

empowering people  
to build better lives



*From Trauma  
to Strength*



**Action  
Changes  
Things**

*2024 Annual Report*



## Mission

We support individuals and families of all cultural backgrounds in their efforts to meet economic, social and emotional challenges and enhance their well-being.



## Vision

Through programs, advocacy and collaboration people are empowered to discover their potential and live as engaged citizens, free of stigma, within a thriving diverse, inclusive community.

# People First



# Act ♡ React



**Ben Lessing, President/CEO, presented the staff appointed Ubuntu Award to Donna Vear Hamilton, LICSW, at the 2024 Annual Meeting. To receive this award is a high honor.**

**Donna has served the Children's Behavioral Health system almost 20 years with unwavering commitment to the well-being and health of the young members of our community. She always sees and highlights the best/strengths in people, making them feel valued and safe. She maintains a positive regard for all while also letting her team know it is ok to be human/imperfect. She gives without asking for anything in return. Donna works hard to help her team grow by using a strength based approach, while nurturing and teaching the next generation of therapist/social workers on how to use empathy and kindness, even when the work is challenging. Donna has profoundly impacted countless lives. She has given back to the community as a whole and is always offering time to provide support in the school systems providing education and processing tragic events. Donna's embodiment of Ubuntu inspires many to strive for a more inclusive and supportive society.**

**Ubuntu  
I am  
because  
we are**

## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am very pleased to share Community Care Alliance's 2024 Annual Report. This represents but a snapshot of the ongoing work of our amazing staff and the commitment of our dedicated Board of Directors to put people first. On a daily basis, our staff go above and beyond to engage people during their most difficult moments in an effort to bring them to stability and balance, and help them realize their potential, dignity and worth.

This year has been incredibly consequential for our organization and the people we serve. CCA is at the forefront of a group of organizations that became the first Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in Rhode Island. This federally recognized best practice created a more comprehensive approach to the delivery of behavioral health services for individuals and families. Moreover, the RI General Assembly took the unprecedented step of fully funding CCBHC's rather than taking a piecemeal approach; thereby providing a behavioral health safety net the likes of which we have not seen in Rhode Island. As a result of this model and the General Assembly's efforts, the workforce for CCBHCs is being compensated at competitive market levels which increases the capacity and stability of the behavioral health system in RI.

Also noteworthy is our staff's leadership in the evolution of the statewide crisis intervention system that includes 988, BH Link, the Acute Stabilization Unit working in coordination with Mobile Crisis Teams and Addiction Treatment and Recovery Services in other organizations across the State. Owing to chaos at the federal level, we believe a coordinated, systems approach in using the State's valuable community-based resources will be more important than ever. To this end, we are advocating that the leadership in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and State agencies work to enable and facilitate greater public-private partnerships.

What is happening on a daily basis within the Federal Government is difficult to absorb. The withdrawal of social service and healthcare resources will only make already economically stressed populations more vulnerable. Moreover, the principle of Equity for all people irrespective of the color of one's skin, gender identity or immigration status seems to now be interpreted as discriminatory, whether in reference to the people we serve or the professionals we hire. Organizations like Community Care Alliance must stand together and continue to rally against people being marginalized or othered.

As our State attempts to absorb and respond to the Federal crisis, the role of the General Assembly could not be more important in terms of closing resource gaps that are emerging. While it will be impossible to do so completely, and hard choices must be made, it is important to understand that lives will literally be at risk.

Lastly, I want to thank our many partners locally and across the State; these include CCBHC's, child and family serving agencies, health centers, organizations serving the homeless, hospitals, police departments as well as coalitions and advocacy organizations such as Horizon Healthcare Partners, RI Coalition for Children and Families, RI Community Action Association, Substance Use Mental Health Leadership Council and the Coalition to End Homelessness. We are all stronger if we work together.

With Gratitude,

Ben

Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., MSW, President/CEO



## The Battle for 988

Advocates continue to invoke the general assembly to designate a permanent funding source for operating the federally mandated 988 Call Center.

