



CONNECTICUT | NEW YORK | RHODE ISLAND

# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT





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# Our Foundation Guides Future Impact

To accelerate our future impact, we rely on our foundation.

We extend our deepest gratitude to every member of the NAFI CT|NY|RI community—our staff, volunteers, donors, and partners. Your dedication and belief in our mission have been instrumental in creating a positive impact. Together, we are shaping a future where everyone can live free from stigma and reach their full potential as members of our greater community.

As this report reflects on the achievements and challenges of the past year, we are inspired by the culture that supports our fundamental beliefs and the actions that are taken daily by our team members that drive our mission at NAFI CT|NY|RI.

It is with great pride and optimism that we share with you our progress and aspirations as we work toward creating a stigma-free environment and empowering individuals to become positive, proactive community members.

**People Can Change:** In the face of adversity and challenges, we have witnessed remarkable transformations within our community. Through dedicated effort both our staff and the individuals we serve have overcome obstacles, demonstrating the incredible resilience of the human spirit.

**Stigma-Free Environment:** This is driven by fostering a culture of understanding and acceptance. In the past year, our initiatives to raise awareness and promote inclusivity have made significant strides, but there is more work to be done.

**Empowering Success:** Given a supportive environment, tools, and opportunities for success, we believe that all people can become positive, proactive community members. Our programs and initiatives have been designed to provide the necessary support and resources for individuals to thrive. We've witnessed countless success stories, reinforcing our conviction that empowerment is a catalyst for positive change.

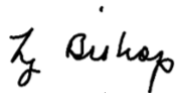
**The Power of Community:** Community, in its truest sense, can be a powerful source of healing and growth. We have experienced firsthand the transformative impact of a supportive network. Together, we have created spaces for individuals to connect, share experiences, and find strength in unity. Our communities have become beacons of hope, demonstrating the profound impact that collective support can have on individual well-being.

**Looking Forward:** As we look to the future, our commitment to these principles remains unwavering. To achieve this vision, we must continue to challenge societal norms, advocate for change, and foster a culture of compassion.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do.



Andy Quinn  
Board President



Lynn Bishop  
Executive Director



# Our Locations and Programs

## Connecticut

### HARTFORD COUNTY

- **Corporate Office:** Training & Consultation Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs
- **Corbin House:** Residential Programs
- **Adolescent Sexual Behavior Treatment & Education Program (ASBTE):** Community-Based Programs

### MIDDLESEX COUNTY

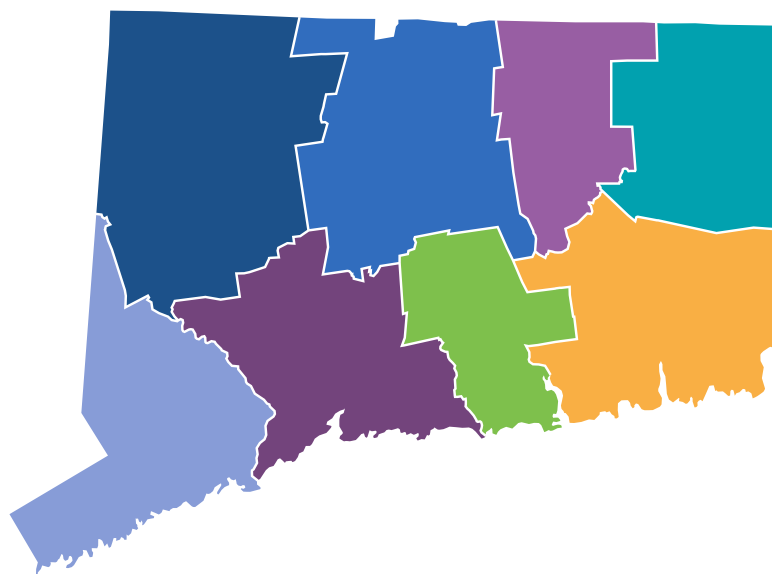
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs
- **Adolescent Sexual Behavior Treatment & Education Program (ASBTE):** Community-Based Programs

### TOLLAND COUNTY

- **Adolescent Sexual Behavior Treatment & Education Program (ASBTE):** Community-Based Programs
- **Linking Youth to Natural Communities (LYNC):** Community-Based Programs; Educational Programs
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs

### NEW LONDON COUNTY

- **Adolescent Sexual Behavior Treatment & Education Program (ASBTE):** Community-Based Programs
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs



### LITCHFIELD COUNTY

- **Thomaston Group Home:** Developmental Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs
- **Unaccompanied Children Shelter:** Care & Residential Programs

### WINDHAM COUNTY

- **Adolescent Sexual Behavior Treatment & Education Program (ASBTE):** Community-Based Programs
- **Linking Youth to Natural Communities (LYNC):** Community-Based Programs; Educational Programs
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs
- **Multisystemic Therapy – Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB):** Community-Based Programs
- **Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic for Children:** Community-Based Programs

### NEW HAVEN COUNTY

- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs
- **Corey Road Group Home:** Developmental Services
- **Individual Supports:** Developmental Services
- **Pierpont:** Developmental Services; Residential Programs
- **Milton Ave.:** Developmental Services; Residential Programs
- **Tress Rd.:** Residential Programs

### FAIRFIELD COUNTY

- **Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adult (MST-EA):** Community-Based Programs

## Rhode Island

### PROVIDENCE COUNTY

- **Lincoln House Adult Group Home** Smithfield, RI
- **Ridge Street ARC Residential Program** Pawtucket, RI
- **Professional Parent Program (PPP)** Therapeutic Foster Care
- **Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Enhanced Outpatient Services Program (EOS)**

### BRISTOL COUNTY

- **Main Street Semi-Independent Living/Supported Apartment Program** Warren RI
- **Professional Parent Program (PPP)** Therapeutic Foster Care
- **Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Enhanced Outpatient Services Program (EOS)**

