

A Message from Stephan McCarthy, Chief Financial Officer

A Lesson Learned at the 5K

This past November, Federation held its first 5K run. As a moderate participant in 5K runs around Long Island, I looked forward to the event. However, my excitement waned on the way to the race, as the temperature dipped to a brisk 32 degrees.



Little did I know that a lesson awaited me that day – a lesson that will guide me into 2018 and beyond.

There are millions of clichés about opportunity, success, and reaching goals. Most provide brief moments of motivation, but little long-term staying power. At the Federation 5K, however, I met a man who seeks out his opportunities and victories, rather than standing by, waiting idly for opportunity to present itself.

Heading to the starting line, I decided not to pass up a nearby bathroom. That's when I encountered Gerard. I made a passing comment about the cold weather. And that's when Gerard said, "It's just a 5K. I did the marathon last week."

To me, a 5K is a marathon. And that morning, the 5K tour through beautiful Eisenhower Park ended up adding an extra half-mile for many of us who didn't follow the right path. Perhaps the extra distance added to everyone's feeling of accomplishment after braving the elements.

After the brief awards ceremony, I headed back to my car. A little red car backed out, with Gerard at the wheel. He yelled, "No medal?" I tried blaming it on the extra half-mile. Gerard didn't let me off the hook, noting that nearly everyone had the extra half-mile. We agreed that it was still a fun race.

I asked Gerard whether he worked for Federation. With more than 500 employees, it's impossible to know everyone, and I like talking with staff members whenever I get the chance.

He explained that he is just a guy who loves to run races, knows where they all are, and when he gets up in the morning to go running, he might as well run a competitive race.

Then he said: "I was 380 pounds, and running saved me. And I like the medals."

Looking at Gerard, I would never have known he once weighed 380 pounds. "I'm addicted to being skinny!" he said.

After he left, I kept thinking about Gerard. He gets it. He seeks his opportunities and victories. To get where he is today took a lot of action. No one did it for him; it was him and him alone, except for the thousands of people running beside him, seeking their own racing goals.

Since 1972, Federation has grown from a small advocacy group to one of Long Island's largest not-for-profit organizations. In my 16 years with Federation, I have seen firsthand the philosophy of an organization that seeks out opportunities, even those outside the comfort zone, to serve those in need in our community.

In 2018, I encourage you to seek out opportunities and achieve your goals with the same passion as Gerard and Federation. If so, you will surely be successful.

ACT Team Expands Services to the North Fork

The North Fork of Long Island will soon benefit from Federation's new Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team that will bring robust health services to high-needs individuals in their own homes.

On January 1st, 2018, the new ACT Team began assembling their program to begin serving the eastern end of Long Island. The expanded ACT service will be able to care for 68 people in Suffolk County and will begin providing services within the next few weeks.

"The North Fork has been an underserved area," said Jason Vandewater, Director of Clinical Services. Previous to the expansion, one team served the entire eastern end of Long Island, including both Forks.

Many individuals with developmental challenges who live there had not had ready access to treatment because of transportation issues and the unavailability of nearby healthcare services.

"There was increased need in Suffolk County, and this new ACT Team will greatly enhance services to the North Fork," Vandewater said.

Mobile Teams Now Help Individuals in the Greater Population

Federation's mobile service teams have traditionally served a population of individuals who lived in mental health housing (SPA Housing), helping them move into the greater community.

Yet, what about individuals with mental illness who don't reside in this system? After all, there are many individuals with disabilities who live at home with their families, in shelters, or in Section 8 Housing.

Ali Rosen, Director of Community Housing Support Teams, has been advocating tirelessly on behalf of these individuals to benefit from the services of Federation's Mobile Teams.

In November, the State of New York agreed that the Mobile Teams could serve anyone struggling with mental illness and substance abuse, no matter where they resided.

"It was a pivotal turn for Federation," said Jennifer Riley, Program Manager, Mobile Residential Services and Residential Transitional Services Teams A and B.

Consider the numbers. Today, Teams A and B are filled to capacity, with each team serving 65 individuals for a year to 18 months. For the first time since the program came into existence two years ago, there is a consistent wait list of five to seven people.

Each Mobile Team of 10 professionals provides a range of services, including symptom management, substance abuse counseling, coordination of health services, coordination of housing, and more. Federation staff members visit clients wherever they live, as often as needed, whether it's daily or once a month.

Riley spoke of the advantages of seeing people in the community rather than in an office.

"The environment gives insights into the clients, and the team gets to know people really well," she said. "In an office, we may see them in a one-dimensional way. In the community or in their homes, the mobile teams can tailor the intervention to their needs."

Even though the population served has expanded, the goals are still the same: to provide services that help people maintain safe housing, manage their medications, and build the skills necessary to be able to live as independently as possible while focusing on their recovery.