# When Crisis Strikes There is 24/7 Relief

BH Link, 988 and CCBHC Mobile Crisis Teams—These three options provide immediate help for a mental health or behavioral health emergency for all Rhode Islanders.

Community Care Alliance provides staffing and management of BH Link and the 988 Call Center, which are both located at 975 Waterman Avenue in East Providence.

Community Care Alliance has greatly expanded capacity for Mobile Crisis services with a new team of 16 mental health professionals. A quarter of these provide overnight or per diem coverage and we are ready to dispatch 2 persons to each outreach as required by the CCBHC standards.

**22,560** individuals contacted the **BH Link** phone or **988 Lifeline** in FY24.

**2098** of callers were referred or directly transported to BH Link.

**74%** were referred to the **Acute Stabilization Unit**.

“The Community Care Alliance Mobile Crisis and Emergency Services staff were the first providers that took my family seriously and didn’t give up when the situation became challenging.” —client’s mother

**60%** of clients seen for crisis assessment by the **Emergency Services Intake Department** diverted from inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

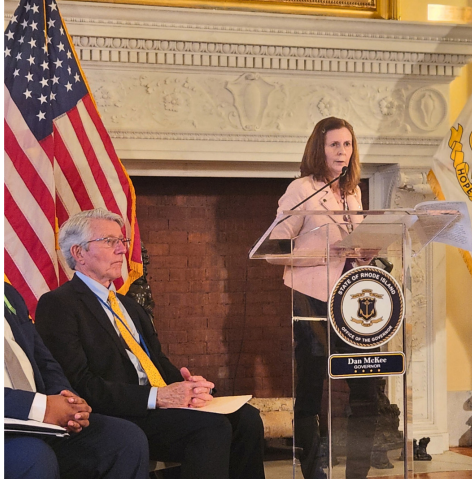
**All** new **Emergency Services** clients referred by a hospital for services who did not show up for an intake appointment, received a follow up call, outreach visit, and/or outreach letter.

# Build



## One Person's Story

*One suicidal person would call regularly—screaming, yelling, crying. This person had experienced trauma and frequent job loss and was expressing signs of depression, and anxiety. He was hesitant to seek resources at first because he didn't have health insurance but kept calling for a few months. Over time, he came to trust, take advice and receive help. Now, he calls to update the Call Center staff. He lets us know that he is in therapy, has a steady job, and is reaching his goals. He worked very hard for that. He's 10 months sober now. —As told by a 988 Call Center Case Worker*



1. Sydney Maroaka, 988 Call Center Manager, speaks at the Horizon Healthcare Partners 988 press conference in 2024.

2. Michelle Taylor addresses audience at May is Mental Health Kickoff event where she was honored with the Mental Health Hero Award in 2025.

3. Members of the Advocacy Committee, Felicity Dyer and Morgan Wynkoop, enter the State House with their outreach supplies.

4. Joe Ash, BH Link Director, addresses the Senate Finance Committee,

30-50 crisis mobilizations are dispatched each month by the **Mobile Crisis Team**.

# Resilience



# Federally Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

On October 1, 2024, Community Care Alliance, along with five other Rhode Island behavioral healthcare providers, joined the federally certified Medicaid demonstration project known as Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC). The federal certification is the culmination of years of planning, assessment, analysis, preparation and program-building to meet the exceptional standards and staff qualifications and capacity required to be selected. Rhode Island is one of 18 states that have been given this designation, which brings federal Medicaid funds to the State to improve access to behavioral healthcare.

If you're having a hard time and need help, we're here for you—one agency serving the entire family—providing comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment, regardless of age, insurance status, or ability to pay.



