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VOLUME 1: ISSUE 3

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2011

SUPPORTING CHILDREN • STRENGTHENING FAMILIES • EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES • CHANGING LIVES

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Celebrating 50 Years Supporting Children Struggling With Mental Health Challenges

Did you know in 1962 the Child and Family Guidance Center was known as the San Fernando Valley Child Guidance Clinic? As the first nonprofit community mental healthcare agency in the San Fernando Valley we opened our doors with one focus, to provide mental healthcare services to severely emotionally



disturbed children. With 3 staff and a host of volunteers we set out to meet the needs of several hundred children on our waiting list. CFGC has always worked to address the specific special needs of children and their families residing in the San Fernando, Santa

CONTINUED ON PG.3

Antelope Valley

Childhood, How Sweet It Is Thanks to Thunder on the Lot

As a children's mental healthcare agency, we are fortunate to have received contributions from Kids Charities of the Antelope Valley's Thunder on the Lot for five consecutive years. Every year thousands gather at the Antelope Valley Fair Grounds in Lancaster, California, to get a glimpse of some of the most stellar bikes and cars around. Having donated more than \$45,000 to the Center, Thunder on the Lot is the largest charity fundraiser in the Antelope Valley. Thunder on the Lot proceeds benefit nonprofit organizations that make a difference in the lives of children in need. We appreciate Kids Charities of the Antelope Valley for their continued support of our cause, helping children and families overcome challenges associated with mental health issues.

Childhood, How Sweet It Is was our theme for this year's Thunder on the Lot, which attracted many families to our booth. Many staff volunteered to make our outreach efforts a success. Admissions Specialist

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Message from our Board Chair



When giving this holiday season I ask that you remember the Child and Family Guidance Center as one of your nonprofit charities. Our cause, serving children who have either behavioral, emotional, and/or mental health challenges, is increasingly in need of your support. We positively impact the lives of more than 21,000 children and families

annually, the majority of whom are low income and face multiple environmental or life problems.

Our youth are threatened with losing vital special needs services every year as we continue to face budget restraints that negatively impact services. When you give to the Center, you are making an investment in your community that changes the lives of children and sets them on a path towards becoming mentally healthy and productive members in our society. Please join me in donating today online at www.childguidance.org or by mail to 9650 Zelzah Avenue, Northridge, CA 91325.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season,

Sari Scheer
Board Chair

President's Message



As this year comes to a close, I want to thank all of you who have helped us fulfill our mission. If it were not for your support many children would be at a lost for mental healthcare services. I am pleased to announce that in 2012, the Child and Family Guidance Center will enter our 50th Anniversary year. Serving vulnerable and

at-risk children in the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys, we will undergo a new strategic planning process to ensure that we are able to continue to provide quality mental healthcare, supportive social services, and links to needed resources for many more years to come. I invite you to think of us as more than just a place this holiday season.

In this issue, we present to you the voices of our children, families, and communities. You will read about how Brian, a 7-year old boy, overcame a traumatic experience to later soar in school. You will discover how one mother battled with her emotional past to reconnect with her son and triumphs. You will also explore how nights of summer light can bring a community together to prevent gang activity. These stories and so many more are a small example of how far our programs and services extend to support children, strengthen families, empower communities, and change lives. We could not positively impact the lives of children without you, again, thank you.

Wishing you a warm and healthy holiday season,

Roy Marshall
President, CEO

The Child and Family Guidance
Center wishes you
Happy Holidays!

SAVE *the* DATE

**50TH ANNIVERSARY
GALA
NOVEMBER 10, 2012**

SUPPORT OUR CAUSE

**Give Funds
Volunteer
Spread the Word**

50 YEARS...CONTINUED FROM PG.1

Clarita, and Antelope Valleys. We invite you, your family, and your friends to join us in celebrating our 50th Anniversary milestone. Help us continue to ensure every child and family in need of mental healthcare resources have access to prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for years to come!

We are excited to announce our *50th Anniversary Gala* will honor outstanding community members dedicated to aiding children with behavioral, emotional, and mental health challenges. Please save the date, Saturday, November 10, 2012. As a nonprofit organization we rely on support from donors like you to positively impact the lives of children and their families in need of mental healthcare, supportive social services, and links to community resources. Some of our children are victims of violence, physical or sexual abuse, and neglect. With your investment we are able to serve children from infancy to 21 years of age who struggle everyday to overcome and triumph over difficult obstacles. This holiday season please include us in your charitable giving. You can visit our website, www.childguidance.org, to discover how we change lives everyday.