### KENT COUNTY

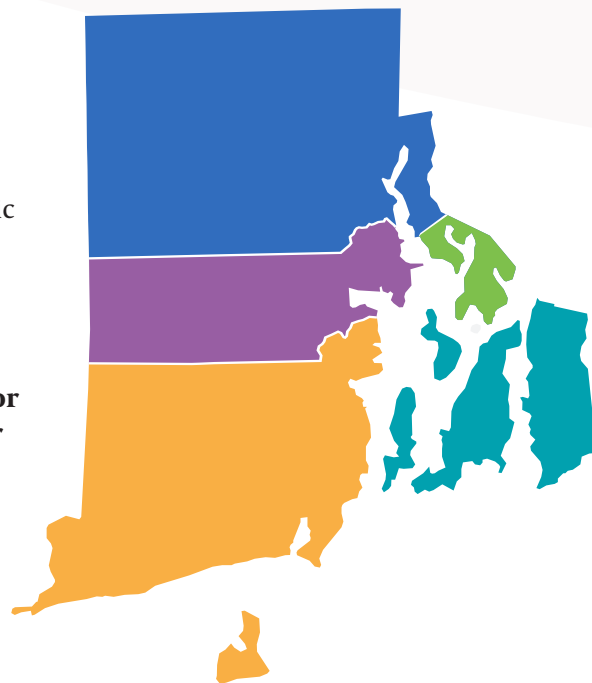
- **Regional Office**
- **Enhanced Outpatient Services Program (EOS)** Warwick, RI
- **Professional Parent Program (PPP)** Therapeutic Foster Care
- **Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Oakland Beach ARC Residential Program** Warwick, RI

### WASHINGTON COUNTY

- **Professional Parent Program (PPP)** Therapeutic Foster Care
- **Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Enhanced Outpatient Services Program (EOS)**

### NEWPORT COUNTY

- **Professional Parent Program (PPP)** Therapeutic Foster Care
- **Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Enhanced Outpatient Services Program (EOS)**



## Our Locations and Programs

### New York

#### WESTCHESTER COUNTY

- **Enhanced Family Wraparound Program:** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL):** Evidence-Based Services

#### ORANGE COUNTY

- **Family Wraparound Program:** Intensive In-Home Services
- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care
- **Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL):** Evidence-Based Services

#### ROCKLAND COUNTY

- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care

#### ALBANY COUNTY

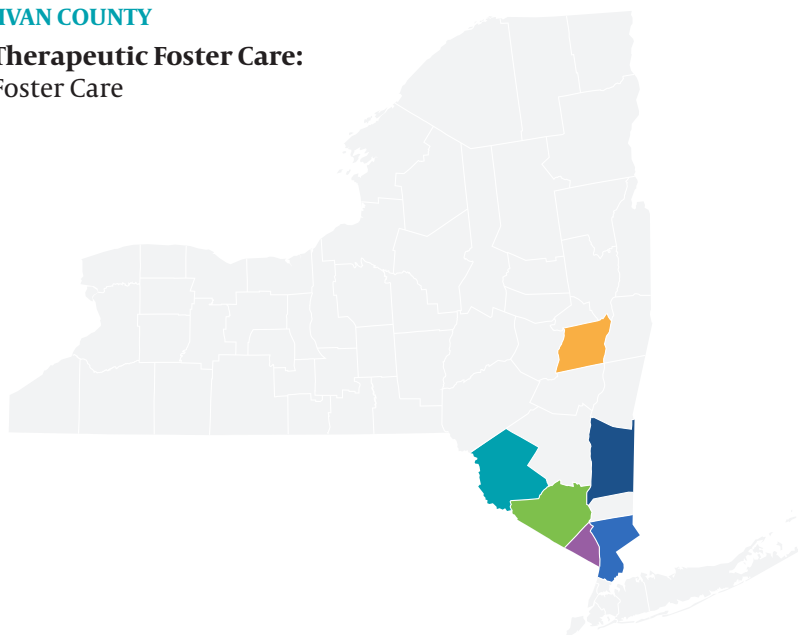
- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care

#### SULLIVAN COUNTY

- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care

#### DUTCHESS COUNTY

- **Therapeutic Foster Care:** Foster Care



### Affiliations/Memberships

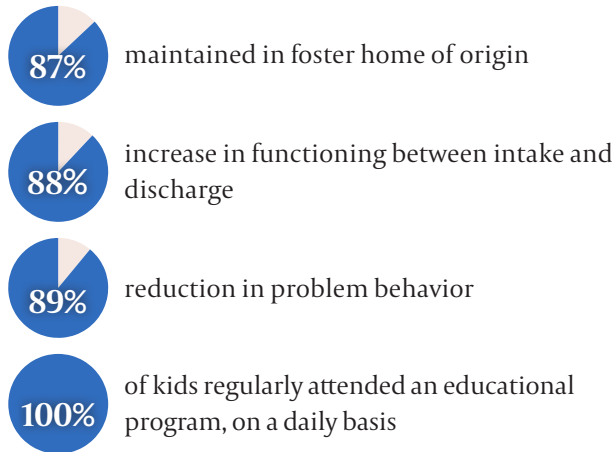
- NAFI/NFI Corporation
- Children's Welfare League of America
- Children's League of Connecticut
- CT Community Nonprofit Alliance
- Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
- Family Focused Treatment Association
- Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families
- The Council of Family and Child Care Agencies

### Accrediting Bodies and Licensures

- Council on Accreditation
- All Children All Families
- CT Department of Children and Families
- CT Court Support Services Division
- CT Department of Developmental Services
- Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
- Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families
- Westchester County Department of Social Services
- Orange County Department of Social Services
- Sullivan County Department of Social Services
- Dutchess County Department of Social Services
- Albany County Department of Social Services
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Office of Refugee and Resettlement

