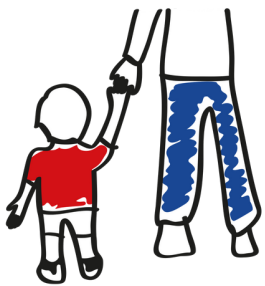




2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Staying Connected



**Bergen's
PROMISE**

Healthy Families, Safe at Home



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A Reflection from Dean Pastras, CEO

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 outbreak a “global pandemic.” This was unprecedented in terms of the magnitude and number of deaths that would result over the ensuing months. For so many people touched by this, it was nothing short of overwhelming. The elderly and sick were threatened; children were unable to attend school in person, loss of jobs that to this day affects so many families.



It is tough times that test an agency's culture and values. Martin Luther King said, *“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”* These times could not have been any less challenging, and controversial. The men and women that make up the staff of Bergen’s Promise have shown that we have faced this with tremendous resiliency and courage. We continued our mission of keeping families healthy and safe at home with tremendous consistency and success. I am so grateful and proud of our staff, and Board who were focused, persistent, creative, and compassionate beyond what could be expected. I am also grateful for our families and the collaboration they showed at a most difficult time. I mourn the losses that we as an agency have experienced both within our staff, and the families we served.

Throughout this we have learned that the human spirit is strong. Now is the time for healing, and the challenge we face as essential front-line workers remains critical. I know from what has been witnessed that Bergen’s Promise will continue to rise to the occasion. When all is said and done, we will share with future generations what it was like to live through this time. I am certain that part of the story our staff will tell will be about how we worked together to help make a difference and save lives.

A Historic Year

Bergen's Promise has always been an organization that encourages growth, collaboration, and celebrates resiliency and our agency values in action. In 2020, we all were faced with a global pandemic. COVID-19 tested every aspect of agency operations and service delivery.

We listened and worked together to address challenges faced by the world in 2020 together such as hygiene, rising racial, social and political tensions and injustice, food, employment, and financial insecurities, all combining to exacerbate mental health challenges. Continuity of services to Bergen County youth and families was maintained through the dedication, adaptability and persistence of our staff, community partners and families served. We are PROUD of what we were able to accomplish.

The calm before the storm...

Office Expansion began at the start of the year



In what has been years in the making, the entire Bergen's Promise agency is now located in one suite together. While the pandemic forced us to work from home starting in March, this provided a good opportunity for the construction of the addition to our office suite so we can all be together. In addition, we have a new training room, creating more space for meetings and trainings.

Spirit Week

In early February, the School Collaboration Team, hosted a weeklong event to raise awareness about school violence, autism and the value of school partners in the Wraparound approach for sustainable progress in youth we share.



Health and Safety

The Covid-19 global pandemic and State of Emergency tested every aspect of agency operations and service delivery to families. The resilience, flexibility and unwavering dedication of our staff in combination with the adaptability and commitment of our community partners sustained quality services to the youth and families. Creativity and fluidity demonstrated by all stakeholders were key to the maintenance of health and safety for all during this year of uncertainty and transition.

Modified Operations

- **Remote work** - Mid March, employees began to work remotely in modified operations which maintained access to secure technology resources and tools they would normally use in the office. This was supported with additional mobile devices to ensure security and connectivity; increased use of mobile hot spots to strengthen access from outside of the office and deploying more secure agency laptops.
- **GoToMeeting** - The pandemic forced us to rethink how to sustain quality, confidential Child and Family Team Meetings in a remote environment. Many web conferencing platforms were vetted in anticipation of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families authorized the use of telehealth. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) sets the standard for protected health information (PHI). Bergen's Promise has physical, network, and process security measures in place and follow them to ensure HIPAA Compliance both in person as well as telehealth interactions with the families we serve. The GoToMeeting web conference platform was critical in maintaining regular interactions with families as well as staff and community partners.
- **DocuSign** - DocuSign was another new tool used to facilitate HIPAA-compliant form completion. This digital transaction platform lets families send, sign and manage legally binding documents securely in the cloud.



Communication is Key

- **Daily Updates to Staff** - Throughout the pandemic, communication was crucial and continuous to provide a sense of hope and safety to staff and families served. Weekly emails were provided by the Health and Safety Committee to keep staff and families served abreast of updates from the Centers for Disease Control, the New Jersey Department of Health, Regional Healthcare Coalition and the New Jersey Children's System of Care. This informed staff and youth/families on health protection, COVID testing, vaccination updates and self care resources. In addition, leadership sent a daily operations update to keep staff informed of new/updated COVID protocols for business continuity. In the Fall, these updates also informed care management staff how to safely transition back to in-person/in community meetings with families, including the creative, safe and private use of space in yards, front/back porches, and in any of the over 175 local parks.

Health and Safety

Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs)

Healthy Families/Staff, Safe at Home/in Office

- **In Office Protocols** were established to maintain health and safety. These included a **Screening Questionnaire** prior to arrival at the office. A **Temperature Check** kiosk was installed at the entrance. **Capacity limits** and **workstation spacing** were established. **Hand Sanitizer stations**, **disinfectant wipes** and **face masks** were available throughout the office.
- **PPE bags** - Care Managers were equipped with PPE bags to protect themselves as well as the families served during in-person visits. The PPE bags consisted of N95 face masks, hand sanitizer, hand wipes, and gloves.
- **Vehicle Safety** - Dividers were installed in agency vehicles to separate the front seats from the back seats. Safety kits were included in each agency vehicle. This helped protect both parties when transportation of families was needed.



Celebrating Positives

- **Leadership, Adaptability and Innovation** - The pandemic highlighted our team's strengths, ability to adapt and responsiveness in support of the mission. Our staff always remained calm and innovative in determining alternative ways to not only continue services but improve upon them.
- **Going Green** - Being virtual, embracing and upgrading technology had a positive impact on the environment. As an example, in November 2019, our total print jobs used a volume of paper that was equivalent to four trees. In November 2020, the agencies paper usage decreased to the equivalent of *13 percent of one tree*.
- **Improving for the Future** - Like many organizations, this was a time to re-evaluate what we could improve on. There will be many aspects of how we function as an agency as well as support our youth and families that will continue well beyond this pandemic. And we will be a better sustainable agency for it.



