CATHOLIC GUARDIAN SERVICES

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

PROVIDING HELP • CREATING HOPE • PRESERVING DIGNITY
GREETINGS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends,

I am proud to present the 2022 Catholic Guardian Services Annual Report. Across all our programs, there is a post-pandemic revitalization and response to increased need. The number of children, families, and individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities we helped in 2022 exceeded 3,100 individuals and 1,400 families. In 2022, we tracked significant increases in enrollment for most of our services. Catholic Guardian Services is one of New York’s largest community-based human services providers and we are nurturing positive outcomes where they are needed most.

Catholic Guardian offers a variety of services to provide help, create hope, and preserve dignity for the people within our community of care. Our programs operate in conjunction with various government bureaus such as the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

However, four of our most impactful community-based programs rely on philanthropic support. These programs are our Parenting Resource Center for expectant mothers and new parents; our CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center for children and caregivers experiencing mental or behavioral health challenges; our Youth Employment Services (YES!) Program for foster youth transitioning into independent living; and our Family Violence Prevention Project.

Among our accomplishments in 2022 were the expansion of the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center and our Parenting Resource Center to central Harlem, where these services are greatly needed. We listened to community voices and responded with innovation.

Our donor-supported programs are featured in the following pages. Please enjoy this 2022 Annual Report for Catholic Guardian Services.

Warmest regards,

Craig Longley
Chief Executive Officer
DESPITE BEING THE RICHEST NATION on earth, maternal and infant mortality remain disproportionately prevalent in the United States. Socioeconomic disadvantage, particularly along racial and geographic lines, is a powerful predictor of key risk factors such as maternal morbidity, pre-term delivery, and low birth weight. These tragic trends continue to precipitate disparate outcomes with heartrending results, especially for low-income families and communities of color. The Bronx is home to 17% of New Yorkers, however, its mothers account for 29% of the City’s pregnancy-related deaths. The infant mortality rate among Black infants in New York City is more than double the citywide rate and 3.3 times higher than the rate among white infants.

Our Parenting Resource Center with locations in the Bronx and Harlem combats these trends and catalyzes positive outcomes for mothers and infants at risk. We offer a holistic suite of wraparound services including access to pre-natal and post-natal healthcare, comprehensive case management, and evidence-based parenting education models to hundreds of expectant mothers and new parents.

Our evidence-based parenting education modalities instruct mothers and fathers about the importance of breastfeeding and safe sleep practices; train families on NYC Department of Health requirements for child-proofing their homes to prevent childhood injuries; and, when appropriate, connect women to domestic violence shelters and support groups. We also provide each new family with a safe, new crib, layettes, and essential childcare supplies.

Each of these services promotes healthy, empowered, and informed lifestyles for parents and children, reducing parental stress and anxiety and improving health and socioeconomic outcomes for each family. In 2022, with due regard to the agency’s ongoing safety protocols, our Parenting Resource Center staff resumed their pre-pandemic practice of hosting personalized baby showers for every mother who participates in our parenting education programs. These showers—which are often the only shower a mother enrolled in our programs will ever receive—provide families with crucial supplies that are often difficult for them to acquire elsewhere. More importantly, the showers show the mothers that they are loved and supported.

The population of parents we serve at the Parenting Resource Center consists primarily of young, unmarried women of color from the Bronx who live in a low-income household and struggle to balance their educational, professional, and personal goals with rapidly expanding, and sometimes unexpected, parenting responsibilities. Young women in this station in life are at exceptional risk of negative outcomes with respect to their health, the health of their child, and their long-term economic prospects. Black women in NYC are nearly three times more likely to experience severe maternal morbidities than white women and eight times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes.

Fortunately, research indicates that adequate pre-natal and post-natal care can significantly reduce morbidity and mortality for mothers and infants. At our Parenting Resource Center, Catholic Guardian Services fights maternal and infant health inequities through education and supports designed to empower mothers and infants to thrive. By caring for expectant mothers, Catholic Guardian is simultaneously serving present and future New Yorkers, building toward generational flourishing.

