are now virtual due to the pandemic. There is a library, educational board games, puzzles, marker boards, and a mounted TV for schoolwork and trivia games. There are also resources to help children learn about day-to-day living, such as fake money that we use to teach them about finances. "We remind the children that having a little help to focus on your education or participating in tutoring does not mean you are dumb," said Antione. "We work on skills to help them become independent learners."

With more digital content available than ever before to sidetrack kids from their education, this can be very difficult. Seeing how the learning center can positively influence the children, though, motivates all of the staff. "One of the first students that came to the learning center could not focus on his work at all when he got back from school," Antione remembered. "We gave him a space to concentrate on his work and some of our team was there to help him. After a few days, I noticed his behavior started changing. He would sit at the table with his hands folded while listening to instructions. Then, he was completely focused on his assignments."

Antione is in communication with schools and educators in order to keep track of how the children are performing. This helps him see how effective the work done at the Residential Treatment Center has been for the children. Antione said, "After a few weeks, [the student's] tutor emailed me and said that he was in shock about how well this student was doing recently."

The children's success in education is incredibly important to Antione, but the Learning Center goes beyond book learning. He wants children to be well-rounded adults, following their passions just as he has. "I explain to my kids that 'academic' doesn't always mean science, math, or reading," said Antione. "It can be the things you love. You can do things you love and be learning at the same time."



Child and Family Services

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## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Elizabeth McPartland  
*President & CEO*  
EMcPartland@cfsbny.org

Mary Czopp  
*Chief Development Officer*  
MCzopp@cfsbny.org

Rachael Greene  
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RGreene@falkschool.com

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LMcCartan@cfsbny.org

Erica Reger  
*Chief Human Resources Officer*  
EReger@cfsbny.org

Chantele Thompson  
*Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*  
ChThompson@cfsbny.org

Laura Yager  
*Chief Risk Officer*  
LYager@cfsbny.org

Melissa Royer  
*Executive Administrative Assistant to the CEO*  
MRoyer@cfsbny.org

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# Heartlight 2021

A Virtual Dueling Pianos Event

Friday, April 23, 2021  
7:00-8:00PM

Register at [cfsbny.org/heartlight](http://cfsbny.org/heartlight)

Lead Sponsor:



# CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES FREQUENT PHONE NUMBERS

### Child & Family Services

Administrative Office, Suite 300  
Counseling Offices, Suite 110  
3901 Genesee Street  
Cheektowaga, New York 14225  
(716) 842-2750

### Center for Resolution & Justice

Tri-Main Center  
2495 Main Street, Suite 357  
Buffalo, New York 14214  
(716) 362-2323

### Cheektowaga Counseling

3901 Genesee Street  
Cheektowaga, New York 14225  
(716) 681-5718

### Connors Children's Center

824 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14209  
(716) 884-3802



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[Twitter @CFSBNY](https://twitter.com/CFSBNY)

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Tri-Main Center  
2495 Main Street, Suite 357  
Buffalo, New York 14214  
(716) 681-4300

### Downtown Counseling

330 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14202  
(716) 842-2750

### Foster Care and Adoption

824 1/2 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14209  
(716) 882-0555

### Haven House

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
(716) 884-6000

### Stanley G. Falk School

848 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14209  
(716) 882-0090