Creative Outreach and Partnerships

May's Mental Health Month

In the midst of the lockdown, social isolation, adjusting to remote learning and working, and the societal challenges that arose throughout the year was taking its toll. During Children's Mental Health Week our staff reached out with [a video](#) of supportive messages to our families served.



Resources to Maintain Wellbeing & Balance during Covid-19

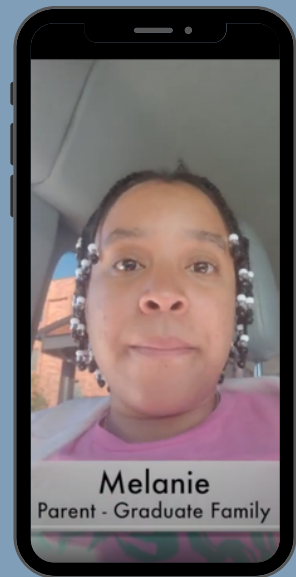
Through the creation of a dedicated resource page on BergenResourceNet.org, we were able to keep the Bergen County community informed of all the resources, assistance, supports available to maintain health and wellbeing! This [Covid-specific resource page](#) was updated daily. Resources were organized by the wellbeing domains of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Family Influencers

In October, we launched the Family Influencers. This monthly virtual meeting gives families, past and present, the opportunity to share and learn about resources to sustain progress as well as valuable self care tips.

One parent in particular, Melanie, has taken a very active role as a Family Influencer. She helped create a video that emphasizes the importance of parent engagement in the Wraparound approach to care. Watch Melanie's and other family's experiences and success with their Child and Family team on the [Success Stories page](#) of our website.

Want to get more involved? Parents, Caregivers, and young adults can become part of our Family Influencers. Join your fellow parents for an opportunity to participate in parenting exercises as well as help contribute to Bergen's Promise's mission. Contact communityresources@bergenspromise.org for more information.



TV Advertising - Altice Community Relief Program

From July-September, Bergen's Promise reached a whole new audience: our local Altice cable television viewers! Altice USA's Community Relief Program supported the recovery efforts of small and medium-sized businesses. Bergen's Promise received \$10,000 in free advertising that helped us connect in a new way with our isolated families. There were over 1,500 airings of our [30 second Public Service Announcement \(PSA\)](#) across 24 different channels.



Creative Outreach and Partnerships

Covid Relief Fund - Community Chest of Englewood



During the pandemic, food insecurity increased by 71 percent presenting a major barrier to family health and wellness.

Bergen's Promise received a \$10K grant from The Community Chest Coronavirus Emergency Fund. This enabled us to provide approximately 200 families living in eastern Bergen County a \$50 gift card to local food stores that offer fresh produce and keeps them connected to their community. Families also received and educational handout containing strategies to support healthy, balanced eating on a budget and its connection to positive physical and mental health outcomes.

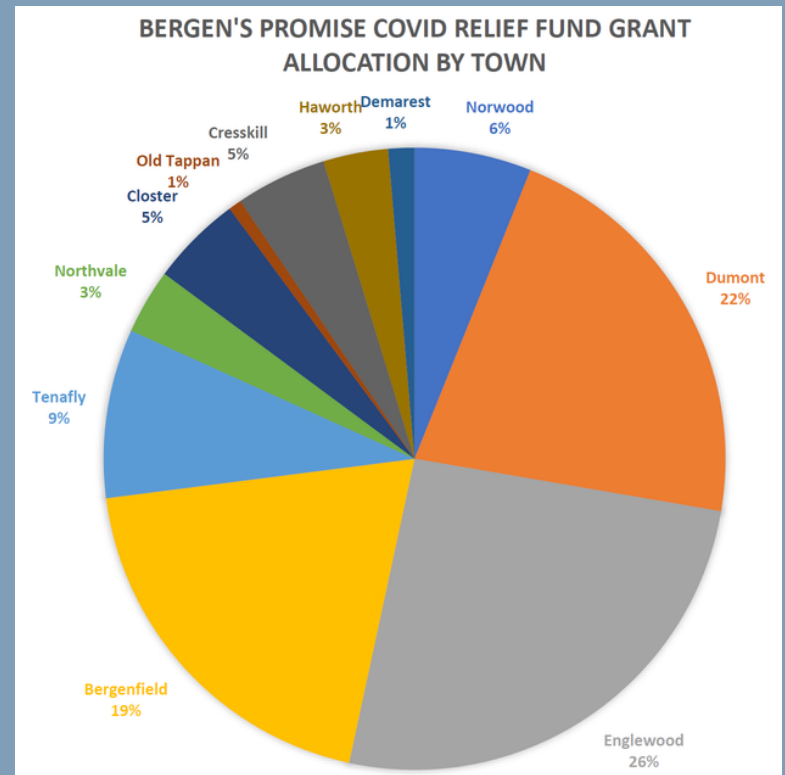
This support provided support while families planned sustainable solutions with their Child and Family Team. Families were incredibly grateful...

"We used the gift card to buy spinach and green apples which we made into smoothies with the recipe you suggested. He is now "drinking" a green vegetable with fruit every day!"

"This gift could not have come at a better time; now we can have extras for the holidays"



Bergen's Promise Behavioral Health Home Nurse delivers healthy food and educational materials to a family



FALL INTO A HEALTHY START

with these budget friendly grocery shopping tips

BE PREPARED

- Plan your meals
- Check your cupboards, start with what you already have
- Plan to use leftovers in soups, stews, omelets, stir fry, etc. to save time and money
- Consider coupons and sales
- Make a grocery list
- Don't shop hungry

SHOP SMART

- Check the highest and lowest shelves for cheaper, healthier options
- Don't forget the fruits and vegetables
- Buy "in season" produce for the best flavor and lowest price
- Try canned options. Look for fruit packed in 100% juice, and "low sodium" or "no salt added" vegetables
- Buy frozen fruits and vegetables without added sauce
- Understand the price tag
 - Retail price: what you will pay at the register
 - Unit price: the cost per pound/ounce/quart etc. Helps you compare items the lower unit price is the better bargain

COVID CONSIDERATIONS

- Plan meals around what you already have to limit trips to the grocery store
- Keep your shopping list general, stores may be out of specific brand/flowers
- If possible, purchase enough to feed you and your family for 2 weeks
- Include frozen and shelf-stable food in your shopping list
- If your child is learning from home, ask your school district how to access free/reduced price meals if eligible

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Search for local food pantries
<https://www.bergenconnect.org/>

Screening tool for food assistance
<https://www.njhelp.org/>

Start Simple with MyPlate App
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/choosemyplateapp>

Free Dietitian Services
<https://dietitians.chopra.com/>

SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES

This fall, Bergen's Promise was awarded a grant from The Community Chest to provide our youth and families with financial support to meet their nutritional needs. COVID-19 has put a strain on many of our food budgets, but we hope that this small contribution will help ease the burden in the coming weeks. Please consider these tips to help you and your family make healthy choices on a budget.