A Simple Book of Recipes Adds Holiday Cheer

There's nothing like a home-cooked meal for the holidays. For individuals and families who are putting together a meal using non-perishable items, cooking can be a challenge.

That's why Federation's Care Coordination team put together a recipe book for three holiday dishes using non-perishable foods. Suffolk County Care Coordination clients received the recipe book along with a \$25 gift card for use supplementing the meal with protein or fresh ingredients.

The recipe book offered three winning dishes: Pumpkin Bisque Soup, Green Bean Casserole, and Cherry Chocolate Cobbler.

Dawn Cassidy, Program Manager, Hudson River Care Coordination Program, said the project was a collaborative effort.

"The staff worked well together," Cassidy said. "Supervisors assembled the bags and care coordinators delivered the packages."

Cassidy said that clients with children and families who were cooking for the holidays were very appreciative.

"One client cried because her son is in culinary school and they were able to cook together," she said.

"This was all about making the holidays brighter for the clients," said Maria Castilla, Administrative Assistant, Care Coordination for Long Island. "The care coordinators did an awesome job. We all look forward to this every year."



FACT Team Expands to Meet Emerging Needs

It's been called a clinic without walls. We're referring to mobile teams of professionals – Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams – that go to the streets, to shelters, or into homes to provide services to people diagnosed with severe mental illness whose needs have not been met by traditional service delivery approaches.

The common factor among all the individuals is a lack of a support network.

Federation now has three ACT teams and in July 2016 began staffing a Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) team. FACT functions like an ACT team but provides services to those who have a criminal history background.

New York City has five FACT teams, and last year Federation's FACT team expanded from Queens County into New York County.

The team of 12 serves a case load of 68 clients. With its forensic focus, the FACT staff members are required to have a higher educational requirement (at least a master's degree).

"The work is typical, but the needs are as different and unique as a snowflake," said Bobby Staley, Associate Director of ACT Services for Federation. "We find that with the forensic population, people have complex personality issues. Every day is something new."

Staley was among a group of professionals who presented at the Association of Community Living Agencies in Mental Health (ACLAIMH) conference in November. He gave an overview of how ACT can help individuals in residential programs, whether they live in group homes, in community housing, or live independently. He emphasized that collaboration with clients and consumers is key.

Staley said that what has always been germane to social work applies to the ACT and FACT teams: "If we can allow a person to self-determine, to arrive at their own decisions, it helps. This requires a lot of listening and in the case of FACT, to reevaluating what has been said."

As Staley sees it, every situation and circumstance represents a new experience.

"Every experience adds more tools to our toolkit," he said.

Wyandanch Clinic Makes a Big Difference in Many Communities

From kids growing up amid poverty, gangs, and addiction, to the elderly who face depression, isolation, and anxiety, the Wyandanch Clinic serves a broad demographic. The geographic sphere is also wide, as it serves individuals in communities as far away as Bay Shore and Islip.

There is no typical day at the Wyandanch Clinic, according to Maria Christiansen, Program Manager. The clinic treats a variety of mental health issues and co-occurring conditions, including depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis, anxiety, trauma, ADHD, and childhood behavioral disorders. They also provide a variety of services including medication management, individual and group psychotherapy, family therapy, health monitoring and smoking cessation. Referrals come from hospitals, community based providers, family and friends, probation/parole, Child Protective Services, Assisted Outpatient Treatment and school districts. The clinic also accepts self-referrals.

Christiansen said she is proud of how quickly the clinical staff responds to the needs of individuals being referred for treatment, as well as individuals in crisis. People are usually seen within 24 to 48 hours. "We also have open access time for walk-ins and crisis intervention, especially during the holidays," Christiansen said.

The clinical staff treats the individual as a whole and in so doing will help link the individual to other services to address their needs. People dealing with long-term health issues are often linked to medical services, support groups for help quitting smoking, getting exercise, and losing weight. If an opioid problem is identified, the person is referred for substance abuse. If a client has housing needs or requires assistance in managing disability paperwork, a care coordination referral is made. "We recognize we cannot meet all the needs of an individual, but we do our best to link them so all their needs are met," added Christiansen.

Christiansen said that she believes in close collaboration with the community, including school districts and parents.

"Kids are growing up so quickly and there is so much pressure," she said. "We give them a safe place to express their feelings, tell their story and develop skills in managing all these pressures."

"If parents are recreating what they experienced growing up, we can offer help. If their experience is with substance abuse, emotional/physical abuse, and gangs, the key is early intervention for the children and education and support for the parents."

Christiansen would like to work on developing after-school groups for children that can provide support and also assist in developing healthy socialization skills. In addition, she hopes to develop parenting groups that provide support, education and skills.

