



children's hope INITIATIVE

A COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS OF SOMERSET COUNTY YOUTH, INC.

Newsletter—Fall 2020/Winter 2021

What We Will Do in 2021

With your generous support, the Children's Hope Initiative (CHI) will be able to help Somerset County's abused and neglected children in the following ways:

I. Continue these programs that continued in 2020 with Covid restrictions:

- **Cut waiting time in half for children to begin treatment** at Family & Community Services in Bound Brook.
- **Serve ten (10) 18-21-year-old young adults who have “aged out” of the child welfare system** through the Middle Earth Visions Plus Program.
- **Provide paid mentors for elementary and middle school children** through Middle Earth Lunchtime Mentoring.
- **Serve up to 10 high school students in the Promise Plus Program** offered by Middle Earth.
- **Educate the community in Trauma Informed Care (TIC).** Our effort is known as Resilient Youth of Somerset, and our goal is to empower our community to help children overcome the damage done through abuse, neglect, and other childhood traumas.

II. Resume these programs once Covid restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so:

- **Provide “Fun Trips” for more than 50 abused and neglected children** to the ropes adventure course, Dorney Park, Sculpture Gardens, and Schaffer Farm.
- **Provide a 5-week, 5-day-a-week therapeutic respite summer camp** at Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center for 20 children, offering equine therapy, karate, music/movement therapy, art therapy, etc.

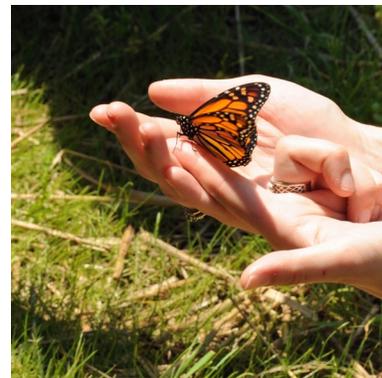
III. Meet the unmet needs outlined on page three.

Our Mission

To meet the unmet needs of abused and neglected children and their families by providing resources for existing organizations in Somerset County.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



What We Have Done
From January 2012 through October 31, 2020

Total Community Impact To Support Abused and Neglected Children

CHILDREN'S HOPE INITIATIVE

The Numbers

**Dollars
Raised**



>\$542,000

**Programs
Funded**



13

**Children
Served**



>900

The Programs

families mentoring
tutoring confidence
succeed overcome therapeutic
engage real impact youth
self-determination vision
relationships

★ Resilient Youth of Somerset Trauma Informed Care

★ 46 children served by CASA Tutors

★ 100 children served by Creative Heartwork

★ Over 220 children served by the Children's Hope Afterschool Program

★ 55 children served by RHCMHC Therapeutic Summer Camp

★ Over 215 children served by Middle Earth Lunchtime Mentors

★ Wait times cut in half at Family and Community Services of Somerset

★ Helped prevent sexual abuse with the YMCA's Darkness to Light Program and training Youth Service organizations

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

As of October 31, 2020

To learn more please visit:
<http://childrenshopeinitiative.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/Childrens.Hope.Initiative>

Significant and Growing Unmet Needs Because of Covid

The Board of CHI conducted its triennial needs assessment by meeting with 15 youth-serving organizations in September. The following are the unmet needs of Somerset County's abused and neglected children in order of priority with greatest need listed first:

- Mental Health – Covid restrictions, remote learning, and social isolation are having a significantly harmful effect upon children—especially abused and neglected children. Also, fewer cases of abuse have been reported to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) since March. The concern is that there will be a surge in cases reported when the pandemic winds down and the psychological and mental harm to those affected children will be magnified by the delay in reporting.
- Fill the Learning Gap Created by Covid – Abused and neglected children have always needed more help in terms of learning. If they don't get extra help to catch up now, they will be forever left behind in their learning.
- Mentoring (tied with “Fill the Learning Gap”) – This was identified as our greatest unmet need three years ago. It remains a most pressing need. The need includes mentors for children and teens, as well as for parents and caregivers.
- Fun Activities – All children need to have fun activities to help build their sense of self-esteem and to give them “good life” experiences that can broaden their horizons. This is especially true for abused and neglected children.
- Immigrant Children – Somerset County has a significant immigrant population. Many of the children were the victims of abuse and/or neglect before arriving in the United States. Last year CHI sponsored middle school and high school group sessions for 20 Spanish-speaking immigrant children. We would like to continue that program and expand it if funding permits.
- Support for Youth Serving Organizations – Our goal is to help existing YSOs whenever possible. Consistent with our mission, CHI will endeavor to work with those YSOs that need financial support to survive.
- Program to Promote YSOs programs and information center for children and caregivers.

2020 Accomplishments

In addition to accomplishments listed on page one, 2020 reports on all CHI-funded services provided to Somerset County's abused and neglected children can be viewed on our website at www.childrenshopeinitiative.org/category/programs.

Also, this summer CHI received a request for a grant to replenish a CASA-SHaW fund used “to fill the wants of children in foster care.” In the past the fund was used to pay for activities for the children, such as summer camp, computers for kids going off to college, registration fees for sports etc. We were told: “With Covid-19, we have found the nature of the requests are changing. Instead of wants, we have been asked for grocery store gift cards for food, diapers, wipes, Chromebooks, and gas cards for older youth. With these requests, we have almost completely zeroed out the fund and desperately need an infusion to not only help with these essential items, but also to fill birthday gift requests.” The request was received on July 30th. Five days later the Board met, an MOU was signed, and a \$6,000 grant was made. In addition, \$500 Target gift cards were donated, and arrangements were made to supply diapers and food cards.

What Your Generous Support Will Allow CHI To Do

As a result of your generous support and monies unspent in 2020 due to Covid cancellations, we have sufficient money to fund Summer Connections 2021 (summer camp for 20 children) and money to continue our existing programs with Middle Earth! That is a wonderful start as we prepare to enter 2021 *thanks, in large part, to FinPro, Inc., for its most generous donation of \$20,000 and Piper Hill Foundation for its gift of \$10,000 for Summer Connections 2021.*

The money we raise between now and December 31 will allow us to deal with the OTHER unmet needs outlined on page three. We ask you to join with our Board—and our friends and corporate donors—to make this happen! The more you are able to give, the more we will be able to accomplish!

CHI Expenses

CHI expenses from January 1, 2020, to October 31, 2020, were less than \$3,000. This includes insurance, bookkeeping, tax returns and filings, printing, postage, website fees and fees for donations paid by credit cards. Since we began in 2011, these costs have been paid in full by a CHI board member. Therefore, every dollar received in donations goes 100% to services for children.

Board Members

Tom Dilts, Chair	Barbara Barkley	Jim Buccini	Kim Charles
Stacey Cozewith, Esq.	Susan Dilts	Carol Dvoor	Jane Fox
Colleen McCarthy, Esq.	Meghan Musso, Esq.	Dan Puntillo	

We Need Your Help!

Please join with us to continue serving Somerset County's abused children in 2021. Your donation is fully tax deductible, and 100% of your donation goes directly to support the programs described in this newsletter.

To donate, please go to our website:
www.childrenshopeinitiative.org
or make your check payable to:
Children's Hope Initiative
and send to:
Friends of Somerset County Youth
P. O. Box 8063
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

What is "Friends of Somerset County Youth, Inc"?

Friends of Somerset County Youth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized in 1981 exclusively for charitable purposes and specifically to benefit the youth of Somerset County. It is the parent organization of the Children's Hope Initiative and Resilient Youth of Somerset.