# Department Outcomes & Statistics

## Foster Care



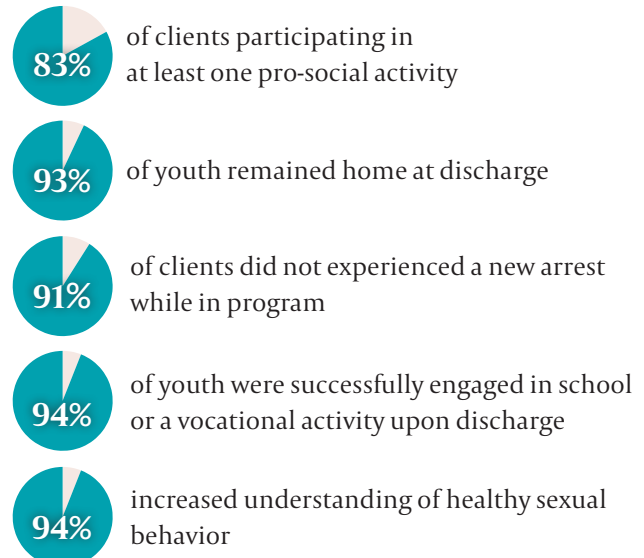
## Developmental Services



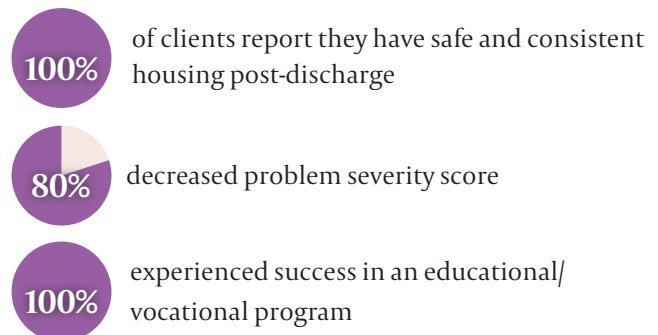
## Numbers by State

	Intakes	Discharges	Number Served
Connecticut	356	322	530
New York	115	112	177
Rhode Island	583	589	823
<b>Total</b>	<b>1084</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>1530</b>

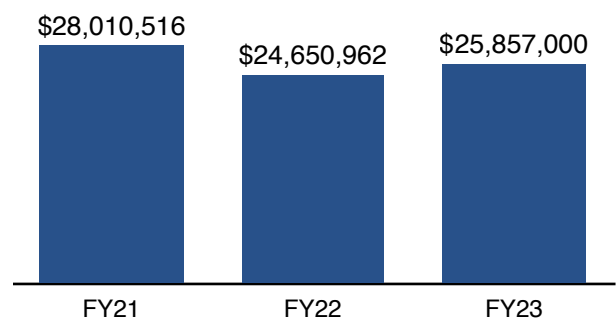
## Behavioral Health & Wellness



## Group Home & Residential Care



## Financial Summary: Total Revenue



# Connecticut Stories of Resilience



## Touchstone Shelter for Unaccompanied Children Making a Difference for ‘Survivors’

Since opening its doors in May of 2023, the NAFI CT Touchstone Shelter for Unaccompanied Children has served more than 120 teen girls. Most of them come from countries considered part of the Northern Triangle in Central America—El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Children flee these countries to escape extreme poverty and violence with the hope of seeking refuge in the United States. These girls travel alone for weeks and sometimes months. The journey is wrought with danger; lack of food/shelter, injury, and risk for assault and trafficking or detainment.

The Touchstone Shelter is the girls’ first introduction to U.S. culture. The physical environment is nicely decorated and welcoming and the staff’s priority is ensuring that each new girl feels emotionally and physically safe. The girls are survivors, and you see their resiliency through their connection with the staff— smiling and singing during recreation events, enjoying socialization with peers— and through the amazement in their eyes when they see their first bear (through the window, of course) or their first snowfall.

Whether the girls stay three days or three weeks, their appreciation for what has been provided while they are in our care is evident with each discharge and connection to their sponsor. It is absolutely impossible to share just one story about this most amazing group of girls, as the strength and resiliency is present in each and every one of them.

## Connecticut Stories of Resilience



### Connecticut Story of Resilience

Our client (7 years old) was admitted to Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) services for school advocacy support. The guardian was also seeking support with getting the client engaged in positive social activity. Our client at the time was experiencing extreme behaviors at school with no support or accommodations and was suspended a few times due to these behaviors.

The VOCA Case Manager supported the family in advocating for our client's needs. After several meetings with the school, a 504 plan was established with the guardian and school personnel. Accommodations were created to support the client's needs when behaviors occurred, and improvement was noticed within a few weeks.

Our client also worked with an Outpatient Care Program (OPC) Therapist to learn skills to help during episodes in school as well as at home. Although the guardian was quite nervous for the client to begin summer camp due to past trends and behaviors, the family decided to give it a try with the support of the team at NAFI.

The VOCA Case Manager supported this prosocial behavior by using VOCA funding and registered the client for summer camp through the local Windham Recreation Department. This was the first year our client attended camp and he did an amazing job through the entire summer camp, receiving recognition from the camp for being a hard worker and always helping staff and others. The family and camp staff recognized the client's growth and use of skills learned in treatment.

Despite the past difficulties the family has endured with the client, they never gave up on him, and they took a risk and did not let their own feelings get in the way of the client's opportunity to grow.



## New York Stories of Resilience

A 12-year-old girl and her father were referred to the Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) program because of her excessive absences and severe mental health issues. Upon meeting the family, it became clear she had not been to school in over a year and was incredibly defiant against any authority figures. The father expressed that he felt let down by the system because, although they had been through many programs before, none were successful.

PLL worked to highlight their strengths and engage with both the father and child at a timing and pace that worked well for them. After just a few sessions with PLL, both the child and her father identified positive changes within their relationship and behavior. After six weeks, the child was actively attending school regularly and her father was able to implement effective rewards and consequences for her consistently. Both were able to minimize their arguments with one another through positive communication skills learned in the program and rebuild a positive relationship. The family has since graduated from the PLL program with great success and has been able to maintain these positive changes post-closure.

The New York Family Wraparound program worked with a mother we'll call "K" to re-gain custody of her children. K and the children were living with K's mother, who had temporary custody of the children. K was unable to work due to an intellectual disability. K also struggled co-parenting with her mother. There was often a conflict when it came to who was responsible for parenting and this caused her a lot of stress and pain. K wanted to be more active in raising her children and was working toward financial stability. The program worked to identify job opportunities that would support her needs and abilities and was able to help find her a part-time job. The program also supported her in applying for benefits. Working together, they supported a successful approval for Social Security benefits for K and her family.

