

Annual Report 2023



Focusing on Whole Person Health

Message from the President and Chair of the Board

Caring for the Whole Person. Whole Person Health. It sounds so simple. So clear. So right. But what does that really mean for an agency like Open Sky which has 140 programs and 1,300 employees spread out across all of Central Mass and beyond? And for an organization that serves nearly 8,000 people who have mental health challenges, substance use disorders, autism spectrum disorder, experience homelessness, and other complex challenges?

It starts with caring about the whole person.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, but your most urgent need is food, or clothing, or a place to sleep, or a job, it's important that you receive all the help we can give.

That's why Open Sky has such a diversity of programs. It's difficult for us to give you an elevator speech on who we are and what we do because we do so much.



Ken Bates, President & CEO



David Przesiek, Chair

- Mental Health Supports and Treatment
 - Substance Use Disorder Supports and Treatment
 - Autism Supports
 - Child and Family Supports and Treatment
 - Home-Based Services and Supports
 - Support for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
 - Support, Treatment and Connections for People Coming Out of Incarceration
 - Employment and Education Support
 - Support for LGBTQIA+ Youth
 - Housing and Homeless Assistance
 - Outpatient Behavioral Health Services
 - Community Membership Opportunities to Hold a Valued Role in the Community
- And so much more!*

Caring for the whole person and the whole family means that we not only help with one of your needs, but we strive to help with all of them, including health-related social needs like housing, nutrition, employment, safety and more.

It also means that no matter who you are, what identities you embrace, what challenges you face, you are welcome. We invite you to learn more about the many ways in which Open Sky is serving the Whole Person by reading this Annual Report. We also invite you to contact us for more information at info@openskycs.org. Thank you.

Warm Regards,

David Przesiek
Board Chair

Ken Bates
President and CEO

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging: Open Sky Works to Build a Culture of Belonging



Like many organizations, Open Sky embraced the need to focus on becoming anti-racist in 2020, and much has been accomplished since that time. The work was launched by staff from across the organization who came together with a common vision and passion for change, and since 2020 we have developed:

- **New hiring policies** that have resulted in more diversity at leadership levels.
- **A changed vacation policy** which has provided flexibility for people who need enough time to travel and stay with loved ones in other countries.
- **A Speak-Up process** which has resulted in the ability for staff to report instances of discrimination.
- **A CARE Team** that continues to support the ongoing journey.
- **Monthly CARE Chats** which attract over 70 people to learn and dialogue about issues like tone policing, code switching, intersectionality, and more.

In recognition of these efforts, Stephen Osei-Bonsu, Director of DEIB, received the DEI Award from the Association of Developmental Disability Providers (ADDP) in September 2023, and Open Sky received the Best Practices in DEIB Award from the Association for Behavioral Health (ABH) in October 2023.

Like many major cultural shifts, it's not a destination – it's a journey.

For the coming year, our sights are set on:

- Implementing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS).
- Launching DEIB Champions who will support programs throughout the agency.
- Refining our training and education, and learning from our employees and directors what they need in order to feel and support a sense of belonging.

Is it enough? No. Like many major cultural shifts, it's not a destination – it's a journey. Open Sky is continuing to learn, explore, grow, teach, and make mistakes, as we travel this journey. What is real is the commitment and sense of purpose. We believe everyone deserves to:

- Feel a sense of belonging
- Advance within our agency
- Achieve personal and career success
- Achieve whatever goals they set their minds to

These beliefs are the very core of who we are and what we do.

We celebrate the positive changes we have made and the collective learning we have achieved. But we also acknowledge we still have far to go, and we are committed to following the lead of our staff of all identities in making sure everyone feels welcome.

Who We Are

The Open Sky Approach

Open Sky supports individuals experiencing behavioral health needs, intellectual and developmental disabilities, homelessness, and other complex challenges to live fulfilling lives. Through over 140 programs, we support individuals and families to develop meaningful relationships, have access to opportunities of their choosing and achieve their own definition of wellness.

Relationships

We are committed to people connecting with others in meaningful and mutually supportive ways. We help people nurture and develop relationships that support their vision of a fulfilling life.



Opportunities

We are committed to people doing more of what they want to do. We help people to connect or reconnect with the opportunities they find meaningful and satisfying. The sky is the limit!