Educational handout distributed with gift cards funded through the COVID Emergency Fund

Sustaining Agency Achievements

Bergen's Promise Recognized for Response to COVID-19

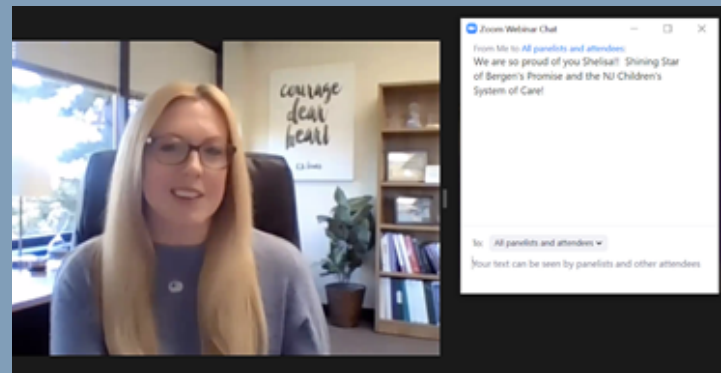
Crystal Wytenus, Director of Care Management, presented at a virtual meeting for Super-Users of New Jersey Children's System of Care (CSOC) Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA). She explained how the NHA was integrated into our Wraparound approach to care during COVID in support of the families we serve.

Feedback was terrific: "I'm amazed at everything you are doing, trying to keep people connected and positive! You are in the heart of the danger zone. Being aware, standing strong and keeping the positivity going."



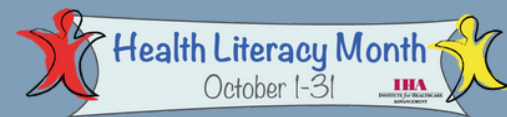
Shelisa Foster Recipient of NJAMHAA Award

Shelisa Foster, MA, LPC, NCC, our Chief Operating Officer, was awarded the prestigious *Outstanding Leader In Children's Services Award*. This award is given to individuals who exhibit extraordinary leadership and have substantial impact on the lives of youth who experience various challenges requiring support and assistance. The award was presented at the Courage and Compassion Awards by the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA).



Health Literacy Hero Campaign

During Health Literacy Month, Bergen's Promise was thrilled to be receive a Health Literacy Hero award from the Institute of Healthcare Advancement. The purpose of Health Literacy Month is to recognize groups working collaboratively to raise awareness of the problems many people have with reading, understanding, and acting on health information. Bergen's Promise Behavioral Health Home team are ambassadors of the assessment of health literacy levels to facilitate more effective preventive health care and management of health conditions.



Peer-Reviewed Publications from our Behavioral Health Home team

- "CHES Champions Initiate First Pediatric Behavioral Health Home using Wraparound in the United States" by Amy Faus and Jan Schlaier published in the American Journal of Health Education
- "Hormonal Fluctuations and Women with Autism: A Call for Increased Awareness and Assessment" by Jan Schlaier and Jacqueline Berko published in Spring 2020 issue of Autism Spectrum News
- "Health Literacy of Youth with Co-occurring Behavioral and Physical Health Care Needs: A Preliminary Report" by Amy Faus and Jan Schlaier accepted for publication in The Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet

Good and Welfare - Support for our Families

A safe and more creative approach was needed to maintain hope and support of our families during the school year and holidays. We thank our community partners that stepped up their support for our School Supply Backpack Drive and our Annual Toy Drive! We adapted our family holiday toy distribution to a festive curbside/drive by event which was able to bring a little holiday spirit for families. They were greeted by holiday music and winter wonderland scene as staff invited them to pop out of their cars for a holiday photo opportunity, goody bag and their toys!



Through the kindness of our donors, we were able to fulfill over 150 school supply backpacks and 130 gift requests this year. We couldn't have fulfilled these needs without the generosity of:

- Bergen County Bar Association
- Brigid, Mary & Pam Johnson of Doran Designs
- Jersey Cares
- Create Change Wellness Center
- EDNI Counseling
- Empower U
- Hackensack Rotary Club
- Jersey Cares
- Lazy Lanagans
- Pathfinder Consultancy Agency LLC
- Persaud Counseling
- Savia Community Counseling
- SG Companies
- WAR Ministry

In addition, we were supported by generous donations through the website by individual donors.

Recruitment & Retention

Bergen's Promise takes pride in hiring diverse staff that exemplify our agency values in action while working with our families served. This year required more innovative ways of recruiting and retaining our team.

Virtual Career Fair - Our Career Fair adapted to a virtual environment this year. Using our new virtual meeting platforms, candidates still received a warm welcome, presentation and opportunity to interview. Our agency ambassadors provided great perspective about the culture of Bergen's Promise as well as the requirements of the role.

Make a Connection Week - Unable to gather for our agency picnic this year, the Reward and Recognition committee got creative and assembled a one week virtual event to give staff a chance to connect with colleagues throughout the agency. The committee facilitated 7 events which promoted inter-agency relationship building, and self-care. Events occurred during lunch hours primarily and included "buddy team" assignments with "getting to know you" activities. Events included a lunch time gathering, team speed dating, and a recipe swap among others.



Professional Development to promote from within

- 1 internal promotion from Care Manager to Certified Wraparound Coach
- 2 internal promotions from Care Manager to Supervisor
- 2 additional Certified Trainers in the Nurtured Heart Approach, 1 becoming an advanced trainer.

