

Helping Children Overcome Trauma

Jack was a popular, outgoing six-year old when he and his older sister, Didi, watched helplessly as his new step-father hit his mother. After that, Jack's behavior changed. He became withdrawn, clinging to his mother and frightened of being separated from her.

Erica was ten years old when she and her mother saw a group of teenage boys beating up a homeless man. Even though the police came to stop the fight and brought the man to the hospital, Erica was frightened to walk in her neighborhood. She was afraid to even go outside.



All parents want to protect their children, but sometimes children see or experience something that just can't be predicted. Violence, abuse, and other traumas have a lasting effect on young victims and witnesses, impacting their development, learning, health, growth, interpersonal skills and happiness. Although the effects are profound and pervasive, the needs of these children often go unmet. But, with early and highly skilled intervention, children can heal and flourish.



Agency staff participating in the National Child Traumatic Stress Learning Collaborative. Back: Rebecca Hoffmann Frances, Paula Webster, Molly McMahon, Patricia Gwynne, Katie Fournier, and Jana Harbaugh. Front: Keily Geary and Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO.

Building on its rich history of serving children and families, Community Counseling Center was awarded a highly competitive, four-year federal grant to develop The Children's Initiative, a community-wide network of care which will help children who have been the victims or witnesses of a traumatic event. The Children's Initiative includes 24 organizations in greater Portland, and will provide outreach, community education, assessment, training and treatment services for children ages 5 - 18 who reside in twelve cities and towns in southern Maine. The Initiative will have an additional focus on greater Portland's refugee and immigrant communities, as many of these children have witnessed or experienced profound violence in their lives.

As a grant recipient, Community Counseling Center is now part of the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Service's Administration's (SAMHSA) National Child Traumatic Stress

Network, a group of 40 select centers throughout the nation that provide evidence-based services to traumatized children and families. Community Counseling Center and other Network partners will collaborate through national training and share learnings as this initiative progresses. This opportunity allows Community Counseling Center to provide a collaborative safety net for all children who have experienced trauma throughout greater Portland.





Perspective

Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO

Dear Friends,

Quality, outcome-based services are a hallmark of Community Counseling Center, and in these pages, we are pleased to share some of the exciting and innovative projects underway.

Being selected by SAMHSA for the Children’s Traumatic Stress Initiative is something that not just Community Counseling Center, but all of Portland’s human service system can be very proud. SAMHSA received approximately **400** applications nationwide, and selected **only 9 projects** - Community Counseling Center was one of them! The strength of our community’s collaborative approach, combined with proven experience in effectively helping children and parents affected by trauma, were two of the key factors in this award. Community steering committee members include; Co-chair Louise Boisvert, Program Administrator Office of Child & Family Services Department of Health and Human Services, and key representatives from; Sweetser, YAI, Portland Police Department, Center for Grieving Children, Spurwink, Sexual Assault Response Services, Family Crisis Services, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, and the Violence Intervention Partnership.

In addition, Community Counseling Center has received a federal Department of Justice grant to address the issues of bullying, and to help children and families who have been devastated by this experience. More and more, Community Counseling Center receives calls from parents who are desperately seeking help because their child has become a target of hateful behavior. Sometimes, parents call in a different kind of despair – they have found out that their child is bullying another. These situations too often lead to terrible depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder for children, and even their parents. Children may drop out of school, or attempt suicide. Through Community Counseling Center’s new program, **Safe and Strong**, and working closely with the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, we will build an effective intervention for helping families and young people.

The new fiscal year ahead also has its challenges. In a time when we have experienced devastating cuts in state funding, we are also seeing a dramatic increase in people needing our help. Many of our clients are turning to community resources for the first time, anxious, depressed and angry that they have to ask for help for themselves or their families. At our core, we are a social work agency, and now more than ever we are called upon to help those in need. With roots back to 1874, we have always been here to serve the community – in times of hardship, as well as times of plenty. We thank you for your generous support – it’s the support of the community that **helps us help others**. Your contributions assure that we remain true to our mission of quality services that enhance the emotional well being of all Maine’s citizens.

