

# The Guidance Center of Westchester

# TIMES

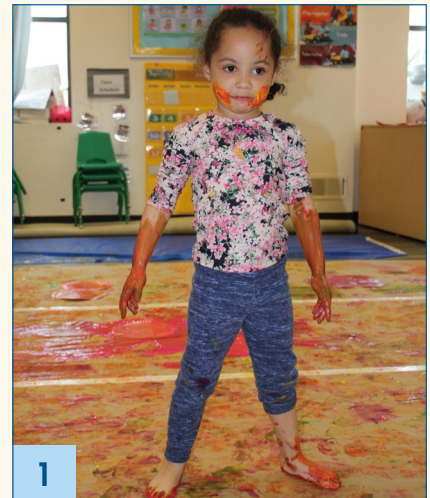
Summer 2020

## From the CEO



While COVID-19 sent New York into the “great pause,” work at The Guidance Center of Westchester (TGCW) shifted into overdrive. Our staff and board responded to the new environment with passion, innovation, and a great sense of community spirit. Here are just a few of the ways that, despite the challenge, we continued to move forward with purpose:

- ✓ TGCW provided mental health and substance use treatment to our program participants, albeit in a new and different way using telehealth. Staff and program participants Zoomed, Facetimed, and found other ways to be “together apart.” Telehealth made it easier for our therapists to connect to participants, many of whom valued the calls as a critical part of their day. Extra sessions were provided as needed to deal with the anxiety and depression that has become pervasive during this time.
- ✓ Our board of directors raised special funds to provide Compassion Fatigue Workshops to all staff. The workshops helped staff deal with their own feelings of loss, find renewed strength, and keep caring for participants.
- ✓ We enrolled new participants for mental health and substance use therapy – regardless of their ability to pay. We made sure that if someone needed help, TGCW was there.
- ✓ Our child care center remained open so that essential workers had a reliable, safe, and certified preschool to bring their child to while they worked.



The Guidance Center of Westchester

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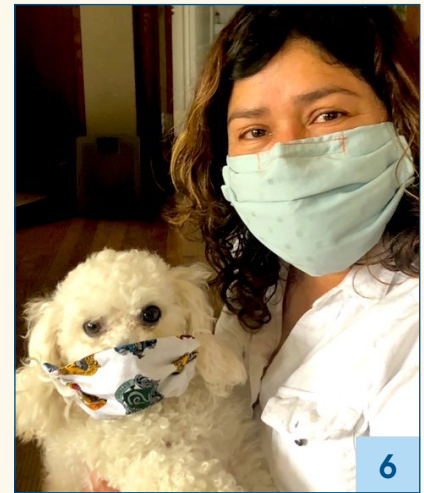


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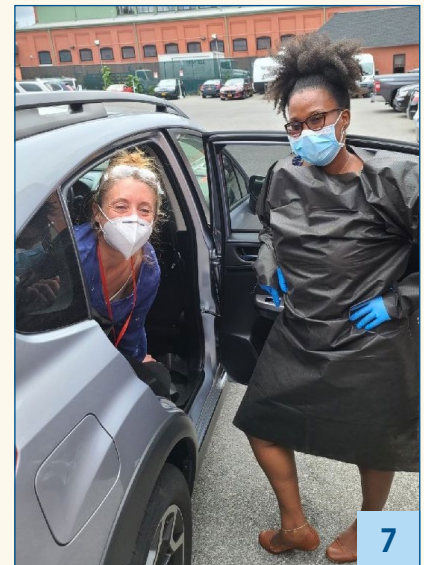