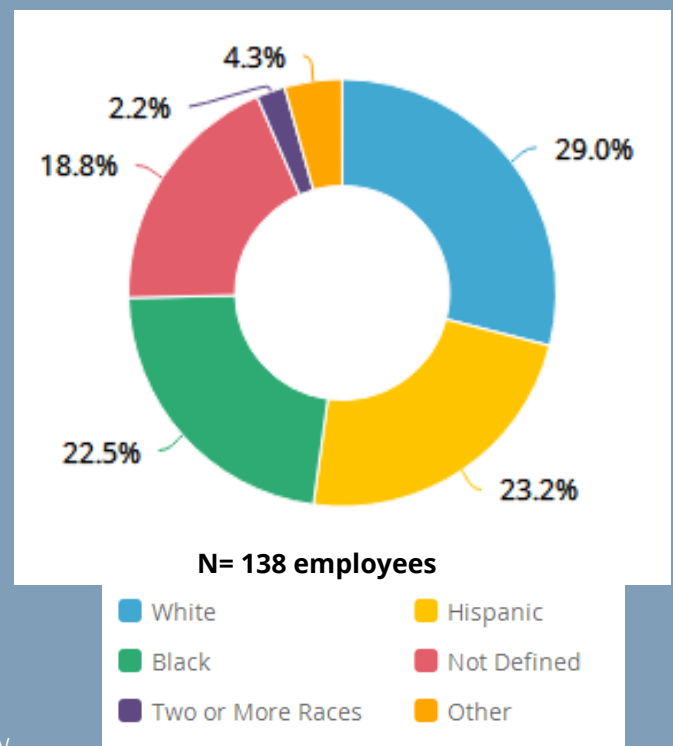
Recruiting/Retaining Diversity

Bergen's Promise is proud of, and continues to cultivate a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the youth we serve.

We're Always Hiring

Our agency continues to grow at a rapid pace and there's always opportunities to join our team. Click the link below to see which of our openings is the best fit!

Apply today at BergensPromise.org/careers



Cultural Diversity

The events and challenges faced throughout 2020, reminded us of the importance of working together and celebrating our diversity and cultural backgrounds. Cultural Diversity is one of our agency values that bridges all aspects of our operations. Our agency planning is sensitive to the diversity within the population of the youth and families served, the employee workforce as well as Agency stakeholders.

Cultural Competency Committee - This committee informs, promotes and/or evaluates standards of care that:

- Address diversity among person's served, staff and stakeholders
- Identify disparities in access to services
- Promote health and wellness equity in care. Furthermore, the committee supports learning about diversity through information sharing, processing specific events (safe space), trainings and cultural events.



Dedicated resource page on BergenResourceNet.org to support families, community professionals working with families, as well as our team members in having conversations/processing any of the unsettling events across the nation and world this year. We utilized

BergenResourceNet.org to compile local, state and national resources to support preventing and responding to prejudice, racism and facilitating social justice, social consciousness, humanity and unity in our community (homes, schools, health care practices, organizations).

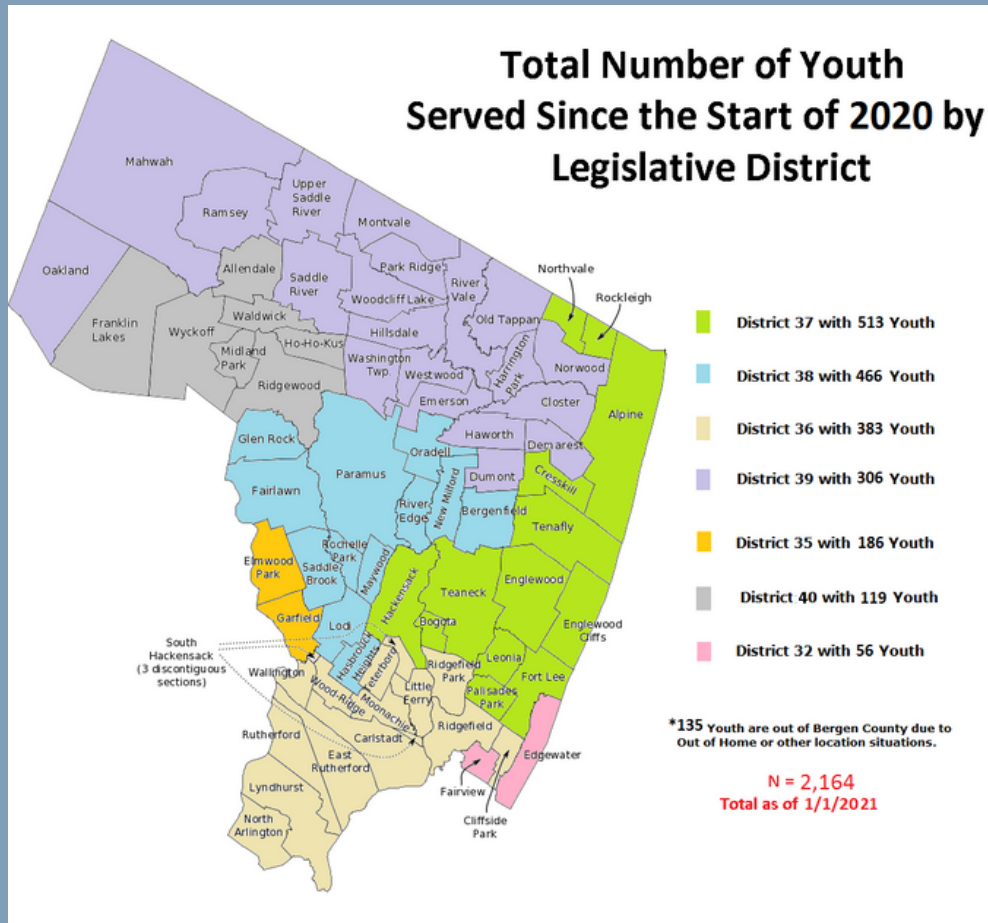


Human Resource Consultant - Bergen's Promise brought in a consultant, Rhonda Chaplin, a leading HR industry expert that specializes in Human Resources strategies, recruitment and retention tactics, and diversity and inclusion practices within organizations. She facilitated a training for the management team on the impact of racism, prejudice and discrimination in our nation, community, at work and home. She was also an advisor to the co-chairs of the Cultural Competency Committee and offered guidance on the creation of the Cultural Diversity Plan for the agency.