Thank you,

Leslie Clark Brancato

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communityconnections
the newsletter of
Community Counseling Center

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... and more!

Nicole Holt, Editor
Any comments or suggestions?
Call 207.874.1030, ext. 336
or email nholt@commcc.org

SUMMER 2008

A Fond Farewell to Laura Gottfried, VP of Program Services

After almost 13 years, Community Counseling Center said goodbye to Laura Gottfried, LCSW, VP of Program Services, who served as our chief clinical officer since 2002. After enjoying a four month sabbatical, with plans to reflect, relax, rejuvenate and experience a Maine summer with partner, Melinda, Laura will explore new areas of work and her next adventure.



Laura brought a wise and centered perspective in her leadership at Community Counseling Center. She mentored many social workers in their professional growth, and modeled excellent clinical practice and judgment.

“Laura embodies a calm, caring and forthright approach to any problem that needs to be solved,” said CEO Leslie Clark Brancato. “Her commitment to the field and the clients we serve is always front and center, along with the confidentiality, dignity, and compassion that is the hallmark of all our work.” In addition, continued Leslie, “she has a quick wit and wonderful sense of humor.”

In her tenure, Laura initiated and grew many new programs, including Deaf Counseling Services, LGBTQ programs and most recently, Counseling Services for Veterans and their Families. Laura spearheaded Community Counseling Center’s annual Clinical Masters’ Lecture Series, bringing in renowned experts in psychological trauma, cultural competency and veterans’ work. With many tears, laughter and reminiscing, board, staff and community members celebrated Laura’s contributions at a reception and goodbye party in April.

We will miss Laura, and remember her always with gratitude.

Welcome Craig Owens, LCSW



Craig Owens, LCSW has joined Community Counseling Center as Vice President for Programs & Services.

Previously, Craig served as Operations Director at Tri-County Mental Health Center. Craig brings a strong combination of clinical, leadership, innovation, and business skills.

Craig made substantial contributions during the first few weeks of his tenure in this position. He is helping lead the agency as it navigates changes mandated by state funding cuts while ensuring that the experience of clients and the agency’s contributions to the greater Portland community remain the focus for Community Counseling Center.

“Craig is a wonderful addition to the leadership of Community Counseling Center,” says Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO. “His clinical vision and philosophy will serve the agency well. We look forward to working together.”

Board Members Gather to Celebrate Agency’s History and Future



Stephen Woodbury, the first chair of the agency’s Board of Directors with current chair, **Lisa Toner** at the 2007 Board of Directors Reunion.

Current and former Community Counseling Center Board Members gathered for the agency’s first Board of Directors’ Reunion last fall.

Attendees from as far away as Lovell came together for an evening to reminisce about the agency’s rich history and learn about its new, innovative programs and services.

Current board members remarked how much they appreciated learning about the way Community Counseling Center came into being. Past Board Members noted how pleased they were that Community Counseling Center continues to meet the emerging needs of the greater Portland community and fulfill the agency’s mission.

Community Counseling Center Welcomes New Board Members



Frank Brooks is a clinical social worker in Portland and is a past employee of Community Counseling Center. Frank has provided volunteer leadership and support on numerous special projects and programs throughout the years, and currently chairs the LGBTQ advisory committee for the agency.



David Smith, a retired lawyer from New York, has served on the boards of numerous healthcare organizations. David also served on the Children's Service Society Board for many years in New York, and is currently a trustee of Barrier Free Living, Inc.




Laurie Williamson is the Director of Home Meal Solutions at Hannaford Bros. Co. She is also an attorney and has an extensive background in health care law. Laurie also serves on the board of the Portland Public Library, and has served on the board of directors of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

Community Counseling Center Case Manager Honored as “Purple Starfish” recipient

Khadija Guled, case manager with the Refugee & Immigrant Case Management program, has recently been awarded the 2008 Perdita Huston Purple Starfish Award. This award is sponsored by the Maine Women Writers Collection at the University of New England. It is given annually to an emerging Maine woman leader who inspires others with her transforming vision and action to create a vibrant, culturally pluralistic society, embracing equal rights and a healthful environment for all.



