

Horizons

A Publication for Seven Hills Foundation
Affiliates, Friends & Supporters

 **Seven Hills**
Foundation & Affiliates



**ELLSWORTH YOUTH & FAMILY CENTER
DEDICATED TO CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

FALL 2022

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr. David A. Jordan
President

Dear Friends,

A warm welcome to this edition of *HORIZONS*, a vivid snapshot of the life-changing work underway throughout Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates. Because of supporters like you, we can act on the creativity and determination of our incredible staff members to deliver dynamic, exceptional services.

As we emerge from this global pandemic and enter the endemic phase of disease management, Seven Hills is well-prepared. Our staff members are the true heroes, as demonstrated by our performance during the two-and-a-half-year dominance of COVID-19, putting those in our care before themselves. Through the turmoil, stress, and upheaval, over 4,600 staff committed to persevering and overcoming endless challenges. Our staff lived our mission and demonstrated our core values while keeping our infection and severe disease rate among the lowest in our health and human services sector. Seven Hills was a leader and generous ally to our partner agencies, and the communities in which we work, sharing PPE resources and providing lifesaving vaccines both in and outside of our networks. I am extremely proud of our performance and leadership as an organization.

Moving forward, Seven Hills is expanding and developing strengthened services that focus on whole-person care. Using a comprehensive model that incorporates the social determinants of health, we will create social, physical, and economic environments that strive to attain the full potential for health and well-being for all.

As we continue our diligence to keep our community healthy, we emerge to focus on the next two-year strategic plan for Seven Hills that will capture lessons learned and set our vision for the future. Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates has the expertise, determination, and fortitude to guide people through the myriad of barriers to achieve optimal health and wellness despite their challenges. I invite you to join in our work to build a collective network of support for the children, adults, and seniors we have the privilege to support. Together, our integrated network of care continues.

Warm regards,

David A. Jordan

Dr. David A. Jordan, President
Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates

HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE



DONATE ▶ sevenhills.org/donate

Your gift brings immediate Hope and Healing. Contact Kate Myshrall, vice president of advancement, to name Seven Hills as a beneficiary in your will, learn how retirement plans make the most highly tax-efficient bequest to Seven Hills, or for ways to make a tax-deductible donation to Seven Hills, 508.983.1302 or kmyshrall@sevenhills.org.

CAREERS ▶ sevenhills.org/careers

Seven Hills takes pride on being the Employer of Choice! Join our talented team of dedicated and compassionate staff. Contact Ginger Lavalley, talent acquisition manager, at 774.262.7205 or glavalley@sevenhills.org.

VOLUNTEER ▶ sevenhills.org/get-involved

Share your time and talents! Contact Kelly Clifford, human resources generalist, to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Seven Hills, 508.983.1361 or kclifford@sevenhills.org.

HORIZONS FALL 2022

Horizons is a newsletter published by the Advancement Office of Seven Hills Foundation. Please direct all content requests, comments, and questions to:

Jennifer Wentworth
Director of Communications
jwentworth@sevenhills.org

Kathleen Myshrall
Vice President of Advancement
kmyshrall@sevenhills.org

Peter Demko
Multimedia Communications Associate
pdemko@sevenhills.org

William Stock
Vice President for Government and Community Relations
bstock@sevenhills.org

Elizabeth Vittum
AVP of Development
evittum@sevenhills.org

Contributing Writers:

Lynn Cummins
Nicole Agois
Matthew Pageau
Lauren Frazee

Seven Hills Foundation
81 Hope Avenue
Worcester, MA 01603
508.755.2340 (T)
508.849.3882 (F)
508.890.5584 (TTY)
sevenhills.org

Dr. David A. Jordan, DHA
President
Seven Hills Foundation

IN THIS ISSUE

IN THE NEWS

- 4 Community Resources in the Heart of Worcester
- 6 Expanding Community Access in Hopedale
- 7 Upward Health & Seven Hills
- 8 Assistive Technology: Leading the Way to Expanded Access
- 10 A Summer Love of Reading
- 11 Catalysts on the Course for Our Community
- 12 Nourishing Neighbors in Need
- 13 Opening Doors to the Arts for All
- 14 Paving the Road to Higher Ed
- 16 A Round of Support for New Beginnings
- 16 Supportive Scoops for Kids
- 17 Granting Good Work!

SPOTLIGHT

- 18 Spotlight on Seven Hills



Ellsworth Youth & Family Center entrance

COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE HEART OF WORCESTER

A day of celebration showcased the grand opening of the newly renovated and repurposed Ellsworth Youth & Family Center in honor of the Ellsworth family's legacy of support to our community's youth. This grand historic building located at 20 Cedar Street in Worcester, was formerly occupied by the Ellsworth Child & Family Counseling Center, which is now part of the Seven Hills Behavioral Health system of care, and YOU, Inc., an affiliate of Seven Hills.

The bright and spacious Ellsworth campus is now home to several programs that address basic needs, emotional support, and educational pathways for youth and families in our local communities: The **Worcester Family Resource Center (WFRC)**, the **Worcester Community Connections Coalition (WCCC)**, The **Carriage House (TCH) Grief Support Center**, the **Arts and Music Police Partnership (AMPP)**, and the **Dynasty John S. Laws Academy**. Youth and their families and caregivers now have a safe landing space for meaningful resources and supports.

Seven Hills Vice President Anne Fine expanded on the Ellsworth Center focus and vision:

Having a warm and welcoming environment for kids and families to get an array of needed supports and services is at the heart of building a healthy community and drives our work at the Ellsworth Center. Our staff focuses on health-related social needs, from education support, to access to basic needs, referral to housing and health care, and on-site support groups. We will continue to expand to provide to the needs of our Worcester community.

The **Worcester Family Resource Center** and the **Worcester Community Connections Coalition** are both supported by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Children and Families.

The **Worcester Family Resource Center** is part of a statewide network of community-based providers offering multicultural parenting programs, support groups, information and referral resources, and education for families whose children range in age from birth to 18 years. WFRC provides information and assistance related to health care, safety, employment training, education, and peer support. The goal is to assist families in strengthening their bonds, connectin to others, and engaging in their communities.

The focus of the **Worcester Community Connections Coalition** is to develop and sustain a community infrastructure that responds to the identified needs of families, with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect. Four core coalition functions are essential to the WCCC's work: Family Support Services, Family Preservation Services, Time Limited Reunification Services, and Adoption Promotion and Support Services. The WCCC is also responsible for providing a safe and neutral setting for residents and service providers, including DCF, to collaborate on abuse and neglect prevention.



Ellsworth Center staff

The **Carriage House (TCH)**, located at the back of the campus, is the only program in central Massachusetts providing children and teens, aged 3 to 18, and their families/caregivers, with a place to grieve the death of a loved one along with peers also experiencing grief and loss. Through the generosity of funders as well as a corps of volunteers, the TCH services are provided free of charge. The Carriage House building was renovated this spring with the help of local college students through the **Working 4 Worcester** effort.