By the Numbers

The challenges of the past year contributed to a new record in the total number of youth served.

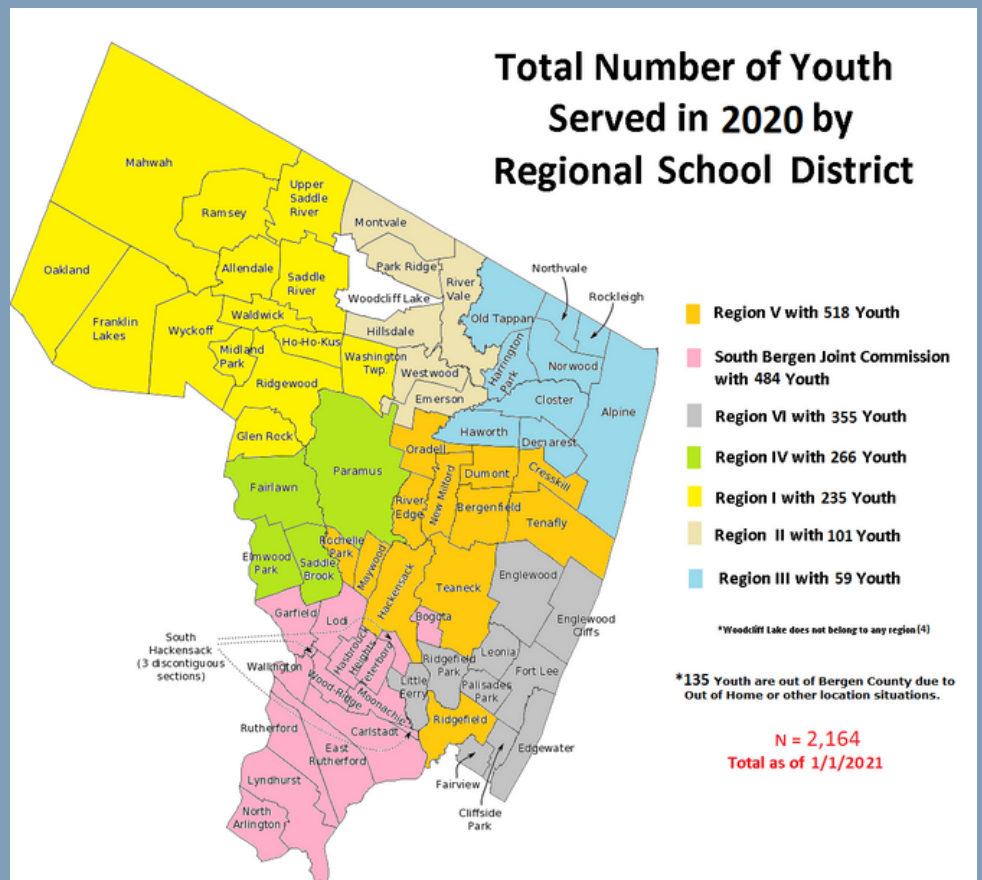


2,164
Total Youth Served in 2020
***A New Record of Youth**

Our touches with our school partners evolved to a fully virtual outreach presentation.

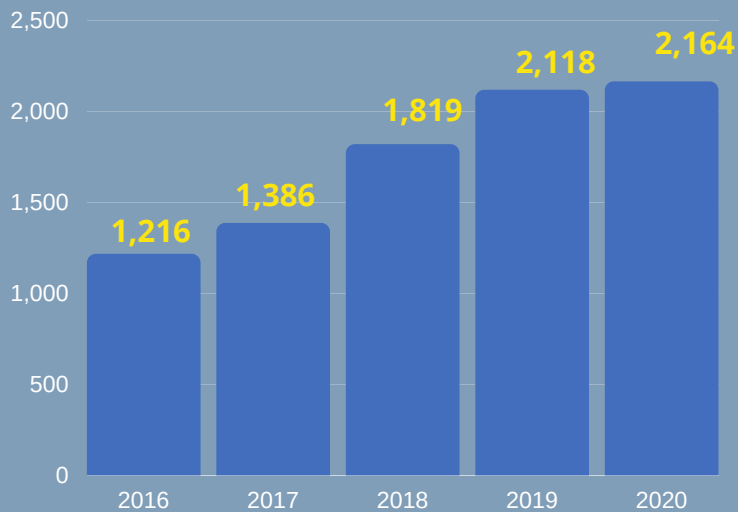
Parents and school staff members were engaged by agency ambassadors from the school collaboration team and community resources department.

There were 75 outreach events held with school partners that included:
wellness fairs, back to school nights, PTA meetings, in-services for Child Study Team staff, sporting events, and much more.



Outcomes

Total Youth Served By Year



Top 5 New Referral Sources that led to Bergen's Promise enrollment

(Total New Referrals 2020: 952)

Community Provider	199
Self-Referral	178
Schools	164
Dept of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P)	157
Screening Center	55

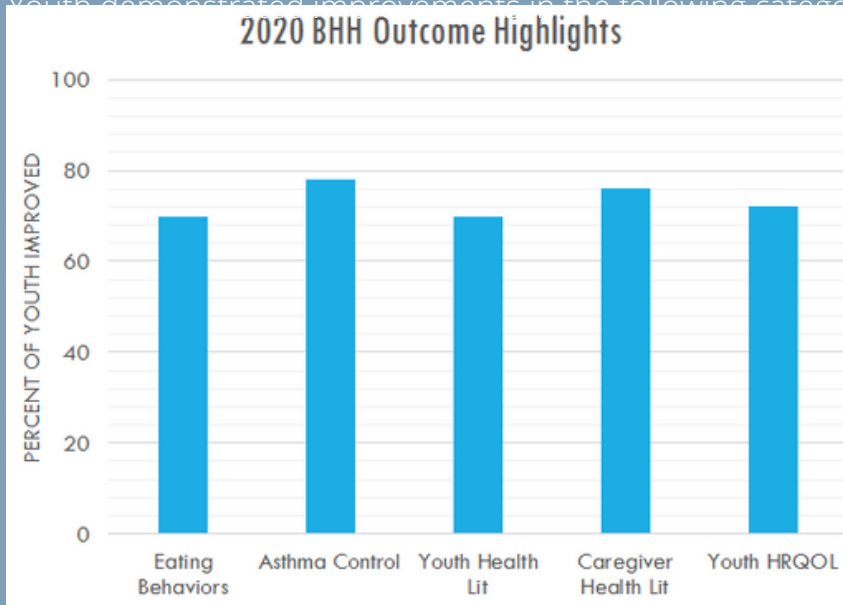
*598 referrals were made via Children's Mobile Response