 Khadija was nominated for this award because of her longstanding commitment to greater Portland's immigrant and refugee communities. “Ms. Guled is a graceful and fierce community activist who has fought for justice for immigrants and the poor in Southern Maine for over a decade,” noted nominator Sandy Wright. “She is a dedicated and tireless advocate who has had many roles in the greater Portland community, including student leader, educator, mentor, volunteer, organizer and professional advocate.”

Khadija is a dedicated and caring case manager at Community Counseling Center for the many families with whom she works.

Clients and Staff Speak to State Legislature in Behalf of Continued Services

As we have all seen in the news, this year the State of Maine faced a serious budget crisis. Mental health and family service programs for the poor throughout the state experienced devastating cuts and worked to fill unexpected budget shortfalls.

In response to the proposed budget cuts, Community Counseling Center staff and clients traveled to Augusta to speak on behalf of programs for the elderly, Deaf, and other vulnerable populations.

While cuts to mental health services were ultimately passed, they were less severe than originally proposed, thanks to the advocacy efforts of clients, staff and volunteers from Community Counseling Center and other community based service providers.

“I know I have only one voice to share, but know I am speaking for the many who are not yet strong enough to speak about this for themselves.”

— Client testimony to Maine legislators

Local Businesses Support Children's Programs

The **Bangor Savings Bank Foundation** provided a grant of \$5,000 to fund the development and production of a new tool designed to help the children of parents deployed to war. The *Courageous Kids Kits* are available for order online at www.commcc.org/veterans or by phone at (207) 874-1030. **For more information about *Courageous Kids Kits* and Community Counseling Center's services for service members, veterans, their families & children, please see page 7.**

Concordia Partners, LLC, donated \$1,500 to support Community Counseling Center's CMY Program. These funds allowed the agency to access municipal and state funds through a matching grant. Thank you Concordia Partners!



Michael O'Reilly & Melissa Marcaurelle of Bangor Savings Bank present a check to Leslie Clark Brancato (center), President & CEO of Community Counseling Center.

Elder Services Program Receives Competitive Grant

Community Counseling Center has been awarded funds and technical assistance through a grant from the national Alliance for Children & Families' *New Age of Aging* program.

This program matches agencies that have demonstrated motivation and commitment to grow in the field of aging with mentor organizations.



Community Counseling Center applied for this grant to learn innovative ways to help meet the needs of older adults and their families. The mentoring relationship will provide help as our agency develops its vision and creative strategies for future programs, funding and creative collaboration in serving older adults.

Foundations Support Conversion to Electronic Consumer Records

Two charitable foundations have granted funds to Community Counseling Center in support of the agency's conversion from paper records to an electronic consumer record system. These grants will allow community-based staff, including case managers, school-based clinicians, and those who provide counseling service in clients' homes, to work from the field without needing to return to the office to complete necessary paperwork.

- **The Sam L. Cohen Foundation** has granted \$10,000 to fund the purchase of laptops and a software package designed especially for psychiatric medication management.
- **The Davis Family Foundation** has provided a grant of \$12,000 to fund the purchase of a terminal server and software licenses.