The **Arts and Music Police Partnership (AMPP)** is a unique collaboration between the Worcester Police Department and members of the local arts community. AMPP is funded primarily through the Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant and provided free of charge. The program is an integral part of the comprehensive violence reduction strategy for the City of Worcester, which includes nine police programs designed to help young people in the city stay on a positive track. YOU, Inc. provides therapeutic services in which youth work directly with local musicians, artists, and police officers to create and develop their art in a positive way.

DYNAMY JOHN S. LAWS ACADEMY DESIGN FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

To round out the collaborative programs at the Ellsworth Youth & Family Center is the Dynamy John S. Laws Academy, an after-school college success and leadership program for promising but underserved Worcester high school students. The program's unique hands-on, real-world educational approach and one-to-one mentoring help students strengthen their talents, skills, and confidence. The Academy's innovative program design augments the work of the Worcester Public Schools, helping students to further develop both the will (resiliency, self-advocacy, perseverance) and the skill (academic knowledge, study habits, college navigation) for success in college and in life.

During the spring college tour in April, students traveled to Connecticut, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., to visit five Universities: Howard, Georgetown, Yale, George Washington, and Morgan State. College tours are vital to finding the right match for students who might not have the opportunity otherwise to visit a college campus. Graduates of Dynamy John S. Laws Academy have attended some of the country's finest colleges and universities and are building meaningful careers.



Dynamy Scholar **Jaaliyah Torres**, Worcester Technical High School class of 2023, wrapped up the speaking portion of the Ellsworth Center Open House, with her excitement about the renovated facility and Dynamy's impact:

I am thankful for this big open, welcoming space where we can have 1:1 advising, and groups and community meetings—it's amazing. I am so grateful for my advisors who have taught me so much about myself. I now know that I want to pursue a career in youth work and outreach, and I appreciate this opportunity from everyone from Dynamy JSL Academy.



Staff from Dynamy John S. Laws Academy

ELLSWORTH YOUTH & FAMILY CENTER CONTACTS

WORCESTER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Mahly Alejandro, Program Director
508.796.1411 or malejandro@sevenhills.org

WORCESTER COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COALITION

Anne Bureau, LICSW, Program Director
774.312.3828 or abureau@sevenhills.org

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE GRIEF SUPPORT CENTER

Erin Morrell, Program Manager
508.796.0431 or emorrell@childrensfriend.org

ARTS AND MUSIC POLICE PROGRAM (AMPP)

Detective Sergeant Justin Bennes
508.799.8561 #28371 or bennesj@worcesterma.gov

DYNAMY JOHN S. LAWS ACADEMY

Gaelyn Hastings, Director, College Access Programs
617.866.1293 or ghastings@sevenhills.org



With the ribbon cutting, it's official—the Grand Opening of ASPIRE! Hopedale

EXPANDING COMMUNITY ACCESS IN HOPEDALE

Building a community creates meaningful relationships and opportunities—and Seven Hills ASPIRE! is doing just that in Hopedale, Massachusetts. The newly renovated building at 150 Charles View Road is the newest location for ASPIRE! Community-Based Day and Employment Supports (CBDES), a program of the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). ASPIRE! CBDES enables individuals with developmental disabilities to develop, enhance, and maintain competency in a full range of personal, social, and community activities. The 40 people enrolled at ASPIRE! Hopedale are building a vibrant community of friendship, learning, and career path exploration.

On June 15, ASPIRE! Hopedale participants and staff celebrated the program's opening. Family members, friends, and town

and state officials learned about the program and toured the new facility.

ASPIRE! Hopedale is the fifth program location in Massachusetts, and welcomes participants from across southern Worcester County. Many have recently transitioned from their school systems to continue their love of innovative lifelong learning.



Tim Johnson, vice president of Seven Hills ASPIRE!, spoke about the new Hopedale site:

Guided by the vision and leadership of Haylee Ouellette, program director, our Hopedale ASPIRE! program is earning its reputation as a preeminent provider of creative community-based programming, directed by the input and preferences of program participants...Some participants engage in group-supported employment with community partners such as Hutchinson Aerospace & Industry and National Grid, while others enjoy guided art workshops at the Worcester Art Museum in preparation for community art shows...The move to Hopedale allows ASPIRE! to enhance the day supports provided and expand our capacity to support more individuals and further deepen our many community connections.

One's health and happiness are linked by their connections. Participants are encouraged to explore their interests and have found the place to create their path—ASPIRE!



Program participant, Mishka, attends with family

UPWARD HEALTH & SEVEN HILLS: BRINGING QUALITY HEALTHCARE WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

For two years, Seven Hills Community Services (SHCS) and Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) have been working in partnership with Upward Health to enhance the care of the individuals supported through Seven Hills' network of group homes. The positive outcomes have been dramatic, with the individuals, families, and Seven Hills staff reporting high satisfaction in care delivery.

Upward Health specializes in providing in-home, community-based primary medical and behavioral health care for individuals with complex needs. Upward Health's services eliminate the need for travel, long waits for scheduled appointments, and demands on professionals to move quickly through cases. In a home-based setting, care can be evaluated and treated from a wide-angle perspective to factor in social determinants such as food insecurity, isolation, housing needs, transportation, and more. The delivery of home-based care to complex patients dramatically improves their health and overall well-being.

Dr. Kathee Jordan, executive vice president & CEO of Seven Hills Foundation and a board member of Upward Health's ACO REACH notes the benefits and partnership potential:

Upward Health is providing excellent in-home medical care for our individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, preventing unnecessary trips to the hospital. We look forward to delivering care to more individuals with complex needs and to improving the health of people who are often underserved by traditional medical systems.

Using technology such as real-time audio/video to remotely deliver care in homes has put the hands-on assistance of Upward Health care specialists into our Seven Hills care teams. The care specialists take vital signs and use medical devices to help diagnose and develop treatment plans. Upward Health brings access to providers across a range of specialties who work in collaboration with Seven Hills staff and primary care providers.

For information on ACO REACH, contact Upward Health at 617.644.7628 or info@upwardhealth.com.



The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has recognized the success of Upward Health's care model with the award of an ACO REACH contract—one of 22 contracts granted by the agency.

ACO REACH—Accountable Care Organization Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health—is a risk-sharing program with the government. It is specifically designed to serve Medicare patients with complex healthcare needs in a private home or long-term-care setting. The intent of ACO REACH is to improve the quality of care for people with Medicare through better care coordination and connection to healthcare providers with an emphasis on reaching and connecting those who are underserved—a priority for achieving equitable outcomes for all.

Seven Hills has expanded its partnership with Upward Health as a preferred provider and is actively enrolling eligible individuals who receive support across Seven Hills affiliates in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. By 2023, ACO REACH will be required to develop and implement a Health Equity Plan for underserved patients within their beneficiary population and implement initiatives to measurably reduce health disparities.