Behavioral Health Home Outcomes

BHH Service Provision:

- 166 unique youth served in 2019 (a 13 percent Improvement)
- BHH team adapted BHH toolkit to include interactive digital resources for telehealth
- BHH team provided staff education on flu vaccination
- BHH team served as health information resource persons for families and the organization during COVID-19 pandemic

Youth demonstrated improvements in the following categories:



- **70%** improved eating behaviors
- **78%** improved asthma control
- **70%** of youth improved health literacy
- **76%** of caregivers improved health literacy
- **72%** improved health-related quality of life per youth self-report

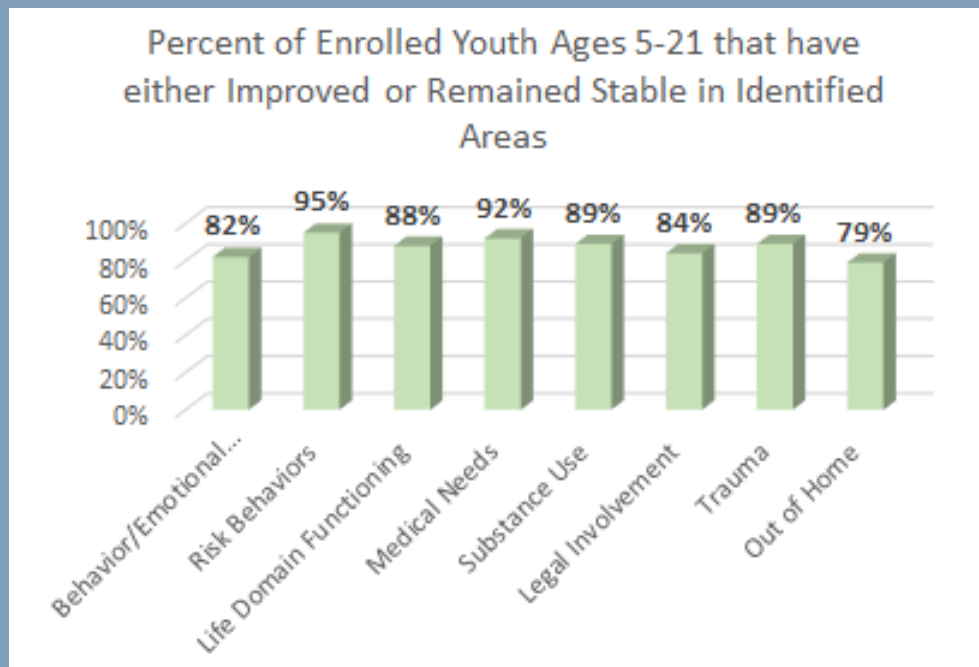
Presentations:

- "Health Literacy: Implications for Effective Integrated Care" presented by Jan Schlaier, Ed.D (c); FNP-BC and Amy Faus, MPH, CPH, MCHES® at the annual NJAHMAA conference
- Successful handwashing community education sessions at a local daycare in March 2020



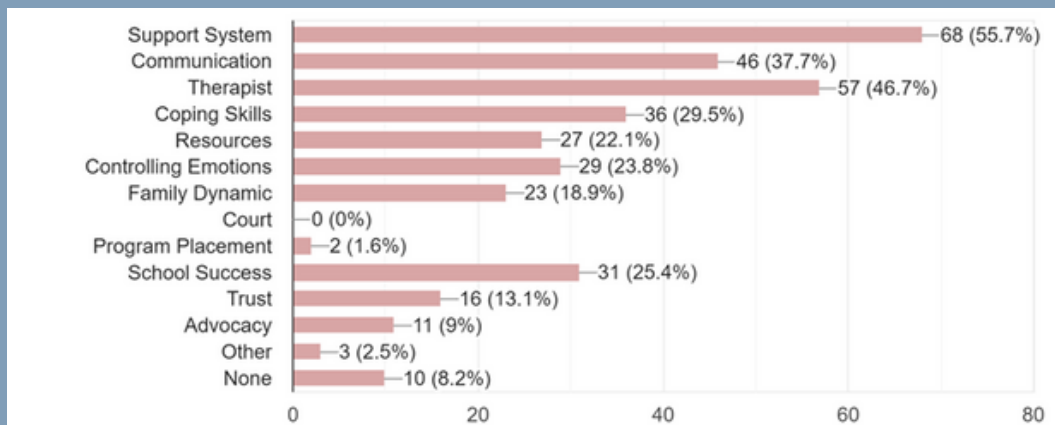
Outcomes

Strength & Needs Assessment Outcomes



*CMO Strength and Needs Assessment Outcome Report for youth 5-21 that were active with CMO between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020, for any length of stay. New Jersey Children's System of Care.