# Rhode Island Stories of Resilience



## Rhode Island Ridge Street Client Success Story

A young lady came to the Ridge Street Program in late fall of 2023, removed from home. Through her duration, she has shown remarkable resilience and determination in overcoming academic and personal challenges. Despite facing bullying and struggling with traditional community schooling, she advocated for herself to transition to virtual learning, demonstrating maturity and self-awareness.

She learned to balance school and personal treatment goals all in one setting (at the program). She would wake up on time daily when other residents are preparing for school, eat breakfast and get on the laptop, supervised by staff, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. She maintained good grades in all five classes without any distractions.

The program's support, combined with her commitment to following academic goals, has enabled her to excel academically by graduating early at 16 in March of 2024. Her dedication and ability to meet expectations, despite past behavioral issues, highlighted her growth and potential for success. This smart young lady would like to attend college and get their certificate in cosmetology school.

## Here's to a New Chapter

In early 2023, a young woman of Hispanic background embarked on a transformative journey at the NAFI Ridge Street Program. With no history of treatment or residential experience, she entered the program carrying the weight of abuse and neglect—struggling with self-injury, anxiety and forming healthy relationships.

Navigating inconsistent communication with her biological father and facing the reality that reunification was no longer the goal, she found herself alone but determined to push through. Despite the obstacles, she embraced the support of the program clinician and staff by mastering coping mechanisms and emotional regulation. She set her sights on independent living as a new goal, and with the guidance of the dedicated team, she learned essential life skills from cooking and laundry basics to job coaching and improvements in her academic performance, while maintaining safety both at school and within the community.

Through her determination and unwavering support, she secured a place in a semi-independent living program, marking a triumphant step toward her goal of independence. This young lady leaves the NAFI Ridge Street Program with a new path and emerged to become stronger, empowered, and ready to embrace the opportunities ahead.

### RI Foster Care Success Story

When longtime foster parents Leidy and Chris Alves received a phone call in the summer of 2019 asking their availability to take placement of 1-year old twins, they did not hesitate to say yes. Having high-school aged biological twins themselves, they felt as though they were equipped to handle the dual needs of same age infants.

After a year and a half of supporting the twin girls, as well as having supportive communication with their biological parents, the twins were able to reunify.

Unfortunately, due to the need for both of their biological parents to focus on their own wellness, the twins were placed back in foster care three months later and soon became free for adoption. Leidy and Chris again readied their home for the now 3-year-olds and opened their hearts again for caring for them, this time with the aim of ensuring that their next placement would be their last.

Having loved and cared for the twins for the majority of their lives, Leidy and Chris knew the kind of support and attention the twins would need in order to be successful long-term. Although they were unable to provide permanency for the twins themselves, this did not stop their commitment to making sure there was a loving and safe home for them somewhere.

When Leidy and Chris met restaurant owners Alyssa and Jimmy, they were immediately drawn by their warmth and energy. Alyssa and Jimmy were licensed foster parents with a different agency and discussed their desire to make their family complete. Leidy and Chris spent months getting to know this new couple, and after discussions with the twins' treatment teams, they started using Alyssa and Jimmy for babysitting.

This gave all people involved a chance to thoroughly get to know one another and the twins soon lit up when visiting Alyssa and Jimmy. The twins moved in full time with Alyssa and Jimmy in July of 2023 and have adjusted to their new life. Now it is Leidy and Chris that are the babysitters, and the twins are thrilled to still have their supporting presence. Just days shy of their 6th birthday, the twins will end their four-and-a-half-year stay in foster care and become permanently a part of Alyssa and Jimmy's family. Leidy and Chris have also signed on to be "forever supports" and are excited to see the twins continue to grow surrounded by the many caring adults who have become their family.



### A Rhode Island Success Story

Whenever NAFI's Main Street Boys' Program is able to empower a young man to learn, practice, and master skills that empower him to transition into independent living, it is a success. But when two young men should, by fate, meet one another in this setting and join forces to forge beyond NAFI, acquiring jobs, an apartment, and a new best friend, that is special.

These two young men came here from different worlds for different reasons, but in coming here they found a common purpose. Working with the program staff, case management, and their clinician, they worked through many challenges and overcame many obstacles. They learned hard skills, such as how to keep their homes clean and how to prepare nutritious dinners and budget for the future, while still setting aside time, money, and energy for fun.

They also worked on soft skills, such as how to accept help, how to seek support, and how to advocate for themselves. Their people skills shine when you meet them as they both share a robust sense of humor, while also maintaining humility, especially when they find time to visit and share with us news of their continued success.

Through this program, these two young men had the space to try and fail and try again. When they left, they were prepared to face a wider world with all of its challenges and all of its rewards.



## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging at NAFI

As we reflect on this year, all we can do is smile at the evidence of growth, courage and strength. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging committee became re-energized and set out to create a culture within the NAFI Tri-State region that embodied inclusivity and celebrated diversity. We strategized and spearheaded quarterly initiatives that would raise awareness of various cultures and worked to create a space where everyone felt safe to be themselves. We developed the bi-monthly DEI&B Newsletter to increase communication and keep everyone "in the know." Co-Chairs Ashley Walker and Rachelle Franco, along with chairs from NFI North and NFI MA, presented at the NAFI/NFI Annual Conference on Embracing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Building Your Normative Community. This was our opportunity to present to the agency at large on the efforts we've taken to build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment where everyone belongs. Rachelle Franco and Alison Rodino took the lead in having "Courageous Conversations" in Rhode Island on difficult topics that would elicit important dialogue around racism and other important topics. Jessica Clow and Ashley Walker participated in the All Children, All Families webinar panel discussion to review our agency's work to integrate LGBTQ+ inclusion into our broader DEI&B initiatives. With over 150+ participants, the outpouring of positive feedback was appreciated and served as a reflection of NAFI CT|RI|NY's mission to foster a diverse, inclusive and welcoming environment for the youth that we serve. For the third consecutive year, NAFI's Foster Care Services division has earned the Solid Foundation For Inclusion Tier of Recognition. This achievement demonstrates that NAFI Foster Care has successfully implemented the essential elements of LGBTQ+ inclusion in policies and affirming practices, has actively "rolled out the welcome mat" to the LGBTQ+ community, and has assessed our practices specific to youth and foster parents to ensure LGBTQ+ inclusion and acted to make these efforts sustainable. We are truly proud and honored to be a part of this movement and look forward to the greatness that is yet to come.

