



NEWS & VIEWS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 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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Fall is just around the corner and it is hard to believe the new school year will start in the next couple of weeks. The Family Enrichment Network continues to grow and change and it continues to be an exciting time at the agency.

We continue to be active in our grant writing and program development to meet community needs based on our community assessment and strategic plan. We appreciate the effort and input and support. We will keep actively looking for financial resources to develop and sustain community programming. We are currently looking for properties in Tioga and Chenango Counties for program development.

As we know, election season is a few weeks out. Make your voices and vote count. Everything we do or not do makes a difference. We continue to be in a decent funding cycle with Early Childhood Development. We need to be forward-looking, assertive bordering on aggressive in terms of future program

development. The children and families of this community need it and deserve it.

We have built an organization and a staff structure that has placed us in a great position for the future. In the past we have been able to weather the funding challenges and continue to be in a good position.

We could not do so that without the support of the staff, the Governing Board and the entire community. Our staff this past year has worked tirelessly to assist us in moving this agency forward and meet the needs of children and families. We thank you for your past support of our Agency and look forward to future partnership opportunities.



*Darrell Newvine,
Family Enrichment Network*

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What Type of Child Care Should I Use?

When thinking about where to put your child, there are many things to consider, such as location, hours, cost, as well as using a licensed center or a registered/licensed family child care home provider.

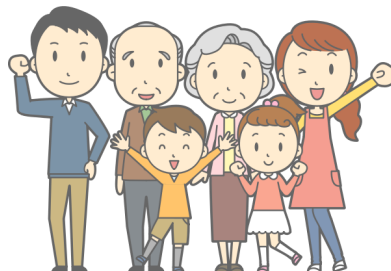
The biggest benefit of using a regulated child care program is that someone has checked their background and is overseeing what the program does. The program has regulations to follow to ensure children are kept healthy and safe. The program must have education requirements and/or ongoing professional development to understand best practices for child development and early childhood education. Regulated child care is usually a higher quality child care.

In New York, a family child care home provider must be registered/licensed if they care for more than two unrelated children in their own home.* If someone is caring for more than two unrelated children all day Monday through Friday, and they are not registered/licensed with the state, then there is a good chance that person is operating an illegal child care program. Many times illegal child care is used because parents and the care provider just do not know the rules. It can also be a cheaper option for a family, be a more convenient location, or possibly be the only option as there is a child care shortage across the country.

As the Child Care Resource and Referral, we promote high quality child care and encourage all parents to choose regulated child care and ensure their program is following the regulations. If you think you are using illegal child care or interviewed someone who is operating an illegal child care program, call us to ask. Calls can be accepted from the CCR&R Director at 607-723-8313 ext. 872. After determining if it is in fact illegal, a call will be made with the state regulatory agency – the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. You can always call in an illegal child care complaint to 1-800-732-5207.

For assistance finding regulated child care options in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties, email referrals@familyenrichment.org or call Kami at 607-723-8313 ext. 829.

*There are exemptions for child care under than three hours.



CCR&R

Back To School Child Care

With the start of another school year comes possible change in your need for child care. If you need child care, whether full-time or part-time, use our FREE referral service for registered/licensed child care programs throughout Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties.

Email referrals@familyenrichment.org or call Kami at 607-723-8313 ext. 829.

New Programs:

Broome Group Family Child Care:

- Ink & Graphics Studios, LLC.
 - Melanie Shauger

Chenango Family Child Care:

- Jessica Vondauber

Tioga Family Child Care:

- Christine's Family Daycare -
Christine Rathke

Tioga Child Care Center:

- Tioga Downs Racetrack, LLC

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 to see our current list of openings or email your resume to mdifulvio@familyenrichment.org.

Family Support Services

Congratulations!

The Family Support Services department is very pleased to announce that our **Kinship Care Peer Mentor, Julie Morgan**, has been awarded her **Professional Family Peer Advocate Credential**.