## CCBHC Certified Programs

Emergency Services Intake

State Opioid Response Team

**New** 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response Team

**New** Children's Mobile Response/Stabilization

Intensive Outpatient Program

**New** Substance Use Outpatient Program

**New** Ambulatory Detox Program

ACT/Integrated Community Treatment

Co-occurring Services

Counseling & Recovery

Peer Services

Wellness & Recovery Center

Expanded Adult Outpatient Services

Children's Intensive Services

Children's Outpatient Services

Healthy Transitions

Save Haven

Safe Haven Outpatient Team

Serenity Center

# Care Support





Ben Lessing, President/CEO, speaks at a press conference highlighting the CCBHC Demonstration State award to Rhode Island as six organizations throughout the State receive national certification.



Michael Coburn, MD, Addiction Medicine Specialist; Jessica Elliott, LMHC, Director of Substance Use Services; and Kazi Salahuddin, MD, Psychiatrist and CCA Medical Director are integral to the new Ambulatory Detox Program.

**650** clients were served by the **Community Support Program Intensive Health Home.**

**87%** participation increase in the **Community Support Program's** peer groups and 61% increase in therapeutic groups.

**91%** of the clients in the **Intensive Outpatient Program** secured placement in safe, affordable housing upon discharge.

**6500** individuals received services at Community Care Alliance to improve their mental health, behavioral health and wellbeing.

**11,000** more family members of clients were positively impacted.

Meeting people where they are—this is the main principle behind our certification as a CCBHC, which requires considerable staffing and coordination. Expanded hours are possible due to funding by the SAMHSA CCBHC Improvement and Advancement Grant.

## Collaborations & Partnerships

Care Coordination Agreements and protocols with the following external providers ensure that clients receive comprehensive, integrated, and continuous care, and that the treatment and recovery planning for all of a client's providers are in alignment with one another.

**Anchor Medical - Lincoln**

**Blackstone Valley Community Health Care - Pawtucket**

**Bradley Hospital**

**Butler Hospital**

**CODAC**

**Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP)**

**Hasbro Children's Hospital**

**Horizon Healthcare Partners (988, BH Link)**

**Landmark Medical Center**

**Seven Hills**

**Sojourner House**

**Thundermist**

**VA Providence Healthcare System**

**WellOne**

**Local Police and Fire Departments**

Felicity Dyer, MPH, Community Behavioral Health Liaison, leads the Community Advisory Board, and provides veteran-focused care coordination efforts, outreach, education, and relationship-building as part of CCBHC outreach efforts.



## Stronger Communities

# Health & Well-Being



Our Agape Drop-In Center provides resources in a safe confidential setting for persons living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is a vital safety net for those living with HIV.

**TJ Martineau, Deputy VP of Social Health Services and Catherine Heanue, AGAPE HIV Program Manager, attended the 2024 National Ryan White Conference on HIV/AIDS Care & Treatment.**

**80%** of our clients have Medicaid for their insurance.



## What happens when your rent doubles overnight?

*After the shock settles, you have to make some hard decisions. Michael\*, who works a 40-hour week could not afford to stay when his new landlord took over and raised his monthly payment to almost twice what he had been paying. He moved into a motel while sorting out his situation, which was turning out to be expensive. He had to find a better solution.*



**Dave Dubeau, HMIS Manager and Home Stabilization Coordinator, has built relationships and connections to help people stay in their homes, or find a place to stay. The program provides connections to resources and assistance with the logistics of completing applications and maintaining housing stability.**

**Who did Michael call?** Fortunately for Michael, he called Community Care Alliance, where he was connected with Dave Dubeau, Home Stabilization Coordinator. Dave says rents often go up exponentially when a new landlord takes over a property. He has a connection for apartments and set up an immediate appointment for Michael. Michael is grateful. He liked the apartment and, he could afford it on his salary. "I got the help to find and look at some apartments within a matter of days. They are very efficient people and showed me exactly what I wanted. Got the help in no time and was able to move in right away. I have no complaints. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

\*The name of our client has been changed.

