

The Guidance Center of Westchester

TIMES

Fall/Winter
2021



BETTER TOGETHER: OUR AFFILIATION WITH



ACCESS:

SUPPORTS FOR LIVING

This summer, The Guidance Center of Westchester (TGCW) CEO Amy Gelles and Access: Supports for Living Inc. President and CEO Ron Colavito, together with their boards of directors, announced that TGCW will become an affiliate of Access. Below, we answer some of the frequently asked questions about what this means. *(Spoiler alert: It's all good!)*

WHAT IS ACCESS: SUPPORTS FOR LIVING?

Headquartered in Middletown, NY, Access was founded in 1963, and today is a nearly \$100 million nonprofit organization with over 1,500 employees, including hundreds with disabilities. It is mission-driven to help people live the healthiest and fullest lives possible. In addition to mental health and substance use treatment and services for children and families, Access is a provider of residential and community-based supports for adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, licensed by the New York State Office for People with Development Disabilities, including Self-Direction.

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From the CEO



The Guidance Center of Westchester has a long history in the world of work. Years ago, we had a whole department

called Guidance Center Industries. Participants worked at the Upper Crust Bakery making delicious breads and pastries and then selling them to the crowds that waited in line. Participants worked together for local businesses with stuffing letters and doing mailings (back in the day!). The streets along North Avenue in New Rochelle were cleaned daily by people in our program.

Guidance Center Industries was a model of how people with mental illness could find their way into the world of work, to jobs that they liked and found rewarding. Unfortunately, the funding dissipated over time, as the state changed priorities.

But The Guidance Center continued to keep work at the forefront of what we do. We know how much joy and satisfaction a job can bring into a life. From teens in our Summer Youth Employment Program, to out of school youth in FutureWorks to Future Careers, teens with

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WHY DID TGCW & ACCESS FORM THIS AFFILIATION?

- **Shared missions**—Both agencies are mission driven to help people live the healthiest and fullest lives possible. We all believe in recovery, and that anybody, surrounded by the right supports, can learn, work, and thrive.
- **Shared expertise**—Access and TGCW provide services for adults, teens, and children licensed or overseen by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the New York State Office of Addiction Supports and Services, the New York State Office of Children and Families, the New York State Department of Health, and the New York State Education Department, as well as employment and vocational supports through Acces-VR.
- **Shared resources**—Both organizations can draw upon the expertise and skills of the combined system, including psychiatrists and clinicians, to promote the use of new and emerging evidence-based and promising practices—to better support the more than 16,000 adults and children who rely on our services.
- **Shared commitment to more dollars going directly to services**—The affiliation will drive down administrative costs, putting more of the scarce dollars available where they're needed most—to supporting people.

- **Shared sustainability**—Our first responsibility is to ensure the services people rely on are available today, tomorrow, and into the future. This affiliation takes two strong organizations and positions them for a solid future.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE TGCW PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS?

TGCW isn't going anywhere! All the programs you know and love will continue right where they are. Our program participants will continue to receive the care, therapy, counseling, and supports they need, in the way which best suits their goals and objectives, just as they always have. With the backing of Access, we have even more resources at the ready.

In fact, TGCW is growing and expanding (and we're putting in a shameless plug for the many career opportunities we have available at TheGuidanceCenter.org/employment). There's never been a better time to be part of the TGCW family, either as a program participant, volunteer, or staff member.

WHAT'S THE REACH OF THE AFFILIATION?

Combined, we will have more than 1,800 staff providing services to more than 16,000 adults and children across Westchester, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster, Sullivan, Rockland, Putnam, Columbia, and Greene counties.

“No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.” — Martin Luther King Jr.

(continued from cover) disabilities in our Access-VR program, participants in our PROS, ACT, housing, and substance use treatment programs, helping our participants find the path to work is at the vanguard of what we do.

It is not just about the paycheck. It is about having a reason to get up in the morning, knowing you are a person who can be relied on, who works hard, and is part of making things work more effectively. This is all critical to boosting self-esteem.

We know that work takes so many forms, and we believe in helping our participants find work that fits who they are. In fact, one of our lead programs, the Vocational Assistance Project (VAP), provides people in recovery from substance use with an in-depth assessment that helps them identify their areas of strength. We show them how to remove any legal barriers to employment.

