

2019 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# Family & Children's

SERVICE OF ITHACA

## CEO Remarks

### Inspiring Connections

Karen Schachere, Interim President & CEO

10 months ago, I became the Interim President and CEO of Family & Children's Service of Ithaca. As many of you know, I have dedicated my career to F&CS and care passionately about its mission. At F&CS, we work daily to create a warm, supportive organization that values people and their experiences. We work to create an environment where staff feels appreciated and supported. And, we work to ensure our doors are open to any one, at any time.

In my new role, I bring a unique perspective from years of providing direct service to clients, supervision to clinicians, and leadership to the clinic. My perspective is now broadening as I work side by side different departments. I see all that it takes to be the supportive agency that we are and to provide such high-quality services. Now, more than ever, I believe in our unique ability to serve our community.

In this newsletter, our last before shifting to a digital format, we focus on connections. Change is always challenging, but it's necessary for growth. The shifts in our organization remind me again and again of the importance of relationships. The opportunity to connect with you, who support us, many for decades, is such a special aspect of my new position. Connecting with our staff, who work passionately and tirelessly to support our community, inspires me to give it my all. Connecting with our community has been and will always be at the center of our work. Our mental health care system can and should work for everyone, and I am grateful to all of you who make F&CS a place where that is possible.

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# Connecting To Our Past

Established in 1885, Family & Children's Service of Ithaca is known for its long history of providing compassionate care to those who are in need in Tompkins County. As we look back on how far we've come, we recognize one particular unsung hero who has played an important role in making the agency and our community what it is today.

Marjorie "Midge" Waldman-Wolga (1926-2012) served as the Associate Director of F&CS from 1974 to 1989. Her organizational savvy, technical expertise, and leadership skills are credited for growing and professionalizing the agency. Despite providing mental health care for decades, it was only with Midge's skillful leadership that F&CS finally became an official state-licensed mental health clinic. During her tenure, Midge was also critical to launching and overseeing new programs such as Group Homes for at-risk youth, Home Care for aging adults, Youth Services, and the Employee Assistance Program—the latter two of which continue to persist and provide critical services to our community to this day.

In addition to her work at F&CS, Midge was a beloved community member who was active in many social service organizations committed to the mental health and well-being of the Tompkins County community. In a letter celebrating her retirement, Richard "Dick" Murdock, former Executive Director of Family Service Centers wrote:

"It seems like only yesterday that I first came to your office at Mental Health to learn how to track the cumulative flow of funds into drug programming. I have relied heavily on those lessons and have thought of your gentle patient instruction as I have passed them onto others... [However] your greatest influence in my life has not been as a teacher or advisor, but as a friend. I remember arriving unannounced one dismal Saturday afternoon and proceeded to fill your kitchen with tears for three uninterrupted hours. I still recall the warmth and support in your silent vigil of my grief."

Her skill, grace, and compassion were echoed by her children, John and Mark Waldman, granddaughter, Maren Waldman, and close friend, colleague, and former CEO of F&CS, James (Jim) Johnston, who shared their memories of a woman who demonstrated the very traits that F&CS strives to embody in its work every day.

Jim: What was Midge like? She was a woman with a lot of class. She was very smart, very engaging, and highly respected in the community. And was really committed to the mission here. When we made the decision to take the clinical program from a non-licensed program to a licensed program within New York State, we needed somebody who really understood the system and Midge did because she essentially ran mental health services in Tompkins County.



"Midge was a beloved community member who was active in many social service organizations committed to the mental health and well-being of the Tompkins County community."





Over the fifteen years that we worked together she helped us structure the clinic program in such a way that it would meet all the criteria for state licensure. As part of that she also brought us into the technological world. Many people were not computer-based that early on, but we certainly were with Midge's help. In today's terms, she was the Chief Operating Officer. Not only did she assist in terms of the clinic program, but she provided oversight for a lot of different functions at the time. Seeing as how we were not so big, she was the Human Resources Director, the Administrative Assistant for the clinical program, and oversaw most of our programs as well—from Home Care to Group Homes to Youth Services, DAP, and EAP.

Maren: Grammy was very passionate about mental health. She was someone who really cared about people and wanted people to have a good life and have good support.

There was one time we were eating lunch at the Moosewood and she just started telling me more about her work in Ithaca—how she helped to support Challenge Industries, the Suicide Prevention Center, the Franziska Racker Center. I just remember sitting there and being so impressed. I didn't know any of that growing up. She was just my grandma—we went over and had really good food, she had her flower garden she cared for, and her music, and that's what I knew. As I was considering how I was serving my community and my field is also related to health, wellness, and the arts, I was very impressed to hear more about her life and how she served.

John: Mom treated everyone from all walks of life with respect and didn't look down on anybody. That was something that was impressed upon myself and my brother.

Mark: I have never heard her speak badly of anyone. There were people she disagreed with, I'm sure, but I never heard much of that. There weren't rules or lectures in our family growing up around this, but it was just that that was the model, that was how she conducted herself and she led by example.

Jim: Patience is important in terms of what we do especially in mental health and Midge had a real talent for patience. That, combined with what we've talked about in terms of her respect for people and their position in life is what we have to keep in mind especially in this business.