# 2023 Employee Recognition Awards

Each year, NAFI recognizes and celebrates employees for the outstanding work they do in providing the highest level of innovative human and social services to individuals and families. The awards are announced by Lynn Bishop, Executive Director.

## DEI&B Champion Award

The DEI&B Champion Award is presented to a NAFI employee who is actively working toward achieving a welcoming, supportive and inclusive work environment. It is intended to celebrate those who embrace the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and recognize how to help advance the mission of NAFI.



### CONNECTICUT: ASHLEY WALKER

Ashley has been involved in NAFI's DEI&B work since the agency first formed a Diversity Committee in 2019. When NAFI designated DEI as one of the agency's six priority areas in its 2021 strategic plan, she volunteered her time on the work group that identified specific goals for advancing the organization's DEI climate. In 2022, NAFI re-energized its diversity committee. The goal was to create a more structured, tri-state diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging (DEI&B) committee. Ashley was quickly identified as the person who could lead such initiatives on behalf of Connecticut's programs and employees. Since assuming the role of co-chair, she has breathed new life and energy into the committee. Her passion for DEI&B is evident in all she does. This enthusiasm is contagious and under her leadership, more employees have participated in committee-sponsored events and programs than ever before! In addition to her role as co-chair of the DEI&B committee, Ashley helps to build and sustain DEI&B policies and practices as a trainer for the agency's diversity, implicit bias, and inclusion trainings. She also recently represented NAFI CT|NY|RI on the national level, appearing

as a panelist on the human rights campaign's webinar "building an organizational framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion." Ashley is a natural "includer." She works to create spaces where people feel safe and empowered to be themselves. We are fortunate to have her and proud to name, Ashley Walker, the co-recipient of the 2023 DEI&B Champion Award!



### RHODE ISLAND: RACHELLE FRANCO

Rachelle has been with the organization for about five years. She came to us as a clinician and soon moved into the supervisor's role, where she has excelled for the past three years. In late 2020, Rachelle reached out to the executive director to ask about the agency's direction as it related to DEI&B. She was soft spoken but her message was clear and respected – let us move our message forward and I want to be a part of it. From there, her role within all things DEI&B has taken off. She is a courageous conversation trainer, is the voice of our RI team, and is now the co-chair of the agency DEI&B committee. She is committed to moving our strategic initiatives forward and is supporting the larger NAFI/NFI Agency by co-facilitating a workshop at the 2023 conference. Due to her commitment, drive and determination to DEI&B, Rachelle Franco is a co-recipient of the DEI&B Champion Award.

## Rookie of the Year

The Rookie of the Year award is presented to someone who has worked for the agency for less than one year but has already made a notable mark on their program, having shown great enthusiasm for their job and commitment to professional growth.



### CONNECTICUT: CARMEN DEMATTEIS

If you looked up the words passion, commitment, perseverance and loyalty to one's team, you would find the name of this year's rookie of the year in the definitions. Carmen came to NAFI with one goal in mind, to find meaning, purpose, and leave an impact on the lives of others. She has done just that.

In my first meeting with Carmen, I knew she was going to be a perfect addition to our NAFI family. From day one, Carmen has not stopped learning or teaching and has built a strong team and program. She came to NAFI with years of leadership and management experience but not in the field of human services or behavioral health. In fact, she had no experience in the provision of services we deliver at NAFI. The work would be an entirely new world – she truly was a rookie to this work. That said, almost a year later, no one would know this.

Carmen has been pivotal in the development of NAFI's first unaccompanied minors shelter, growing the team and the program from the ground up. As she was learning NAFI's systems and those of our funders, Carmen was also responsible for hiring, training, building policy and procedures, and developing internal operations to ensure success. Thank you for throwing yourself into the work, for the long hours and endless calls and emails, and most importantly, thank you for taking a risk with us and changing your profession. I am sure everyone misses you in the kitchen (yes, she's an amazing chef) and we are very honored and lucky to have her as the assistant director of our unaccompanied minors shelter. Join me in congratulating, Carmen DeMatteis, NAFI Connecticut's Rookie of the Year!



### RHODE ISLAND: DIANA VANG

From day one, Diana was dependable, observant and unfailingly punctual for all shifts! Even though she came into the field with no experience, Diana presents herself with confidence and enthusiasm. Over the past few months she has grown more and more. She is savvy, competent, and one of the most reliable employees. She has a willingness to take on difficult projects, including but not limited to cooking and grocery shopping. Not only does Diana love cooking and does an amazing job at including the boys in this process, but she is also one of the friendliest people I know. She always arrives to work with a smile on her face and a cheerful attitude. I have also seen her resolve conflict with remarkable patience! She is such a team player who is consistently finding ways to help co-workers. No matter what is going on she always remains calm, even despite my scare tactics. It is with great pleasure to congratulate Diana Vang as the 2023 Rookie of the Year recipient! She is a fabulous employee, a huge asset to our team, and extremely deserving of this award and recognition.



### NEW YORK: CAMILLE LINDO

Camille started with NAFI NY in December 2022. From the moment she started, she was eager to learn about who we were, the programs we ran and what we needed. Camille quickly learned about the region, programs and support that was needed.

She has supported the programs by developing systems for supply ordering, developing calendar schedules for conference rooms, and maintaining and pre-planning meals for groups and training events. Camille has also supported the oversight of agency vehicles over both counties, scheduling routine maintenance and having any maintenance concerns addressed so the vehicles are available for use.

Camille has embraced the office manager role and continues to support all the needs of the NY region. She has also joined the spirit committee to support staff events and activities. Camille Lindo is an asset to the NAFI NY region and we are honored to award her Rookie of the Year.

## Award of Excellence

The Award of Excellence is presented to someone who serves as an example of superior performance in their agency, having made significant accomplishments during the year. Recipients are recognized for exemplary leadership, innovation, or initiative.