Christiansen envisions a strong future for the Wyandanch Clinic. Since Federation took over the clinic in March 2015, the numbers have quadrupled. As of September 30, 2017, over 700 individuals received services at the clinic in 2017, which is up over 10% from 2016 and steadily increasing. "We're growing and we continue to add more services to meet the needs of the communities we serve," added Christiansen.

Year-End Highlights

Thanks to enthusiastic employees, Federation's annual Toy Drive was a huge success. Well over 100 gifts were collected in offices throughout Suffolk County. From dolls and cars to crafting kits, board games, and clothing, there were items for all ages, as well as candy for stocking stuffers. The gifts were distributed by Care Coordinators to clients in the Suffolk Care Coordination programs. Not only did it make the holidays merrier for many families, it was a rewarding experience for Federation staff as well.

Foster Grandparents acted generously this past holiday season to help low-income and disadvantaged families served by Federation's POWER program, a homeless outreach program. Program staff organized a donation drive at Federation's annual Volunteer Holiday Party, held on December 15th, 2017 at Stonebridge Country Club. Federation's Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion volunteers donated non-perishable food items, toiletries, coats, clothing, gift cards and other essential items to assist the clients and families served by the POWER Program. There were over 150 people in attendance at this event, and it was a wonderful kick off to the holiday season!

More than 100 supporters gathered together for a celebratory evening when Federation held its Third Annual Casino Night Fundraiser on October 12th at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, NY. Guests participated in the thrill of casino games and gambling, and also placed bids for a silent auction. The event honored Richard Turan, a member of Federation's Board of Directors.



In its first-ever "Turkey Trot 5K Run" Federation gathered together an enthusiastic group of runners, walkers, and supporters on November 18th at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. We wish to thank everyone who participated in support of the programs and services that Federation offers to help vulnerable populations on Long Island and in New York City. Thanks to our many sponsors, without whom the day would not have been possible. Congrats to Federation's own Ben Turner, Program Supervisor Copiague PROS, and Angela Mendes, EHR Specialist, for their 1st place wins overall! Way to go!



Federation Collaborates with NYS Senator John Brooks and Participates in the Golden Gathering Health Fair

Last fall, Jessica Acevedo, Program Manager of Federation's Senior Support Services Department, and Graziella Ferrara, Field Supervisor of the Senior Companion Program, were proud to participate in Senator John E. Brooks' Golden Gathering Health Fair at the Helen Butler Hall at Dominican Village in Amityville.

This important gathering was an opportunity for senior citizens to learn about resources, as well as to get free flu vaccinations, enroll in a free senior ID program, and receive blood pressure and health screenings.

At the health fair, Acevedo and Ferrara talked with attendees about Federation's programs and services, as well as encouraged people to consider volunteering, especially for the Foster Grandparent program, which is actively recruiting and in need of volunteers. Senior volunteers not only receive a rewarding experience by helping others, but also receive an hourly stipend, transportation and meal reimbursement if income eligible, and benefit from a strong network of fellow senior volunteers.

"For many of our seniors, this volunteer experience gives them a purpose. The children and other seniors they serve truly depend on them. In addition, for many seniors living on a fixed income on Long Island, the stipend and transportation reimbursement, while not exorbitant, can make a difference," said Acevedo.

After the event, Acevedo was honored to receive a personalized letter from Senator Brooks in which he extended "utmost thanks and appreciation for participating" in the event, which was attended by 400 people.

Senator Brooks also wrote: *"We could not have done it without your support and valuable participation. . . . The expertise that you provided was invaluable."*

If you, or someone you know, is 55 years of age or older and interested in becoming a Foster Grandparent volunteer, please contact the Senior Support Services Department at (631) 321-8229 Ext. 1224.



Staff Highlights & Achievements

Federation of Organizations Congratulates Staff Members on Recent Accomplishments:

- **Eric Schatzel** promoted to Associate Director
- **Kelly Rogan** earned her RN license
- **Gillean Gradney, SSSH Case Manager,** received her Recover Peer Advocate Training Certificate – Connecting for Purpose
- **Stephanie Mattarocci** graduated on December 19, 2017, from Molloy College with her Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Management.

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Federation Expands to Brooklyn and the Bronx!

Federation is proud to announce they we have expanded into Brooklyn and the Bronx! Two new buildings for Scattered-Site Housing have also come with a silver lining: Office space for employees who traditionally do much of their work in the field.

The Brooklyn residence, which has 27 single apartments, has office space for six case managers and one supervisor. The building in the Bronx has 13 double apartments for 26 residents and includes office space with room for six staff members. Both buildings became available in November of last year.

The on-site offices in the residential buildings are a plus for both clients and staff.

"They can come down and ask questions or resolve issues right on the premise," said Julian Stanley, Senior Administrative Assistant.

That's a win-win for everyone!

**Special Issue:
Client stories of
triumph...
March 2018**