Wellness

We are committed to people feeling their best. We support people in pursuing their own vision of wellness.



Fulfilling
Life

► Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Open Sky cares about supporting the whole person including the many identities, experiences, and influences that make a person who they are. We are proud to be investing in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging efforts. We are on a journey to be anti-racist as we learn, grow, teach, and transform.

► Trauma-Informed Care

Open Sky is on the path to becoming a more trauma-informed, trauma-responsive and resilient organization. Through learning about and centering the principles of Trauma Informed Care, we seek to transform our culture to one that fosters safety, healing, and hope for all.

► Community Engagement

We believe community is an incredibly powerful tool. We offer inclusive activities, including arts and culture programs, for individuals of all abilities and facilitate opportunities for individuals we serve to play valued roles in their community.

What's your open sky?



"Compassionate, empathetic support to achieve my goal of becoming a LPN."

Emma M.
individual served by
Adult Community Clinical Services



"Seeing individuals discover and explore new passions."

Laura F.
Certified Peer Recovery Counselor,
Adult Community Clinical Services
South County

Finding Your Way at Community Compass

Chris has struggled to find a place where he feels comfortable being himself. In shelters and other programs he always had to keep a wall up, not sure if the people around him really cared.

However, he's found a place where he feels comfortable – Open Sky's Community Compass program.

Community Compass is a free, walk-in service located on Grove Street in Worcester, providing support for successful re-entry for returning citizens after incarceration and others with any history of incarceration. It is a grant-funded program in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Correction and UMass Chan Medical School's ForHealth Consulting group.

4918
Total visits
since opening

Opened in late June 2023, Community Compass has already welcomed over **700** unique members as of May 2024, with over **60%** of members returning after their first visit. Some return nearly every day, like Chris.

While currently living in a shelter, and with the prospect of camping this summer, Chris is able to come to Community Compass to use the food pantry, clothing closet, housing supplies such as tents, and laundry service.



He also takes advantage of many of the groups hosted by the program staff including anger management, mental health, employment workshops, coping skills, peer support, LGBT support, and art and poetry.



“I would probably be miserable with the position I’m in now, but coming here is safe and comfortable. They care about me and my mental health.”

Chris is an upbeat, friendly guy, but he said without Community Compass his life would be very different.

When he first came to the program he was nervous because he wasn't sure how he would be treated or if they could actually help him. Now the staff are what keep him coming back.

“They actually care. They actually listen to you and provide what we need, big or small,” he said. “They help people no matter what.”

The supports used most often by members include Housing, Recovery, Employment, Food, and Education. Staff also help with tasks such as obtaining identification.

As part of their housing supports, the program provides flex funding and paid a total of \$59,369 in rental assistance within the first six months of opening.



You can learn more about Community Compass at openskycs.org/communitycompass.

Fun Throughout the Year



Valley Friendship Tour

The 38th Valley Friendship Tour was held on a cloudy and chilly June 3rd, 2023 but that didn't dampen the moods of participants! Over 200 participants, ran, walked or biked to raise over \$118,000 for Open Sky. The cycling route was new, and received rave reviews.



Kickball

The annual Open Sky kickball tournament was held in late July, with dozens of Open Sky staff and individuals served by programs competing at Fitton Field for the big trophy and bragging rights. The inclusive tournament also included lawn games and other activities to keep participants active between games. Congratulation to the 2023 champions, "Not Your Average Joes!"



50th Anniversary

In 2023, Open Sky celebrated 50 years of opening doors in the community. This milestone was celebrated by local Chambers of Commerce, as well as through a commemorative insert in the Worcester Business Journal. The pinnacle of the year, however, was a celebration and awards ceremony at Polar Park for individuals served by Open Sky programs and staff.



Valley Bag Toss

The plaza was packed on October 14th for the 9th Annual Valley Bag Toss! Sixty-eight teams raised more than \$23,000 for Open Sky's health and wellness programs. Join us October 19th, 2024 as we celebrate the 10th year of friendly cornhole competition. Congratulations to our 2023 winners Simply Baggers!



Worcester Railers

Open Sky staff and individuals served enjoyed attending Worcester Railers hockey games during the 2023-24 season! The Railers generously donate many tickets throughout the season and provide Open Sky with access to a suite for a few games each year. It's a great opportunity for those in our programs to attend a game, and a fun perk for staff and their families as well!



