



# NEWS & VIEWS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

*The mission of Family Enrichment Network is to provide supportive services for the optimal development of children, adults, and families.*

*The vision is that all children, adults and families in our service area have the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential.*

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## From the Desk of the Executive Director

January is here and it has been a relatively mild winter (except for the four feet of snow). It's hard to believe that we are now into 2021 and as you look back at 2020 it was a roller coaster year. It started great and then suddenly COVID-19 hit our community and the agency. We all faced a time unlike any other. Our funding sources were great and we were able to retain the majority of our staff. We continued to provide as much service to our children and families as we could. We, very quickly, learned our virtual learning reality. In spite of all that, the agency completed another great year of growth, development, and financial stability.

Every year at this time we start to look to the future and what we need to do. We recognize that we must continue to find a way to increase staff salaries and fringe benefits to attract and retain quality staff. We need to review our strategic plan and see where we are. That plan and our annual community assessment will help us streamline our program development. COVID-19 has been a significant issue this past year. We continue to use all the tools we have, masking, social distancing, and hand washing to keep our staff, children and families safe. The vaccine is now available to our staff and I encourage all of our staff to get vaccinated as soon as they can. The sooner we are vaccinated, the sooner we can return to normalcy.

In March, we will start moving people into our HHAP project (Housing Connections), providing 19 permanent supportive housing units for homeless families and individuals. We will continue to develop our housing for the homeless and low income and we will actively pursue affordable housing for low and moderate income families. We are still looking at enhancing our services to children with disabilities. We hope to increase those services in Chenango County and are looking at developing those services in Tioga County. We are also looking at applying for federal funding for a new facility in

Tioga County for our Owego site. We continue to look at ways to develop additional non programmatic revenue to assist us in meeting the many agency needs we have. Grant writing and program development will continue to be a major focus for the next couple of years. Other areas we are looking at are ADHD programming, elderly services, and food security.

We could not do that without the support of the staff, the Governing Board and the entire community. Our staff this past year has worked tirelessly to assist us in moving this agency forward and meet the needs of children and families. We thank you for your past support of our Agency and look forward to future partnership opportunities.



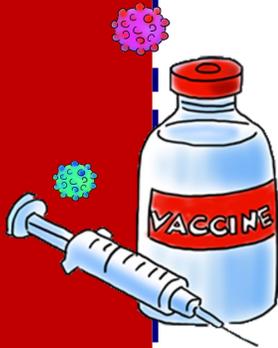
***Darrell Newwine,  
Family Enrichment Network  
Executive Director***

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## A Message From Nurse Michelle

### Let's Not Let COVID-19 Beat Us!



The COVID-19 virus has changed everything about how we communicate, socialize, shop, conduct business, educate our children, get the health care we need, and many other ways. We have had to make adjustments in our lifestyles – wearing masks in public; keeping a six feet distance from those with whom we are in contact; washing our hands frequently; and decreasing the size of groups with whom we interact.

It has been frustrating for all of us to follow all these instructions and restrictions, but it is essential that we continue to do so, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have hope in the fact that there are vaccines now being developed and planned to be distributed to lessen the effects of the virus. Many people are skeptical, maybe even afraid, about the rapid development of the vaccines and have concerns about their effectiveness and possible side effects. I will tell you about the process by which the vaccines have been developed and why you can trust in receiving them. Please be patient, this is not a topic that can be explained in a few sentences.

**Please keep in mind that the current immunizations against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Measles, etc. were all new at some point in time and mistrusted when first introduced, but have since eliminated these serious and sometimes deadly health threats to our children.**

- The development of the vaccine is not starting from scratch. Similar viruses (SARS-CoV-1 in 2003 and MERS-CoV, as well as other viruses) had been used to develop vaccines. These vaccines were never released because the outbreaks lessened quickly and were not needed<sup>2</sup>.
- The high number of people infected with COVID-19 allows researchers to test the effectiveness of the vaccine sooner, by comparing who tested positive for the virus and who did not.
- President Trump's Operation Warp Speed provided funding to invest in factories and supplies to make and distribute vaccines before the clinical trials were even completed. This step usually isn't done until after a vaccine has been approved.
- **Clinical trials of the vaccine have been combined to speed up the processes, but no steps have been skipped.**
- The science of developing immunizations has advanced from years ago to allow quicker results in producing effective vaccines.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may issue an Emergency Use Authorization for the vaccine administration but will also require follow up for those it has been administered to and for any incomplete phases of clinical trials to be completed.
- The Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) is an independent

## A Message From Nurse Michelle, continued

advisory group that will review and evaluate the data concerning the safety, effectiveness and appropriate use of the vaccine and related biological products and provides input upon request of the FDA. VRBPAC recommendations are not required but are usually followed.

