Leading the Way to Recovery

THE CONNECTION 2017 ANNUAL REPORT
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LEADING THE WAY TO RECOVERY
DEAR FRIENDS,

At The Connection we celebrate our clients’ recovery. Recovery from mental illness; recovery from addiction; recovery from trauma. Our staff is committed to helping individuals and families recover from addiction, trauma, and its consequences through the provision of quality education, resources and support.

Thank you for your interest in our Annual Report. Read on to learn more about our work in Connecticut and be sure to look at The Connection client stories of courage. We are truly moved by these transformational success stories—and we hope you will be as well.

Sincerely,

Gloster Aaron, Ph.D.
CHAIR, THE CONNECTION, INC.

Stephen Angle, Ph.D.
CHAIR, THE CONNECTION FUND, INC.
THE CONNECTION’S MISSION
BUILDING SAFE, HEALTHY, CARING COMMUNITIES AND INSPIRING PEOPLE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS PRODUCTIVE AND VALUED CITIZENS.
OUR IMPACT
The Better Choice Program provides an array of services to individuals and/or their family members affected by problem gambling. The program provides peer case management and community outreach to promote awareness, education and prevention as it relates to problem gambling disorders.

The program offers these services, in addition to medication management, in New Haven and Middletown. Dr. Marc Potenza, MD, is a nationally renowned expert in the field of problem gambling and serves as Medical Director for the program.

The Connection’s Better Choice program is one of the largest in the state. We offer diverse groups, host multiple client activities throughout the year, and support the long-term recovery of our clients with this high-relapse disorder. Program staff members have certifications from the National Council on Problem Gambling and receive regular invitations to present their expertise at local and national conferences.
PROFILE:

RECOVERY HOUSE

Recovery House is a 27-bed residential program that provides supportive services to low-income adults with substance use disorders or co-occurring disorders, located in the heart of the City of New Haven. This program provides a safe, therapeutic, and sober living environment for people in the very early stages of recovery.

The program serves approximately 120 people in recovery annually, for an average stay of about 60 days. People who access this type of care typically have recently gone through the medical detoxification process and are in need of an intermediate level of care to support their stabilization.

Recovery House provides an array of person-centered services on-site and links residents with community-based services that promote recovery. We use a harm-reduction approach and seek to support people in reducing or eliminating substance use; improving or maintaining their social support systems; improving or maintaining housing stability; and successfully completing desired and clinically indicated substance use treatment.
PROFILE: WOMEN’S RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Women’s Recovery Support Program, located in Bridgeport, CT, serves women 18 years and older. The program helps women return to their communities by providing them with intensive case management services including: financial management, resume writing, education and vocational assistance, life skills, developing healthy relationships, and improving natural support systems. Workshops held throughout the year focus on issues such as relapse prevention, gambling and sexuality. All participants must be willing and able to work as well as agree to a one-year commitment. Program staff works closely with people in this program to help participants realize their value to their communities; staff assists each participant in helping them reach their fullest potential as a contributing member of society.
Logano Place is a nine- to twelve-month program designed to support people transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency, named after NASCAR driver, Joey Logano. The Joey Logano Foundation has contributed to the operation of the program since it opened in 2014. Located on the Connecticut Valley Hospital campus, this Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services-funded program serves men and women who are active in their recovery and mental health treatment and can engage in weekly community activity. On-site case managers support each person with a customized array of services including educational and vocational development, financial management, life skills and developing healthy relationships. Case managers also connect people to available community resources with the overall goal of achieving self-sufficiency and stable housing.
PROFILE: CREST CENTER

The Community Reporting Engagement Support and Treatment (CREST) Center is a community-based mental health day-reporting program, based in New Haven. The CREST Center’s mission is to bridge the efforts of the mental health and criminal justice systems to meet the needs of community safety. The program serves individuals 18 and over diagnosed with a mental illness or co-occurring disorder and involved in the Criminal Justice System.

