The Center for
Great Expectations

2024 FALL NEWSLETTER • 2024 FALL NEWSLETTER •

Embracing CHANGE & GROWTH

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Dear Friends,

We all resist change. The older we get, the more our own behavior is patterned, comfortable and predictable. This is true even if what we do, or how we do it, isn't good or even healthy for us. I believe that resistance to change is something that we can all relate to as we routinely opt for comfort of familiarity.

Now picture, if you will, the expectations we have for our clients. Essentially, we are asking them to change and grow in nearly every aspect of their life. These changes will move them away from relationships that are harmful to them and situations that can be destructive for them – even if that's all they've ever known.

A key connection that we focus on with our clients is their relationship with their child or, in some cases, children. CGE's program of early relational health builds trust on so many different levels. And it is this trust that, in part, enables them to connect with their child and learn, over time, how to be in relationship with them.

That is why I find our cover image to be so profoundly beautiful – and I am sure that you do too! Through our own experiences, and our own personal lens, we are moved by the intimacy between mother and child. They are close and connected, physically and emotionally. There is trust and the desire to be with each other that comes across very clearly.

None of this would be possible without growth and change, and the deep trust that this mother has in CGE to support her journey and help her build a healthy path forward along with her child. Now, when we consider again how hard it is for each of us to change, we can recognize and appreciate even more the bravery and strength of this mother and all of our clients.

Thank you for your support and, as always, I invite you to reach out to me and to continue to learn more and grow in your relationship with us.

Warm regards,

Peg

Peg Wright

The role of PLAY IN RECOVERY

Play and the joy it brings helps us feel alive, connected and positive. It can be a special form of expression that nurtures an attuned, connected relationship between a mother and her children. That's why it is important for treatment programs to incorporate joy into a mother's life, as a part of their path to recovery.

Play is an important component of the support provided by CGE. START, The Center for Great Expectations' community-based program, serves pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders in eight counties throughout New Jersey. In addition to providing, substance use counseling, parent-child relationship therapy, peer recovery support and doula/case management, START staff offer holistic, wraparound services including substance use counseling, early relational health therapy, doula support, and meetings with a peer recovery specialist. Staff break down barriers to treatment by supporting clients with issues of transportation, childcare, employment and housing. These services lay a foundation upon which play is a vital layer.

Play is crucial for child development across all domains: emotion regulation, cognitive development, social-emotional and motor skills. Importantly, play provides a way of bonding and sharing joy between parent and child. START offers activities for clients to engage in with their children in a playful and joy filled way. These gatherings take place with an air of lightness and celebration. Seasons, holidays, graduations, recovery, and milestones of both clients and their children are celebrated.

Play is also facilitated through the growth of connectedness and relationships in clients' group sessions. In these group sessions, when all are respected and given freedom to share on their own terms, trust is developed. It then becomes easier for clients to joke with others and to become more comfortable with play.

One of the year's largest gatherings for clients and their children is a trip to the Land of Make Believe. Clients can ride and splash with their children creating memories of connection and joy. During this trip, children play games with their caregivers on the bus ride, laugh while flying by on rides, and we witness bridges and trust develop during the water activities. At START, play is serious business.

As participants connect with themselves and with others, they learn to interact differently with their children experiencing self-acceptance and healing.

Screening our DOCUMENTARY

CGE is proud to announce that our documentary, Mending Marissa, was accepted by the Jersey Shore Film Festival which took place in July in Asbury Park. Mending Marissa 's film maker Ash Polito (pictured with microphone) received the Humanitarian Award for the film which shows the challenges of substance use disorders and how CGE's Care Model is unique in assisting clients in addressing their struggles while building a relationship with their children.

CGE held its own premier of the documentary for friends and supporters at Raritan Valley Community College. Over 150 guests attended the screening and panel discussion that followed. Two of the clients featured in the film participated in the discussion speaking openly about their experience at CGE highlighting the special relationship they have fostered with their children. Audience members were profoundly moved and inspired by the resiliency of the women.

If you missed the screening, an announcement will be made when the film is available for distribution. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Veronica Finlay, vfinlay@cge-nj.org, 732-247-7003 Ext 356.

Horticulture

HEALING THROUGH NATURE

People heal in different ways, which is why the variety of alternative therapies offered at CGE are so important. Horticulture provides an opportunity for the women to plant seeds, flowers, or vegetables, then watch them grow and flourish thanks to their care. Their own growth as a person in recovery and mother mirrors the plants they nurture.