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is an independent advisory group to the CDC comprised of medical and public health experts who will review and summarize data submitted to the FDA as well as post-licensure data and other available data to develop recommendations for the use of the vaccine in the U.S. civilian population. It annually establishes and updates vaccination schedules for children, adolescents and adults. ACIP recommendations are not required, however, the CDC usually follows them. The ACIP may change or retract previous recommendations if/when new data becomes available<sup>3</sup>.

On a cautionary note, receiving the COVID-19 immunization will not necessarily prevent you from being infected or spreading the virus. It may reduce the severity of the symptoms and complications you experience from the virus, which is very important<sup>4</sup>. At this time, we do not know what effects people may have in the future if they have been infected. In consideration of this, after you have received the vaccine, you will still have to wear masks in public, keep a six feet distance from those with whom you are in contact, wash your hands frequently, and decrease the size of groups with whom you interact, until the spread of the virus subsides and public health officials announce that these measures are no longer necessary.

Please be advised that many of us at Family Enrichment Network plan to get the COVID-19 immunization as soon it is available, to stay healthy and help reduce the spread of this virus. You should ask your Health Care Provider any questions you have. If you choose to search information on the internet, your best resources are the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the New York State Department of Health. Social media is **NOT** a reliable source of information.

I wish all of you good health and look forward to the time when this crisis has passed.



Michelle M. Codner, MS, RN  
Health Services Coordinator  
(607) 723-8313, ext 862

<sup>1</sup> Speed of COVID vaccines did not compromise safety or scientific integrity, Fauci says | Live Science | 11/20/20

<sup>2</sup> There was no vaccine for Sars or Mers. Will there be one for the new coronavirus? | South China Morning Post

<sup>3</sup> New York State Department of Health - An Update for NYS Healthcare Providers on COVID-19 Webinar, November 19, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Early COVID-19 Vaccines May Prevent Symptoms But Not the Infection, Dr. Fauci Says | SELF, October 29, 2020

## Child Care Resource and Referral

### New OCFS Regulation on Training

On January 6, 2021, OCFS updated the regulations for all modalities of child care (Child Care Centers, School-Age Child Care Programs, Family Child Care and Group Family Child Care) adding a new training category.

What does that mean? It means there are now ten training categories instead of nine.

The new tenth training category is on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Understanding Trauma and Resiliency.

As always, child care providers must receive 30 hours of training every two years. This has not changed. ACEs has simply been added to the existing required training topics that must be covered within the 30 hours of training you obtain every two years.

The required state topics are:

- (1) principles of childhood development, focusing on the developmental stages of the age groups for which the program provides care;
- (2) nutrition and health needs of children;
- (3) child care program development;
- (4) safety and security procedures;
- (5) business record maintenance and management;
- (6) child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention;
- (7) statutes and regulations pertaining to child care;
- (8) statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment;
- (9) education and information on the identification, diagnosis and prevention of shaken baby syndrome; and
- (10) adverse childhood experiences, focused on understanding trauma and on nurturing resiliency.

Family Enrichment Network CCR&R staff are trained on ACEs, Trauma Informed Care and Resiliency. Call any CCR&R staff member for assistance in meeting this new training requirement.

#### CCR&R Offices

**Broome:** (607) 723-8313

**Tioga:** (607) 687-6721

**Chenango:** (607) 373-3555

## Family Support Services

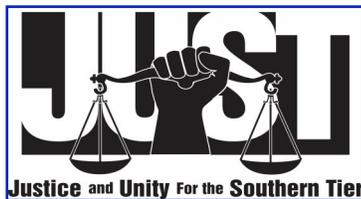
### Walk With Me ReEntry Program



The Walk With Me Program provides supportive services for those recently incarcerated in the Broome County Correctional Facility/Broome County jail.

Many people are sitting in the jail because they cannot afford their bail and are waiting for a court hearing, which means they have not yet been convicted. This normally time consuming process has become longer since COVID-19 and the slowing down of the courts. This has far reaching economic effects on the individual, their family members, and the community at large.

Rent and utility bills go unpaid and often the individual loses their job. Once the individual is released from jail they have to pick up where they left off. This is not easy as credit ratings have been damaged because of unpaid bills and employment is much harder to find because of their incarceration. Finding housing in our area is an uphill struggle anyway, but with limited financial resources it becomes impossible.



To assist individuals and their families find their way back into the community, the Walk With Me program offers help with benefits navigation, community resources and referrals, advocacy issues, employment search skills, peer mentoring, counseling and support groups in collaboration with JUST (Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier).