The CREST Center works closely with referring agencies in an effort to provide a comprehensive and coordinated supervision plan. Program staff provides our clients with information, skills, structure, and the support needed to reach their full potential and make informed decisions about their recovery.
This past year, The Connection’s staff assisted approximately **15,670 people** throughout Connecticut who have experienced trauma in their lives and are struggling with substance use, mental illness, homelessness, and community justice issues. In addition, through The Connection’s Institute for Innovative Practice®, we connect research to practice to better serve our clients, raise awareness of societal issues, and promote sound public policy.
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**PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE HELPED**

- **3,706** Community Justice Clients
- **4,743** Family Support Services Clients
- **7,221** Behavioral Health Clients

As we encourage integrated care, many of our clients receive assistance from more than one Connection program or service.
YOUR CONNECTION TO

Self-Sufficiency
"You have to make up your mind where you want to go. Either I’m going to be a bum, or I’m going to do something to change my life and make something of myself."

BLAINE
Blaine, a graduate of The Connection’s Roger Sherman House prison release program, works for the City of New Haven, and recently opened his own cleaning business, McKay’s Custom Clean.

Blaine was ready to reclaim his life when he came to the program. “They gave me structure,” he says.
Upon graduation, Blaine was offered a job with the City’s Traffic and Parking Department. That job allowed him to give back to his community.

“I have a tremendous support system. I know I have to do something bigger, to help give something back,” he says.
YOUR CONNECTION TO
Well-Being
"I went from a chance to go to the Super Bowl to drugs to jail. I achieved my life goal when I was very young. My goal now is to do something good for someone every day for the rest of my life."

GARY
Gary’s life has been one of extremes. A graduate of the Eddy Shelter and Logano Place, he now lives at a supportive housing program in New Haven and works for an addictions treatment agency.

Gary was a star football player in high school and college. He played in the NFL for two years until a sports injury cut his football career short.
After moving to Connecticut, Gary turned to drugs and alcohol to cope. Addiction led to prison and drug treatment programs, but he kept relapsing. His turning point came in 2013 when he came to the Eddy Shelter and eventually became one of Logano Place’s first graduates.

Gary is an athlete who has taken full advantage of the second chance he was given.
YOUR CONNECTION TO
Recovery
What I learned during the time I was at Hallie House is that what I put out is often what I get. If I’m a caring, loyal, compassionate person, then I attract caring, compassionate, loyal people. I get what I give.

JENNIFER
Meet Jennifer, a graduate of The Connection’s Hallie House Program for Women and Children in Middletown. Jennifer struggled with addictions for over 10 years and spent time at York Correctional Institute for Women. Today she has a successful career in accounting and is in a committed relationship.
Jennifer grew up in Wethersfield. Despite growing up with two parents who loved her and made certain she had everything she needed, getting to this point has not been easy.

Jennifer’s story of addiction is common. Addictions know no boundaries, striking even people who seem to have everything.

“I love how my life is now. I just want to continue growing.”
YOUR CONNECTION TO
Self-Sufficiency
“My greatest happiness is that I am safe and reborn—having a renewed mind, having the ability to help myself support my children and help others. I can’t forget the truth of my sordid history, but I can embrace the new light and new life.”

MARY
Mary, a client of The Connection’s PILOTS Permanent Supportive Housing Program, is now a successful woman who has a solid place in her community.

She works for the Connecticut Pardon Team, is a minister in her church and is president of The Connection’s Women Empowering Women group.
Mary lost 20 years of her life to drugs and unhealthy relationships. She has spent time in prison for use and selling, eventually becoming homeless for several years. She became one of the first clients of The Connection’s Elm City Women and Children’s Center and eventually found her way to the PILOTS program.

“I’m thankful that I can lean on The Connection and God. You have to be an active participant in your own life.”
You can’t get me out of here. I’m here! I’m not going anywhere, anytime soon. This is home! I’m at peace when I come here.
Willie, a resident of The Connection’s permanent supportive housing Milestone Program in Bridgeport, is an extraordinary man with a difficult past and a vision for a positive future.

Willie spent many years on the streets and many years in prison.

“I spent 56 years of my life in addiction. I missed out on an awful lot,” he says.
Willie completed an application to live at Milestone with the help of the Homeless Outreach Team and became the program’s first resident.