This professional credential is administered by **Families Together in New York State** and is endorsed by the New York State Office of Mental Health.

In order to be credentialed as a Family Peer Advocate, **Julie** has completed training in key skills and competencies and has made a commitment to engage in ongoing professional development. She first had to meet the requirements for the provisional credential then had to complete extra course work, on-line training modules, three months of coaching calls, and 1000 hours of direct work with kinship care families.



At this point, Julie is the first staff person in a NYS Kinship Care program to be awarded this Professional Credential. This represents an important step forward for the profession of Family Peer Advocacy and its unique contribution to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with complex social, emotional and behavioral needs.

Please join us in saying well done Julie, you are a credit to our Agency.

If you or someone you know is raising someone else's children and needs help and resources, please call Julie Morgan at 723-8313 x 840.



Special Education Services

Calming Room

Do you ever feel anxiety mounting or anger bubbling up inside? Well, so do some of our children at FEN. Because of this, our Occupational Therapy Department (Charlotte Heaney and Mary Ann Higgins) used a grant to purchase products to create a "calming room". It is designed as a safe space to relax and relieve some pressure. The child can have soothing music playing or even calming scents dispersed in the room. There are a variety of light up devices as well as sensory boards and objects to use as needed. Time is limited in the room as it is meant to calm a child enough to have them be successful once he/she is back in the classroom. Based on initial reports, the room is a huge success and a welcome addition to support the students.



Housing

Our housing department offers assistance to those in our community who are experiencing homelessness, but there is no one size fits all solution. There is no singular root cause of homelessness and it can look different depending on the person, the family, and the community. In order to help those in our community who are experiencing homelessness, we must first understand it.

Below is an excerpt from Red Nose Day website, originally published December 6, 2021, that explains the four types of homelessness people can face.

What are the four types of homelessness?

<https://rednoseday.org/news/what-are-four-types-homelessness>

Homelessness is a global issue. Although a safe home should be considered a fundamental human right, nearly 31 million children around the world are left unhoused. Many of these children and their families are forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution, and natural disasters. Some are left without shelter due to circumstances beyond their control.

As this winter season approaches, the needs of people facing homelessness could not be more urgent. But to help the unhoused in America, we must also understand that each case presents its own different root causes and challenges. Some reasons for homelessness include periods of unemployment, waning public assistance programs, domestic abuse, and mental illness.

In America, homelessness has been rapidly growing since the early 1990s, with exponential growth in suburban and rural areas. For youth and young adults in America, there are about 4 million who experience homelessness.

According to [the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#), the United States has twelve states with more than 10,000 people experiencing homelessness, including Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

In order to find sustainable solutions to this national crisis, we need to understand the types of homelessness millions of people in this country face every day.

Here is a breakdown of the four types of homelessness people face in the United States:

I. Transitional Homelessness

There is a popular misconception that homelessness is a chronic condition. While it's true in some cases, in reality, the most common type of homelessness is transitional.

Transitional homelessness is “a state of homelessness that’s a result of a major life change or catastrophic event”. These life changes might be job loss, a health condition, divorce, domestic abuse, a substance use disorder, or personal or family crisis, among many others, resulting in people being in unhoused situations for less than a year.

Housing, continued

People who experience transitional homelessness may enter a transitional housing program for a limited time. They may also sleep in their cars or outside. Oftentimes people experiencing transitional homelessness still have jobs, but cannot afford housing and other expenses.

Many people experiencing transitional homelessness tend to be younger. Youth are often harassed and discriminated against when they seek alternative housing, contributing to their disproportionately high rate of homelessness. Compared to older people, young people are often considered "invisible homeless," and statistics about them are scarce as they don't typically access services. The first sign of homelessness for them may be couch surfing or sleeping over with friends, which is considered less serious and obvious than sleeping on the street. About 8% of those who are experiencing homelessness identify as youth or young adults. On average, [there are around 550,000 people under the age of 24](#) and 380,000 under the age of 18 experiencing homelessness per year.