The Walk With Me program has been offered by Family Enrichment Network since June 2018, funded through a few local foundations, including the United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton (UPC). We are very thankful that UPC has made a real commitment to supporting the Walk With Me program, which is allowing us to continue offering the program throughout 2021.

To find out more about the Walk With Me program services for an individual or family of an individual who had been incarcerated, please call Family Enrichment Network's **ReEntry Specialists at (607) 723-8313, ext. 1675.**

## Community Services

### A Crisis within a Crisis Homelessness during COVID-19

While this year has been challenging for many of us, it has been especially difficult for those who are dealing with the added burden of becoming homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In this particularly uncertain time, of which COVID-19 has taken center stage, people experiencing homelessness have been hit particularly hard. Lack of access to basic needs has resulted in a physical and emotional toll on this population.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, 552,830 people are estimated to be homeless in the United States, which breaks down to roughly 17 people per 10,000. States like Washington, California, Hawaii and New York suffer some of the highest and most disproportional rates of homelessness in the country. A national growing concern for homeless people in particular those without shelter has resulted in both a federal and state focus on solving the problem and providing stable housing and resources to this vulnerable population.



In 2020, the City of Binghamton prioritized Homeless Prevention services for Family Enrichment Network. In continuing with our homeless prevention services, we are pleased to announce our Housing Connections program. Housing Connections is a 19-unit permanent supportive housing project located at 29 Virgil Street, on the corner of Virgil and Liberty Streets, in Binghamton. The program will prioritize some of the most vulnerable of chronic homelessness as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The populations this project will serve include homeless youth (18-25 years old), formerly incarcerated (non-violent offenders), survivors of domestic violence, disabled military veterans, and those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (OPWDD).

In addition to providing stabilized housing, the tenants will receive both case management and life skills support with a focus on trauma-informed assessments, adult literacy, parent education, job readiness training, financial literacy, housing education, referrals to substance abuse and mental health counselling, benefit advocacy, and life skills training.

The Housing Connections program is slated to be open to tenants in mid-March. For any questions about the program or services provided please contact the Director of Housing and Community Services, Chastity McEwen, at (607) 723-8313 ext. 877 or email at [CMcEwen@familyenrichment.org](mailto:CMcEwen@familyenrichment.org).

## Program Development

While 2020 was a challenging year that tested our resilience with the support of these funders we were able to sustain and/or develop additional opportunities to help meet the needs of our community. We appreciate their continued support of our mission.

<b>United Way of Broome County</b>	Second Step Social-Emotional Development
<b>Broome County DSS</b>	Formal Foster Kinship Caregiver Support
<b>United Presbyterian Church</b>	Walk with Me (ReEntry Services)
<b>Care Compass</b>	Telehealth equipment
<b>City of Binghamton (CARES Act HUD funds)</b>	COVID-19 Homeless Prevention, City of Binghamton
<b>CFSCNY</b>	Broome PPE, tech equipment for remote services
<b>CFSCNY</b>	Chenango/Tioga PPE
<b>OTDA</b>	Chenango County Homeless housing services related to COVID-19
<b>United Way of Broome County</b>	COVID-19 PPE and cleaning supplies