Individuals are eligible for this program if they have Medicare alone or both Medicare and Medicaid, as long as they don't have health insurance through a managed care company like Commonwealth Care Alliance or Tufts Health Plan.



SHCS Area Director **Cheryl Green** recognizes the impact Upward Health is having in their work:

A trip to the emergency room can be a nightmare for some of our individuals. One time we were there for over 18 hours, and you can imagine how stressful that can be for someone. Now, with Upward Health a call away, we can bring in almost immediately a telehealth consult, and then access services they provide like an x-ray or blood work right in the home. They then coordinate directly with the individual's primary care physician including the follow-up. It's been a godsend to our individuals.





AT Program Director Steve Kessler reviews an adaptive device with Kerriane

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: LEADING THE WAY TO EXPANDED ACCESS

For the past decade, Seven Hills Foundation has been a pioneer in embedding Assistive Technology (AT) into the culture of our service delivery, laying the groundwork necessary to become the premier provider resource in the state for best practices in AT and related technologies. Seven Hills incorporates AT as an opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and brain injury to lead more inclusive and independent lives. Our philosophy and goal are to identify AT for self-sufficiency or to enhance the services of direct support professionals.

The dedicated Seven Hills Assistive Technology team is led by Program Director Steven Kessler and Assistive Technology Specialist Areeba Khan, M.S., RESNA. The team enhances access to assistive technologies across the foundation through evaluations, demonstrations, trainings, and participation in unique pilot programs featuring Smart Home Technologies, Virtual Reality, Employment Supports, and Professional Development AT Certifications for direct support staff. The AT Department also forges community relationships and partnerships with universities and schools, local AT Consortia, technology vendors, and state funding agencies to build the capacity of Seven Hills to share and implement best practices. Most recently, Seven Hills became a qualified provider of Assistive Technology through the new Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Technology Forward initiative. As a provider, Seven Hills can accept referrals for AT services to any individual living in Massachusetts who receives DDS funding even if they do not participate in a Seven Hills-funded program. Additionally, Seven Hills has partnered

with the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH) to provide advanced AT trainings to over 125 direct support staff and AT evaluations and equipment as part of a new customized employment program.

BUILDING A SERVICE DELIVERY CULTURE THAT EMBRACES AT

Five years ago, Seven Hills Foundation added an AT requirement to its onboarding training as well as an “Intro to AT” video presented at New Employee Orientation. “Educating all staff about the transformative nature of Assistive Technology—what it is, how to access it, and how it can be a game changer in an individual’s ability to be more independent was important to us,” said Dr. Kathee Jordan, EVP/CEO of Seven Hills. “Helping all staff gain a better understanding of AT Services from the start of their work with us has helped to increase its use with the individuals they support.” Seven Hills has developed additional supports for staff to help increase the use of AT in service delivery. An AT Super Users Group was established for staff across the Foundation to share best practices. Web pages dedicated to AT on the staff and public websites include comprehensive resources to keep staff and the public updated on AT best practices in Health and Human Services. More intensive AT trainings and certifications have been provided for direct support staff in residential, day, and employment programs both in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. A large AT Lending Library provides opportunities for individuals and staff to test and/or borrow different low- and high-tech assistive technologies to decide if they are a good fit for individuals supported.

SUCCESS STORIES

Seven Hills has many success stories that highlight the transformative nature of assistive technology in building confidence, success, and greater independence in people's lives.

Larry is a 68-year-old man who receives individual supports from Seven Hills that help him live independently in his own apartment in southeastern Massachusetts. Larry has memory loss because of a car accident in 1971. He loses his keys and wallet often and forgets that he has already eaten, and accidentally overspends designated money on items he already owns. To help with these frustrations, Larry was referred to the Seven Hills Assistive Technology Department through the new Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services waiver. He received a formal evaluation from an AT specialist who helped identify technology such as a new iPhone, Airtags, and a Tovala Oven, which are helping him with his everyday activities and keeping track of his routine with decreased dependency on staff.

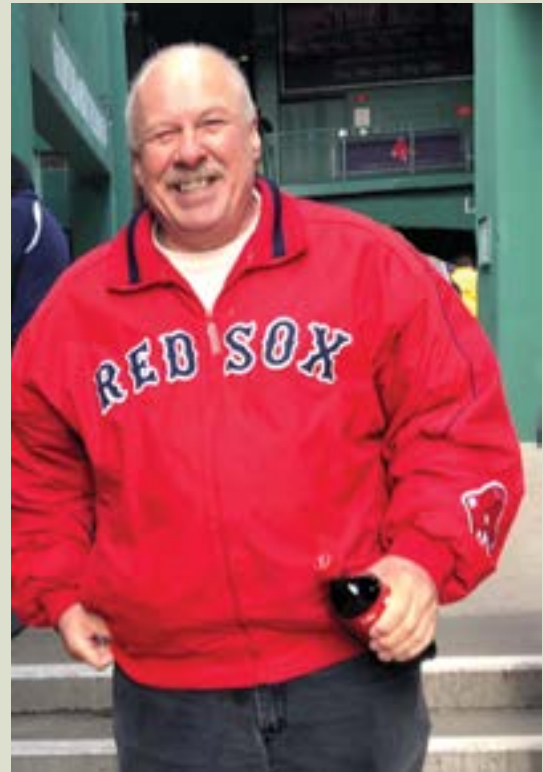
Anthony participated in the Seven Hills Rhode Island Employment Matters program, funded by the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals, to provide customized employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Anthony had been looking for a job for many years but was having difficulty finding the right position. Through Employment Matters, Anthony worked with a job developer and embarked on an intensive discovery process that assessed his routine and everyday surroundings to identify his interests. This process revealed Anthony's love of sports and politics with his affinity for cleaning, communicating, and organizing. A new informed job search ultimately led to Anthony accepting a position at the local bowling alley.

As part of the customized employment process, Anthony met with Steve Kessler, AT program director at Seven Hills. Steve conducted an AT assessment in collaboration with Anthony's job developer and employer. Through this process, Anthony was fitted with an Apple watch with all the apps he needs to track and perform his job responsibilities. A cart was also recommended to help keep him organized and on-task. Anthony is grateful for the technology that helps him perform his job to the best of his abilities and earn a paycheck of his own.

Anthony talks about his AT success on a recent Employment Matters video: <https://www.sevenhills.org/programs/employment-matters>



Scan the QR Code to watch Anthony's Employment Matters Interview!



A SUMMER LOVE OF READING



At-risk children have the greatest chance of lagging academically when they don't achieve reading proficiency by grades 3 or 4—the time when they make the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” By fourth grade, even math requires appropriate grade-level reading abilities. In Worcester, third-grade

students assessed by MCAS achieved lower than the statewide average for English Language Arts (ELA). In 2021, only 31% of third-graders in the Worcester public school (WPS) system attained “meets or exceeds expectations” for ELA, compared to 50% statewide. The achievement gap is even greater for subgroups in the WPS. Those who “meet or exceed in ELA” is 27% for English language learners, 23% for low-income students, 28% for Black students, and 22% for Latinx students, demonstrating the barriers to equity in education.