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- ✓ We kept people from losing their apartments by working with landlords. We ensured that none of our housing participants were displaced.
- ✓ We addressed food insecurity in young and old by making sure every participant was aware of available resources. Staff took it one step further by shopping for food and basic necessities and then delivering them to the participants.
- ✓ We visited participants at their residence, in shelters, and on the street to dispense vital medications and make sure that no treatments were missed.
- ✓ For our preschool-age children, we worked to keep things as consistent as possible. Story time took place on YouTube and circle time on Zoom. Teachers made daily phone calls to families. Meals were delivered to homes to ensure that those children and their families who relied on TGCW for daily healthy meals continued to receive them.
- ✓ The parents of our young children were cared for, too. We helped parents cope with their emotions and anxieties, and we helped them develop and practice strategies to manage their children's behaviors. We used telehealth sessions and online meet-ups to stay connected.
- ✓ We kept adolescents and young adults engaged in their futures through online programming, resume writing, information sharing, counseling, virtual training, and tutoring. We stayed full steam ahead and continued to register people for upcoming FutureWorks construction training sessions.
- ✓ Being in New Rochelle, our opioid recovery program was the first in the state to put new policies and procedures in place to ensure that social distancing could be maintained while medication assisted treatment could be provided to 240 people. Both staff and program participants were very adaptable, learning to effectively manage take-home medication between their visits to the methadone program.



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- ✓ Behind the scenes, we continued to clean, sanitize, and plan for the day when we are able to greet participants in the office again. We found, purchased and delivered PPE to all staff and participants who needed it.
- ✓ We seized the opportunity for self-improvement, which resulted in a new executive management structure. You can find details later in this newsletter.
- ✓ We gave our website ([www.TheGuidanceCenter.org](http://www.TheGuidanceCenter.org)) a total refresh, making it easier to find information. Go give it a look!
- ✓ While we had to delay our annual Gala (typically held in May), our development committee immediately began planning our Together We Thrive Virtual Gala, which will take place on Tuesday, September 22 at 6:30 PM.

As you can see, TGCW did what we do best: we continued to help the most vulnerable members of our community develop new ways to learn, work, and thrive.

We are delighted to share our good work with you, our friends and supporters.

Together, we thrive –

Chief Executive Officer

**Photos:** 1. Fun at the Creative Learning Center. 2. MVHS grad & Center for College & Careers student Chenelle Gordon attained a 4.0 & will study psychology at SUNY Albany. 3. Staff accepts a donation of bedding from Brooklinen. 4 & 5. Members of our medical team gear up to see participants. 6. Early Childhood staff and pup help make & distribute masks to families in Ossining. 7. Our ACT Team heads out to provide services. 8. Our own Mr. Devin shares the letter of the week. 9. Zoom keeps staff connected. 10. Packing up meals for families. 11. Security in PPE greets participants. 12. Staff shop for participants.



The Guidance Center  
of Westchester

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Many thanks to the Junior League of Bronxville for continuing to support seniors from our Mount Vernon High School (MVHS) Center for College & Careers. The Junior League sponsored the dorm essentials shopping spree at Value Drugs and provided gift cards to Bed Bath & Beyond. Good luck, grads!

# Introducing

## TGCW's New Executive Management Team

**TGCW** is delighted to introduce a newly formed Executive Management Team to support Chief Executive Officer Amy Gelles as the agency begins to implement new processes and business models to meet the changing landscape of behavioral health care. Several of these key changes are linked to two of the major grants that we recently received (detailed on reverse).

**Chief Development & External Affairs Officer, Ann R. Hyatt, ACFRE.** Ann has been with TGCW for five years as the Director of Development & External Relations. Ann will continue to direct board development, donor cultivation and stewardship, fundraising, events, external relations, marketing and public relations.

**Chief Financial Officer, Orlando Acevedo.** Orlando has been the CFO since 2007. He continues to oversee payroll, accounts payable and receivable, vouchers, financial audits, and financial reporting.

**Chief Operating Officer, Marvin Sims, CPA.** Having served as Vice President Finance & Global Head of Strategic Pricing for Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., Marvin will bring professional guidance to revenue cycle management, human resources, facilities, IT, myEvolve support, and contracting and credentialing.

**Chief Strategy & Program Officer, Shawna Aarons-Cooke, LCSRW.** Shawna has been an integral part of TGCW for 10 years. She most recently was our Chief Operating Officer. In her new role she will be responsible for leading TGCW's programs into being more integrated with the new Access Center and will supervise all program areas, including compliance.