THUNDER ON THE LOT...CONTINUED FROM PG.1



Gabbie Galvez developed the concept. "I wanted visitors to remember how sweet childhood was and remind them that not all children have a happy childhood. That is why I work to ensure children who struggle with mental health challenges have the support they need to live a healthy and vibrant life," says Gabbie. Face painting, raffles, plinko, and a pinwheel are just some of the activities families enjoyed at our booth. "The children and families that we meet at Thunder on the Lot are always excited to see the Center providing engaging activities and helpful resource information in the community," said Rocio Cabrales, regional operations manager. If you would like to support our work in the Antelope Valley by volunteering or to donate, please contact our Development Department for more information at development@childguidance.org or 818.739.5319.

Supporting Children

From Trauma Victim to Class Leader



Brian was 4 years old when he fell victim to neglect and suspected physical abuse. Placed in foster care, Brian and his three siblings were adopted into a new loving family. It did not take long before Brian's family noticed he, then 6 years old, was unable to brush his teeth, clothe himself, or use the restroom on his own. He also exhibited many negative behaviors such as emotional outbursts with tears in his eyes and shouts of curse words when frustrated. "Brian really didn't know how to express himself and had very strong fears of abandonment," said Staff Psychologist, Dr. Kate Odom.

Children like Brian who experience neglect and abuse often exhibit negative behaviors as a means of expressing their pain. To help him overcome his trauma Brian was placed in our Trauma Focus Cognitive Behavior Therapy program (TFCBT). TFCBT is a therapy practice that enhances safety and maintains skill building related to emotional stability. Learning how to relax through play and express himself in a calm manner, Brian's behavior began to improve. "Drawing pictures, listening to music, and allowing kids like Brian to teach me what interests them, helps me better address their traumatic experiences while highlighting their strengths and opportunities to lead a successful and happy life," said Dr. Odom. Four months into therapy Brian has learned how to prepare himself for school and bed independently.

Today Brian is 7 years old, has friends and no longer fears abandonment.

Today Brian is 7 years old and a class leader. He has friends and no longer fears abandonment. "Brian will face some self esteem and behavior issues as he continues to adjust to his surroundings. To ensure Brian is successful in school and continues to develop bonds with his family and friends, the program also provides parenting skills to build structure and routine that assists his family in maintaining a healthy environment for his continued progress," says Dr. Odom. You can support programs that help children like Brian overcome trauma by visiting our website at www.childguidance.org and clicking donate.

Strengthening Families

An Emotional Breakthrough: A Mother Reconnects with Her Son



After many failed attempts to learn positive parenting skills through other programs Joan, a mother of six, developed negative feelings towards parenting classes. Nothing seemed to help her improve her relationship with her youngest son Samuel. At age 6 Samuel seemed to misbehave only in her presence. "Me and my child had no communication, he was very distant towards me," wrote Joan.

"From the moment Joan came to her first scheduled appointment she seemed to be consumed by negativity, she really had a negative outlook on life out of fear of losing her kids," said

Patricia Melkonian, positive parenting program practitioner and behavior specialist. Joan never recovered from the tragic loss of her mother at a young age. She grew up in a home where her father seldom expressed affection. "I knew I would have to focus Joan on two therapeutic strategies, showing positive affection and practicing descriptive praise of her children," Patricia said. "Parents are able to see success only when they do not give up and are proactive with implementing our Positive Parenting Program strategies in their home life."

"No matter what, most parents can see the light at the end of the tunnel after completing our Positive Parenting Program."

**Patricia Melkonian,
Behavior Specialist**

In therapy Patricia helped motivate Joan to embrace the program so she could be a better parent for her children. A few weeks into the program Joan slowly began expressing positive feelings towards her family resulting in a significant breakthrough. For the first time in two years Samuel hugged his mom and Joan broke down and cried. Joan credits Patricia and the Center's Positive Parenting Program for her breakthrough. "He [Samuel] became very loving and listens to me and doesn't talk back...I became very understanding and learned to be patient," wrote Joan.