Safe Homes Gala

The 2024 Safe Homes Gala raised over \$172,000 for Open Sky's LGBTQIA+ youth drop-in center, Safe Homes, and brought together 350 people to celebrate 20 years of legal same sex marriage in Massachusetts. Six awardees were honored with People of Courage Awards at our largest Safe Homes Gala yet.

Program Highlights



Leominster Co-Response

Open Sky and Leominster Police Department entered a partnership to implement a co-responder model in May 2023. In a co-response model, a mental health clinician is embedded in a police department and will respond with police officers to behavioral health calls. The purpose of the model is to help connect the individual experiencing a crisis to resources and divert from arrest/jail or unnecessary hospitalization.

From June 2023 to December 2023, Vanessa Rivera, Co-Response Clinician, had

71
calls for response

84%
of those calls were diverted from arrest or criminal charges.

Bureau of Substance Addiction Services State Opioid Response Rapid Rehousing Program (BSAS SOR RRH)

Open Sky has been operating the BSAS SOR RRH grant since 2019. Recent changes to the grant opened eligibility to include individuals who receive Access To Recovery (ATR) services. In 2023, these changes significantly increased the referrals received by Open Sky for rapid rehousing assistance, homelessness prevention, and stabilization.

In 2023, Melissa Ingerson, Housing Team Lead, provided support to

148

individuals for rapid rehousing assistance, homelessness prevention and stabilization.

CARF Accreditation

In 2023, Open Sky received three-year CARF Accreditation for meeting internationally recognized benchmarks for standards of care and quality of services for Behavioral Health programs. Specific strengths include Open Sky's sense of community for individuals and staff, an environment of care that minimizes the stigma of mental illness, and strategies for staff recruitment, retention and advancement.



Hyde Park Receives a My25 Gold Recognition

An individual at Open Sky's Hyde Park program lost 15 pounds as part of the My25 program. In honor of this achievement, Hyde Park was honored with a Gold Recognition in Health Leadership Excellence. My25 is a program that provides health and nutrition specifically for those with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental health challenges.



The Caring Force Rally

Open Sky continues to advocate for better wages for direct care workers in the human services industry, as well as for other policies and programs that will benefit those we serve. In spring 2023, over a dozen Open Sky staff and individuals served attended The Caring Force Rally, organized by The Providers' Council, at the Massachusetts State House to meet with legislators.

Open Sky Awarded Three New DDS Contracts

In Fall 2023, Open Sky's Community Based Day Supports programs expanded to include a new CBDS program in Worcester. Then, in early 2024, Open Sky opened two new DDS funded programs. The first, opened in April, is a residential program for four men ages 22-50 with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Worcester. Also awarded in early 2024 was a pilot program collaboration between DDS and DMH. Five agencies were selected state-wide to participate in the Intensive Community Wraparound pilot, which will support adults ages 18-30 living in the community with autism spectrum disorder and significant mental health challenges.

Getting From *Here.....* to *.....There*

When thinking of what factors impact health and wellbeing, transportation may not be the first thing on the list, however access to transportation can improve someone's life in innumerable ways.

In 2023, Open Sky was awarded a \$250,000 grant by Mass-Development to fund transportation services for individuals served by Open Sky who do not live in areas easily accessible by public transportation. From January 2023 to February 2024, the grant covered more than 3,800 rides for 146 individuals.

When an individual had a need, staff could schedule a ride through a local transportation vendor such as a taxi or car service. The grant did not cover trips with ride share companies such as Uber or Lyft. Transportation is not always reimbursed by funders and therefore poses a challenge for individuals in need of a ride to appointments, work, or other events.

The primary transportation need during the grant period was for rides to medical related visits, with employment and education, support meetings and community activities towards the top of the list. A variety of programs used these services including Open Sky's OASIS program for those with substance use disorders, Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS), the Family Support Center, Career Services and others.

A lack of transportation can seriously affect someone's ability to receive necessary care, maintain employment, or live independently.

When staff in Open Sky's ACCS program heard of Brick Fest, a Lego convention at the DCU Center in Worcester, they knew it would be a great opportunity for Jeremy, an individual served in their program. The only issue was that Jeremy did not have

a way to get there, and there was no public transportation between where he lives and the convention center.