**Chief of Staff, Latoya Bailey.** Latoya joined TGCW earlier in 2020. She will manage the overall administration of agencywide staff events and initiatives, as well as annual reporting, analytics support, and contracts. She will continue to be liaison to the Board of Directors and to the Executive Management Team.

# WE'RE HIRING!

*Be sure to check  
our website for  
job opportunities*

[TheGuidanceCenter.org](http://TheGuidanceCenter.org)

# GALA 2020!

*Our Annual  
Gala has  
moved to  
cyberspace!*

*Sept. 22 / 6:30pm  
See our website  
for details*

[TheGuidanceCenter.org](http://TheGuidanceCenter.org)

# BASH 2020!

*To support  
The Center  
for College  
& Careers*

*Virtual event  
Oct 22. / 6:30pm*

*See our website  
for details*

[TheGuidanceCenter.org](http://TheGuidanceCenter.org)

# New Grants Help Forge TGCW's Future Success

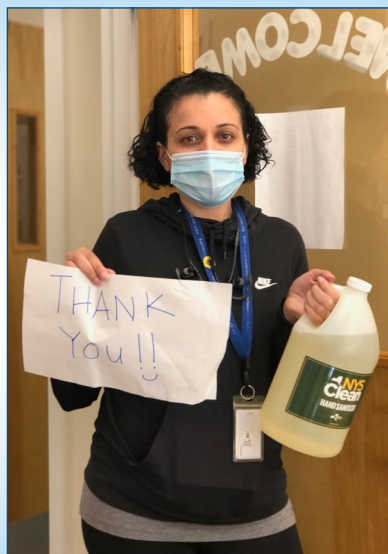
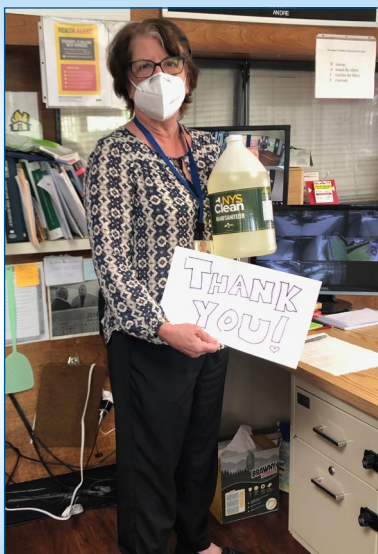
**TGCW's success in impacting communities has led to us being awarded several grants:**

- \$1.9 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This federal grant will enable TGCW to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). As one of only 98 awards in the country, this is a tremendous opportunity for TGCW to have an even more significant impact on the lives of Westchester residents.
- \$133,000 grant from Westchester Medical Center Health (WMCHHealth) Network to strengthen integration of primary care with behavioral health services which we currently provide. We will develop an integrated referral system to help ensure that a person's physical and behavioral health care needs are not only met, but also are treated as a single service plan, leading to better outcomes.

***Together, the SAMHSA and WMCHHealth Network grants will position TGCW to further establish ourselves as a leading, trend-setting agency in Westchester County, as we integrate all programs and services and create linkages to primary care. We***

***will create an Access Center for all TGCW services, and a 24/7 phone hotline to answer all calls and respond to crises.***

- \$10,000 from Westchester Community Foundation through their Westchester COVID-19 Response Fund. The grant money covered the costs of cleaning supplies and PPE for staff who must continue to have in-person interaction with participants. It also provided for increased mental health support in Mount Vernon for those without insurance during COVID-19.
- \$8,000 from RXR Realty (through Westchester Community Foundation) to purchase smart phones and a six-month service plan. This was vital to helping our program participants stay connected to us via telehealth.
- Junior League of Bronxville donated \$650 for chrome books for young people in our Center for College & Careers.
- \$15,000 from Neuberger Berman Foundation for our youth programs.
- \$3,000 from United Way of Westchester & Putnam for COVID-19 related needs.



*Many thanks to Assemblywoman Amy Paulin for providing several gallons of hand sanitizer to our New Rochelle programs. It will come in handy.*