### CONNECTICUT: ELLIOT TELLADO

While Elliot has only been part of the NAFI family for a short time, his impact on our community has been tremendous. Elliot radiates an energy that naturally and genuinely welcomes and engages all people. He demonstrates sincere enthusiasm for not only his regular role and responsibilities, but for all events, whether it be a rally at the state capitol, lunch time in the Hartford office, or visiting programs.

Elliot immediately hit the ground running when he started. Being in the first position of its kind in our NAFT CT world, Elliot pioneered the way, defining the position and setting the bar high. Through his community engagement, persistence, hard work and 'can do' attitude, Elliot staffed a brand new entire program in just six months. And he didn't stop there! He has tirelessly pounded the pavement in our communities to recruit staff and

get our good NAFI name out there. This is evidenced by his energetic attendance at dozens of job fairs, presentations at colleges and universities, collaboration with many community organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Hartford Yard Goats), creating fliers and yard signs to sprinkle in communities all over Connecticut, and even getting us airtime on the radio!

It is with much appreciation that this Award of Excellence goes to Elliot Tellado.



### CONNECTICUT: MYRA DAOUD

Myra came to NAFI approximately two years ago and has done incredible things for clients, families, and NAFI already! Beginning as an intern and now as a clinician, Myra is always up for a challenge, constantly asking for feedback in order to grow, and is extremely helpful to everyone she comes in contact with. She is known to her team, the MST world, and to our stakeholders as someone who consistently goes above and beyond with her clients. One of her families was highlighted this past year when one of her taped family sessions was selected to be used in future MST trainings as an example of excellent work for all to see. It did not take long for her to be promoted to Lead Therapist, as she typically was taking on roles outside of her job description, including supporting her new teammate during this past year. Always bringing a positive perspective even in the

midst of challenges, Myra was recently acknowledged during an MST Provider meeting for being a highly proficient clinician who the consultant saw as an up-and-coming supervisor in the future. We are so grateful to celebrate Myra Daoud, MST PSB Lead Clinician, as the recipient of the Award of Excellence for her commitment to families, clinical growth, and emerging leadership!



### CONNECTICUT: JOCELYN PARDI

Jocelyn's position requirements and skills make her role one with extremely big shoes to fill. When first meeting her, I thought, "This person is too good to be true!" But her skills, heart, dedication, talents, and abilities are even greater than I originally thought. Jocelyn came into an extremely challenging and isolated position and took the proverbial bull by the horns. The things she accomplished in such a short period of time are simply amazing!

Jocelyn utilized her existing skills to painstakingly analyze, prioritize, and actualize a tremendous amount of high-needs projects in an incredibly short period of time. Embracing this huge challenge with vigor and minimal support, she forged forward with vigor and has positively impacted the agency and programs in significant ways. Her ability to analyze, plan and implement significant change within systems and programs has made her an invaluable asset to NAFI CT and especially those we serve. Jocelyn is a person

of high character and a strong work ethic, and her ability to engage others in working toward a common goal has been tremendous. When she started, there were 41 med certified staff in Connecticut, and within a year this number doubled! She has exceeded all expectations and continues to provide exemplary care for both staff and clients across the state! These and countless other reasons are why this purple unicorn, Jocelyn Pardi, is so very deserving of the Award of Excellence!

## 2023 Employee Recognition Awards: Award of Excellence



### RHODE ISLAND: DEREK LEDOUX

Derek has been nominated for staff recognition in the past due to his consistent record of going above and beyond for our children and families, as well as for our staff. Whenever there is a case or program need, Derek is often the first to volunteer their time.

He genuinely cares about the children and families we work for and makes himself available whenever a family is experiencing difficulty.

Derek has been a HUGE factor in our ability to decrease disruptions, and we receive consistent positive feedback from foster parents about the support he readily gives them.

While Derek has always had an incredible work ethic, in the past he has reported a tendency to overthink and second-guess himself. Derek made changing this his professional development goal and I am proud to report that he has absolutely smashed this goal this year! Derek has become a powerhouse advocate for our children and families and is able to use his professional demeanor, clinical insight, and confidence to be a voice for our clients. Derek does not hesitate to reach out to, consult with, or respectfully disagree with FSU supervisors, chiefs, CASA workers, or collaterals.

He speaks confidently in court on behalf of our clients and reaches out to the Child Advocates Office if a child is being disserved.

He makes sound decisions independently and has helped to stabilize many intense cases by turning over every stone to advocate for the needs of the family.

Derek is such an asset to our program and deserves to be celebrated for all of his hard work and personal growth!



### RHODE ISLAND: JOHN SHAW

It is an absolute pleasure to present this Award of Excellence to one of the senior clinicians at the EOS program. Since John's start at NAFI in 2018, he continues to soar. It takes courage to embrace the possibilities of your potential, and John continues to model growth by taking risks. His approach is considerate and thoughtful, and he always sees things through the lens of a willingness to learn. John takes the time to fully listen and make sure everyone's perspective is being taken into consideration. In addition, he sees the strengths in people and encourages others to do the same. John truly leads by example, and brings such positive energy with a personal touch to NAFI. He continues to have an outstanding commitment to families, which demonstrates the integrity he has regarding the quality of their work. Thank you and congratulations, John Shaw, for continuing to care, listen, advocate, teach, learn, and grow. You are a true model for excellence!



### NEW YORK: STEPHANIE LOPEZ

Stephanie started working with NAFI NY in January 2022. She is a case manager for the Therapeutic Foster Care Program. Throughout the year, Stephanie has continued to provide support to all the youth and families in the foster care program. During the past year, she persevered through working with a complex family. The family was struggling with permanency planning while the youth was also undergoing complex medical needs. Stephanie provided consistency and support to the family, foster parents, and youth in order to ensure everyone had information and was able to meet the youth's needs.

Her willingness to be present and provide support, and her compassion and caring for the youth, was evident throughout all the work she had done with the family. The family, foster family and youth were lucky to have a dedicated, caring case manager to guide them through the challenges of the past year.

Stephanie continued to provide support and case management to other families on her workload while managing the complex needs of this family.

In addition, she has participated on the spirit committee and is the knowledge hub for every staff member's birthday in the NY region. We are honored to acknowledge Stephanie Lopez with the Award of Excellence for all she has done this past year!