PAVING THE WAY IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN



Congratulations to Director of Programs, Kathleen Welch-Torres and Director of Outpatient and Outreach Treatment, Evy Lowe for co-authoring a research publication on the topic of prenatal alcohol exposure entitled *Translation of an Evidenced Based Social Skills Intervention for Children with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure in a Community Mental Health Setting*.



Empowering Communities

Nights of Summer Light: CFGC Helps Bring A Community Together



Many parents who work multiple jobs have a difficult time providing adequate supervision for their children while at work. “The West Valley has a marginalized population with a lot of single parent homes, limited resources, and little youth supervision,” says Cristal Crandal, gang prevention program manager. Living in limited income communities dealing with overcrowded conditions, crime, drug, and gang problems, many youth have few safe alternative activities during the summer months when school is not in session. That is why the City of Los Angeles’ Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s office developed Summer Night Lights (SNL), a summer arts and recreation activity program.

“We advocated on behalf of residents living in Canoga Park to bring Summer Night Lights to Lenark Park this year” says Cristal. Collaborating with community partners like the Center’s United Solutions Gang Reduction and Youth Development program (GRYD) provided many youth and their families a safe and supervised environment that included several fun activities. “My favorite activity was skateboarding on ramps in the park. It was fun!” said Andy, a 12-year old participant of Summer Night Lights. Many GRYD staff engaged youth for eight weeks, Wednesday through Saturday, from 7:00 PM to Midnight providing activities during the hours when criminal activities tend to occur.

The Center offered sports, music, and arts and crafts programs, parent and youth workshops, and hosted a resource fair. Some of our workshops focused on gang prevention and conflict resolution through communication. Other workshops focused on positive parenting and helping parents understand their children’s school district services and resources. “My neighbors and I were very happy

to participate in the Center’s program about how we as parents can be better involved in our children’s education,” said Obdulia, Andy’s mother and a resident of Canoga Park. “The staff worked really hard for our families, they benefit the entire community.” You can find more photos of Summer Night Lights on page 6.



“The therapists and staff at the Center are caring, supportive, collaborative partners who are amazing to work with.”

Janis Lake,
LAUSD District 1 Organization Facilitator





- 1 Crowd at Summer Night Lights
- 2 United Solutions (GRYD) Staff Co-Host Summer Night Lights (Left to Right: Sergio Morales, Kevin Escobar, Jennifer Carlos)
- 3 LA Mayor Antonio Villaragoisa Visits Summer Night Lights
- 4 Councilman Dennis P. Zine Speaks at Summer Night Lights
- 5 Summer Night Lights Banner
- 6 Staff Show Support of Summer Night Lights (Left to Right: Michelle Mancera, Roy Marshall - President/CEO, Hugo Ramirez)
- 7 United Solutions Students Perform for Mayor Villaragoisa at SNL (Left to Right: Sergio Morales, Community Youth, Kevin Escobar)



- 8 CFGC's Annual Community Family Center Health Fair (Left to Right: Patricia Melkonian and Maral Papazian)
- 9 Staff Host a Booth at Montague Charter Academy Multi-Cultural Fiesta (Kathleen Le Breton)
- 10 Community Family Center Health Fair
- 11 Montague Charter Academy Multi-Cultural Fiesta
- 12 Hugo Ramirez Helps a Parent at the San Fernando Valley Children's Day
- 13 Booth at Children's Day (Left to Right: France Pelis, Jennifer Carlos, Hugo Ramirez)
- 14 Children's Day CFGC Booth (Jessica Esparza)

Parenting Tip

Mental Health Topic: Coping with Stress During the Holiday Season

This time of year families and friends often come together to spread cheer and celebrate the holiday season. Sometimes holiday activities, whether staying close to home or traveling, can cause additional stress on a family. Stress is a normal part of life, however, how you manage stress can affect how your children learn to manage stress as they develop. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, support from parents and/or other concerned caregivers is necessary for children to learn how to respond to stress in a physically and emotionally healthy manner. Here are a few tips from Mental Health America that may help if you find yourself stressed during the holidays.