Our staff has developed many relationships with employers in Westchester County: toy stores; boutiques; ice cream stores; recording studios; construction and energy companies; and more. We are honored that these companies have become our partners and care enough to give back by offering our participants an opportunity to join the workforce.

Appreciating how important work is in recovery and developing self esteem is shared by Access: Supports for Living, TGCW's affiliate agency. Access has a whole department called Business Solutions where participants contribute to society through multiple employment opportunities and become creators of high-quality products.

I look forward to how Access and TGCW will – together – increase employment opportunities for even more participants.

As you read our newsletter, please think about what work – whatever form that work takes – means to you. Realize that TGCW helps our participants find that same feeling of success and purpose, and the important role that you play in this.

Thank you.



Amy Gelles
Chief Executive Officer

BASH Brightens the Future

Our **2021 Bash to the Future** was a shining success, raising vital funds for our Center for College & Careers. The evening honored those businesses and individuals who partner with our program and lead the way in creating opportunities for youth.

2021 CCC BASH FOR THE FUTURE SPONSORS – AS OF NOVEMBER 2021

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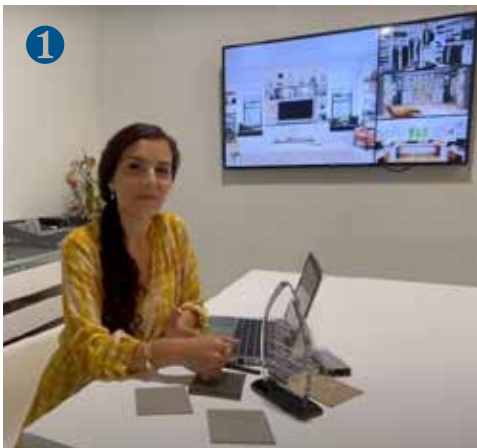
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2021 BASH HONOREES



Congratulations and deep appreciation to:
1. California Closets of Hawthorne, represented by Masha Alimova;
2. Carmine Lippolis and Lippolis Electric, Inc.;
3. Peggy Williams of Mount Vernon High School;
4. Maureen Jacobson and James Bernardo and Candela Systems Corporation.

“Our honorees are true partners who lead by example. They set a tone of optimism and create opportunity, and our young people respond,” says Amrika Sieunarine, director of the Center for College & Careers.

You can see a replay of the event on our website under “Past Events.”



Westchester Community Leadership Council

Our newly formed Westchester Community Leadership Council (WCLC) had its inaugural meeting on October 6 at Sam's of Gedney Way in White Plains.

The WCLC brings together former TGCW board members, Access board members, and Westchester County business and community members who will broaden and support fundraising, programs, brand awareness, and relationship development. The WCLC does not have

governing or legal responsibilities.

The WCLC members will serve as Westchester County ambassadors for our programs and services. Executive Director of the Access: Supports for Living Foundation and Senior VP of Business Development Chris Masters says, "I look forward to working with this new group to advance the work of The Guidance Center."

Chief Development & External Relations Officer of TGCW Ann Hyatt notes that this group is an excellent representation

of Westchester leaders who will bring renewed energy and enthusiasm as we broaden the reach of the expanded TGCW/Access brand.

Photo (left to right): Ann Hyatt, Jonathan Forman, Ron Colavito, Nick Preddice, Mitzi Ambrose-Washington, Kelly Fowler Hunter, Amy Gelles, Deanna Robertson, Mariann Cheney, Kathy Hagendorf, Megan Glander, Robert Levine, Chris Masters.

Not pictured: Elissa Bard, Gerry Feinberg, Wendy M. Geringer, Marshall W. Jaffe.

Vocational TRAINING

Vocational services are one of the ways that we empower our program participants to become active members of the community. “It can be a little confusing because we have several vocational programs, each with its own qualifying criteria,” says Ed McKay, VAP program director. “But the end result is the same: recovery and wellness through meaningful work.”

Job coaches or employment counselors help participants develop a plan in line with their personal goals. That can

mean full- or part-time employment or volunteering. “We start by assessing interests and abilities, and then go on to building skills, and providing job placement and job coaching,” Mr. McKay continues. Despite the challenges of 2020, our vocational programs helped close to 400 people and delivered more than 4,500 hours of trainings and certifications. We can also help people attain a high school equivalency diploma so that they can reach their employment goals.