Once Willie moved into his new home, he began to focus on his own recovery, and helping others. Today Willie volunteers for recovery organizations in Connecticut and is well-recognized for his dedication and advocacy.
YOUR CONNECTION TO

Recovery
My fiancé has 14 years clean. He was with me when I had that great job . . . and when I relapsed. He’s the one who held my hand and took me to meetings with him. I used his support network for a while until I was able to find my own.

MINDY
Mindy, twice a graduate of The Connection’s Women’s Recovery Support Program and the Supportive Housing for Families Program®, has struggled with addiction since her late teens.

In her mid-twenties, she found The Connection and achieved a sobriety that lasted six years. Following a car accident that made it difficult for her to go to meetings, she quickly spiraled back into addiction.
When Mindy recognized the toll her addiction was taking on her family, she contacted staff at The Connection and re-entered the Women’s Recovery Support Program.

Today, Mindy is working to complete her bachelor’s degree and works part-time. She relies on her fiancé and maintains a good relationship with her children.
YOUR CONNECTION TO
Self-Sufficiency
The best part of my job is being able to be the face of hope for people. The rest is gravy.
Stephen, a case manger in the Bettor Choice Program for problem gambling, is a person in long-term recovery. He began experimenting with drugs and alcohol in his teens, and continued using even as he rose through the ranks at his job with the State of Connecticut. But his main problem was gambling.

“I gambled every day—I didn’t drink and drug every day,” he says. “Even when I wasn’t gambling, I was preoccupied with gambling.”
When Stephen was 29, he went on a three-day drinking binge and realized he had a problem. He told his supervisor and through the Employee Assistance Program went to a detox program and then to an Intensive Outpatient Program. He has attended AA, NA, and Gamblers Anonymous meetings faithfully since that time.

Stephen learned about the Bettor Choice program soon after he retired from the state at age 55. He began working for The Connection in 2013, and has become an International Certified Gambling Counselor II.
I would stay in homeless shelters, move in with friends for a few weeks, go to women’s shelters, and then back to the homeless shelters. In-between I would relapse. Now my burdens feel a whole lot different, and lifted. I’m loving being in my own apartment.
Velveta is a client of The Connection’s Norton Court supportive housing program who was homeless for 10 years before she came to live at Norton Court.

Velveta started drinking at 14 and moved on to other substances. After 5 years working on her recovery in the program, today Velveta likes to stay busy. Dually diagnosed with bipolar disorder and substance abuse, she needs to stay active in order to maintain her recovery.
“I’m very involved in the community. I do community outreach and the walk of faith for my church—I help give out food and clothes to people who need it.”

Velveta is currently enrolled in a vocational training program to prepare to return to the workforce part-time.
UPDATES FROM
THE CONNECTION FUND/
INSTITUTE FOR
INNOVATIVE PRACTICE®
We believe that a meaningful integration of research, theory and practice is required to address the complex needs of our clients. At The Institute for Innovative Practice®, we have created the conditions to realize this vision—by integrating and embedding internationally renowned researchers into our direct care programs.

**Research:** We conduct pilot studies to explore the efficacy of promising practices in the fields of behavioral health, community justice, and family support services, under the guidance of our own in-house researcher.

**Practice:** The results of our own research, as well as best practice standards, directly inform our work with clients.

**Advocacy:** All of our work with clients, as well as our support for staff, is grounded in a trauma-informed perspective that honors the lived experiences of individuals as a source of strength and wisdom.

2017 kicked off large scale and long-term projects for the Institute, including the design grant awarded to the Middletown Working Cities team. Led by The Connection and the Middlesex United Way, the Working Cities team features 20 cross-sector organizations that aim to increase the earning power of single parent households. This will be accomplished through building successful partnerships with school, neighborhood, faith-based groups, and working with additional stakeholders to craft polices that are advantageous to low-income community members.
OUR EVENTS
OUR EVENTS

IN 2017, THE CONNECTION SHOWCASED ITS GOOD WORK WITH SEVERAL FUNDRAISING EVENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE AGENCY AND THE COMMUNITY.
THE CONNECTION PRESENTS