Thanks to the grant, however, staff were able to help Jeremy attend the convention independently and spend time among peers who share the same interests.

"The staff support me by looking into ideas I like," Jeremy said. "Staff show me events or new movies I would enjoy."

The staff worked with a transportation company to arrange pick-up and drop-off, and gave Jeremy tips for traveling independently such as when to head to his pick-up spot and how to find information upon arrival.

"I learned a lot from this event. It was fun and I saw a lot of Lego things," he said. "The coolest thing was the building event. I got to build two characters and won two pins."

Without this grant and the ability to access transportation, attending the Lego convention would have just been a fun idea and nothing more. By filling in the missing piece – transportation – Jeremy was able to explore a passion and gain skills to become more independent.



The grant by MassDevelopment covered more than 3,800 rides for 146 individuals from January 2023 to February 2024.



Exploring Your **Passions**

The Open Sky Family Support Center holds dozens of activities every month for individuals and families with intellectual/developmental disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Blackstone Valley. One regular activity you'll find along with Tai Chi with Ron and ASL Bingo, is Diamond Art with Ann.

Ann has been attending the Family Support Center for about two years and her artistic skills were immediately apparent. She picked up diamond art quickly and clearly enjoyed it. A staff member asked her if she would like to lead the class and the rest is history.

"We strive to empower individuals served by creating opportunities for leadership roles. We encourage individuals to step outside their comfort zone to increase their confidence by sharing their gifts and talents," said Jennifer MacNeill, Director of the Family Support Center.

A goal of Open Sky is to provide meaningful roles in the community for the individuals we serve. Sometimes this involves finding existing opportunities, and other times it means creating them. The hope is that this brave space

created by the Family Support Center will help Ann to develop her leadership and confidence, which will transfer to experiences she has in the community.



Ann has taken her craft to the next level by even selling it at the Art and Music Makers Festival hosted by ValleyCAST, Open Sky's arts and culture arm. She loves creating art and says that leading diamond art makes her heart happy.

The other participants have also responded well to her leadership. She is welcoming, kind, compassionate and patient, providing encouragement to new learners. The program has even fostered relationships within the group which led to more attendance at other events.

By providing Ann with the opportunity to not only learn a new skill, but to actually take the lead, the Family Support Center staff are helping to increase her creativity, social skills, and confidence!

To learn more about the Family Support Center visit openskycs.org/familysupportcenter.

Community Membership

Open Sky's Community Membership efforts are a great example of our commitment to whole person health, and the Open Sky approach of promoting wellness, opportunities, and relationships. It is about finding or developing meaningful opportunities for individuals to play a valued role in the community, while doing the things they want to do.

One example is our work in Southbridge. Victoria Prince, Community Membership Facilitator, helped to facilitate many projects and created an Acts of Kindness campaign. This empowered individuals to show kindness and give back to their community. Projects included making cards and bringing treats to show appreciation to Southbridge Police, Fire, and First Responders, and Valentine's Day cards for the senior and rehab centers, helping with the Southbridge Recreation Department's Easter Egg Hunt, and rock painting at the senior center.

Continued on page 11



A Community Effort

The staff at Safe Homes, Open Sky's LGBTQIA+ youth drop-in center, understand the power of community.

The program offers food and toiletries for youth, as well as clothing and gender-affirming supplies through their **Transgender Resource Center**. They also offer **free one-on-one mental health counseling** for youth through their part-time clinician, who is a former Safe Homes youth herself.



However, by partnering with other local organizations, the staff are able to provide many more opportunities and resources that youth might not otherwise have access to.



For three years now, Safe Homes has partnered with the **New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill** as part of the Garden's **Project Bloom series**.

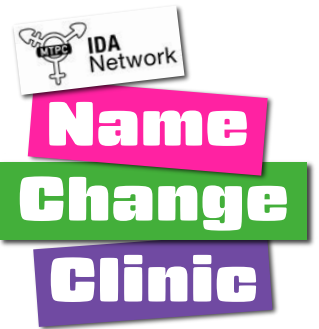
During these workshops, youth can take part in hands on learning about nature, plants, and wellness. Some topics include mason jar herb gardens, nature photography and yoga.

