



# NEWS & VIEWS

MAY/JUNE 2022

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

*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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It has been a memorable winter we will not soon forget with the late storm and significant power outage issues. As we enter the spring season it continues to be an exciting time at the Agency. We have completed our move to a \$13.20 minimum wage and beyond for all staff, however with existing funding sources this continues to be a challenge. We continue to navigate the coronavirus and how it impacts our staff, children, and families. There is light at the end of the tunnel even with recent uptick in cases. In the meantime we need to remain vigilant. We still encourage all staff and parents to get vaccinated.

Despite many uncertainties, we are pleased to report that the government has made a commitment to increasing the availability of child care. Governor Hochul recently announced \$70 million in federal funding to address child care deserts. Funding will support new child care programs in areas without sufficient child care slots. Our Child Care Resource and Referral Department are here to help! Find more information on this program, including the RFA and desert maps, at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/deserts/>

The area that provides continued growth is housing. Two years ago we had just six units, we now have 31. We just submitted another letter of intent for ten additional units of HHAP homeless housing. We have also had interest from Chenango County for homeless housing. The need is there. We have several more opportunities in the works. We are also in the process of trying to provide transitional housing to people upon release from being incarcerated. There needs to be a safe place to go until they can make long term living

arrangements, otherwise they struggle and end up re-incarcerated.

The Agency continues to have a very aggressive development program, to include program development and expansion in general. We have been blessed with very supportive community partners with foundations and government agencies being very supportive. If there something we are doing well, tell us. If there is something we could do different or better tell us. Our sole purpose here is to meet your needs and community needs.



*Darrell Newvine,  
Family Enrichment Network*

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## Housing Services

### Housing

We are excited to announce the newest additions to our housing program... Crocker Ave. in Johnson City and Robinson St. in Binghamton!

11 Crocker Ave in Johnson City is a two unit home. The home contains one one-bedroom bedroom unit and one two-bedroom unit. The home is Section 8 certified.



146 Robinson St is a five unit building. It contains one one-bedroom unit and four two-bedroom units. The home is Section 8 certified.



Lack of affordable and quality housing in our area is at a critical level. Homes and buildings are being condemned while landlords are converting units to student housing. With the current uptick in evictions the housing crisis is more apparent than ever. Family Enrichment Network is committed to helping close the gap on homelessness and will remain dedicated to supporting those most in need.

For more information on the Family Enrichment Network Housing Program, visit us online or call (607) 723-8313 ext. 877.



### **Provider Appreciation Day is Friday, May 6, 2022!**

Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize and thank the child care work force, which includes family child care providers, child care center teachers, and other educators of young children everywhere.

Throughout the pandemic, child care professionals have been recognized as essential workers. There is finally national awareness of the crisis child care is experiencing. Low wages, long hours, high expectations, and low appreciation are among the issues seen by child care providers across the country. Parents have experienced a lack of child care and high costs for care they can find.

Child care professionals are truly among the ranks of the unsung heroes in today's society. Early childhood is one of the most critical periods of development in a person's life. With little recognition, early childhood providers make a difference in the lives of children every day.

Provider Appreciation Day offers an opportunity to let your child care provider know how much you appreciate their tireless and dedicated commitment to your child! Use this opportunity to say "Thank you!" Do not let this day go by without a special thank you to this person who is so important to you and your child! And don't forget to let your child care provider know how much you appreciate all they do on social media. Use #ProviderAppreciationDay when you post.

#### **New Programs:**

Chenango Group Family Child Care: Pitter Patter Daycare - Micah Boyd

## Head Start

# Little Read 2022

**EACH YEAR OUR CENTER'S PLAN LITTLE READ EXPLORATION EVENTS AROUND ONE BOOK, ONE AUTHOR, MULTIPLE BOOKS, OR ANOTHER LITERACY THEME. EACH CENTER PLANS THEIR EVENTS BASED ON STAFF AND CHILDREN INPUT. THESE EVENTS INVOLVE THE ENTIRE CENTER IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES FROM CLASSROOM FUN, CREATIVE SNACKS & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

**THIS YEAR THERE WAS FOCUS AROUND SUPERHEROS, THE CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR, AND AUTHORS LIKE LAURA NUMEROFF & DR. SEUSS**

# Head Start, Continued



Little Read 2022

## Department Spotlight

### Family Support Services

The Family Support Services (FSS) Department started 17 years ago (2006) due to the number of special projects that were no longer specifically childcare or child development related. These projects were developed in response to gaps in services identified through our annual FEN community assessments. Over the past 17 years, FSS has offered 11 distinct programs each with different funding sources, rules and regulations. Depending on the specific program, services were offered in one or two of the following counties: Broome, Cortland, Delaware, and/or Tioga.

Our FSS programs fill important needs in people's lives and really make a difference for individuals and families of all kinds. Over the years the FSS department has helped survivors of domestic violence achieve independence, helped individuals with disabilities find employment, helped working families purchase cars, assisted families in signing up for WIC and SNAP benefits, provided a NYS certified parenting class to help court-ordered parents manage custody and visitation issues while minimizing the drama in their children's lives. We also offered three programs for formerly incarcerated populations: a support group for formerly incarcerated mothers that focused on family reunification and improved mother/child relationships; another group for unemployed and underemployed individuals with criminal records that focused on employment resources and training; and a parenting class in the women's pod at the Broome County Jail.

Currently the FSS Department is responsible for three programs: Kinship Care, Walk With Me, and the Courthouse Children's Center.

