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Together in Health

Newsletter of The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey

Issue 7 - December 2023

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Our Impact Report



Read our 2022 Impact Report [here](#).

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Focusing on the Future

Dear Community Partner,

If you want to make a difference, focus on what matters.

In 2023, the Foundation placed a special focus on listening to the community and on refreshing our operations. Toward that end, this year we held several listening sessions with community partners and visited with grantees. As a result of what we learned, we revamped our application forms, updated grant guidelines, created toolkits and developed a new feedback process—all to better support our grantees.

In 2024, we will be building upon this work, focusing more intently on areas within healthcare where we can make a sustained difference. In the coming year our staff and

Newark area and Greater MetroWest Jewish community.

As we emerge from the pandemic and face a rise in hate incidents, including growing antisemitism, in our region and around the globe, we have doubled down our commitment to support the behavioral needs of our youth and members of the community. While the Foundation has always supported this critical area of health, our investment in this field has doubled in just the past three years due to the urgent and growing demand. In the past three years, our funding for behavioral health projects grew from over \$1.5m in 2021 to \$1.8m in 2022 to nearly a 100% increase at over \$3 million this year – more than any other of our focus areas.

Our board also convened a Task Force on Behavioral Health, which recently released an RFP to support projects strengthening the health of adolescents within the Jewish community of Greater MetroWest NJ. In response we received eleven proposals and are actively reviewing them and anticipate making awards by the end of the first quarter of 2024. We anticipate releasing a second RFP in 2024 focused on behavioral health in Newark and its environs.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, our valued community partners, to learn about how your organizations are responding to the crisis in youth mental health, and what we can do to support your efforts.

Best wishes for joyful and healthy 2024,

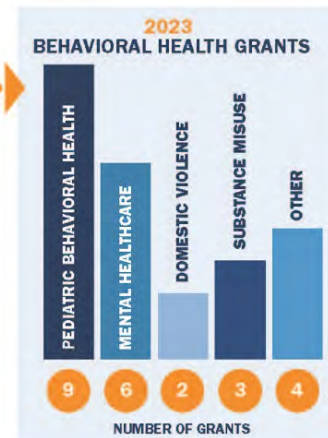


Amy Schechner Michael Schmidt
Board Chair Executive Director and CEO

HFNJ Announces \$1,559,659 in Fourth Quarter Grants

The Healthcare Foundation of NJ has awarded \$1,559,659 to thirteen New Jersey nonprofit organizations in its fourth quarter grant cycle of 2023. In the fourth quarter there was a focus on strengthening youth mental health services – particularly through the provision of behavioral health counseling at local public schools. The two largest grants awarded this quarter – a \$300,000 grant to Northwest Essex Community Healthcare Network and a \$250,000 award to Main St. Counseling – both include counseling young people within schools.

2023 GRANTS BY CATEGORY



HFNJ Releases Health Equity Statement



Since our inception, The Healthcare Foundation of NJ has dedicated itself to addressing health disparities and promoting quality health for all. Earlier in the year, HFNJ’s board established a Health Equity Task Force to educate our staff and trustees and develop

recommendations for enhancing our work in health equity. Our board recently approved a statement which conveys to the public our enduring commitment to the principles of health equity and our pledge for action.

In the statement, HFNJ states that it will: invest in knowledge; receive community-led guidance; identify opportunities for equity-centric grantmaking; and forge new partnerships for collaborative innovation.

Read our full pledge [here](#).

"The COVID-19 pandemic served as a powerful reminder of the importance of addressing structural inequities that lie at the root of these disparities. The stark outcomes of the recent pandemic, which disproportionately affected communities of color, have further ignited our call to action."

-from the HFNJ Health Equity Statement

Interview: Beth Mitchell of JCC of Central New Jersey

The Inclusion and Support Services department at **JCC of Central NJ** consists of Beth Mitchell, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, and Stephanie Weiss, Inclusion and Support Services Coordinator. We interviewed Beth about how they're working to ensure that all children can participate in JCC's programming - and how their organization is adapting to address the youth mental health crisis.



1) What differences are you noticing today between young children entering your early childhood classes today and previous years' students?

We are seeing sweeping delays in the acquisition of children's developmental milestones, gaps in their social skills and a decrease in their ability to self-regulate their bodies and emotions. During the Covid-19 pandemic many children missed out on typical child-based group experiences like playdates, community classes or in-person socialization. The end result is a complex set of clinical diagnoses that negatively impact a child's ability to access and participate in their learning.

The ripple effect of these challenges are wide reaching. Parents in this post-Covid generation are struggling to meet the increasingly complex needs of their children while balancing their careers and attending to their own mental health and wellness. The teachers serving our children are working hard to understand and support these complex needs.

[Read the full interview](#)

HFNJ Hosts Mental Health First Aid Training



Identifying the signs of mental health distress and being able to connect those in your life to mental health resources can make a critical difference in their lives. That is why on November 20, 2023 HFNJ staff and board members joined 20 of our grantee partners for an intensive, full-day Mental Health First Aid Training. Expert trainers Don Decker and Ruth Kaluski from the Mental Health Association of NJ guided the participants through identifying signs of mental health challenges. Participants engaged in role-playing scenarios and group discussions on the most common behavioral health conditions and appropriate non-clinical ways to respond.

HFNJ Awards \$100,000 Grant in Response to Hamas Attack

We were rendered speechless by the horrific events that unfolded in Israel on Saturday, October 7th. HFNJ's board immediately responded through a Special One-time emergency grant of \$100,000 to Israeli medical relief agency Magen David Adom. The donation unlocked an additional \$100,000 matching pledge from philanthropist and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.



Saving lives. It's in our blood.

The Magen David Adom agency is Israel's national emergency organization. It ensures that the 33,000 paramedics, EMTs, and first-aid responders—Jewish, Christian and Muslim Israelis—have the training, equipment, and medical supplies they need to treat all injured and ill people in Israel.

What We Are Watching and Reading

- Because "after the fact" is too late to address child abuse and maltreatment, last year HFNJ awarded Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center with a \$124,100 grant to launch the "Prevention by Design" program - an innovative, multi-stakeholder effort to build community strength to prevent maltreatment before it happens. [Watch to learn more.](#)
- This video shows how Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children's Hospital of New Jersey is transforming how seniors receive care - in a manner that is integrated, holistic, and respectful of the wishes of seniors and their families. HFNJ is proud to have provided a \$250,000 award last year to launch this new approach. [Watch here.](#)
- The City of Newark [announced](#) a huge 57.6% reduction in the number of unsheltered homeless from the previous year. Powering the reduction: Newark's strategic plan to end homelessness, and the work of on-the-ground partners like HFNJ grantees Bridges Outreach, Inc. and Covenant House New Jersey.

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