Community Counseling Center's Recognition Fund

In memory of Glen Bennett
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of Rose Giannavola
Richard Loiacono

In memory of Harold Caro
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of Dr. Elliot Winograd
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In honor of Michelle Brodsky & Marla Ryder
Rita Kissen

In honor of Laura Gottfried
Lynn Weisz

In honor of Lorraine Riffle
Todd Goodwin

In memory of Theodore Pelletier
Nicole Pelletier Holt

In honor of Jane Weiss' Birthday
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In honor of Paula Kaplan
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of Sarah Bresnick
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In honor of Lisa Toner
Virginia Toner

In memory of Constance Fasino
Richard Loiacono

In honor of Linda McKenney
Avery Jenkins &
TIP Volunteers

In honor of Sharon Prizant
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of William McInnis
Sandra Stewart

In honor of Sally Fisher & Molly
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In honor of Robert Adam
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of Craig Owens' Father
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In memory of John Tighe
Paul Doherty
Karen & Alan Zwickel
Lucy & Sarah-Jane Poli
Theresa Langevin
Nanette & Lawrence Chern
Christine & John L'Hommedieu
New York Times
Pencham & James Peters
John & Laurie DeFilippis
Tony Harrell
Laura Pepper-Doyle
Lisa & Todd Duchaine
Dudley Sayre

In honor of Vicky & Lynn Frisbey
Wendy Laidlaw

To give a gift in honor or memory of a loved one, please use the enclosed envelope or call Lynn Weisz at (207) 874-1030.

3rd Annual Heroes with Heart Awards Dinner & Silent Auction Raises Funds, Awareness for TIP



Portland Police Sergeant Robin Gauvin, 2008 Heroes With Heart Volunteer Choice Award winner, with wife, Theresa, TIP volunteer Susan Marean and David Shedd. Heroes with Heart is a community celebration of everyday heroes, and the premiere fundraiser for the agency's Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine.

On February 15th, over 225 community and business leaders, first responders, and volunteers from the Portland, South Portland, Scarborough, Westbrook and Gorham police and fire departments gathered for the 3rd *Heroes with Heart Awards Dinner and Silent Auction*. The event raised community awareness and funds for the Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine (TIP), a program that provided practical support to 711 people during the crucial first hours following a tragedy in 2007.

Heroes with Heart was hosted by **Shannon Moss**, News Anchor of WMTW-8, and featured remarks by special guest **Congressman Tom Allen**. Awards were presented to six first responders who were nominated by chiefs, supervisors and TIP volunteers for demonstrating exceptional compassion to

individuals and families who experienced a traumatic event. **Maine Medical Center** was given the Heart of Gold award for its strong ongoing support of the program, and its commitment to supporting both the medical and emotional needs of individuals and families who have been affected by an unexpected traumatic event.

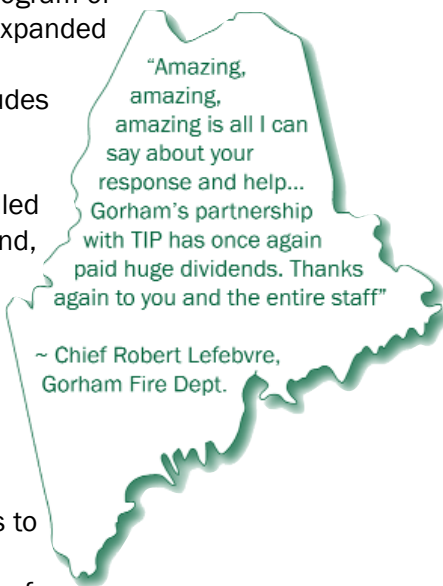
TIP Expands Service Area to Windham and Falmouth

The Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine (TIP) has expanded its service area to two new communities and now includes seven cities and towns in Cumberland County. TIP volunteers are currently called to trauma scenes by Portland, South Portland, Gorham, Scarborough, Westbrook, and now Falmouth and Windham police and fire departments, as well as Maine Medical Center.

TIP trains citizen volunteers to provide emotional and practical support to victims of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy. Volunteers are called to fires, car accidents, traumatic injuries, and unexpected deaths. While the calls they receive vary greatly, one constant remains: victims of tragedy do not have to face their crisis alone, thanks to TIP.