“Medicaid was a vital program for me. Being on Medicaid helped me maintain my recovery during a difficult part of my life when I was in between jobs. Without Medicaid I would have been left without health coverage and without access to my medication and doctors. Medicaid saved my life.” —Christopher Lloyd, Peer Recovery Specialist



Read Chris' story of recovery here.

# Challenge ➡



“Homelessness is not a personal moral failing or a lifestyle choice, but a catastrophic failure of the system.” —Michelle Taylor, VP of Social Health Services

“We must first treat homeless individuals and families with the dignity and respect they deserve and then roll up our sleeves to solve this problem.” —Ben Lessing

When we provide emergency shelter, we save lives, improve physical and behavioral health, connect people with resources, get people working, preserve families, reduce crime and connect them with housing. When people remain on the streets, it is nearly impossible to achieve these outcomes because all of our energy is directed at crisis intervention.

The Woonsocket Family Shelter is a longer-term program that provides resources to get families into more permanent housing situations. These families enter through the State Coordinated Entry System where there are long wait times. This year, Community Care Alliance also operated the NRI Emergency Shelter in Smithfield for 80 adults & children.



## Shelter First

The Dignity Bus is a creative, collaborative effort with the City of Woonsocket to provide 20 emergency beds on a nightly basis.



## Children, Families & Basic Needs

Early Childhood Family Visiting Programs respond to family needs, offering support to parents to create a home environment that promotes their child's health, growth and development, and link parents and families to community resources.

The Family Care Community Partnership is DCYF's primary prevention program, aiming to provide families with the services and support they need to avoid DCYF involvement.

Our behavioral health programs provide family-centered, trauma-informed care including office-based clinical services for children and families struggling with behavioral health issues, and intensive, community-based services for individuals in acute distress and at high risk of harm to self or others.

Drop-in operations such as the Family Support Center, Safe Haven, Serenity Peer Recovery Center and the Harbour Youth Center offer immediate resources.

As an advocate for homeless people, Christa Thomas Sowers, a Wall of Appreciation winner, attended the 2024 National Conference on Ending Homelessness Capitol Hill Day in Washington, DC, hosted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

**543** families were served by the **FCCP** and 86% of families met or partially met their goals.

**503** home visits were provided by the **Healthy Families America** program.

**516** families receive food or food vouchers at our **Family Support Center** each month.

**185** unduplicated clients were served at the **Serenity Recovery Center**, with 56 new intakes and 684 face-to-face contacts.

# Change

when we care for everyone, our community thrives



Miriam Kaba speaks at The opening of the Mariam Kaba Community Food Pantry at The Harbour Youth Center in 2024

## "If you had \$1-million dollars to impact your community, what would you do?"

Mariam Kaba, a recent Woonsocket High School graduate and former Harbour Youth Center member, is transforming communities through collaboration and visionary leadership. The Papitto Opportunity Connection challenged high schoolers with the question: "If you had \$1-million dollars to impact your community, what would you do?" Mariam's compelling answer outshone 97 other teens, securing the funding to implement her idea.

Upon being awarded this investment, Mariam collaborated with Samantha Bergbauer from Leadership Rhode Island (LRI), along with planning and design teams, to turn her vision into reality.

Mariam, with the help of dedicated friends and the funding mentioned above, inaugurated The Mariam Kaba Community Food Pantry at the

Harbour Youth Center. The ribbon cutting ceremony signaled the start of delivering crucial nourishment to many students in need—students with whom Mariam has forged strong bonds over the years.

**"Mariam's really the vision and the driving force, and the planning committee, the design committee, and LRI are the soldiers, the boots on the ground... staying true to Mariam's vision,"** said Stump Evans.

*"This food pantry will save some of my kids' lives."* —Stump Evans, Director, Employment, Education, and Support Services and the Harbour Youth Center



The team from the Papitto Opportunity Connection and Leadership RI came out to support Miriam and Stump Evans at the Food Pantry opening.