Unmasking Homelessness
2017 Masquerade Ball
The Connection hosted its first annual Masquerade Ball on May 24th. The Masquerade Ball featured the theme of Unmasking Homelessness as a way to de-stigmatize and tell the stories of a complex issue that affects so many of The Connection’s clients. A current Connection client who has been homeless and has a history of incarceration shared her story about the ways in which our caring staff and programs have helped her find success in her life. The event raised more than $20,000 for The Connection’s programs.
2017 PIZZA FEST
The 22nd Annual Greater New Haven Pizza Fest was a wonderful family-friendly event on the New Haven Green on June 21-23, 2017. The festival took place on the New Haven Green and coincided with the International Festival of Arts and Ideas’s free lunchtime concert series. Many people enjoyed grabbing their slice and enjoying some sunshine and good music during their lunch break. **The longstanding event raised over $6,000 to benefit the Cornerstone program in New Haven.**
DRIVING HOPE HOME
The 4th Annual 2017 Driving Hope Home fundraiser took place in July at the Southington Country Club and Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. Family and friends from the community spent the day with NASCAR driver Joey Logano at the successful event, raising more than $60,000 for programs at The Connection. The event featured a golf tournament with a raffle, dinner, car show, as well as live and silent auctions. Middletown, Connecticut native, Joey Logano, has returned home for each of the last four years to meet his local fans and give back to his hometown community at this annual fundraiser.
Second chances are hard to come by in life, so when I got mine in racing, I wanted to make sure I could bring as many second chances to others,” said Logano. “Through the Foundation, and with the support of generous sponsors, we were able to give back to charities in my home state while having lots of fun at the events. I’d like to thank all of the Foundation supporters for helping me make a greater impact in communities across the country and offering so many kids a path toward a successful future.

In 2018, Joey Logano will be featured as the spokesperson of a public awareness campaign for our foster care program, Connecting Children and Families.
2017 CFA SOCIETY CORPORATE 5K
Nearly 1,000 participants raced through beautiful Bushnell Park in Hartford on August 4 for the CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) Society Corporate 5K event, benefitting The Connection. With strong support from the CFA Society—Hartford and organized by Race Director John Bysiewicz of JB Sports, the event raised over $15,000 for The Connection’s programs. Create a team and join us for our next race on August 2, 2018!
THE FRESH START PROGRAM

at The Center for Compassionate Recovery
17 Wall Street, Madison, CT 06443

Where Compassion Meets Courage Everyday

www.cerfreshstart.com
The Connection hosted its annual conference, **ADDICTIVE DISORDERS: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES • RECLAIMED LIVES** on October 23 and 24 at Wesleyan University. 400 attendees arrived eager to learn about topics regarding addictive disorders. A sample of the multiple breakout sessions included:

- Explaining the use of pharmacological medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies.
- A special session on the cutting edge of exploring Internet Addiction.
- Exploring the neurobiology behind addiction and its effects on the nervous system.

The Keynote speaker for the conference was Kathleen F. Maurer, MD, MPH, MBA, Director of Health and Addiction Services and Medical Director of the Connecticut Department of Correction. Dr. Maurer was recently awarded the Coalition of Correctional Health Authorities national award for Leadership in Correctional Healthcare.

Join us for The Connection’s 2018 Conference, **Exploring Engagement: Making Meaningful Connections** on October 22, 2018 at Wesleyan University.
FINANCIALS
THE CONNECTION, INC. ANNUAL SUPPORT
2016–2017 DATA BASED UPON AGENCY BUDGET, FY 2008 TO FY 2017
TOTAL GRANT EXPENDITURES BY SERVICE AREA

FY 2017

$ 9,114,284 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
$ 14,061,140 COMMUNITY JUSTICE
$ 22,697,886 FAMILY SUPPORT
$ 509,194 OTHER
$ 46,382,504 TOTAL

HOW WE USE THE DOLLARS

88%
DIRECT Services to clients and communities, including counseling, evaluations, community service work, food, housing, care, guidance, supervision and monitoring.