The Summer Literacy Initiative (SLI) is a program of the Family Services of Central Massachusetts Center for Childcare Careers. Since 2010, SLI has partnered with summer camp programs in Worcester to prevent summer learning loss, a drop in reading level during the minimum two-month period when the school year ends in June and begins again in September. To combat this, SLI's literacy coaches implement effective literacy learning strategies in 8-10 recreational programs at 15 sites for elementary-aged children.

75% of the SLI participants come from low-income families. At least 70% identify as children of color (black, Latinx, multiracial), 14% are on special-education-related Individualized Education Programs, 10% are English language learners, and some children are enrolled through the Department of Children and Families due to homelessness or other factors of family instability.

Since its inception, SLI has been supported by the United Way of Central Massachusetts and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. In 2022, the program secured additional funding from the Amelia Peabody Foundation. Through ongoing funding streams, SLI can coach upwards of 1,295 Worcester students annually. This summer, SLI prevented summer learning loss in 90% of its students. A sample of 236 children showed a gain of 8.5 words per minute by the end of the program—a clear indication they did not suffer learning loss, and instead, possibly made reading gains.

PERSEVERANCE LEADS TO PAGE-TURNING EXPERIENCE

A very determined literacy coach at the YMCA Alden site worked with a reluctant reader for two summers. The first year, the student was “very apprehensive about literacy, and refused to participate.” He began this summer’s session in the same stubborn state of mind. In the reading group, it was a struggle just to get him to open the book, *The One and Only Ivan*. Yet, the coach persisted with various strategies that ultimately yielded results. By the last day, the student clearly clicked with a love of literacy! He was an enthusiastic participant and volunteered to read aloud numerous times. The coach shared the success, “I couldn’t believe he was excited and willing to participate! I was very excited and proud of him. He read beautifully!”

PARTICIPATING SUMMER PROGRAMS:

- Boys and Girls Club of Worcester**
bgcworchester.org
- Boys and Girls Club of Webster-Dudley**
bgcwebsterdudley.org
- Friendly House at Lakeside Housing**
friendlyhousema.org
- Girls, Incorporated of Worcester**
girlsincworchester.org
- Guild of St. Agnes: Granite St., Grove St., Mercy Center, Quinsigamond School**
guildofstagnes.org
- Rainbow Child Development at Camp Marshall**
rainbowcdc.com/camp
- The Community Builders at Plumley Village**
plumleyvillageapts.com
- Worcester Housing Authority at Great Brook Valley Camp Freedom**
worcesterha.org/frs_summerprograms
- Worcester Comprehensive Education and Care at Great Brook Valley**
facebook.com/worcester.comprehensive
- YMCA at Alden and Camp Blanchard**
ymcaofcm.org/camp-blanchard
- YWCA at Camp Wind-In-The-Pines**
ywcacm.org/summercamp



CATALYSTS ON THE COURSE FOR COMMUNITY CARE



Shortly after the first crack of dawn on Monday, August 22, the traditional lineup of Worcester Country Club (WCC) Members in carts awaited the first crack of the tee-off at this year's 47th Annual Lori Lajoie Charity Golf Tournament. The full

slate of golfers, both in the morning and afternoon, participated as Catalysts for Care in Our Community, continuing the legacy that benefits people with significant life challenges supported by Seven Hills. The golfers and their swings were fueled with high spirits. Their smiles reflected the good cheer that this powerfully caring club exudes even on this dog day of August that broke a relentless heat record with unseasonably chilly air.

During the Lori Lajoie each year, Worcester Country Club members respond to critical needs affecting the wellbeing of our collective community in and around the city. This year's outpouring of generosity is directly impacting people with disabilities, autism, and brain injury; vulnerable children and families; care options for seniors; at-risk youth; people struggling with mental illness; and more.

Seven Hills extends its profound gratitude to the Worcester Country Club and its Members, event sponsors, donors, and volunteers who not only made the day possible, but continue to exceed expectations and raise the bar, year after year. With gusto, the WCC Members embraced the challenges of 2022, and answered the call to help Seven Hills rebuild resilience through care in our communities.

47 years ago, the Worcester Country Club and its Members made a commitment to Seven Hills Foundation and the people it supports. Every year, you make a difference.





Connie Rocha-Mimoso, left, checks the pantry supply of holiday turkeys with staff.

NOURISHING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) has received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding delegated by the federal government's CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act and stewarded by the Southcoast Community Foundation. The purpose of the CARES Act CDBG grant is to address disparities in access to necessities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically for food. Since the onset of the pandemic, many families across the country have been financially impacted, most notably those who were already nearing or experiencing poverty. The SHBH Food Pantry at the Community Wellness Center in New Bedford has seen this impact in the numbers served growing 50% from 1,511 in 2019, to 2,172 in 2021, during the pandemic. The exponentially rising expenses around necessities such as housing, oil, electricity, labor services, and others has left many families without the means to purchase nutritious food. This grant funding is targeted to support those below the poverty line. To qualify, at least 51% of all persons served must be under 80% of the area's median income. Historically, all the people that the SHBH Food Pantry serves in New Bedford are below the federal poverty level. SHBH will use the CDBG funding to advance food access for those below the poverty line in Bristol County.

Through the CDBG grant, SHBH will establish two new food pantries at Community Wellness Centers in Fall River and Taunton. The funding will provide much-needed assistance to acquire equipment, non-perishable food, and hot-and-ready meals. The funding also supports the SHBH mobile outreach team to provide access to food in the community where the most in-need and hard-to-reach populations reside.

The partnership between SouthCoast Community Foundation and SHBH will bring a robust, community-level approach to addressing the visceral impact of COVID-19 and the cascade of challenges that followed for families of Bristol County.

The SHBH director of community health services, Connie Rocha-Mimoso, will oversee the food pantry expansion. Rocha-Mimoso has been at Seven Hills Foundation since 1994, and is a chair, co-chair, board member, committee member, secretary, and general member of 15 task forces, governmental councils, coalitions, and other committees involved in community health for residents in the south coast area of the Commonwealth.



OPENING DOORS TO THE ARTS FOR ALL



Seven Hills Foundation and its affiliate, Open Door Arts, enjoy a unique and robust partnership with the Worcester Art Museum (WAM). The partnership, pulling from its collective resources and expertise, provides access to the arts and promote inclusion for people with disabilities. Five years ago, the first gallery dedicated exclusively to exhibiting the work of artists with disabilities opened in this world-class art museum. Since its inception, the Open Door Gallery (ODG) @ WAM has exhibited the work of dozens of artists through four individual exhibits and ten group exhibits that welcomed hundreds of visitors. The amazing team of WAM educators lead studio arts programs that are accessible through virtual and in-person classes, and have engaged over 150 artists with disabilities, many of whom participate in Seven Hills ASPIRE! Day programs.