2022 OUTCOMES
In 2022, the Parenting Resource Center had a 30% increase in expectant mothers seeking services, from 171 mothers in 2021 to 223 in 2022. We care for the people who carry the future.
IN THE LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS where Catholic Guardian operates, children and families in need of mental healthcare services face an average wait time of nearly two months to obtain even preliminary evaluations and counseling. As a result, these communities have a great, unmet need for mental healthcare services, especially treatments that meet the specific needs of children from severely disadvantaged backgrounds who have witnessed trauma.

Mental healthcare need is rising in the United States, particularly among disadvantaged groups who face a greater exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), a powerful driver of negative medical, psychological, and socioeconomic outcomes in children which can last well into adulthood. Rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide among young people have all increased in the last decade, but access to mental healthcare remains inconsistent and unequal. For example, the ratio between children living in the Bronx and psychologists working in the Bronx is twenty-four times higher than the ratio of Manhattan children to Manhattan psychologists.

The CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center provides a comprehensive array of psychological and psychiatric healthcare services and resources for children and their caregivers. The CGS Family Center extends services to children, teens, and young adults through the age of twenty-five years as well as their caregivers, providing psychiatric diagnosis, psychotherapy, prescription and oversight of medicines, care coordination, and referrals to primary care doctors. In 2022, we expanded our mental healthcare services to our Harlem satellite office on West 134th Street in Manhattan.

Our therapists are experts at trauma-informed counseling. Our clinicians support children’s ability to thrive through positive social-emotional functioning, (re)establishment of healthy and supportive relationships, optimization of developmental functioning, and collaboration with family and essential community service providers. We have a special license from the New York State Office of Mental Health to serve children and young people on-site or remotely via tele-mental health services. In contrast to the national average wait time, children and youth in urgent need of services receive priority slots and expedited pre-admission screenings within five business days of referral.

In 2022, the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center treated our largest cohort of children in need of services since our opening in 2018. Our clinicians received 322 referrals in 2022: 85% of them were cleared to receive services, and 80% of those enrolled.

Accessible mental healthcare is an essential driver of health, productivity, and economic mobility in any context, but especially in generationally impoverished communities of color. Untreated mental illness costs the U.S. up to $300 billion in lost productivity every year, but evidence-based psychotherapy modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for children and adolescents with anxiety—one of the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center’s most frequently used therapy modalities—offers long-term returns of up to $23.57 per dollar invested. At-risk children such as those within our community of care are much more heavily exposed to ACEs, trauma, and cyclic poverty. It is the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center’s mission to combat these risk factors, promote sustainable healing, and ensure long-term wellness for the children who need it the most.
YOUTH RAISED IN THE FOSTER CARE system face a wide variety of acute disadvantages from early childhood throughout adulthood. Lower educational attainment and employment rates, combined with elevated criminal justice involvement and disease burden, make for a daunting landscape for foster youth preparing to transition out of care and into independent living. However, robust educational, employment, and housing support systems can mitigate these risk factors and empower youth to defy these odds.

A 2022 study revealed that when foster youth receive targeted services and supports to prepare them to secure and maintain employment, their chances of earning a living wage increase from 20% to 80%. Our Youth Employment Services (YES!) Program is one such support system. The YES! Program equips foster youth with the tools and resources they need to thrive and combat negative outcomes by preparing youth for the challenges of transitioning out of the child welfare system and into independent living. The YES! Program combines job training, mentoring, education, employment, and housing support to holistically address these young adults’ unique, multifaceted needs.

Our YES! job coaches use evidence-based, trauma-informed youth development models to empower foster youth ages eighteen to twenty-six with job training, internship placement, employment support, and retention services, all of which address the obstacles they face as they approach emancipation—the point at which youth ‘age out’ of foster care in New York. These program foci bridge chronic educational gaps and help nurture the skills, confidence, and support youth need to catalyze their entry into higher education and the workforce.

In 2022, 100% of our YES! graduates completed high school, enrolled in college or vocational school, and/or successfully entered the workforce, depending on their age and life circumstances. In 2021, Catholic Guardian Services was recognized by the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) for having one of the highest percentages of young adults in college of any foster care agency in New York. YES! has graduates in higher education, the workforce, and the military. Our YES! Program staff have professional relationships with dozens of companies, nonprofits, and educational institutions for the benefit of our students, including Workforce 1, the Workforce Professionals Training Institute, Per Scholas, and Columbia University’s Office of Government and Community Affairs.