Age	Qualifications	What Services	Self-refer?	Contact 914-613-0700
16-24 YEARS OLD	Mount Vernon or New Rochelle resident Income eligibility guidelines High school diploma <u>NOT</u> required	Job coaching, work placement, training courses, OSHA-30, site safety & other certifications, job development, internships, pre-apprenticeships, HSE	Yes	Center for College & Careers (CCC) x7089
	Active Medicaid/Managed Care & Health and Recovery Plan (HARP) eligible with a qualifying behavioral health need (serious mental illness or substance use disorder)	Pre-vocational services, job coaching, supported employment educational and vocational services	No	Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) x7051
14+ YEARS OLD	Enrolled or enrolling in ACCES-VR	Vocational evaluation, training, job placement, job coaching, referrals to additional services	Yes	Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) x7057
	Enrolled in substance use treatment program at TGCW Sunrise Clinic; Lexington Center for Recovery, Mount Kisco; St. John’s Riverside Hospital, Archway Clinic; Halfway Houses of Westchester, Hawthorne House	Full range of vocational and assessment counseling in 1:1 & group format	No	Vocational Assistance Project (VAP) x7225
18+ YEARS OLD	Enrolled in TGCW’s Personalized Recovery-Oriented Services (PROS) for people with serious mental illness	Pre-vocational & vocational supports, job placement, job coaching	Yes	Personalized Recovery-Oriented Services (PROS) x7051

VOCATIONAL UPDATE: CELEBRATING THREE YEARS OF WORK AND WELLNESS

We first shared Priya’s employment journey back in 2019. At that time, she had built up her self-confidence through the PROS snack trolley cart and secured her job at Stew Leonard’s. Throughout the pandemic, she picked up extra work hours and, as result of her work ethic and dedication, received a raise. Priya also applied for a cashier position and successfully took on the new role. Priya defines work as “a part of who you are as a person” and a part of the “journey to knowing more about yourself.”

By working with her job developer, Priya has been able to maintain recovery and practice self-care while working. She keeps her individual telehealth appointments with her recovery counselor, and attends online telehealth groups. The weekly “Job Survival” group allows her to connect with other participants who are working and maintaining mental health recovery. Keep up the good work, Priya!



**NOW
OPEN:**

early childhood mental health clinic

The Guidance Center of Westchester opened a new early childhood mental health clinic at 17 Anderson Street in New Rochelle. The clinic specializes in the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of children 2-5 years old and their families.

"Too often, parents are at a loss when it comes to identifying their child's social-emotional development and assessing behaviors. Parents aren't sure what is typical versus what may need a little guiding and coaching. And then they don't know where to go for help," says Amy Gelles, CEO of TGCW. "TGCW is particularly well positioned as an important resource. Our early childhood clinic is solely focused on helping very young children and their families. Addressing any challenges early is the key to positive, long-term outcomes."



There are many ways that social, emotional, or behavioral issues may present in very young children: changes in mood, behaviors, sleep patterns or eating habits; increased tantrums; regression in toilet training or other developmental milestones; becoming easily frustrated, irritable, or teary; acting out, hitting, or biting; becoming withdrawn.

"Early intervention leads to better outcomes," says Ron Colavito, President of TGCW. "Families have known and trusted TGCW for decades for the support

they've needed to raise healthy children. Now, they will know where to turn when they have concerns about their child's mental health. This is a needed and welcomed resource for the community."



Emily Young of News12 shares the importance of early childhood mental health in two reports. See them at www.TheGuidanceCenter.org

The new early childhood mental health clinic:



Play Therapy is a specialized way for a therapist to gain insights into a child's behaviors. The therapist helps the child explore emotions and deal with unresolved trauma. Children can learn new coping skills and how to redirect inappropriate behaviors.

Family & Sibling Support helps families improve communication and resolve conflicts in a healthy way.

Postpartum Support helps new moms who experience feelings of anger, sadness, irritability, guilt, lack of interest in the baby, or other troubling thoughts.

Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) is an intervention model for children birth-5 years old who have experienced

traumatic events or are experiencing mental health, attachment, or behavioral challenges. Therapeutic sessions include the child and parent or primary caregiver. A central goal is to support and strengthen the caregiver-child relationship as a vehicle for restoring and protecting the child's mental health.

Sessions are by appointment only: Tuesdays and Thursdays (3:00 PM – 7:00 PM); Saturdays (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM). Services are available in English and Spanish. To schedule an appointment, call 914-613-0700 x7301 or email EarlyChildhood@TheGuidanceCenter.org.