Seven Hills and ODA have recently convened with WAM to envision the next phase of this work, celebrating what has been accomplished and laying the groundwork for growth and expansion of programs and services with increased opportunities for learning, art making, and exhibiting for people with disabilities. The partnership is thrilled to reopen the doors of ODG@WAM after closures due to COVID-19 and museum renovations. Stay tuned for a re-opening event!

Seven Hills, Open Door Arts, and the Worcester Art Museum are grateful to the foundations that have nurtured our partnership:

- Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Stoddard Charitable Trust
- Unibank
- Webster Five Foundation
- Worcester Arts Council



In these past five years, the Worcester Art Museum has continued to solidify its unwavering commitment to the disability community, making significant strides to improve the accessibility of their physical facilities and programs. Seven Hills and ODA are profoundly grateful for their efforts, which have included the addition of an accessible restroom, and a ramp with a switch-operated

door in the Higgins Wing, where the gallery is located. In return, ODA staff has provided professional development to WAM docents and educators on inclusive practices to support visitors and participants with disabilities.





PAVING THE ROAD TO HIGHER ED

For low-income students, particularly those of color, a college education is not an automatic next step after high school graduation. A college degree can make the difference between overall wellbeing and economic stability, or a lifetime of lower earnings, housing insecurity, and poor health outcomes.

In Worcester and New Bedford, Seven Hills has a long history of helping promising but at-risk students achieve their dreams of a college education with a mix of federally and privately funded college access programs. Most students will be the first in their family to enroll in higher education. In many cases, their parents or guardians may not speak English, and have had little to no experience with college and financial aid applications that can be complex for *most* adults.



The **Bruce Wells Scholars Upward Bound** and **Dynamy John S. Laws Youth Academy** programs in Worcester are five-year leadership and college-access programs for first-generation, low-income students from six Worcester high schools. Based at Clark University and the new Ellsworth Youth & Family Center, respectively, the programs offer comprehensive academic services, leadership and community development activities, career exploration and internships, college tours, summer programs, and assistance with the college admissions process.

Monica Potter, senior director of educational services in Worcester, outlined the programs' student profile:

Eighth-grade students identified by school staff as having strong college potential, complete an Upward Bound or Youth Academy application. Accepted students must meet the programs' objectives for academic performance, and after-school and Saturday program participation, while managing their school and work schedules. Almost without exception, students not only meet but exceed the program requirements.

In partnership with **MassEdCo**, the **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)** in New Bedford aims to prepare low-income students for success in post-secondary education. GEAR UP serves students from Normandin Middle School and New Bedford High School—beginning no later than seventh grade—and follows them through high school. Services include college and career awareness workshops, college tours, academic and recreational enrichment activities, college financial aid form assistance, and STEM and transition summer programming, among others.

The New Bedford **Educational Talent Search** program provides college awareness and readiness programming to low-income/potential first-generation college students enrolled in Keith Middle School and New Bedford High School. At the high-school level, students and their parents/guardians participate in college tours and planning workshops. During senior year, the focus is on assisting students with the college admissions and financial aid processes including the completion of the Common App, FAFSA, CSS Profile, and scholarship applications.

Elizabeth Connelly-Sylvia, director of education programs in the southeast, noted the expanse of services:

*We also support income-eligible adults—typically low-income/first-generation potential college students—who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. The Seven Hills **Educational Opportunity Center** provides free education access services including academic, career, and financial aid advising in New Bedford and at seven other centers across Massachusetts in partnership with MassEdCo.*



Catalysts for Care in Our Community

There is tremendous need in our community—our fellow community members are facing challenges that seem impossible to overcome:

Families go without basic securities like food and shelter on a daily basis. **Seniors** experience extreme loneliness, which negatively impacts their health. **People with disabilities** seek employment to achieve their full potential. **At-risk youth** overcome adversity to become first-generation college students. **People of all ages** seek to stabilize ongoing mental health issues.

At Seven Hills, we care for the most vulnerable members of our community. The quality of their lives depends on us—and YOU.

With YOUR support, together we become Catalysts for Care in Our Community.

It takes action to achieve measurable change. Your gift, today, will loosen the grip of insurmountable need and build on the Seven Hills Foundation of care where our families, our neighbors, and YOU can engage, thrive, and #BeWell.



Become a Catalyst for Care in Our Community!

Scan the QR Code or donate online at sevenhills.org.

 **Seven Hills**
Foundation & Affiliates





A ROUND OF SUPPORT FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

The spring season of giving starts each year at Seven Hills with the annual New Beginnings Charity Golf Tournament at Highfields Golf & Country Club in Grafton, MA. On May 26, a full field of golfers and our generous sponsors raised nearly \$70,000 for our Seven Hills Family Services Community Connections program offering access to a wide range of activities for over 2,600 individuals of all ages with disabilities and their families. Our **Presenting Sponsor**, General Mechanical Contractors, Inc., sent eight golfers to lead the day!

Thank you to our **Tournament Sponsors**, Risk Strategies and Charles and Lenore Monahan; our **MVP Sponsors**, Manny's Appliance, Kelleher & Sadowsky, Eagle Cleaning, and Benoit Tree & Landscape; and our **Champion Sponsors**, Rossmore Painting and 47 Brand. Because of the remarkable dedication of our committed supporters, New Beginnings has funded Community Connections for 35 years, helping people with disabilities build skills, friendships, and lasting connections to the community!



SUPPORTIVE SCOOPS FOR KIDS

The Annual Bigger Dipper Ice Cream summer fundraiser was another sweet success! Our virtual platform generated coupon sales to local ice cream vendors, which along with our sponsors, raised nearly \$40,000 for Seven Hills Behavioral Health services for children and their families. A special thank you to our **Champion Sponsor**, Risk Strategies, and our **Steward Sponsors**, Avidia Bank, Digital Federal Credit Union, TD Bank, and Saint Gobain Corporation Foundation for ensuring that families have access to the counseling services they need. The Bigger Dipper is also made possible through the generosity of our favorite local ice cream vendors, who recognize the critical role ice cream plays in the success of this annual Seven Hills event!



GRANTING GOOD WORK!

Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates is fortunate to leverage grant and other local support to strengthen and expand our work across our 14 affiliates located in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Grants support programs or projects not typically funded

through traditional sources and provide unique opportunities to develop and implement innovative and creative initiatives that enhance the lives of people faced with significant life challenges. The following highlight recently funded projects:

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS



The Switch Adaptive Technology Library at Seven Hills Pediatric Center (SHPC) Academy at Groton received a grant of \$7,500 from the **Greater Lowell Community Foundation**. SHPC and the Academy serve students with complex medical, disability, and communication needs. The Switch Adaptive Technology

Library helps students experience improved communication with their teachers, families, and peers, and allows them to interact and play in their world far more independently than ever before. Thank you, Greater Lowell Community Foundation, for enhancing communication for SHPC Academy students!