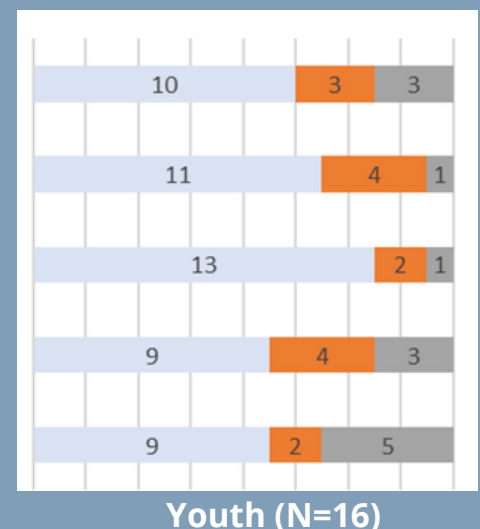
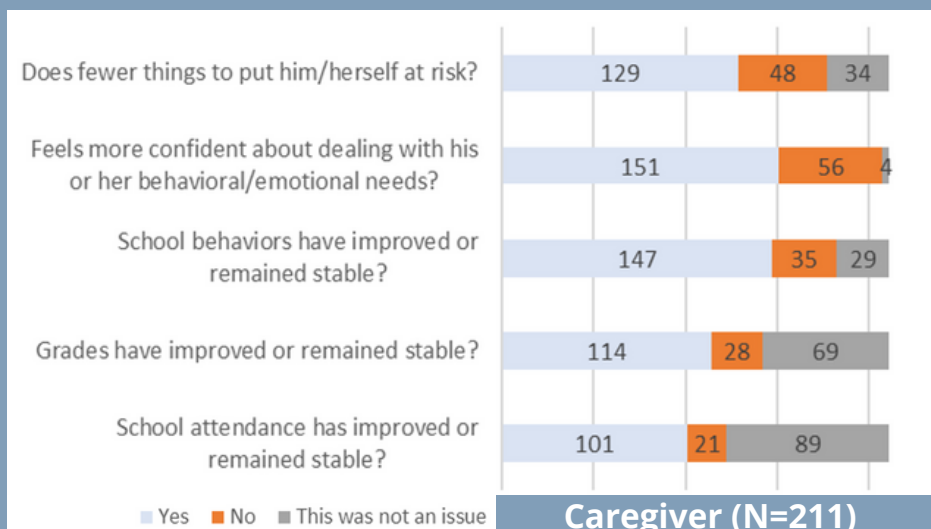
What is the most significant and long-term benefit of participating in Wraparound?



*2020 Post Enrollment Survey

Since participating in Bergen's Promise Wraparound Child and Family Team process, would you say that you/your child:

*2020 Family Satisfaction Survey



In Their Own Words

Testimonials from Families



"My care manager was always accessible and consistently reaches out to check on us, especially during COVID, so we definitely feel very much cared for."

"It provided consistent support for me and my son for an extended period of time. My care manager worked with us and was empathetic. She did not give up despite the difficulties, I had a great experience with Nurturing Parent and therapists."

"My care manager and therapist helped my family in all areas. They treated my son like he was their own. The biggest help was making sure everyone in the home understood how to make a positive impact on my son. My care manager went above and beyond in making sure my son was heard and had all the tools he needed for his improvement."

"Our care manager (CM) kept us very calm from the beginning, and let us know that she and Bergen's Promise would be there for us 100% of the time. We feel the CM has been like family to us, and we are indebted to her and Bergen's Promise, for all of their support."

"The CM has been a literal Godsend to my family. She is non-judgmental, caring, and puts an INCREDIBLE amount of effort into my ENTIRE family. I really believe that if it were not for her, we would not be as good as we are. She puts such a personal effort into helping my family. I trust her a lot (which takes a lot for me) and both my kids are extremely comfortable with her. She is a true asset."

"Bergen's Promise could not have been more invested in my family and my children. They were instrumental in my introduction and education of the system and unyielding promoter of my children's needs."

"There are no words to express how grateful I am for the support I received during the difficult time. Our family is finally in a good place after years of battle, thanks to Bergen Promise."



Success Stories



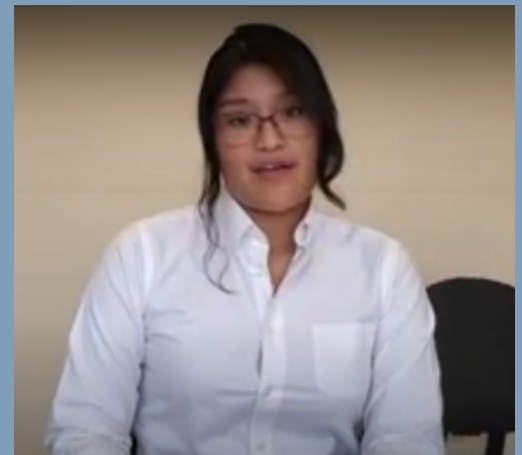
This youth experienced ongoing depression and anxiousness related to her family situation. Through her work with an in home clinician, she made progress expressing her feelings. While dealing with her anxiety related to the pandemic, this youth volunteered to help two of her teachers give out food and household essentials to Hackensack residents in need. News 12 even featured a story related to the food volunteer opportunity she participated in. She continues to practice her self care and coping strategies to maintain her mental health.



This youth was experiencing a lot of challenges related to gender dysphoria. Struggling with "internalized transphobia" and the fear of coming out to a family member, a trans-affirmative therapeutic approach allowed this youth to view himself as valid in his identity which improved mood. The youth came out to his family member, who was very accepting and affirmed love for the youth no matter what. The above photo was created by the youth to demonstrate the level of emotions he felt after successfully coming out to his family member.



Seth lives with autism, aggression, and challenges socializing outside of his school friends. Using a strength-based approach, the child and family team maximized on his interest in watching and making YouTube videos. Seth was encouraged to join a program called GameU which helped him learn coding and other computer-related things - which he loved! He now socializes with youth who share this interest. Above is an image from a video CREATED BY SETH that highlights his experience with Bergen's Promise. It can be viewed on the [Success Stories page of our website](#).