## Spirit of the Community

NAFI's Normative Community Approach creates a culture where people work together to achieve individual and community successes. We have come to think of this phenomenon of working together towards a greater mission as the "Spirit of the Community." The Spirit of the Community award recognizes individuals who exemplify this dedication to the greater good of their community, NAFI and beyond, throughout the year.



### CONNECTICUT: KEVIN MCLAUGHLIN

This gentle giant started his reign at NAFI almost 10 years ago and has paved the way for future leaders to come. From the moment he stepped foot on the court—oops I mean on campus—his presence was definitely felt. From Kevin's calm, cool and collected presentation to his understanding, validating and empowering ways, he truly connected with everyone around him. Kevin's unprecedented work ethic and organizational skills prove successful in his ability to manage multiple hats as NAFI trainer, program director and most importantly, fearless leader. Kevin truly embodies the definition of teamwork as he's always willing to support, train, coach and teach others to be the best versions of themselves. Kevin has worked in multiple NAFI programs and brought lessons learned in each location with him as he grew and progressed within the agency. Kevin is looked up to in more ways than one and has been an inspiration to the many youths he has served. He can always be relied on to assist in any situation, be it shift coverage, last minute spot trainings or even substitute teaching. His effective communication and ability to implement systems provided a sense of safety as the programs navigated tirelessly during the pandemic. Kevin's team knew that he would block, set a screen or post up to keep everyone happy and healthy. With a set goal in mind, a simple alley-oop to Kevin will guarantee the win. Without question, his nomination for this award was a slam dunk! For all these reasons and millions that couldn't fit on this page, it is with great pleasure that we award the Spirit of the Community Award to NAFI, CT's Corbin House Group Home Program Director Kevin McLaughlin.



### RHODE ISLAND: MALIK OGUNDARE

Malik has been a member of NAFI programming since 2007. During this time, he has been an integral part of improving the lives of youth and family. Through every challenge, crisis, and change that has occurred, Malik has never wavered in his commitment to NAFI, teamwork, and consistency. Not only is Malik someone who is admired for his work ethic and personal integrity, but he is someone who works with focus, purpose, and professionalism. Never one to get frazzled, Malik can be counted on to keep calm, cool and collected. He carries a positive energy for colleagues and the youth they support. Always a quiet observer, Malik takes on all situations, offering input and suggestions for problem solving, planning and next steps.

Each program he has supported has had the pleasure of seeing Malik work each day to carry out the program's vision and mission, always circling back to NAFI's core Normative Approach and values. Malik is someone who truly believes in the work that is done and believes that we can all grow and change.

When thinking of someone who embodies the Spirit of the Community, Malik immediately comes to mind. Through every success and bump in the road, he continues to bring the calm needed to support the team for growth and success to occur. It is with much appreciation for all he does that we honor Malik Ogundare.

## 2023 Employee Recognition Awards: Spirit of the Community



### NEW YORK: JOE MATCHAM

Joe became part of the NAFI NY family in October 2009. He has been a significant support and staple over the past four years for the NY region. Joe even thought about retiring from NAFI NY, but three weeks into retirement he returned, stating he was not ready to leave NAFI. He embodies the NAFI mission and values and encourages a sense of community in the NY region. Joe is committed and dedicated to the youth he works with, and he identifies programs and opportunities for youth to gain skills to move successfully into adulthood. Joe has supported youth in obtaining jobs, getting their own apartments, and with getting into college. His connections extend beyond his current caseload, as former youth still reach out to him for information or to share exciting news in their lives. Joe loves to share his knowledge and information and openly shares information he has learned with the larger NAFI NY staff. He is always willing to help out and support when needed. Joe takes pride in the NAFI NY resources and cares for agency vehicles as though they were his own. He has even been known to clean and wash them by hand. We value his commitment to NAFI, the families we serve, and the larger community. We are honored to present Joe Matcham with the 2023 Spirit of the Community Award.

## Executive Director's Choice

Each year, the agency's Executive Director selects one individual to receive this distinguished award. It recognizes an individual who has made a significant impact on the organization based both on performance of job responsibilities as well as contributions to the overall mission, goals, and values of NAFI.



### RHODE ISLAND: KAREN COX

Karen has been part of the NAFI community for quite some time. She has mostly maintained her employment at one specific program, but you can feel her presence throughout. Whether it be for training, guidance to new employees, or helping our clients and families, you know when Karen is in the building.

Under the definition of family, you would see a picture of her! Karen is always, and when I say always, I mean always, involved in the community. She has made hundreds, or maybe even thousands, of connections over her 25-plus years in the agency that have benefited more children, adolescents, and families than we can count. She has a "do whatever it takes attitude" for the people we serve. You can also say Karen uses this mantra with the staff, helping out however or wherever needed. She sits on the fundraising committee and is spearheading our first ever fun-run in Rhode Island.

Thank you, Karen. Thank you for all that you do and for all that you have given to the NAFI RI family. Your actions speak for your dedication to the organization. You are very much appreciated! For these reasons, Karen is the Executive Director of Year award recipient.

# Because of You

## Board of Directors & Officers

Andy Quinn, *President*

Hildy Paris, *Treasurer*

Kim Opperman, *Secretary*

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Brittany Goss

William Benjamin

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### THIRTY-TWO YEARS

Susan Reed

### THIRTY YEARS

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### TWENTY-NINE YEARS

John H. Basiliere Jr.

