Youth Innovators Lead the Way

CCANO’s Immigration and Refugee Services program was one of five pilot organizations out of 250 applicants chosen for CONNECTED, a two-year initiative from the National Council for Behavioral Health designed to reduce anxiety, depression, and suicide among young people in underserved communities, while empowering youth to engage in meaningful community change. The National Council for Behavioral Health launched this groundbreaking initiative to increase access and engagement in quality, appropriate care for culturally diverse populations that experience barriers to mental health support systems. The youth innovators selected to participate will engage with mentors throughout the community to use their voice and experience to champion youth engagement in mental wellness using peer-to-peer learning.

Recently, CCANO Immigration and Refugee Services staff members accompanied the participants to the National Council for Behavioral Health’s annual conference in Nashville. These youth change-makers were not only able to connect to their peers from the other participating organizations but also build relationships with healthcare professionals from across the country in conference workshops and sessions. While they learned a lot from the experienced professionals, they were also able to share feedback as to how these healthcare providers could better connect with teenagers who are traditionally overlooked or disconnected from mental health services.

In the future, The National Council for Behavioral Health hopes to provide opportunities for the participants to present their own sessions as they develop as leaders and communicators.

CCANO is excited to see how these youth leaders grow as individuals and help their communities grow as well.

News from Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

A Time for Growth

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities:

As we leave the Lenten time of penance, let us embrace the renewal that Easter brings. Just as we have observed the signs of spring through the budding of trees and blooming of flowers, we have witnessed CCANO clients across our 30 programs grow from strain to stability through our services.

For the formerly incarcerated clients of our new Workforce Development services, our work begins while they are still imprisoned, transitioning with them into a season of rebirth. Our clients in Immigration and Refugee Services are leaving a period of darkness and going forth into the light with newfound language acquisition thanks to our robust and dedicated volunteer pool. In the case of one of our Health Guardians clients, our services have resulted with her health arising from slumber. Additionally, our ACCESS and St. Vincent Maternity Clinic maternity services bring new life into the world, helping mothers on their journey from the early stages of pregnancy through labor, delivery, and post-natal care.

All of the clients and the CCANO staff who graciously serve them are raised up by the grace of God. As it is written in 1 Thess. 4:14, “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.” Catholic Charities, supporters like you raise up staff and clients, and this transformative season is not possible without all of us coming together to raise our community as a whole.

Easter reminds us that Jesus rose from the grave, paving the way for us to have new life. Thank you for your prayers and gifts that allow our clients to have a chance at a new life as well.

May you and your family receive the fullness of Easter joy!

Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans

President/CEO

Celebrating New Life at ACCESS

Earlier this month, ACCESS hosted their annual Jazz Brunch, which ensures compassionate care for over 600 pregnant women and their unborn babies in our community. One such client is “Eliza” who recently gave birth to a baby girl. She first came to ACCESS Pregnancy and Referral Center for a pregnancy test and ultrasound after hearing about us through a friend who was a former client. Because she was visiting from another country, she did not qualify for Medicaid.

Debbie Donohue, CCANO client advocate, saw Eliza on her first appointment and explained that there would be no charge for any of the services at ACCESS. She received pregnancy testing and scheduled her first ultrasound. During this appointment, Margaret Murphy, CCANO’s nurse sonographer, was able to show Eliza the first image of her baby, which was just one of so many special moments shared at ACCESS.

Eliza was concerned about how she was going to pay for healthcare during her pregnancy until she heard about St. Vincent Maternity Clinic and the discounted private pay package offered to families who do not qualify for Medicaid. At the clinic, she saw Dr. Bacchus and was able to see the same doctor and nurse at every visit, ensuring consistent care throughout her pregnancy.

When Eliza and her 11-year-old daughter brought their new baby boy to in the clinic for her last visit at St. Vincent, she received a gift bag full of essentials and signed up for the Diaper Bank to return every month for diapers, wipes, and any additional baby items.

With the services offered by ACCESS and St. Vincent, CCANO is able to meet a woman early in her pregnancy and continue a relationship until her child is potty-trained. ACCESS has locations in Metairie, Gretna, and New Orleans East, and St. Vincent is housed in our Metairie location. Learn more about ACCESS’ services at http://www.ccano.org/access-pregnancy-services/.
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Since its inception in 2009, the program has grown leaps and bounds, working with 870 students and leveraging 32,201 volunteer hours in the community over the past ten years. Last year alone, 42 high school seniors from 17 different public and private schools volunteered 1005 hours valued at $24,248 for Second Harvest Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and Second Harvest Food Bank.

In partnership with the Medical Director of Healthcare for the Homeless, Health Guards staff scheduled a weekly primary care appointment for Lauren for three consecutive weeks after an initial visit. To stay informed about doctor’s appointments and in the event of an emergency, Health Guards purchased a cell phone for the couple to continue consistent communication. Additionally, CCANO was able to link Lauren to Aetna Medicaid insurance, pay her co-pays for her many medications, and supply boxes of food to the couple when visiting their tent.

Currently, Lauren continues to make her doctor’s appointments at University Medical Center with Health Guards staff members in attendance. The couple purchased a car in February, which has ensured reliable transportation to and from medical care. CCANO Health Guardians staff still makes monthly home visits to their apartment and looks forward to seeing sustained progress in the Lauren’s overall wellbeing and health.

Learn more about Health Guards at http://www.ccano.org/healthguards/