

Family & Children's

SERVICE OF ITHACA

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F&CS: Hello & Goodbye

Dear Friends,

What an amazing first week it has been! I had the privilege of meeting with staff across the organization, all of whom have worked extraordinarily hard to ensure that our clients are able to access the high quality mental health care Family & Children's Service provides despite the challenges that COVID has presented. Their dedication to our mission and to our clients is inspiring, and I am so proud (and excited!) to be joining this team.



We know that the devastation of the pandemic has had a profound effect on people's mental health. The percentage of people reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression has surged, substance use has increased significantly, and reports of suicidal ideation are up. The needs for our services have never been greater and we committed to working to meet the increased demand for our services

I am looking forward to getting to know the vibrant community that is Family & Children's Service in the weeks to come, and invite you to reach out to me at any time at akenaley@fcsith.org.

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AK', written in a stylized, cursive script.

Alicia Kenaley
Executive Director

Last fall, when we announced that Karen Schachere would be retiring after over thirty years at Family & Children's Service of Ithaca, we knew it would be the end of an era at the agency. Both Current and former staff, as well as current Board Members, gathered over Zoom to celebrate Karen's legacy, the many lives she has touched over the years, and to bid her farewell as she heads off on *her* next adventure. With the pandemic preventing a public celebration and gathering, Karen wanted to share one more message with the community that she has cherished working with throughout her career:



One year ago, when I made the decision to retire in early 2021, never did I imagine that my final year at F&CS would be an historic time for our agency, our community, and for the world at large. Our commitment to provide mental health services in our community never felt so urgent as we strove to provide care in novel ways in the face of a pandemic.

Although it has been marked with unprecedented challenges, this has also been a time of deep reflection on and gratitude for the years I have spent at F&CS.

The events of this year have only served to further my appreciation for what has made being a part of F&CS so life enriching for me. It has been a privilege to work with such wonderful staff and community members who have dedicated endless time and energy to ensure that there was a psychologically safe and welcoming place to receive compassionate mental health care. This commitment to high quality services throughout the years has been what I am most proud of being a part of and what I will truly miss.

We are so pleased to welcome Alicia Kenaley as our new Executive Director. I am confident that the agency is in excellent hands with her leadership as it meets new challenges.

Many, many thanks to all of you. I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to be part of such an incredible organization.

With warm wishes for good health and happiness,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Schachere". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Schachere

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