The LGBTQ community faces unique challenges and is often more likely to face violence, abuse, and exploitation. According to the Williams Institute, the most common factor to LGBTQ homelessness is family rejection based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

2. Episodic Homelessness

People can also experience "episodic homelessness", whether they are currently unhoused or experienced at least three periods of homelessness within the last 12 months. In contrast, those confronting the realities of "chronic homelessness" usually experience four periods within a calendar year without a home.

Like transitional homelessness, many of those facing episodic homelessness are younger or dealing with a disabling condition. These conditions could be substance use disorder, mental illness, and other mental and/or physical health conditions. In some cases, some episodically unhoused people have seasonal or minimum wage income jobs.

Episodic homelessness can eventually become chronic homelessness without adequate resources and support.

3. Chronic Homelessness

A person experiencing chronic homelessness is defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition" who has been homeless for more than one year. It's more common for people experiencing chronic homelessness to also deal with a certain disability, mental health condition, addiction, and other debilitating conditions that restrict their ability to escape homelessness.

According to the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#), chronically homeless people tend to be older and makeup about 17% of the homeless population. Many chronically unhoused people have complex, long-term health issues and live on the street, in parks, in cars, or in other places that are not suitable or safe for living.

Housing, continued

4. Hidden Homelessness

The fourth type of homelessness is referred to as “hidden homelessness.”

Individuals who live with others temporarily without a permanent home are considered “hidden homeless,” as it is often most unnoticed. Since they lack access to housing support resources and cannot be identified, they are 'hidden' from national statistics on homelessness.

Since they lack access to housing support resources and cannot be identified, they are 'hidden' from national statistics on homelessness.

People who experience hidden homelessness, often turn to friends, family, and neighbors for a shelter or a place of refuge. In a lot of cases, many of these people cannot afford to pay rent or afford other living expenses.

Many in the “hidden homeless” population are younger people who have experienced a sudden catastrophic life change, trauma, or challenges as a result. Youth are often harassed and discriminated against when they seek alternative housing, which contributes to their disproportionately high rate of homelessness. Compared to older people, young people are often considered “invisible homeless” - and statistics about them are scarce as they don't typically access services. The first sign of homelessness for them may be couch surfing or sleeping over with friends, which is considered to be less serious — and obvious — than sleeping on the street.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

While the best way to end homelessness is to provide permanent housing solutions for unhoused individuals, there are also other resources available. Red Nose Day supports organizations that focus on youth at risk for homelessness or in unstable housing situations. Covenant House, [a proud grantee of Red Nose Day](#), is one of the many organizations working to address homelessness in the US and abroad. The organization — spanning across 31 US cities and several parts of Latin America — has served and provided [more than 1 million young homeless and runaway youth](#) with short-term and transitional housing, food, urgent crisis care, and social services since its founding in 1972. Your support of Red Nose Day helps fund programs like Covenant House ensuring youth across the country and around the world have access to safe housing.



Department Spotlight

Head Start/Early Head Start: ERSEA

The spotlight is on our ERSEA Department. ERSEA stands for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance in Head Start and Early Head Start. ERSEA is the mechanism through which families learn about the program and our offerings to community families. With grassroots efforts, the ERSEA staff share information about Head Start program for preschool aged children and the Early Head Start program for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Broome County. After families learn about our program, the ERSEA staff begin the application and prescreening program where eligibility is determined. Once families are selected to the program, the enrollment process begins. After enrollment, we monitor children's attendance and support the family to ensure that children can participate in the program each day to become school ready. There are times when children will be absent due to illness or family circumstance; but the more days that children are able to participate in program the more ready they will be for their transition to preschool from Early Head Start or transition to their kindergarten program from Head Start. So, the Family Advocates work with their families and the ERSEA staff to ensure the most positive outcomes.