**350** youth utilized **Harbour Youth Center** services.

**160** clients connected to 120 different jobs.

**130** youth received case management and/or crisis intervention services through the SAMSHA No Limits Program, which offers prevention, harm reduction and recovery services to youth, ages 12-25.

**140** youth were referred to other services.

**30** youth engage in the new Homework Hub

# Feed Grow





## Award Winners

### The Nancy Paradee Family Support Center

On October 21st, the Nancy Paradee Family Support Center, located at 245 Main Street was dedicated with a celebration with former colleagues, collaborators, family and friends. Community Care Alliance renamed the program in honor of Nancy Paradee, retired Senior Vice President. Nancy's career spanned 30 years in Woonsocket where she applied her vision and leadership to developing programs that impacted tens of thousands of individuals and families and continue to do so.



### The Paul Dempster Award

The late Paul Dempster founded the Woonsocket Shelter and the Because He Lives soup kitchen in Woonsocket. Each year we honor him by selecting a person who goes above and beyond to serve others and make our community a better place, especially for those who are vulnerable or in crisis. This year, we honored Felice Desmarais, for her 18-year career at HUD and an addition 17 years serving on the HUD Board, and the Blackstone Valley Mental Health Realty Board (now HUD Borrowers Corporations). Her commitment over the years ensured that vulnerable populations continued to receive affordable housing. CEO, Ben Lessing and Board Chair, Rev. Jeffrey Thomas, presented Felice with the 2024 Paul Dempster Award. She is the fourteenth recipient of this prestigious award.



### Advocacy in Action

Richard Asinof launched ConvergenceRI 11 years ago as an independent news source created to break down existing silos and illustrate the convergence of health, science, innovation, technology, research and community. Richard brings a wealth of experience, providing accurate news where so many outlets are repeating falsehoods espoused by powerful politicians and corporations. RI Attorney General, Peter Neronha, attended the 2024 Annual Meeting to witness his friend receive the Advocacy in Action Award.

“The importance of storytelling, recognizing that our own personal stories are our most valuable possessions, and the act of sharing those stories is what makes us human. I believe that creating an inclusive narrative is a crucial survival skill in a time of climate urgency and economic upheaval. The goal is to create a sense of connectedness, of neighborhood, in which we all can be residents.

—Richard Asinof, Advocacy in Action Award Recipient

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Molly Champagne Burke, SECRETARY

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\*at time of printing (August 2025)

“The Client Emergency Fund has afforded me the opportunity to move into my first supervised apartment.” —John

“Emergency funding helped me tremendously! It got me on the right path. It allowed me to focus on my recovery and not become overwhelmed financially.” —Bernard

“I have been able to get my birth certificate, and with that have been able to sign up for low income housing and try not to be homeless again. Thank you so much for everything.” —Trina