Looking at another aspect of wellness, Safe Homes has partnered with **Planned Parenthood** to offer safe sex supplies. Educators from Planned Parenthood have also led workshops on topics such as healthy relationships, STIs and barrier methods, and gender-affirming care options – topics that encourage positive outcomes among young people.

Last year Safe Homes partnered with **Love Your Labels** to run the **Threads pop-up series** through a grant from Hanover Foundation, introducing youth to fashion, makeup, and design, culminating in an incredibly stylish Halloween Party featuring local performers.



Additionally, Safe Homes has partnered with the **Mass Trans Political Coalition** to bring a **Name Change Clinic** to drop-in! In May 2024, experts from MTPC and Namesake were on hand for one-on-one consultations and support for folks anywhere in the name change process (including those who are just curious). Having these experts visit is an excellent opportunity for young people to learn more about the process and get their questions answered.



Peer support is also incredibly important and Safe Homes has partnered with the **Worcester Public Library** to host a Safe Homes favorite, **T-Time**. This peer led group for Transgender and Non-binary youth provides a safe space to ask questions, get support, and have fun with others who identify as Transgender or Non-binary.

Safe Homes joined together with **Love Your Labels** and **AIDS Project Worcester's SWAGLY** group again in early 2024 to hold a vigil in memory of Nex Benedict, a non-binary youth in Oklahoma who died following an altercation with classmates. Since the vigil, the three groups have created a coalition to better serve LGBTQ+ youth in Worcester and beyond.



This is just the start of partnerships Safe Homes has and is developing as Program Director Oscar Oliveira Soens attends events throughout Central Mass nearly every week to let youth know about the services available and seek out new connections.

Learn more about Safe Homes at safehomesma.org.



The Career Pipeline Program Continues Success

The Career Pipeline Program is a collaborative effort with Seven Hills, Open Sky, African Community Education (ACE), Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC), and Mass Hire to address the workforce crisis, while offering opportunity for immigrants, refugees and BIPOC staff in the Human Services field. There are three components detailed below. In addition, the project works collaboratively with UMass Chan Medical School and the City of Worcester on Dynamic Futures, a program to expose high school students to behavioral health careers.

Human Services Career Support

Since its inception, the Human Services Career Support Program has graduated 68 people (with 28 more due to graduate in June 2024) from the 5-month training program which leads to a job at Seven Hills or Open Sky.

Joe Booker (Cohort 1) Graduated from the first cohort of the Human Services Career Support Program and proceeded to become a residential counselor who currently works across different programs within our agency. Joe is dedicated to excelling in this field. He actively seeks out mentorship, networking opportunities, and advanced training to enhance his expertise and performance which aided his appointment to mentor three participants from the 3rd cohort.

Henry Htoo (Cohort 2) Following his graduation as a participant of the second cohort, Henry has moved around within the agency in various capacities. Henry has moved from being a residential counselor to education and employment specialist and now works as a housing specialist at Open Sky's ATARP program. Henry has also mentored some of the subsequent participants and contributed immensely to their personal and professional growth.

Joseph Casseus (Cohort 3) came to us from Haiti speaking little to no English. He persevered through the challenges and refused to let any barrier stop him from reaching his goals. Joseph's commitment propelled him forward and his positive attitude made way for him. As a participant of 3rd cohort, Joseph exemplifies great desire for learning and drive



for a career in human service work. Joseph benefitted from our wraparound support which he used to purchase his first vehicle that he now uses to bring himself to work. His determination and commitment were recently rewarded as he gained his MAP certification which allows him to administer medication in his home program.

Jeremy Frost (Cohort 3) has faced many challenges, some of which prevented him from gaining employment. When he came to us, it became apparent where his desire to serve stems from. Jeremy expressed that his goal in



life was to become a recovery coach/specialist and that he would like to use his life experience to be a source of strength for others like him. Upon completing the program, Jeremy was provided with resources to help him enroll in the recovery coach training offered through our agency. This led to his duo certification, and he now works as a recovery specialist at OASIS, Open Sky's 16-bed treatment program for people with co-occurring mental health challenges and substance use disorders in Douglas.

Clinical and Leadership Support

This program is to help BIPOC incumbent staff at Open Sky and Seven Hills explore career pathways, develop a career plan and begin on the path to advancement in leadership or a clinical career. 28 people completed this program last year. The next cohort is enrolling in July 2024.