To learn more about the Fall TIP Volunteer Training Academy, call Avery Jenkins at (207) 874-1030 or email ajenkins@commcc.org.

www.commcc.org



PRYSM Hosts Prom for LGBTQA Youth

Proud Rainbow Youth of Southern Maine (PRYSM) held its annual prom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning & allied (LGBTQA) youth on Friday, May 9th at the Holiday Inn By the Bay. Over 300 youth from throughout Maine celebrated to the theme of *Out through the Decades*.

This annual event assures that all youth have the opportunity



to celebrate their prom. "It's hard being gay, living in northern Maine," a prom attendee conveyed. "When I went to the PRYSM Prom, I didn't feel different, or self-conscious or afraid. I just felt like me. It felt good and I had an awesome time."

For more information about PRYSM, including the annual Prom and weekly Drop-In program, call Joanna Testa at (207) 874-1022 or email prysm@commcc.org.

If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution to PRYSM, please call Lynn Weisz at (207) 874-1030 or email lweisz@commcc.org.

Innovative Services Spotlight:

Programs for Veterans, Service Members, their Families & Children

In 2007, Community Counseling Center released a study, in partnership with the Maine Army National Guard, that assessed the types of readjustment issues that Guard members face related to military deployment. The study found that service members and their families face significant challenges that can interfere with everyday life, including the difficulties inherent in becoming a single-parent household during times of extended deployment. A large number of deployed service members reported that they were experiencing trauma-related issues, such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse problems.

Community Counseling Center has continued to strengthen its working relationship with the Maine National Guard. A counselor from the agency now has regular office hours at the Stevens Avenue Armory, during which service members and families can access counseling or inquire about available services. Additionally, Community Counseling Center is partnering with the Maine National Guard to offer “Heart to Heart” meetings, informal discussions with the families of service members designed to help families deal with deployment proactively, alleviating crises and issues before they arise.

Community Counseling Center services include specialized counseling and educational offerings to the families and children of service members and veterans. Through individual, family and group counseling and various outreach activities, Community Counseling Center can help individuals and families learn new ways of coping with the stresses that accompany the deployment of a family member. Community Counseling Center is also pleased to offer two new resources to help service members, their families and children (see below).



Major General John W. Libby of the Maine National Guard, speaking about the needs of service members and their families at Community Counseling Center's Annual Meeting.



Bill Hall of Martin's Point Healthcare, Congressman Michael Michaud and Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO of Community Counseling Center, at CCC's conference for those providing service to veterans and their families.

Courageous Kids Kits

Courageous Kids Kits are tools for parents, schools and helping professionals working with the children of deployed parents. These kits provide tips for parents, children and teens, as well as tools, including a Badge of Courage, and notes kids can use to jot down things they want to remember to tell their deployed parent.



Maine Directory of Support

The Maine Directory of Support is a resource guide for service members, veterans and their families. These guides include tips for selecting a counselor and lists of providers throughout Maine that have a special interest or expertise in the unique needs of military personnel and their families.



For more information about Community Counseling Center's services for veterans, their families & children, or to order a *Courageous Kids Kit* or *Maine Directory of Support*, please call (207) 874-1030, (207) 874-1043 (tty) or visit www.commcc.org/veterans.



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Save the Date

October 23rd: Annual Meeting featuring Esther Deblinger, PhD

Please join us as we celebrate a year of meeting the emerging needs of our community. Dr. Deblinger will speak about the impact of trauma on children and how effective treatment can help children heal.

Clarion Hotel, Portland • 5- 7pm • Free

November 23rd: Make Your Voice Heard & Celebrate Diverse Families

Join us for a morning workshop designed to help community members advocate for their needs. Later, Celebrate Diverse Families, an annual event in honor of National Family Week, will provide fun & entertainment suitable for all families.

Time & Location TBD • Free

February 27th: Heroes with Heart

Mark your calendars for the 4th Annual Heroes with Heart, a celebration of everyday heroes and premiere fundraising event supporting the Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine. FMI call Lynn Weisz at 207.874.1030.

Holiday Inn By the Bay • Call for tickets