PROMOTING PRIDE THROUGH THE GENDER WELLNESS INITIATIVE



The Gender Wellness Initiative (GWI) received a \$15,000 grant from **The Mabel A. Horne Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee** and a \$5,000 grant from **The**

Boston Foundation Equality Fund. GWI provides clinical mental health supports, resources, consultations, and support groups to youth who identify as transgender or gender expansive, and their families/caregivers. GWI also conducts workshops and trainings for staff in school systems, healthcare settings, and other youth-serving organizations to support the sexual minority youth in their care. We are grateful to the funders' support, which provides a safe, nurturing, and affirming space for youth who are experiencing intersectional marginalization.

HEALING TRAUMA THROUGH FITNESS & WELLNESS



Stetson School is expanding its campus capacity to include the **Patrick Sullivan Health & Fitness Center** in honor of Patrick and made possible through the generous trusts from

the Sullivan Family as distributed through Fletcher Tilton, LLC. The campus has indoor and outdoor basketball courts, as well as a baseball field. However, there is a significant need to provide outdoor fitness, free play, and recreation space for youth, aged 9-14. **The Fletcher Foundation** is supporting this need with a generous grant of \$25,000, and the **Stoddard Charitable Trust** with \$50,000 toward the purchase and installation of an outdoor therapeutic playground/fitness area.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTS EDUCATORS

Open Door Arts received a \$30,000 grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts** to help fund the "Supporting the Processing of Experience through the Arts during Crises" Professional Development Program for Arts Educators. In this collaboration between the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts and Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University, arts educators will explore how the artistic process intersects with students' social, emotional, and cultural needs. 1,248 projects across America totaling \$28,840,000 were selected to receive this first round of fiscal-year 2022 funding in the Grants for Arts Projects category.

EDUCATION HELPING TO ELIMINATE DRUG USE AND CRIME

The **Bristol County Sheriff's Office (BCSO)** has awarded Seven Hills Behavioral Health (SHBH) with a new contract to provide **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)** for women and **Therapeutic Community & Residential Treatment (TCRT)** for men at all Bristol County Correctional Facilities. SHBH is uniquely positioned to implement RSAT and TCRT, having over 30 years' experience with the BCSO and currently providing substance abuse and educational services to inmates in the BCSO system. SHBH harm reduction staff will identify inmates' rehabilitation needs, and develop cognitive, behavioral, social, educational, and vocational skills, and individualized treatment plans to address substance use.

SPOTLIGHT

SEVEN HILLS ASPIRE!

The ASPIRE! Employment team is currently serving more than 100 individuals with vocational education and exploration, job development and placement, and ongoing supports. Group supported employment has established two new partnerships: The Worcester Department of Public Works and Hutchinson Aerospace and Industry in Hopkinton. The new partnerships have created regular competitive employment for an additional fifteen participants receiving employment supports.

The National Grid Charitable Foundation recently awarded a grant of \$25,000 to ASPIRE! to support the launch of a new employment enterprise through a collaboration with the Milford Public School System and the Zenus Foundation. Sweet Inspirations, a candy and craft storefront in downtown Milford, will be managed by the Zenus Foundation, and is projected to employ six to twelve participants in competitive, community-based employment. This collaborative project will also support a referral stream for students transitioning out of Milford Public Schools' special education programming to contracted employment services with Seven Hills.

Senior Vice President John Tanacea and his team visited ASPIRE! participants to practice job interview skills as part of their workforce development education. ASPIRE! is grateful for the longtime support from Bank of America.



SEVEN HILLS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (SHBH)

Community Health Services (CHS), in New Bedford, was one of 13 providers in the Commonwealth selected to administer the monkey pox vaccine, and the only provider selected in southeastern MA. CHS continues to offer three clinics per week for the COVID-19 vaccine for ages 5 and up, and partnered with the New Bedford Health Department to host vaccine clinics for over 200 students who were not in compliance with vaccine requirements and would not be allowed to start school. The Health Department provided the vaccines and completed all necessary reporting.



In September, **SHBH welcomed 37 graduate-level interns** from programs across New England. The interns are participating in a year-long training program that will support them in learning to specialize in work with children and families.

Early Childhood Mental Health provides clinical consultation to parents, teachers, and administrators at childcare sites

throughout central Massachusetts. The program's purpose is to enhance the overall mental health of young children and youth, from birth to age 14, and promote positive attachment relationships with their adult caregivers at home, school, child care settings, and in the community. The Department of Early Education and Care again awarded increased grant funding to the program to conduct more classroom/child consultations. Six doctoral interns started completing supervised psychological testing in September.



Worcester Family Resource Center (WFRC) has served 2,260 families so far this calendar year. The WFRC collaborated city-wide with the Amazon food pantry delivery program to get culturally appropriate food delivered to the most at-risk community members. In October, the WFRC hosted a Welcome Baby Resource Fair for expectant mothers, along with Together for Kids. Resources included WIC and UMASS educators. The popular "My Time" drop-in group was well-attended by parents in the community. Working with Cradles to Crayons, donations of diapers and clothing were collected and distributed for youth.

In July, the WFRC welcomed **The Carriage House (TCH) Center for Grief Support** as part of its programming. A new cohort of volunteers was trained in August. TCH is always seeking volunteers to facilitate each new group and now is the time to start filling the next cohort. TCH volunteers provide meaningful ways for children, teens, and their families to grieve and cope with the death of a loved one. The commitment of a volunteer facilitator includes 20 hours of training and 3.5 hours of time every other week

from October to June for at least one year. Training is typically provided twice a year. To learn more, call 508.796.0431.

In response to the shortage of baby formula, the **Worcester Community Connections Coalition (WCCC)** worked with Together for Kids to convene legislative and community leaders to address the need. With the collective efforts of the Baby Formula Task Force, 175 cases of infant formula were acquired, totaling 1,050 cans. The United Way of Central Massachusetts managed distribution to food pantries and community organizations—\$50,000 worth of supplies. Policy advocacy has also begun to prevent shortages from affecting our communities in the future.

In early August, over 80 Haitian families arrived at a local hotel/shelter. WCCC helped Friendly House convene leaders of the Haitian community and several community partners to coordinate meals and services for the families. Several church leaders were activated to deliver the outpouring of food to the families.

The **Southbridge Family Resource Center (SFRC)** has impacted 4,856 people so far this calendar year. Since opening in January 2020, SFRC completed the first in-person parenting class with all participants graduating from the program. Between the Memorial Day and July 4th holidays, SFRC distributed free rapid COVID-19 tests to the community.

The **SFRC** and **Southbridge Community Connections (SCC)** planned and cohosted the **2nd annual Southbridge Family Fun Day**, where over 30 providers exhibited and distributed resources. Families engaged in fun activities and refueled with complimentary food.

The town library was the venue for a **Racial Equity workshop**, hosted by the SCC, which included the distribution of children's books on race and racial equity to all who attended.