Four-Legged Friends

AT KATY'S PLACE

When a service dog visits Katy's Place the children are sometimes reticent to approach the animal since most of them have never had a pet. But they slowly warm up, eventually anticipating and enjoying these monthly visits. Pet therapy is beneficial for small children as it can help reduce anxiety and stress, promoting emotional well-being and comfort. Additionally, interacting with pets can enhance social skills and encourage a sense of responsibility and empathy.

Vital VOLUNTEERS

FUN FACT:
DONORS IN 25 STATES & CANADA

18 dedicated volunteers from Verizon's legal team visited The Center to assemble toiletry bags for clients.

Volunteers – individuals, businesses, corporations, and community groups - help CGE grow by providing essential support and people power, allowing us to extend our reach and impact while sparing budget costs. Volunteers' diverse skills and community connections can also enhance CGE's programs, fundraising efforts, and visibility.

VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

JANUARY - AUGUST 2024

Total number of volunteers: **73**

Total number of hours: **1,087**

Number of companies: **10**

Golf OUTING

Ken Daneyko celebrated 20 years of hosting the Golf Classic this year with over 200 golfers who came out to celebrate with him enjoying a day on the links at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club. It was a sold-out event and the highest-grossing golf event in the history of The Center for Great Expectations. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the golf committee, the generosity of our supporters, and the enthusiastic participation of our community.

A pickleball round robin tournament was added to the event running simultaneously through the afternoon while the golfers were on the course. The round robin tournament included 29 players and a clinic.

Golfers and pickleball participants attended a wonderful dinner reception in the beautiful ballroom. Four former NHL hockey players; Mike Rupp, Grant Marshall, Chris Terreri, Milan Lucic, joined Ken for a panel discussion, entertaining guests with their stories.

This event not only provided essential funds for CGE programs but also increased awareness of our mission and the critical work we do at CGE. The overwhelming support and participation we witnessed reaffirms the community's commitment to our cause and the impact we make together.

At CGE, it is common for clients to share that they are not living life anymore, they're merely existing. Learning more about what that means for each individual is vitally important for continued growth and identity development. Wondering aloud about who they want to be, what they want from life, and why that matters now, is important work.

CGE staff provide a safe container for clients to work through what they are feeling. Staff are trained to be with clients in a way that preserves their dignity and honors their experience. We work with clients to help them to feel safe in their own bodies again.

CGE has two Mommy & Me programs – one for adolescents and their children and one for adults and their children. When we consider how trauma, or even wellness, is transmitted through generations, we have the unique opportunity to witness how healing impacts a mother's relationship with her infant or child.

"People need a compassionate presence [to] allow them to experience their pain without having to run away from it."

– DR. GABOR MATÉ

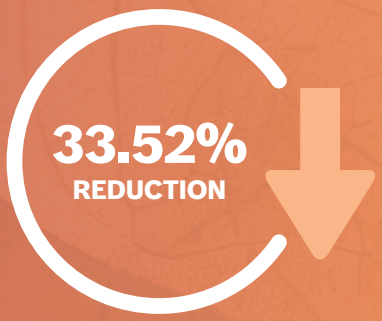
RENOWNED SPEAKER AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Research indicates that our environment and the spaces we occupy can have tremendous influence on our mental health. At CGE we strive to provide a safe and welcoming space for clients to do the meaningful work that has brought them through our doors. The experience of belonging and connectedness is the foundation for healing.

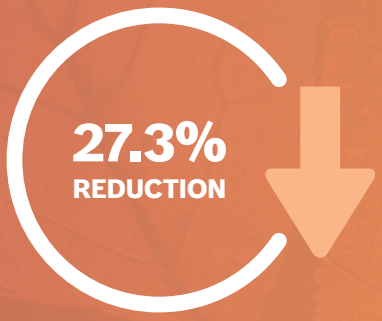
When working with a parent we acknowledge that one of the greatest gifts they can offer their child is his or her own healing. When the mother with whom we are working feels secure and stable, the positive impact she has on her child is felt. The domino effect is quite remarkable.

ADULT RESIDENTIAL STATISTICS*

ANXIETY



DEPRESSION



PARENTING STRESS

*The data is from assessments completed by clients during their 6–9-month residential program participation.

The Center for
Great Expectations

19B Dellwood Lane | Somerset, NJ 08873

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Hope Lives Here

Annual Gala

The Marigold in Somerset
Friday, October 18, 2024 @ 6pm

Ken Daneyko
Outstanding Service Award

Pat & Bob Bridgeman
Humanitarian Award

Kevin Mannion
Outstanding Volunteer Award

Assemblyman Joe Danielsen
Champion for Change

Tickets and Sponsorships: http://weblink.donorperfect.com/HopeLivesHereGala2024

Presenting Sponsors

RWJBarnabas HEALTH

FRONTline INSURANCE

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