- Take one thing at a time – Pick one task and work on it. When that's done, move on to the next.
- Be realistic – If you're overwhelmed learn to say "No!"
- Don't try to be superman/superwoman – No one is perfect; so don't expect perfection from yourself.
- Meditate – Five to 10 minutes of quiet reflection can bring some relief.
- Exercise – Thirty minutes of physical activity per day helps both body and mind.
- Hobbies – Take a break and do something you enjoy.
- Share your feelings – Don't try to cope alone. Let friends and family provide support and guidance.

For more information about how to better cope with stress please visit www.nmha.org.



Welcome New Board Member: Nancy Lee Grahn



Nancy Lee Grahn is pleased to join the Child and Family Guidance Center's Board of Directors. As a child advocate, she is excited to increase community awareness of mental health care for children and support the important work the Center does in communities of need.

Nancy is an accomplished Actor who currently is on the ABC Television daytime show General Hospital. She has dedicated her time towards many charitable causes in the past including breast cancer and autism. When not working and volunteering Nancy loves to write. She is currently writing a book promoting women over the age of forty-five.

Tis the Season to Spread Cheer



This holiday we ask that you consider the many at-risk children struggling with behavioral, emotional, and mental health challenges in need of cheer. We encourage you to give funds, volunteer, and spread the word about our cause: supporting children, strengthening families, empowering communities, and changing lives. There are many ways you can help change the life of a child. You can host a holiday party on our behalf, join a CFGC support group to aid families through difficult times, spread the word about our cause, or re-connect with us and learn more about our impact in your community. For more information please contact our Development Office at 818.739.5319 or email us at development@childguidance.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Our Staff

Graciela Sherman, Community Resource Services Program Manager

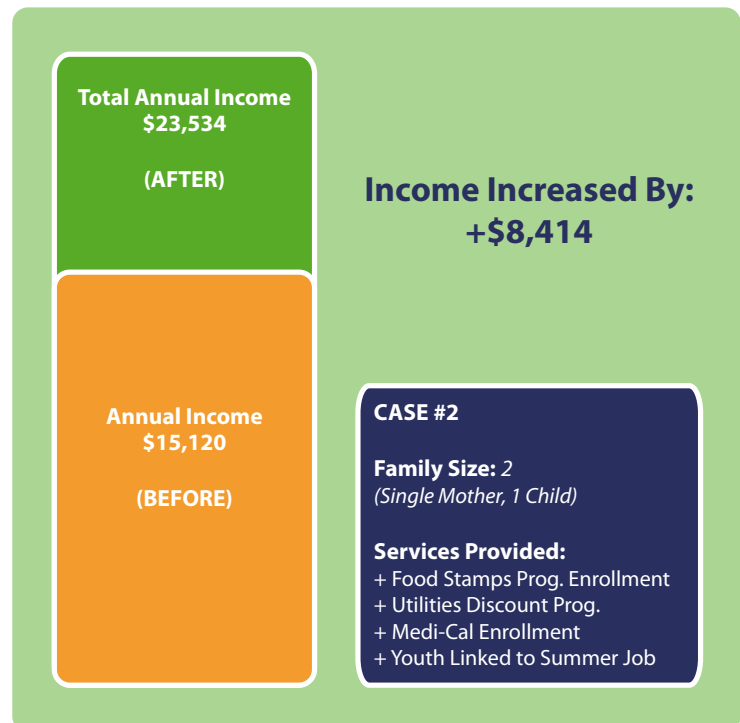
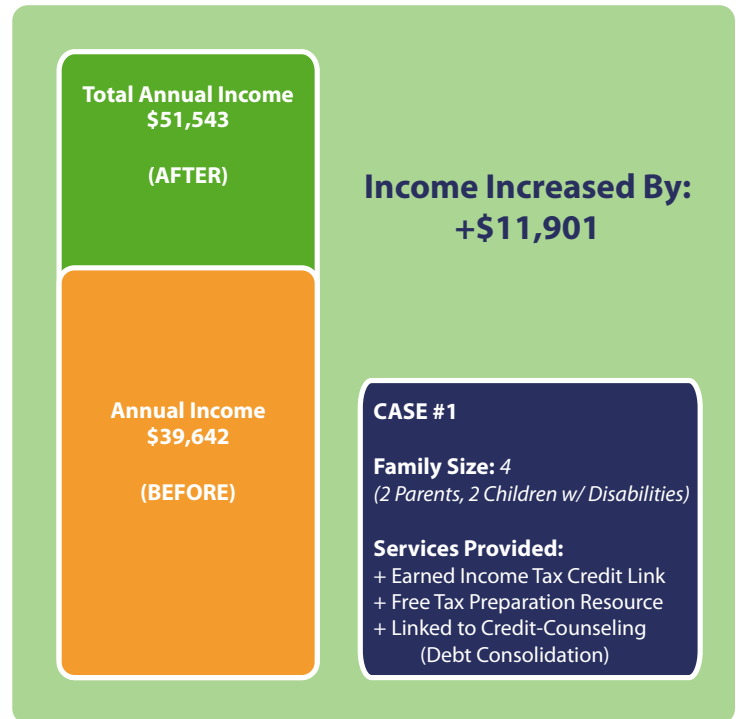