Higher Education Cohorts

The first cohort of 21 employees embarked on a three-year Master's degree program offered by Framingham State, on-site at Seven Hills and hybrid, leading to licensure as Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC). A second group is preparing for classes to begin in September. The program is free for participants, and is supported by grants and the two employers.

Employee *Wellness*

The human services industry can be challenging, and Open Sky is committed to supporting our workforce while becoming a more trauma-informed organization. An essential part of this journey involves looking at the culture and climate of the places and spaces where we do our work. The Employee Wellness Committee is comprised of various people across the organization aiming to enhance our culture so that we attend to the wellness of both the individuals who use our services and our staff. This is done through assessments, opportunities, and sharing of best practices and is essential in our goal to strengthen our workforce.

Many barriers exist for employees in our organization to be able to take breaks and look after their own wellness. We are exploring these barriers, and this committee aims to work with employees to make wellness more attainable for all.

Often the messaging around self-care and wellness practices for human service workers are emphasized as the things you should do for yourself outside of work. However, there are things we can do in our workday to impact compassion fatigue and stress. Offering these and providing messaging that it is ok to attend these events during your workday can provide employees with the opportunity to do something for themselves. To truly have an impact, we will need to look at Open Sky's organizational culture and what messages our employees receive from themselves, each other, supervisors, colleagues and leaders of the organization. It is when we understand the whole picture that we can truly work to shape our culture to be one of growth, wellness, and inclusion for all.

Some of the recent Employee Wellness efforts include:

The addition of a **90-minute employee wellness portion** of new staff orientation.

Financial wellness resources including an Employee Emergency Savings program and Emergency Relief program.

Monthly wellness newsletters, and a wellness component in the Agency's weekly briefing.

Lunch & Learns focusing on the "8 Dimensions of Wellness."

Wellness While Working contest.

Spotify playlist with positive music submitted by staff.

Weekly "Feel Good Friday" email with good news submitted by staff.

Employee wellness drop-in events such as mindfulness, card making, and coloring.

Premium access to the **Calm App** for all employees.

Community Membership

Continued from page 8

"Individuals from Open Sky stepped up and helped carry out programs for the Southbridge recreation department by hiding and collecting Easter eggs, interacting with the public, and helping lead and encourage rock painting. Participants had fun getting creative and interacting during these activities," said Mike Brunelle, Recreational Director for the Town of Southbridge. Other activities offered through the Community Membership department include decorating for the Festival of Giving Trees to support local charities, and participating in Stepping Stones Theater where individuals step out of their comfort zone and shine on stage.

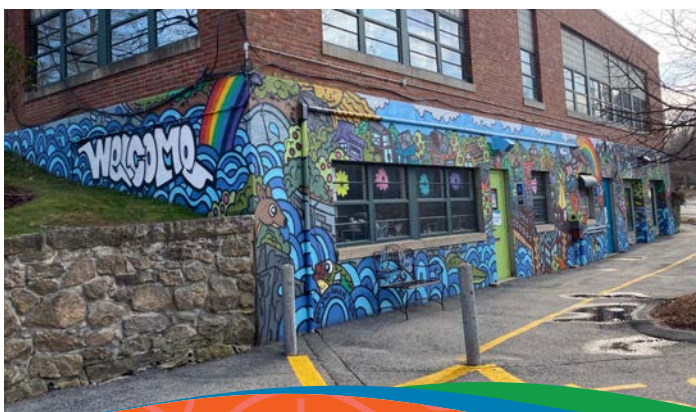
Learn more about Community Membership at openskycs.org/communitymembership



ValleyCAST Brings the Community Together Through **Arts & Culture**

The Family Support Center, an Open Sky program for individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and autism, located on the lower floor of 70 Douglas Rd., at the Alternatives' Whitin Mill Complex, needed a more welcoming entrance for the families they serve. They reached out to ValleyCAST, the arts & culture arm of Open Sky, for some ideas.

Cristi Collari, Director of ValleyCAST, contacted Whitinsville-based mural artist Ben Jundanian who was thrilled to take on the project. Collari and Jundanian decided to bring together individuals served by Open Sky, staff, and community members to talk about what is meaningful to them, what brings them joy, and what they'd like to see depicted in the mural.



Jundanian then drew up a sketch, which everyone loved and approved, and went to work spray painting the design in black outlines on the concrete walls. ValleyCAST arranged a paint day with all involved and the mural was completed in one day!