The Kinship Care program provides support and advocacy for kinship caregivers (adults raising someone else's child/ren) in Broome and Tioga Counties. Kinship program services are provided regardless of a caregiver's income and include assistance navigating the Department of Social Services, Family Court, school enrollments, referrals, community resources, and a weekly support group. The program also provides up to date information on kinship care laws and regulations. For more information please contact Julie Morgan at ext. 840.

Walk With Me (WWM) is a reentry program that helps individuals resettle back into the community after being released from the Broome County Jail. WWM provides personalized advocacy and support to each program participant, assisting with any barriers or challenges that may arise. Housing, employment, establishing benefits and transportation are all addressed by the program, as well as assistance obtaining, clothes, hygiene items, furniture and household items as needed. Through WWM's partnership with Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier (JUST) we offer support groups and peer mentoring. For more information on WWM please contact Chamisse Morast at ext. 1675.

The Courthouse Children's Center provides free drop-in childcare for any adult with business in the Broome County Family Court. Unfortunately, the Center is currently closed at the request of Family Court due to restrictions from COVID and the reduced in-person court calendar. However, for 19 years the Center has provided a safe, fun, and educational haven for children, away from the tensions and stress of the Family Court waiting rooms.

## Employee Spotlights

### Chamisse Morast

I started my journey at Family Enrichment Network Work in July of 2021 as a volunteer in the Reentry Program, Family Support Services Department. My passion for helping people has always led me to jobs where I could give back to the community. When I was offered a position as a Reentry Specialist in September 2021 I gladly accepted. I was previously employed by the Volunteers of America here in Binghamton. While working there I realized I wanted to do more to help to formerly incarcerated people. I am originally from Brooklyn, NY and moved to Broome County in 2011. Since then, along with my sister, I started an organization called "Surviving Ladies" and we donated over 200 book bags to children in the community in August of last year. I hope to continue to be a positive reinforcement for the community.



### William Wrighter

Bill is new to our staff, starting in July of 2021. He is not new to Family Enrichment though. He attended the school when he was a youngster then again under the summer youth program in 2017 and 2020. After graduating from Johnson City High School he attended BCC. He came to me last May wondering if we had any positions available, and remembering his excellent work ethic, I hired him immediately.

As a summer youth member, he has done everything from cleaning the building, playground renovations at Cherry St. and Fayette, and some construction at different sights. He has worked at all the locations except for Norwich and is familiar with both cleaning and some operations. Bill is still working on his driver's license and does all the driving for us older folk. His plan is to have his license by May 1st.

He is open to learning new things, and likes to be outside as much as possible. He is at work on time every day until I inform him he should take some time off (use it or lose it). Bill is a fine addition to our department, presently working nights at Cherry and Owego.



## Employee Spotlights, Continued

### **Danielle Brown**

Hello to my FEN family. To the FEN “littles”, I am Mrs. Brown and to the FEN “bigs” I am Danielle. It’s hard to believe that it has been 25 years of working for BCCDC, our old name, and then to Family Enrichment Network, which I proudly share with everyone who will listen about our agency. Our Cherry St. site was the former Lincoln Elementary School which I attended for seven years as a child. I received my Early Childhood Education degree from BCC, let’s just say many years ago, and I have worked with preschoolers for 25 years. I remained in the classroom part-time when I was also offered the position of ERSEA Clerk, which I now work full time. I continue to see the best of both worlds with meeting the children and their families and watch them grow and prosper in our programs. I stay in contact with many of our graduating preschoolers and their parents. It has been a joy to see and hear about their paths they have chosen in their lives as teachers, military service members and successful community members. My greatest joys are my two sons and their wives and my now four grandchildren: Lorelai, Nolan, Arden and Abby. We love to sit and have dinners together, laugh, play games, talk about our day, being outside in the sunshine, parks, zoos, museums and I attend all the grandkids activities (and yes there are many). My youngest son always starts our dinners by asking everyone to share “the best part of their day.” Today, what’s the best part of my day? Meeting and sharing with all the wonderful people I have worked with for the last 25 years. There are so many stories to tell and we should write that book someday for all to read. Yes! Confidentiality will remain intact. Thank you FEN for all you do for our “littles and bigs.” It has been a pleasure and a joy to be a part of this agency!



### **Leslie Vermaat**

I started work at Family Enrichment shortly after I moved here in 1985 (I think!). Yes, it was back in the Dark Ages! At that time, we were helping school-age programs to get started and we were the only game in town as far as trainings for child care providers went. I took a long break from FEN later on to have kids (two girls) and came back slowly as a consultant and trainer before going full-time again. I received my Master’s in Mental Health Counseling at one point and also worked as a counselor in the Kinship program since coming back. I enjoy living in this area—it’s absolutely beautiful! I love exploring lake towns and hiking trails, flowers, books, and antique stores and spending time with friends. My sweet (mostly) Sheltie goes on lots of adventures with me! I also have fun visiting family in Michigan and Montana. I have had great supervisors here at FEN and love my co-workers...otherwise I would have not kept coming back!



## Years of Service

### Five Years

Helen Wimberly  
Holly Wheeler  
Temica Bradshaw



## Job Opportunities

We have a number of job opportunities available at our Broome, Chenango, and Tioga sites. If you are interested in working with children and families, adults with disabilities or serving the greater community, Family Enrichment Network has an employment opportunity for you. We offer competitive benefits and paid time off. We are recruiting for a number of openings from entry level up to senior level positions, and are willing to provide education and training.

Please go to [www.familyenrichment.org](http://www.familyenrichment.org) to see our current list of openings or email your resume to [mdifulvio@familyenrichment.org](mailto:mdifulvio@familyenrichment.org).

# 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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### 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.