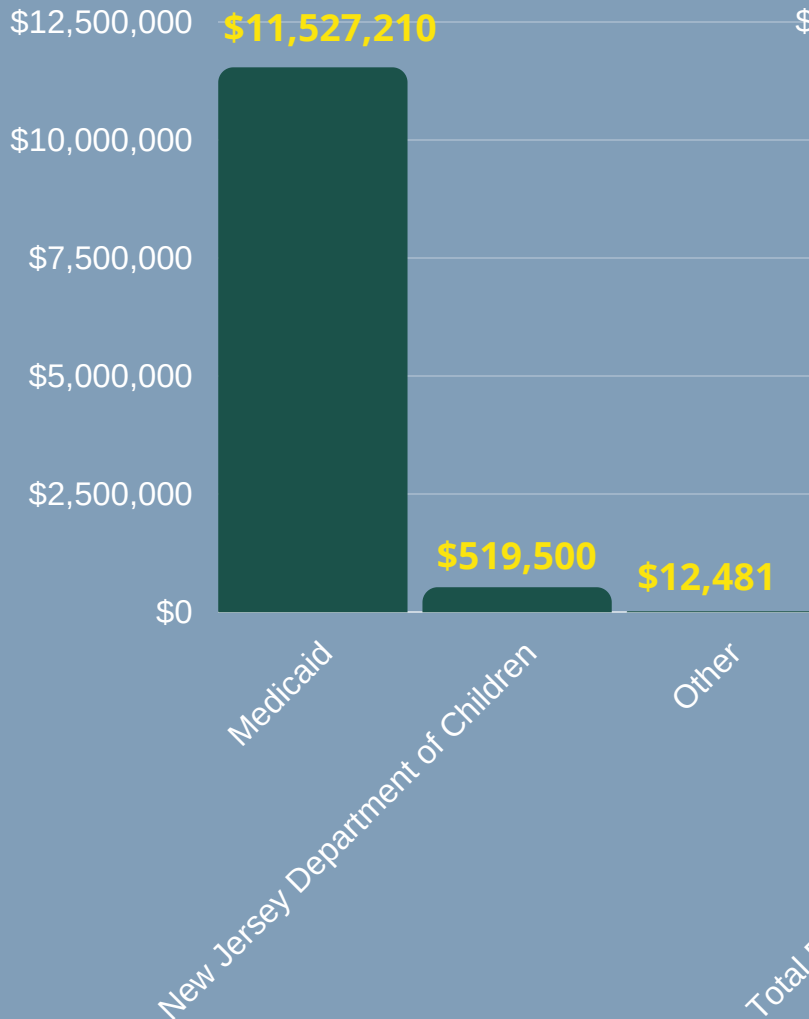


Alisson experienced childhood trauma which caused depression and anxiety. Her confident Care Manager helped her to organize her life again and restore hope. Alisson worked with a mentor and got involved in therapy groups, social activities and youth leadership initiatives. Her experience was so positive that she is pursuing a career in social work.

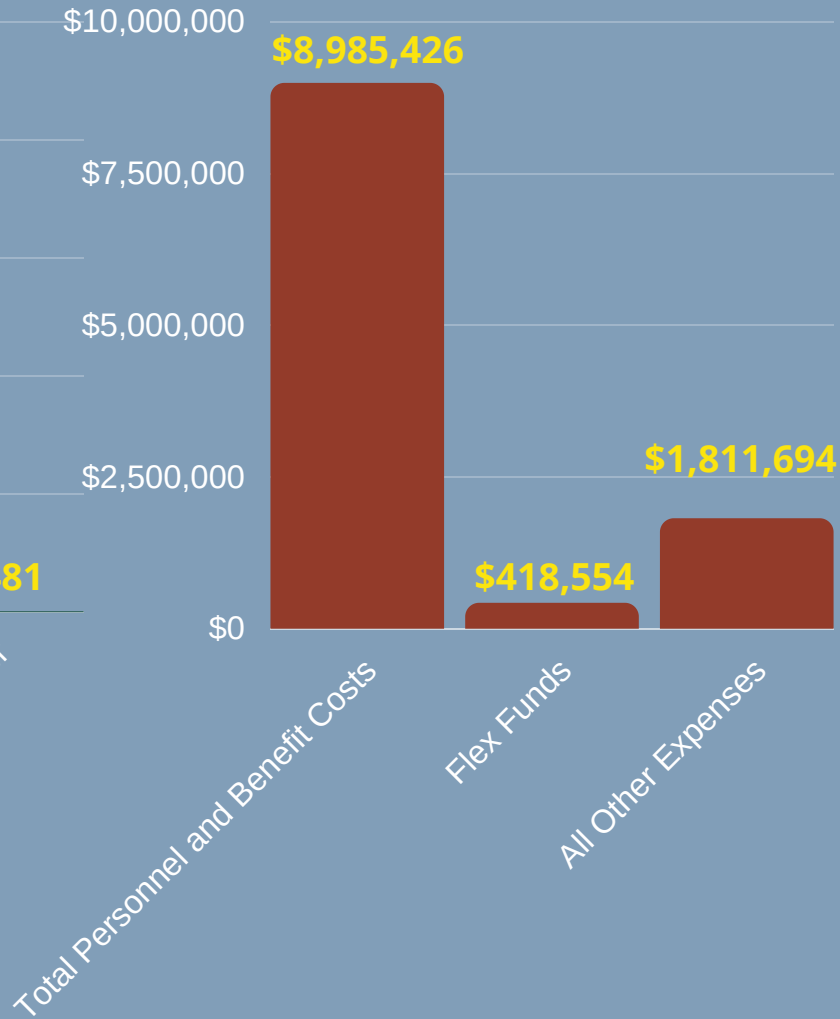
Revenue

2020 Fiscal Year Financial Report (7-1-2019 through 6-30-2020)

Revenues



Expenses



Bergen's Promise receives \$130,000 COVID-19 Grant

Bergen's Promise was eligible in November 2020 to apply for, and received \$130,000 of funding from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. This funding was used for personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff to keep our team members and families served safe while conducting in home, in community visits. The funding was also used for cleaning and infection control measures for office and agency vehicles, as well as, the purchase and upgrade of HIPAA compliant technology to facilitate remote services as appropriate.

Partner With Us

Donate

Annual Drives - Every August, we hold a backpack drive for our youth in need of school supplies. In December, we manage our toy drive which culminates with our Family Holiday Party. There are other opportunities throughout the year for food or supply donations throughout the year. Here's how you can contribute to these events.

Cash Donor - Support a child with a one-time or monthly donation

Participate in one of our Drives - Email CommunityResources@bergenpromise.org to arrange a drop off of your donated goods

Amazon Smile - Use Amazon Smile when purchasing through Amazon, and select Bergen's Promise as your charity of choice. We receive a small percent of your purchase.

Social Media

Stay connect with us and contribute to the conversation by following our social media sites:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/Bergen-Resourcenet-1491800140966030/>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/5264308>



Join our Team

Apply Today!

BergenPromise.org/careers

Please share!

Fulfill your passion to help others!

Join our rapidly growing agency that supports the social & emotional health needs of 1,600 Bergen County youth!

Become our newest Hero to our kids served! Apply Today!

BergenPromise.org/careers

**WE'RE
HIRING!**

Scan here with your phone to
see our open positions!





Bergen's **PROMISE**

Healthy Families, Safe at Home

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