"It was so incredible watching everyone, regardless of ability or disability, spray paint for the first time with such confidence under Ben's kind and patient direction and support. The joy, kindness, and laughter as together everyone brought the Mural to life were the same feelings we all shared when we spoke of what we wanted to see depicted in the mural," Collari said.



The result, as you can see in the photos, is a much more welcoming entrance, for not just the Family Support Center, but for everyone who comes to the Mill. It is bright, cheerful, playful, and full of hope!

[Learn more about ValleyCAST at openskycs.org/valleycast](https://openskycs.org/valleycast)

Weaving Community!

As many gallery-goers would agree, touching art on display is usually a hard "no." However, visitors to ValleyCAST's "Weaving Community" exhibit at the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery experienced an exhibit that was not only a colorful feast for the eyes, with examples of circle, basket, and loom weaving by local artists and weaving organizations of all abilities, it was also a tactile and participatory delight.

Upon entering the gallery, a floor to ceiling loom enticed visitors of all ages and abilities to grab provided yarn and fabric and start weaving shoulder to shoulder with other gallery patrons. A free style floor loom stood in the corner with volunteers and gallery staff ready to teach the relaxing, freestyle method.

Related workshops, in fence weaving, circle weaving, square weaving, and floor loom weaving were also offered and

taught throughout summer and fall 2023 to extend the "Weaving Community" concept beyond the gallery walls.

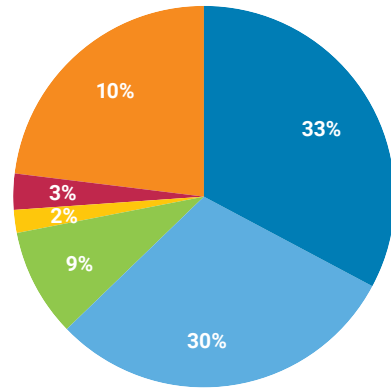
The exhibit opened with the Annual Free Summer Concert Series at the end of June and extended through to the end of September, so people who attended the Annual Art & Music Makers Festival could also participate. Hundreds of people of all ages and abilities contributed to the weavings, which are now hung in the new Weaving Community Studio at the Whitin Mill, where inclusive, freestyle weaving workshops are taught throughout the year.



Financial Report (FY 2023)

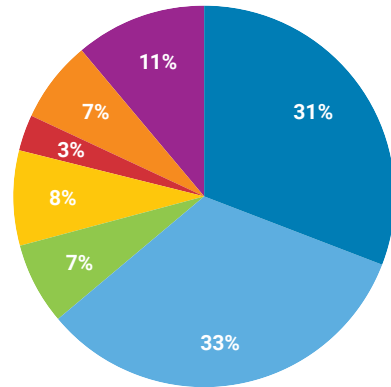
Revenues

Mental Health	33%	39,185,280
Developmental Services	30%	35,884,279
Medicare / Medicaid / Mass Health	9%	9,949,692
3rd Party Insurance	2%	2,886,535
Client Fees & Rent Subsidies	3%	3,986,071
Other	23%	27,890,586
Total	100%	\$119,782,443



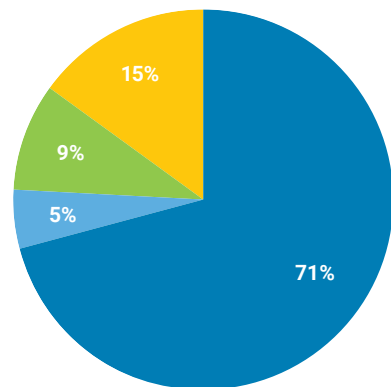
Operating Expenses

Mental Health	31%	32,081,089
Developmental Services	33%	34,154,961
Outpatient Services	7%	7,284,118
Shared Living and Adult Foster Care	8%	7,839,906
Children and Families	3%	2,841,478
Other	7%	7,243,500
General & Administrative	11%	10,972,556
Total	100%	\$102,417,608



Expenses by Function

Personnel	71%	73,127,839
Program Support	5%	5,108,122
Occupancy	9%	9,438,699
Direct Program Expenses	15%	14,742,948
Total	100%	\$102,417,608



Corporators (As of June 2024)