For 17 years Graciela Sherman has helped families live healthier and happier lives. When asked what peaked her interest in working in mental healthcare Graciela states, "As a Teacher's Assistant I encountered many students struggling to succeed academically because of unaddressed mental health issues and a lack of parental involvement."

In 1995 she began working as a teacher in our Home Instruction Program helping parents prepare their 3 to 4 year old children for Kindergarten. Driven by her passion to address the root of challenges faced by children and families in need of mental healthcare, Graciela has also worked as a Case Manager and a Family Advocate. In her various roles, Graciela has always worked to empower parents/caregivers to actively participate and access needed resources for their children's special needs.

“Helping families who care for special needs children increase their annual income has a tremendous impact and is a great feeling!”

"Many of our children have unique needs and their parents are not aware of the special education laws and services their school district provides," says Graciela. Today Graciela supervises our Resource Coordinators and Family Advocates as our Community Resource Services Program Manager. She also oversees our Money Management Program, funded by United Way of Greater Los Angeles, providing case management and financial literacy to increase economic opportunities for limited income families in the San Fernando Valley. "The children we serve face many barriers: mental health diagnosis, learning disabilities and a lack of basic needs. Increasing a families income by a few thousand dollars makes a significant difference in the lives of families that have such low incomes and are caring for children with special needs in our communities," says Graciela. In her spare time Graciela, a mother of two, enjoys hiking and her family.



Impact Report

This year our therapists trained, implemented, and practiced 10 new Los Angeles Department of Mental Health approved Evidenced Based Practices agency-wide. Our team has taken on many more responsibilities to meet the growing demand for mental healthcare services. We are pleased to share that we have strengthened more than 21,000 families this year.

Our Phone Screeners helped 4,805 worried parents, 800 children and families received in-home mental health treatment services, and 3,500 families received at least one "field" visit resulting in more than 100,000 hours of outpatient mental health care. Additionally, our Administrative team opened 2,377 new cases and closed 1,943 cases. Our Northpoint School graduated all of our senior class, many of which will be continuing on to college, and our Desert Pathways Program successfully graduated three students. 456 children are successfully enrolled in Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, and other healthcare coverage

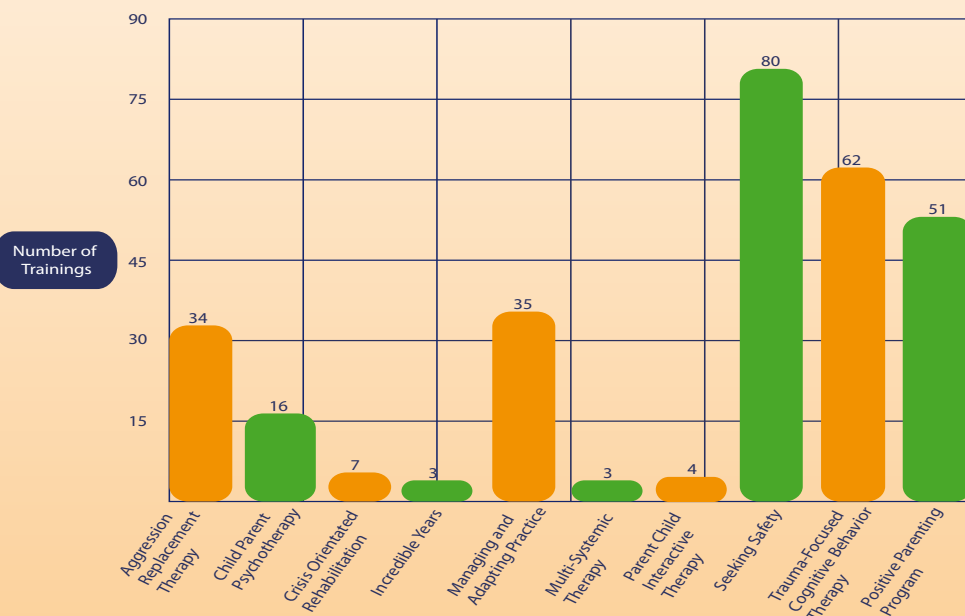
programs. In addition, 683 more children are re-enrolled in their healthcare coverage program, all thanks to our Community Family Center team. Our CalWORKs team expanded treatment to help more parents overcome their challenges and rejoin the workforce. Furthermore, the Center is the only mental health agency in the San Fernando Valley that has a staff of 13 Psychiatrists available to address the needs of children challenged with severe emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health issues.