Mark: She was very accepting. I just always felt safe talking to her. She listened and asked good questions and had very wise suggestions for things to think about.

John: Mom could distill and cut through issues that were very complicated and get to the core of what that was about.

Jim: In mental health, nothing comes that quick. You really have to be able to compartmentalize your feelings about certain issues for the people you have to deal with and where they are coming from. And Midge could do that very well. Patience, respect, really caring, and being able to share that feeling of care—those are real skills and values for us to continue to uphold.



# Connecting To Our Community

After 20 years of Cayuga at Twilight, the task to find an event that could flourish in its own right was daunting. Last year, we gave great time and thought to what would come next, and with the help of many dedicated board and staff, we are proud to present the First Annual Cardboard Boat Race. The event will set sail on Sunday, September 15 from 2 PM - 6 PM at the Ithaca Yacht Club. This event will be the first of its kind for Tompkins County and we are thrilled to be at the helm.

The event centers on a boat race that challenges teams to build boats created primarily from cardboard and duct tape that they will need to be able to get in to sail across the Ithaca Yacht Club harbor. These boats should be constructed ahead of time—teams can spend all summer perfecting a boat or 20 minutes the night before. The Cardboard Boat Race is meant to inspire people to work together, employing creativity and ingenuity, to get their boats to cross the finish line. For our land lovers, we hope you'll come and cheer on your favorite team while enjoying great food, music, and a day by the lake.

The cost to register a boat is free and boat entries will be accepted until August 30 (or until full). The size of your boat crew is up to you, but all crew members will be required to purchase a general admission ticket. Prizes will be awarded for fastest elapsed time, best construction, best theme, best name, and most epic sinking. General admission will be \$50 per person with tickets available in advance or at the gate, but we encourage everyone to preregister. Details on boat construction and race rules, sponsorship opportunities, spectator registration, and more will be available on our website at [www.fcsith.org](http://www.fcsith.org).

Family & Children's Service of Ithaca is committed to providing the highest quality mental health and related social services to our entire community, and we hope you'll join us in celebrating community mental health on September 15! We promise it's going to be a day you won't forget—so grab your life jacket and meet us at the Ithaca Yacht Club.





## SAVE THE DATE!

September 15, 2019  
2 PM - 6 PM  
Ithaca Yacht Club

Presented by CFCU  
Community Credit Union



# Meaningful Connections

Every year, Family & Children's Service of Ithaca gathers to celebrate all the people and organizations that make our work possible. This year, our Annual Celebration was held on May 9 at the Ithaca Country Club. Our keynote speakers were F&CS staff from three different departments. Following a year of major leadership shifts, we wanted our friends, supporters, and donors to know that what hasn't changed, and what never will, is our commitment to serving any one, at any time. Erika Busch, PsyD, gave us insight into a typical client session, Wendy Hammond, MA, MUKCP, shared her dedication to working with Tompkins County youth, and Ann Dolan, LCSW, opened up about how she began our Geriatric Mental Health program.

We awarded the Cancer Resource Center with our Agda Osborn Award and Arnold Printing Company with our Family Partner of the Year Award. We also welcomed in new board members; Tanya Brozost, Liz Gebhart, Scott Heyman, and Anna Rosenblatt!

Digital copies of our annual report are now available on our website.



KEVIN CARTMILL, BOARD CHAIR

A graphic featuring a collage of many hands in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) raised in the air, symbolizing unity and support.

## #100daychallengeaccepted

## Connecting To Our Youth

Family & Children's Service of Ithaca is a place for any one to turn to, at any time. For four years, we have been dedicated to providing services to youth up to age 21 who have runaway, are homeless, or at-risk of either. The goal of the program is to reunify youth with their parents or care-takers and help them develop the skills needed to have healthy and supportive relationships. We see firsthand that youth homelessness is a persistent issue in Tompkins County, and oftentimes, it's an issue that is under-reported and overlooked. F&CS is thrilled to be a part of new cohort that aims to end youth homelessness in 100 days. We join a coalition of invested groups and community members who are tackling the challenge from all angles. F&CS staff, Mustafaa Ali and Wendy Hammond, have been representing the agency at these meetings.

Tompkins County was chosen as one of four communities nationally to take on a 100-day challenge to end youth homelessness. The communities are supported by the Rapid Results Institute, and Tompkins County joins more than 200 communities across the country that have taken part in the challenge to prevent and end youth homelessness. Follow the progress on Facebook at [facebook.com/TC100DC](https://facebook.com/TC100DC).

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Member Agency



## Community and Continuing Education Workshop Series

COMING SOON

**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE  
MODEL TRAINING**  
with Sue Mann

August 1, 9 AM - 12 PM  
Location: Swieringa Education Center  
Cost: Early Registration: \$49 |  
Registration: \$69

**INTERNAL FAMILY  
SYSTEMS**  
with Derek Scott

October 11, 9 AM - 5 PM  
Location: Borg Warner Room  
Cost: Early Registration: \$149 |  
Registration: \$169  
Credits: 7 CEU

**MOTIVATIONAL  
INTERVIEWING**  
with Paul Mikowski

December 10, 1 PM - 4 PM  
Location: Swieringa Education Center  
Cost: Early Registration: \$49 |  
Registration: \$69  
Credits: 3 CEU