SEVEN HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICES (SHCS)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has begun a process to review the **Medication Administration Program (MAP)** after nearly 30 years. MAP certifies staff and programs, and sets standards and practices along with governing medication administration by non-licensed direct support professionals in congregate care settings.

In July, two SHCS homes on Cape Cod began participating in an authorized pilot in collaboration with **Pelmeds Pharmacy**. The pilot uses an electronic medication record system and medication that is pre-packaged by the pharmacy. The pilot is going well; SHCS MAP-certified staff has provided feedback to Pelmeds, and in turn, the pharmacy staff has made improvements to their app. The pilot should help increase efficiency and reduce medication errors. The system used in the pilot is similar to the systems widely used in assisted living.

To honor its workforce, the SHCS leadership team embarked on a **Sweet Summer Thank You Tour** visiting every home with a delivery of ice cream to residents and staff. The ice cream provided a cool treat and unexpected thank you for the hard-working staff, while the smiles of delight were the ultimate treat for the delivery team.

SEVEN HILLS FAMILY SERVICES (SHFS)

SHFS has been approved by the MA Department of Developmental Services (DDS) for **Enhanced family support (SSQUAL)**. The program, as described by disability.org, is for families of children with significant developmental disabilities who are living at home. Families choose a provider agency to manage their SSQUAL funding and then work with their provider agency to determine an annual budget of supports within the DDS guidelines. The program allows for a variety of individualized supports, including Emergency Stabilization, Individualized

Supports, several respite services, Adult Companion, and Family Navigation.

SEVEN HILLS GLOBAL OUTREACH (SHGO)



Uplifting the poorest of the poor through education has been one of SHGO's major goals for the eight countries in which the Seven Hills affiliate partners with local NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Most recently, a major step toward this goal became a reality in Bo, Sierra Leone, where school children and community members celebrated the grand opening of the Drs. David and Kathee Jordan Community Library. Situated near Zion Ministries Primary School in downtown Bo, the library houses more than 25,000 titles, including classroom editions, children's books, and literary classics. In addition to the physical texts, internet-connected desktop computers enable students and community members to explore and expand their knowledge through technology.



"We hope to create a sanctuary of learning, with this space as well as serving as a way out of poverty," said Dr. David A. Jordan, President of Seven Hills Foundation.

On November 12, the community of Garland, Texas was host to the 11th annual Running 4 Clean Water 5k race

to benefit the work underway in Sierra Leone, providing life-saving clean water, sanitation, and food assistance. The incredible commitment of the local Methodist congregations has raised in excess of \$145,000, which has provided 27 villages with these basic needs for thousands of people, drastically reducing disease and suffering.



In early 2023, Dr. Jordan will be joined by Seven Hills Rhode Island staff Isaac Aduku and vice president, Marissa Ruff, and Advancement's Peter Demko, on a trip to Sierra Leone to meet with long-time partner Zion Ministries. The team will be apprised of the medical clinic operations and schools created by SHGO. Next stop is Kenya to meet with partners Children's Garden, Bethel School, and Focus Dream Center. Dr. Jordan and the SHGO team are working with government officials in Nairobi to develop a new primary school in the heart of Africa's largest slum, Kibera. They will meet with Kenyan government officials to continue helping the country's students secure careers in health and human services.

SEVEN HILLS NEUROCARE (SHNC)

Approximately two years ago, SHNC was asked by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to assume operations of **two residences in southeastern Massachusetts** previously operated by another agency. Given the timing and SHNC's goal to minimize disruption in the participants' lives, a home was leased in New Bedford while efforts were made to locate, purchase, and renovate a new home in the vicinity for the residents. In early September, the

ladies successfully moved into a beautiful new home located in Freetown. The home dramatically improves their quality of life and includes several person-centered customizations that will benefit the rehabilitation of everyone.

SHNC is expanding the size and scope of its **New Bedford Brain Injury Clubhouse**. Approval has been granted to occupy a much greater footprint on the first floor of the South First Street location and renovations are in the works. The updates will include an expanded kitchen area and computer space, lockers for members, dedicated spaces for member-led administrative activities, improved security, and a fenced-in outdoor space. The renovations will allow the Clubhouse to support more members and operate several dedicated work units aligned with the programming standards set forth by



the International Brain Injury Clubhouse Association (IBICA). Once finalized and the program's services are strengthened in New Bedford, SHNC's long-term goal is to replicate the model with other clubhouses in the Commonwealth.

SHNC **rehabilitation outcomes** are the result of the tireless effort and determination demonstrated by both participants and staff. One of the gentlemen who lives at our Fitchburg residence has been working to regain his independence after sustaining a frontal

lobe brain injury. He lost his ability to express himself through speech but has successfully adapted by learning to communicate through augmentative and alternative communication. Building on the momentum of this success and sheer will, he subsequently regained the ability to enjoy time alone, resumed driving, earned competitive employment, is learning how to self-manage his medications, and was recently approved to access a lower level of care through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's community living waiver program.

SEVEN HILLS PEDIATRIC CENTER (SHPC)



Families are thrilled to be visiting their loved ones on-site again! Smiles are brightening the rooms and hallways as families and friends resume their pre-pandemic visits. Above, Mom is engaging son, Eric, as the sun's rays warm the cheerful setting.

Seven Hills Pediatric Center at Groton's annual Family and Staff picnic was held on Sunday, June 26, for the first time since 2019—the last time the community was able to gather together in person before the onset of the pandemic. Guests were treated to an amazing cookout, live music, entertainment, a petting zoo, a dunk tank, and an ice cream truck. This year, facility staff were wowed by one of the biggest turnouts of all time! New families were able to meet each other in person, and fun was had by all.

SEVEN HILLS RHODE ISLAND (SHRI)

The latest live stage production from **Seven Hills Rhode Island (SHRI) Drama** and **Trinity Rep Active Imagination Network (TRAIN)**, was performed at the Trinity Rep Theatre in Providence, on June 7, 2022. "The Days of Our Hospital," was written and directed by Jordan Butterfield, and starred SHRI participants of all



abilities. This talented ensemble again wowed the audience with its sharp script, talented performances, and impressive set design. Thank you to the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and The Fogarty Foundation for their continued support of this amazing program!

Early Intervention (EI) is actively transitioning to Welligent, an Electronic Health Record. This platform was selected by the state and all RI Early Intervention programs already enter some data into the system. Training is ongoing with the EI team, many of whom are quickly becoming comfortable navigating through the system. The department has recently hired both a nutritionist and a behavior health clinician to enhance service delivery and supports to families in the community.

CHILDREN'S AID & FAMILY SERVICE (CAFS)



The **Child Enrichment Center** is at full capacity with 87 children enrolled! The Center's Fun Fridays of Summer was a big hit with activities that included Class Color; Red, White and Blue Day; Disney Day; Beach Day; and ending August 26, with a Hawaiian Luau. Kindergarten graduation was held on August 25, with over one hundred students, parents, and siblings attending.