## Executive Leadership

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# Serve Reflect



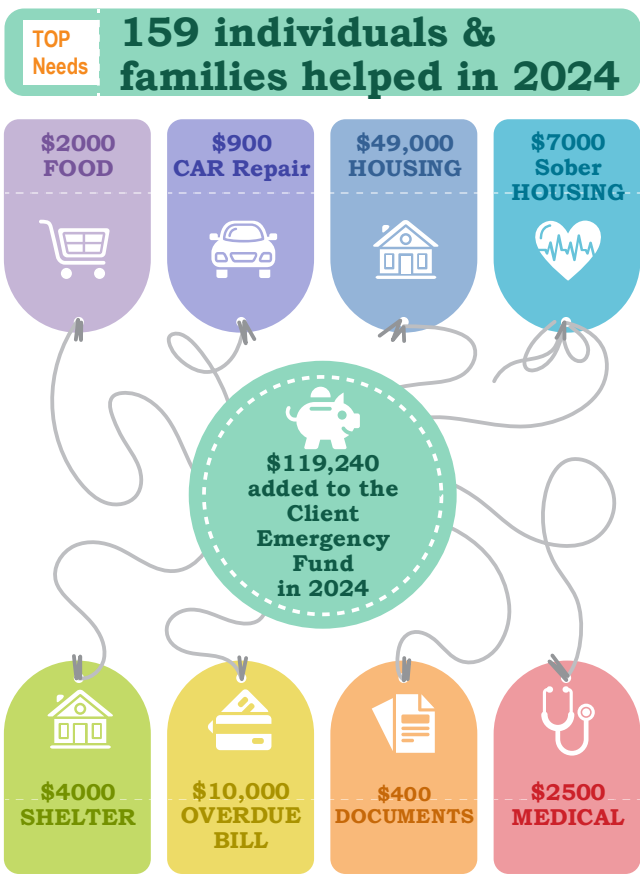
# Funding Possibilities

We began fundraising for a Client Emergency Fund in late 2020 and started distributions in 2021. Between 2021 and 2024, we helped over 350 individuals and families by making monetary payments to resolve a wide-range of needs. For example, a mother applying for work needs to provide a birth certificate or other documentation to complete a job application, but cannot afford the fee. We help her obtain her official birth record and she is able to take the steps toward getting employment. These kinds of barriers occur often.

**In 2024, our donors helped 159 individuals/families through the Client Emergency Fund**, assisting with 45 payments for rental assistance, like first month rent, security deposit or back rent, totaling over \$49,000. Donors helped one person with a \$900 car repair; paid approximately \$2000 to 7 families with food insecurity; paid to start 15 individuals in sober housing at a cost of \$7000; and kept 14 families sheltered by paying \$4000 for hotel stays. Nine people obtained necessary documentation at a cost of \$300 (as described in the example above.) The fund has also paid for funeral expenses, utility assistance, bus fare, driver’s licenses, eyeglasses, hearing aids, teeth extractions, and medication. When we make these payments, staff follow up with assurances that the root cause is being addressed, as well. The Client Emergency Fund leverages situations to allow for proceeding with the next steps in reaching life-affirming goals. Every client’s crisis is different. Providing this monetary one-time measure gives people the ability to fix a bad situation and move in a positive direction. **Thank you to all who have helped make this fund possible.**

**Statement of Financial Position**  
**Total Expenses \$ 42,510,073 by Services**

<b>Current Assets</b> .....	<b>6,019,455</b>
Cash.....	1,191,216
Property and Equipment (net) .....	7,151,106
<b>Total Assets</b> .....	<b>14,361,777</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b> .....	<b>4,786,398</b>
Long Term Debt .....	4,826,077
<b>Total Liabilities</b> .....	<b>9,612,475</b>
Unrestricted Net Assets.....	1,869,975
Invested in Facilities/Fixed Assets.....	2,164,298
Temporarily Restricted.....	715,029
<b>Total Net Assets</b> .....	<b>4,749,302</b>
<b>Total Net Assets and Liabilities</b> .....	<b>14,361,777</b>



“Thank you for all you and CCA have done for me. The funds provided have helped me get off the street and into a place of my own. I have hopes of rekindling a relationship with my granddaughter again now that I have a roof over my head.” —William, CCA Client



# Invest Impact



Join other individuals, families, businesses and foundations in supporting our mission.\*

Forum Nets \$17,500



Employees, David Mercer and Amanda Buffery, receive a donation delivered by a Subaru N. Attleboro employee. Subaru Loves to Help Community Care Alliance!



CCA hosted a fundraising event, *Creating Strength in the Home*, a paneled discussion featured professionals in the field who provided crisis prevention measures, such as mobile and in-home services that help families stay together, maintain safety and promote well-being.

## First Game On Event Raises \$25,000



Have fun, raise funds is the premise behind our new fundraising event. From cornhole to music trivia and games—these are the feature of this networking event. Attendees had the opportunity to bid on four cornhole games painted by our program clients.



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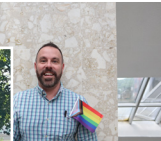
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empowering people  
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# A Stronger Community Begins Here



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