12%
INDIRECT General leadership and management services, including planning, program and fund development, accounting, audits, legal and personnel support, board support and community relations.

Percentages are calculated based on total expenses.
2017 Supporters
THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CARING INDIVIDUALS, COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO SUPPORTED THE CONNECTION’S MISSION BY MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AGENCY IN FISCAL YEAR 2017*.

*JULY 1, 2016 THRU JUNE 30, 2017
A-1 TOYOTA
A R. MAZZOTTA EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS
DR. GLOSTER B. AARON, JR. AND DR. KATHERINE ALLOCCO
ABATE APIZZA & SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
ACCESS COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
ACTIVE NETWORK
ADVENTURE PARK
AETNA FOUNDATION
AGENCY ON AGING OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
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ANONYMOUS
ANTIQUES & HOME FURNISHINGS, LLC
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ARRIGONI WINERY
TRACY BADEN
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NICOLE BAJEK
BALDWIN MEDIA
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RUTHANNE CANTO
KENNETH CAPANO, JR.
CAPITOL VIEW APARTMENTS
CAPPETTA'S PIZZA & CATERING
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CHELSEA GROTON FOUNDATION
CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITY MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF NEW HAVEN
CLINTON CROSSINGS PREMIUM OUTLETS
MATTHEW COHEN
DAN COLLINS
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER NEW HAVEN
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT
STEVE AND TINA CONLIN
FRANCIS X. CONLON II, CPA
CONNECTICARE
CONNECTICUT COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS
CONNECTICUT COURT SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
CRESCENT STREET OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY
MICHAEL AND BETSY CRONIN
CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION STREET
ROCHELLE CURRIE
DA LEGNA
LISA DAVIS
RICHARD AND BETH DAVIS
DAVIES O'SULLIVAN & PRIEST
ALISSA K. DEJONGE, IN LOVING MEMORY OF RJ AND PAULA DEJONGE
LISA DEMATTIES-LEPORE
MARIA DEZI
MICHAEL E. DONAHUE
DOWNTOWN CABARET THEATRE
AUSTAN DROESSEL
JOHN DUCA
EDGEHILL REALTORS AT PEARCE/JUDITH NORMANDIN
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PANERA BREAD COMPANY
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PENSKE TRUCK RENTAL
PEPE'S PIZZA
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KATHY SAVIND
JAMES M. SCARAMOZZA
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SEA T.E.A IMPROV
DAVID AND CORY SELLS
TAHIRAH SHARIF
SHIPMAN & GOODWIN LLP
DR. ALLEN AND MRS. IRENE SILBERSTEIN
LOUISE SILVERMAN
SIMPLY SHARING
EDWARD SIOCH
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STAR PIZZA
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SUBURBAN OFFICE FURNITURE
SUBURBAN STATIONERS, INC.
SUMMER THEATRE OF NEW CANAAN
TAKEN FOR GRANITE
FRED AND MARY TARCA
TARGET
THE BUSHNELL CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
THE CONNECTION CATERING
THE IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE
THE PLACE IN GUILFORD
THE VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY
THEATER WORKS
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ROBERTA THORNTON
THURSTON FOODS, INC.
TOLLY'S APIZZA
TOWN FAIR TIRE CENTERS
TOWN OF CROWELL
TOWN OF DURHAM
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
TOWN OF ESSEX
TOWN OF HAMDEN
TOWN OF KILLINGWORTH
TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN
TOWN OF PORTLAND
TOWN OF WESTBROOK
DON AND VICKI TUBBS
DAWN TYSON
MACKenzie TYSON
UNITED ILLUMINATING COMPANY
UNITED STATES BUREAU OF JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT PROBATION OFFICE
UNITED WAY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN
UNITED WAY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY
IRIS VELAZQUEZ
THANK YOU.
THE CONNECTION IS ACCREDITED BY THE COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA)

COA is an independent, not-for-profit organization that partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting appropriate best practice standards. Achieving accreditation entails review of all aspects of The Connection's programs and services. COA accreditation has improved the way the agency delivers services to our clients and the community, and has established strategies for continual improvement in the years to come.