We are pleased to share that the Center has strengthened more than 21,000 families this year.

Our United Solutions Gang Reduction and Youth Development team successfully prevented 73 youth from joining gangs and empowered them to be leaders

in their communities. Our Antelope Valley Wraparound Program scored higher than the national average in every category of its index, providing comprehensive mental health care to at-risk children. We look forward to expanding our impact in the New Year with your support as we celebrate 50 years of changing lives!

CENTER IMPACT



A job well done! CFGC staff completed a total of 295 trainings to strengthen 3,609 children and families last year, providing LA Department of Mental Health's Evidenced Based Practice services to children living in the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys.

Changing Lives

Granada Hills Woman's Club Invests in Children's Future Through Philanthropy



Established in 1927, the women of Granada Hills Woman's Club have always upheld enthusiasm and a sense of duty for improving public welfare. When it comes to philanthropy the Club is devoted to seven community service project areas that address the needs of our

communities. "The fact that we are able to help others through our philanthropy is representative of how we help our communities prosper, that is our impact," says Ellen Reiner, Philanthropy Co-Chairwoman. "We are impressed with the Child and Family Guidance Center's programs and services and wish there were more agencies like the Center." Over the years the Club has been, and continues to be, very generous when it

comes to supporting our cause, aiding children and their families struggling with mental health challenges.

The Club has donated more than 1,280 volunteer service hours and made numerous contributions in support of our programs and services for at-risk limited income children and their families. We thank the Granada Hills Woman's Club for their continued support; if it were not for community organizations like you our children and families would not have a place to turn to for help.



LEFT TO RIGHT: PRESIDENT, YOLANDA PETROSKI AND PHILANTHROPY CO-CHAIRWOMEN, ELLEN REINER AND ROXI WEIMER.

Donor Recognition

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals, foundations, corporations and community organizations for their generous contributions from July 1, 2011 through to November 1, 2011.

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In Memory of Mother of Lisa Folta
In Memory of Mother of Trudy Agins
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Fowler
In Memory of Michael Goldsen

David Gordon
& Donna Schwarzbach
In Honor of Reggie Scheer's 80th Birthday
Mrs. Joan Haywood
In Honor of Reggie Scheer's 80th Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Kaleko
In Honor of Reggie Scheer's 80th Birthday
Mrs. Barbara Kassel
In Honor of Reggie Scheer's 80th Birthday
Ms. Elaine Levin
In Honor of Reggie Scheer's 80th Birthday
Roy Marshall and Eileen Lopez
In Memory of Sylvia Frank
Sari Scheer and Eric Frank
In Memory of Eddie Newman
In Honor of Janice and Ray Kyser – Thank You
In Memory of Stan Knox
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wolff
In Honor of Joyce Hymes' Special Birthday



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Mission

The Child and Family Guidance Center serves vulnerable and at-risk children, as well as their families. We provide a continuum of quality mental healthcare, supportive social services and links to needed resources. The Center embraces a family-strengthening philosophy aimed at helping clients to become empowered, overcome challenges and flourish within the community.

The Center is committed to remaining responsive to the ever-changing needs of our families, developing

innovative programs and training professional staff members to work in a community setting.



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