Family Child Care (FCC) staff is working with the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program staff to make improvements in all areas. FCC program



coordinators are working hard on reassessments and filling the slots for children moving on to kindergarten. FCC's program billing specialist is doing excellent work and has just implemented

the acceptance of credit cards payment from parents for childcare. The program is bringing on line one new FCC provider, which will increase program capacity.

Seven Hills Child Care Resources (SHCCR) is estimating that it will receive \$2.5M of the \$8M legislative budget for Child Care Resources & Referral agencies across the state. Part of that money must be used to fund a new program designed to assist families in navigating the extraordinarily complex child care subsidy system. The pilot project has officially begun and SHCCR is working with the Governor's office and the Department of Early Education and Care to help expedite the move of families from the waitlist to securing subsidies for child care.

CHILDREN'S FRIEND (CF)

Adoption Services was busy during the summer months. A 13-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl were placed in pre-adoptive homes. Two adoptions were finalized, one of a 9-year-old girl and the other of a 3-year-old boy. Children's Friend placed children with four families that received CF training. Two sets of siblings, a 2-year-old boy and his 4-year-old sister were placed with one couple; a second couple took placement of two brothers, aged 2 and 3. A third couple took placement of a 1-week-year-old boy, the emergency placement of his 7-year-old sister, and eventual placement of their 4-year-old brother. Finally, CF placed a 7-year-old boy with a single woman who participated in the CF trainings. CF is working on 27 assessments which were accepted to help the Department of Children and Families in their process toward permanency for children.

The **Early Learning Center (ELC)** celebrates summer with gusto, getting outdoors as much as possible to enjoy the on-site playground and burn off indoor energy with walks around the block and trips to local parks. With attention turned to fall and the changing seasons, ELC is swapping flipflops for boots and making



room for winter coats. While staff is steadfast to the daily routine year-round, the new school year signals that it's time to renew the love of learning at all levels.

OPEN DOOR ARTS (ODA)

In July, Open Door Arts was thrilled to welcome **Mehdi Raoufi** as its new **director of school programs**. Mehdi is hard at work getting programs started in nine Boston Public Schools, where over 900 students with and without disabilities, aged 3-21, will receive visual arts, drama, and music instruction this year.



In August, ODA moved into the **Cultural Equity Incubator**, a shared workspace designed by and for arts and culture leaders committed to intersectional equity and creative justice. The Incubator is located in Boston's Fort Point area, and also hosts an art gallery. In which we can co-curate with our partner organizations. Learn more at culturalequityincubator.org.

ODA is excited to share research findings in a published report from a statewide study of 94 arts and culture organizations

that was conducted earlier this year in collaboration with the Mass Cultural Council. The survey was designed to learn more about existing practices and



programs that support accessibility for people with disabilities, and identify barriers getting in the way, as well as strategic interventions to improve this work at scale. We will be sharing this report in the next issue of *HORIZONS*!

STETSON SCHOOL

Summertime fun rocked the Stetson campus, featuring a carnival-themed festival day and a project fair, which exhibited youths' learning through the summer program. During festival day, youth participated in a speed pitch, dunked their favorite staff in the tank, and competed in the pie-eating contest. They participated in arts and crafts activities, dressed up in fun costumes, and checked out the fire truck and police cruisers. The following day, youth were sorted into Hogwarts houses and created their own potions. Youth played their own homemade instruments, and others made



solar ovens! Finally, the Stetson staff vs staff softball game was a big hit! The Green Stetson Stingers beat the Yellow, but a rematch is highly expected!

Off campus, youth took trips to see the Woo Sox in Worcester, hang out at Apex in Marlborough, jump around at Altitude Trampoline Park, and create beautiful art during paint night at Hubbardston library.

The youth at **Harrington Way** attended Six Flags and Canobie Lake Park. Trips to Webster Lake were a summer staple. On-site, the youth planted a garden with the help of the program nurse. One of the youth even learned to plant a tree, much to his excitement. The youth were so thankful to the nurse for taking the time to lend her gardening expertise.



Kudos to the Stetson nursing staff for going above and beyond their medical skills to ensure the of fun at all activities—and staying safe with sunblock and insect repellent, tick checks and provide first aid for any bumps and bruises, that are par for the course of outdoor play.

During the last week of May, Stetson completed a multi-month review with a two-day site visit from the **Council on Accreditation (CoA)**. This process takes place every four years with the goal to receive a full accreditation rating. Beginning virtually in February and continuing into March, Stetson first submitted a "self-study." The site visit consisted of document and physical plant review of both Stetson and Harrington Way. Stetson is proud to report that it received an "Expedited Accreditation"

for the second review in a row. This designation is a result of no deficiencies being found during the process.

YOU, INC. (YI)

Over the past few months **Grafton House** has made significant strides in various areas of youth support and programmatic function. It has been a successful summer, with daily activity planning with off unit activities to the beach and volunteering at the local animal shelter, to on unit cook out Fridays and tie dye fun days! Half of the program census is engaged in part-time employment, and as the school year has begun a large majority of our youth have expressed their interest in increased engagement in various extracurriculars in the community and at school.

Thursday, September 8, was Opening Day for the 2022 **Dynamy Internship Year**, which welcomed students from 13 states. In preparation, the programming team held two Zoom meet and greets, tweaked the orientation schedule, got the



apartments ready, and creatively designed Monday Programming workshops. The staff developed 20 new internship sites for a total of over 70 internships.

Career Pathways currently has 25 enrollments for FY23 and plans to offer IT (online), Nurse Assistant, EKG, and Phlebotomy trainings. The current student group has been volunteering every other Tuesday at the Community Harvest Project. This is the 13th year the program has participated in this regular

volunteering initiative. Community Harvest Project is a non-profit farm that engages and educates volunteers to grow fresh fruits and vegetables for hunger relief.

Bruce Wells Bruce Wells Scholars Upward Bound Program held its 6-week summer component for 40 high-school scholars in grades 10-12, at Clark university, from June 20 to July 29. The students lived on campus for five weeks and took classes in sciences, ELA summer reading and reflections, ACT prep, college essay writing, and resume writing. They explored a ropes course for community building, and toured UConn, salve Regina, Northeastern, Emmanuel, and Wentworth campuses. The sixth week was an internship week with scholars at various sites around Worcester, such as city hall, the city manager's office, Masterman's, WCCA TV, and Clark.

The 2022 awards banquet and graduation was held on July 29. 17 graduates are going on to schools such as Brown, Clark, WSU, UMASS Amherst and Lowell, Assumption, Holy Cross, and more.





81 Hope Avenue
Worcester, Massachusetts 01603

Non-profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Worcester MA
Permit No. 723

MAILING CHANGES?

If you are receiving duplicates, have a change of address, or wish to be removed, please contact Jennifer Wentworth at 508.983.1304 or jwentworth@sevenhills.org

sevenhills.org



Why Seven Hills?

"Every day I get to do something I love and make an impact on people's lives."

Apply Online: sevenhills.org/careers

JOIN
OUR
TEAM!