## Years of Service



### Five Years

Alicia Gomez

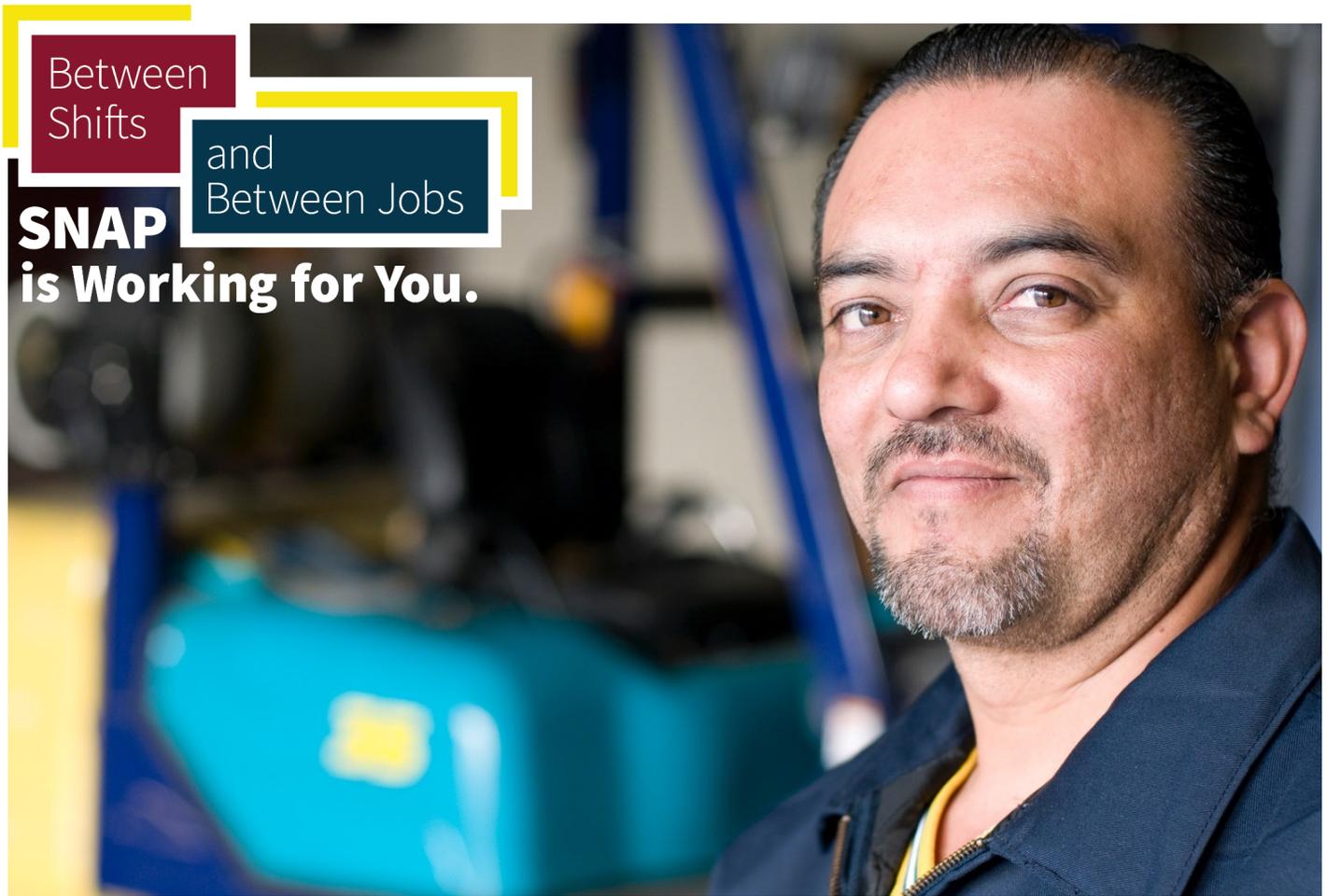
Cathy Lipski

### Ten Years

Marie Bazile

### Twenty Years

Nora Bush



## **SNAP helps many working families in New York buy food.**

- If you are working part-time or looking for a job, SNAP helps stretch your food budget.
- If you are working BUT not earning enough money to make ends meet, SNAP may be able to help put food on the table.
- Contact the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) to learn if you may be eligible for SNAP. NOEP can also help you complete and submit your application.

**Call today. It is free and confidential.**

**Family Enrichment Network**

**Broome County**

**NOEP Coordinator**

**607-723-8313, ext. 827**

## Coats for Kids



Thank you to everyone who donated coats during our Coats for Kids Coat Drive, organized by WBNG 12 News and to all the coat drive sponsors! And an extra special thank you to:

John Bunnell, Bill and Karen Mirabito, and

Knights of Columbus, Council 206 for their donation of 96 new coats!

## Adopt-a-Family

To all donors, big and small, old and new, who participated in our 2020 Adopt-a-Family program:

Thank you! Because of you, we were able to serve every single child and family who was nominated. This year, the Adopt-a-Family program adopted 349 children from 124 families.

It's been a difficult year for all but the outpouring of support was a warm reminder of how kind and wonderful our community really is.

From all of us at FEN,

Thank you!



*Adopt-a-Family gifts for Tioga County, waiting to be delivered to our Owego site for distribution.*

# Family<sup>SM</sup>



## Enrichment Network



We are a proud sponsor of Family Enrichment Network, and the positive changes they make in our community.

*Thank you  
for all you do!*

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### Associates of Psychotherapy Welcomes MaryLou Popielarski, LMHC

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### Advertising Space Available

Space is now available to send your valuable message to OVER 1,000 community members.

“Blocks” approximately 2 1/2” x 3 1/2” are now available, become an advertising partner of Family Enrichment Network for \$15 per year, and receive 3 issues of “free” advertising.

For more information on available space or to set up your ad,

please call Laura at (607) 723-8313 ext. 815.