The typical YES! student is a young adult of color who was born into a fractured, low-income home where they experienced multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). As a result, our graduates transition into independent living at an immature age facing a slew of disadvantages. The YES! Program provides foster youth with the multifaceted support they need to scale these obstacles, defy statistics, and enter the working world as empowered, educated, and well-employed adults.
FAMILY VIOLENCE REMAINS A PERSISTENT issue in the United States, particularly among low-income families of color. Women subjected to intimate partner violence face an elevated risk of a wide variety of negative health outcomes, including injuries, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and chronic diseases such as asthma. Children who witness family violence are much more likely to be victimized themselves and face a variety of ripple effects throughout their lives. Though family violence can affect anyone, it is disproportionately prevalent in the Bronx which exhibits the highest number of domestic violence incident reports per capita of any New York City borough and the number of domestic violence incidents reported in the Bronx increased throughout the pandemic.

The Catholic Guardian Services Family Violence Prevention Project combats the risk factors behind intimate partner violence and child abuse by uniting two programs within the agency’s umbrella of services: the Parenting Resource Center and the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center. The combination of these services in a single program setting allows the agency to provide specialized, wraparound mental healthcare, parenting education, and case management services.

Children who witness parental violence are 140% more likely to exhibit externalizing behavior problems such as aggression and delinquency, and they are 103% more likely to exhibit internalizing behavior problems such as anxiety and depression. In addition, a boy who sees his mother being abused is ten times more likely to abuse his female partner as an adult, and a girl who grows up in a home where her father abuses her mother is more than six times as likely to be sexually abused than a girl who grows up in a non-abusive home.

Our Family Violence Prevention Project aims to effectively interrupt this cycle and aims to prevent tragic outcomes later in life by addressing the roots and consequences of family violence during early childhood. Though the need for these services in the Bronx is great, our evidence-based interventions have the potential to reshape hundreds of families’ futures and empower them to thrive.

2022 OUTCOMES

Family Violence Prevention Project was launched in March 2022.

We empower the people who have the power to break the cycle of violence.
**2022 DONOR-SUPPORTED EVENTS AND PROJECTS**

### 2022 EASTER DINNER BASKET PROJECT
co-chaired by Catherine Nelson and Summer Nelson, provided nutritious Easter dinner baskets for one hundred families with young children identified by the Parenting Resource Center. Each basket included a selection of non-perishable food items and a $100 gift certificate.

### SUMMER 2022 GET MOVING! SCOOTER & BICYCLE CAMPAIGN
chaired by Anne M. Falvey, raised funds to supply children with a bicycle or scooter and safety gear, as well as give parents a $50 gift card per child to purchase sneakers or summer essentials.

### 2ND ANNUAL OUTDOOR SPORTING CLAYS EVENT
chaired by Margaret Stevens O’Keeffe and Augusta Sanfilippo, raised funds to benefit the CGS Family Counseling & Wellness Center.

### 37TH CHILD OF PEACE AWARDS CELEBRATION
honored Megan and Victor D. Ziminsky, III with the Child of Peace Award; the Ladies of Charity of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York with the Rosalie Cardon-Jetté Award for Courage and Compassion; and Catholic Guardian’s Foster & Adoptive Parents with the Humanitarian Award.

### GIVING CIRCLES ROUND TABLE SERIES
- Screening of the film, *Life After You!* This award-winning film portrays a suburban family’s struggle with the death of their nineteen-year-old son, following an overdose of heroin that was laced with fentanyl. The screening was followed by a “talk back” with the film’s artists and creators.

- How to Recruit and Maintain an Inclusive Workforce, hosted by Luciano S. Rodembusch with panelists Craig Longley, Ania Kwasniewski Shahidi, and Sharon Torres.
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On behalf of the children and families served by Catholic Guardian, we thank the individuals and organizations listed below for their support in 2022.

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