Jay Bry	Chris Collins	Michael Lyons	Vera Raposo	Dennis and Nancy
Kathryn Calo	David Felper	Suzanne Maas	Dennis H. Rice	Thompson
Heather Carr Reiter	Lee Gaudette	John McCann	Mary Ritter	Barry Walsh
Kirk Carter	Paulette Goeden	Frederick Misilo	Wayne Rocheleau	Judith White
Linda Cavaioli	Edith Joyce	Laura Myers	Scott Rossiter	
Maedon Coburn	Karl Krantz	Charley O'Neill	Mary Taber	

Major Donors, Sponsors and Grantors (FY 2023)

401kQuote.com
 Arbor Associates, Inc.
 Boston Benefit Partners, an Alera Group Company
 Bowditch & Dewey, LLP
 City of Worcester-ESG Grant
 Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts
 DiPlacido Development Corporation
 Edward Atter
 Fallon Health
 Fitchburg State University
 FMC Ice Sports
 Four Oaks Corporation
 George I. Alden Trust
 Greater Worcester Community Foundation
 Koopman Lumber Company
 L. E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation
 Mass General Brigham Health Plan
 MassHire
 Judith L. Kirk
 Plumb House, Inc.
 Rebecca W. Annis
 Reliant Foundation, Inc.
 Reliant Medical Group
 Spectrum Health Systems, Inc.
 Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage, Inc.

TD Bank
 The Hoche-Scofield Foundation
 The Stonewall Fund
 The Albert J. Gifford Charitable Trust
 The Fletcher Foundation
 The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
 The Hanover Insurance Group
 The Shop @ Whitinsville
 The Stoddard Charitable Trust
 TJX Foundation
 UMass Memorial Health
 UniBank
 United Way of Central Massachusetts
 United Way of South Central MA
 Wyman-Gordon Foundation
 Youths' Friends Association, Inc.

State/Federal and Public Funders

Central Mass Housing Alliance
 City of Worcester
 Commonwealth Corporation
 Department of Transitional Assistance
 Executive Office of Health and Human Services
 Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development
 Mass Department of Developmental Services
 Mass Department of Mental Health
 Mass Department of Public Health
 Mass Development
 MassHealth
 MassHire/Workforce Investment Board
 Mass Rehab Commission
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Thank you to our 2023 Holiday Gift Card Drive Sponsors

<p>Carr Funeral Home EmpowerCare Flynn Pest Control Genoa Healthcare Ideal Residences of New England International Ceramic Engineering Knights of Columbus, Mumford Council #365</p>	<p>Leo's Vacuum Center Mathieu Newton Sotherby NAMI Nydam's Landscaping Pyne Sand and Gravel Worcester Restaurant Group</p>
---	--

1,296 individuals from **76 programs**
 received gift cards,
 for a total of **\$25,920 gifted.**



4 Mann Street, Worcester, MA 01602

Board of Directors

(as of June 2024)

David Przesiek, Chair
Judith Kirk, Vice Chair
Donna Connolly, Clerk
Paul Schasel, Treasurer
Kola Akindele
Peter Bacchiocchi
Sara DeCarvalho
James DiReda, LICSW, PhD
Leonard Doerfler, PhD

Donald Doyle
Jill Green Lebow
Kevin Hunt
Michael Kilcoyne
Mary Ellen Larkin
Charisse Murphy
Gina Plata-Nino
Hamilton Soriano
Mark Williams

Credits

Editorial Content:

Catherine Twing-Irish,

Senior Director of Advancement and Marketing

Lorie Martiska,

Executive Vice President, Chief Advancement Officer

Design: Beth DeMember, *Graphic Designer*

Printing: Curry Printing

Leadership

Kenneth J. Bates, MA

President and CEO

Mary Benvenuto, MS

Executive Vice President, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Emmanuel Oppong, MSW, LICSW

Executive Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer

Lorie Martiska, MS

Executive Vice President, Chief Advancement Officer

Liz Olivera-Mustard, MBA, CHPC, CHC

Senior Vice President of Quality and Compliance

Oliver Joseph, MD

Chief Medical Officer

Kelley Gamble

Vice President of Community Engagement

Lisa Jeronymo

Vice President of Human Resources

David Lambert, MPA

Vice President of Business Development

Elesa Humphrey

Senior Director of Operations