Karen A. Lombardi Cox

### TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS

Amy R. Lefebvre

Melissa A. Petrone

### TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS

Heather M. Kalin

Dawn M. Sparadeo

Andy Torres

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Matthew R. Burns

Cynthia Livsey

### TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

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Melissa A. Niver

Hillary F. DePina

Antonio Vazquez

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Sherry A. Hicks

Jessica E. Marcil

### EIGHTEEN YEARS

Stephanie E. Calise

### SEVENTEEN YEARS

Catherine B. Pfahl

Eleanor R. Smith

Donna A. Thomas

### SIXTEEN YEARS

Diana M. Arango-Dolin

Jessica L. Clow

Jessica L. Lamkin

Nilda Lebron

Mayowa Ogundare

Craig S. Schmitt

### FIFTEEN YEARS

Melinda S. Baller

Diane B. Thompson

### FOURTEEN YEARS

David J. Forget

Joseph I. Matcham

Karley A. Root

Ashley M. Walker

### THIRTEEN YEARS

Lisette Ibraimov

Pontien B. Mockett

Clifton S. Roberts

Mai N. Vang

### TWELVE YEARS

Abigail E. Okarmus

Tracy J. Rave

Kerel R. Tiggett

### ELEVEN YEARS

Thomas A. Aitkens

Heather M. Dattel

Kevin C. McLaughlin

### TEN YEARS

Erica L. Basilio

Kristen E. Devany

Kristal L. Glaude

Amy M. Lakin

Jaime Perez

Tamyra L. Rico

Alison B. Rodino

### NINE YEARS

Othilia Davis

Timothy B. Goldberg

Jonja A. Russo

Laura R. Smith

Laura A. Tuscani

### EIGHT YEARS

Rachel L. Lamas Hayes

Stacey M. Shaia

### SEVEN YEARS

Gina Santoro

Telicia Townsend

### SIX YEARS

Christine E. Bacon

Celine E. Conti

Arthur L. Hamilton

Elise N. Jarvis

Avina Johnson-Smith

Julie Kolakowski

Derek LeDoux

Brian Siecienski

Emily Tyson

### FIVE YEARS

German M. Aveledo

Luciana Cuthbert

Maria Do Carmo

Kathleen Eldredge

Antoinette M. Fearon-Eugene

Rachelle Franco

Martin A. Jones Jr.

Joshua McGaw

Brenda Melendez

Heather Morrison

Kathleen Ohara-Ferrari

Tracey L. Pearson

Michelle M. Sarofin

John F. Shaw

John Spillane

### FOUR YEARS

Ramona Batista

Damani Brandon

Ana M. Depina

Robert L. Garrett

Edward Hughes

Roberto Marquez

Luetta T. Marshall

Kyle N. McCurdy

Maggie Orellana

Edward Ramos

Solinez Torres

### THREE YEARS

Sam G. Browne

Kendall Conley

Sherri L. Cox

Kayla Dos Santos

Tyler M. Evans

Annie C. Hodgins

Amanda Kobryn

Claudia S. Lima

Kamryn Novella

Mariellys Pena

Dakota Rockwell

April Tucker

## Because of You

### TWO YEARS

Donald J. Adao-Antonio  
Karl Anderson  
Kendra Andrews  
Milka C. Aquino  
Fatima H. bala  
Julita Becolli  
Michelle Blake  
Tyra Brooks  
Christina Bryant  
Amanda Cervone  
Samantha R. Coscio  
Paul B. Crook  
Emily M. DeVita  
Bonnie Doran  
Myra Duhaime  
Donovan C. Edwards  
Diane Fazzina  
Laura Haspeslagh  
Stephanie C. Huancas  
Jalisa Levett  
Marlen Peguero  
Jadira Rodriguez  
Liana Scollans  
Charles A. Sherwood Jr.  
Wafa Simapore  
Danielle M. Soule  
Allison Towers  
Gabriella M. Zone

### ONE YEAR

Tanzania P. Agramonte  
Patricia Arciniega  
Nancy E. Barranco-Hernandez  
Michael V. Bartelli  
Jolly Black  
Andrea Bryant  
Ezekiel Byfield  
Haydee Carrasquillo  
Kristen M. Clark  
Monica Claros White  
William Congdon III  
Thamara Cruz  
Ana Carmen DeMatteis  
Heather L. Dufour

Maria Guerrero  
Coty Gueye  
Zhanely Hernandez  
Francine M. Holness  
Anna H. Horlbogen  
Taylor Lafleur  
Camille Lindo  
Michelle Link  
Mel-Liaky Lovett  
Sydney Lyons  
Alberto Madera Jr.  
Janine Martins  
Paul M. Mathews  
Kelsie J. McGinity  
Chelsea R. Naiss  
Amanda Nunez  
Jocelyn R. Pardi  
Isabel M. Pellot  
Sawpaka Phothisen  
Joveanie Ramos  
Gianna L. Rapuano  
Elizabeth Rende-Bakshi  
Shantajah S. Robinson  
Ashley M. Rodriguez  
Jennifer L. Shields  
Nicole St. Pierre  
Carolyn Tejera  
Elliot Tellado  
Patrice Theano  
Paula M. Torres  
Tatiana Urias  
Diana Vang

### UNDER ONE YEAR

Whab O. Abiola  
John Almeida III  
Diego Alvarez  
Brent Alves  
Walter Asbury  
Kaitlyn E. Babin  
Francis Bautista  
Lindsey Berube  
Katherine Bonilla  
Kaymoni Bradford  
Lis Braun  
Nadia Brown

Rhashita Brown  
Njaia Bryant  
Susanna Burkhard  
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Marlyn Cordero  
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Laury C. Cruz Medina  
Ashley M. Cuebas  
Oscar D. Cuebas Jr.  
Casey Cullinane  
Matesha L. Davis  
Alexia DeLeo  
Deniel Dillon  
Emma Duffney  
Patria Echavarria  
Luis Epstein  
Kurt L. Feinberg  
Leslie J. Figueroa  
Jillian M. Fluette  
Tatiana Gonzalez  
Hannah L. Grabowski  
Victoria M. Greco  
Robert Harris  
Josiah D. Hart  
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Melvin D. Howard  
Asavion Johnson  
Sharea LaFountaine  
Riley Laird  
Marisa Landry  
Samantha Legere  
Kassandra Martinez  
Greysen Martorony  
Shaquita S. McClam  
Taylor O. Mewborn  
Jamie D. Micalizzi  
Katelyn R. Michaud  
Shivani Mullahoo  
Melanie Muzzulin  
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Erica Pagan

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Mirian A. Polanco Baret  
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LaReginald D. Pressley Jr.  
Ross A. Preston Sr.  
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Nayare L. Rivera  
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Russell J. White  
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# *Creating Diverse and Innovative Services for People*

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