Our Broome County Head Start program has 287 participants; and our Early Head Start program has 112 participants. In Tioga County, we have 62 Head Start children and 32 infants and toddlers. Our total enrollment for all four programs in Broome and Tioga Counties is 493 children and their families.

The ERSEA staff are charged with recruiting, pre-screening, selecting, moving the family to enrollment which is completed by the Family Advocate. They are also charged with attendance tracking and follow up on attendance analysis.

I would like to applaud the members of the ERSEA Team: Kathy Gross, ERSEA Coordinator; Danielle Brown, Broome ERSEA Clerk; Sarah Buffington, Tioga ERSEA Clerk; and Cassidy Fischer, Recruitment/Outreach Worker. Cassidy is featured as our Employee Spotlight this month.

And a shout out to the Family Services Department for their efforts with enrolling and monitoring the attendance of our enrolled children.

It does in fact take a village!!! Head Start and Early Head Start is proof positive of that!

Employee Spotlights

Cassidy Fisher

I am still fairly new to FEN, I just started this past March of 2022. Before that, I was a nanny for a year right out of college. I graduated from SUNY Cortland in 2021 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology and Psychology. I lived in Cortland for another year after I graduated with my boyfriend, Gianno, until we moved back to Binghamton this past March into a house on the same day I started working here! We live with our cat, Beauty, and our two-year-old dog, Dobby, who are both rescues from a local animal sanctuary called Willow's Wings. Dobby came from Texas when he was four months old with a life threatening heart condition. Because of Willow, he was able to get his heart surgery that saved his life, and we adopted him a month later once he was recovered! He has been in perfect health ever since, and is the best little guy we could ask for! I've volunteered at Willow's Wings for seven years, and it's one of the most rewarding things I've had the chance to be a part of. I'm excited to continue my journey both here and at Willow's Wings, and hopefully adopt a few more animals (just don't tell Gianno)!



Shari Neuberger

Shari Neuberger has been an employee of the finance department of the Family Enrichment Network since January 24, 2000. Shari is responsible for maintaining our accounts receivable and ensures timely and accurate billing. Shari developed and oversees our inventory system. She has the keen sense of detail that this position requires. Shari always asks to learn more challenging tasks and never shirks additional responsibility. She is an integral part of the fiscal office.



While working for the Agency Shari has raised two fantastic children and has earned a business degree from BCC. She is a proud grandma of three. Shari's love for cooking has been passed down to her granddaughter who has been baking since she was three! In her free time, Shari enjoys traveling to visit her family with her wonderful husband Rob. There is far more to Shari than her accounting skills. Shari plays a mean guitar, loves to read, and sings like an angel. She has a B.A. in Environmental Studies and promotes recycling at home and within the agency. Shari embodies the spirit of this Agency and we are fortunate to have her.

Employee Spotlights

Kathy Gross



I have been employed with the Agency since September 1987, and have had multiple positions. I was the first Health Aide and computerized the Health Office long before we used a national data base. I was a Home Base Visitor, visiting families each week, with children coming in for a playgroup and parents attending their own meeting one day a week. After five years I became a Head Start Family Worker, then a Case Manager, with a caseload of 58, a Family Advocate/Recruitment Specialist, and eventually the ERSEA Coordinator. I have seen the Agency grow from two sites, St Ann's and Fayette, the coming and going of our sites at Franklin, MacArthur, and Upper Court St., giving up Fayette St. with all the neighborhood characters, to our current presence in two counties. For a while I was a substitute bus driver before CDL's were a requirement, the littles would tell me who was next to get off the bus and if I missed the house.

We are all lucky to have so many great people to work with and wonderful families to learn from, I have never wanted to work anywhere else.

Years of Service

5 Years

Theresa Petrucci
Brandy Reynolds

25 Years:

Deb Faulks
Lorinda Sweeney

35 Years:

Kathy Gross



FamilySM



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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For more information on available space or to set up your ad,

please call Laura at (607) 723-8313 ext. 815.