



CHESTER  
COMMUNITY  
COALITION



Photo: 2019 Legacy Walk by Jkirkz / Breon Barret

# ANNUAL REPORT

## FY20 Outcomes Summary

[www.chestercommunitycoalition.org](http://www.chestercommunitycoalition.org)

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## OUR MISSION

Is to heal the psychological and emotional impact of homicides and reduce trauma-related reactive violence in the City of Chester, PA.

The coronavirus pandemic has been a challenge to navigate for everyone. From school and work closures to quarantine, we have all had to grapple with an unprecedented global event. Chester Community Coalition was no exception. We stopped our programming and worked from home in compliance with CDC and State guidance. We tried hard to adjust to the evolving face of the pandemic, developing new ways to embody our mission of providing healing and reducing violence in Chester. For continuity of care we switched to teletherapy, for example, using a HIPAA compliant platform called Doxy.me to deliver sessions.

Thank you for your trust in us over the last three years. We hope to continue to earn it every day moving forward. Our annual report captures the ways we have grown and learned this past year and we are grateful to continue to be of service in the City of Chester.

## STAFFING

This is our first year providing services with direct hires. We hired a lead therapist at 12-15 hours per week and 6 group facilitators at 5-6 hours per week. We continue to maintain 1 full-time employee at 35 hours per week.



## CURRICULUM

We revised the Healing and Strength curriculum, placing less emphasis on parenting skills for adult participants, and greater emphasis on modeling the process of grieving. Program participants felt like they had more opportunities to unpack their grief and be heard. Participants also reported feeling the therapists were knowledgeable and provided good information. We have also restructured the upcoming Healing and Strength groups to allow for a process group in the fall, and a psychoeducational group with the developed curriculum in the spring.

While psychoeducation is a key component in trauma informed treatment, in this community embracing one's narrative is of parallel importance, can be felt, and a space of safety can be created leading to a more trusting dynamic, the best backdrop for healing. The sharing of narratives allows for the participants to express and process their grief. This step is important to better understand and internalize the psychoeducational concepts presented later in the group treatment curriculum. Group members are able to complete one full cycle of the group, fall and spring.

The changes improved our client retention and we expect that to continue with the additional restructuring of delivery.

The times that groups support was contraindicated due to other primary mental health or substance use concerns, referrals were provided to participants to support treatment of the primary concern.

## COUNSELING SERVICES

We served 91 with counseling, an increase of 34% from FY19. Recruitment and retention were impacted by coronavirus. We were still able to recruit and serve 50 participants in grief and survivor support groups. Through partnerships with community organizations (The Boys and Girls Club of Chester, Chester Upland School District, the Chester Education Foundation, and Team MAC [Making a Change] Group), we were able to serve 41 youth (6-17 yrs. old).

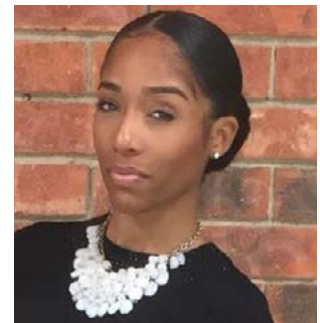
Meals were provided at all our groups, to remove a barrier to care.

## TRANSPORTATION

We continue to make Lyft concierge available to our clients. 20 clients (40%) took advantage of this service in 2019-2020, showing just how necessary an option it is to our community.



LaShira Council, LPC



Shakyra Morales, LMSW



## TREATMENT OUTCOMES

We collect pre and post-test information on PTSD and complicated grief using the CPSS, IES-r, TOP-8 and Complicated Grief screens. Of the 11 adults attending because of traumatic loss, 7 screened positive for complicated grief.

In terms of PTSD, the pattern of higher post-test scores continued. 75% of our fall participants who completed both pre and post tests scored higher at the close for PTSD. All of the collected parent-reported child PTSD scores were higher at post-test as well. We believe that as clients learn about the signs/symptoms of trauma and grief, they become more aware of those impacts in themselves.

Spring post tests were not completed because of the coronavirus pandemic. We are inviting all our spring session clients to rejoin us in the fall when programming resumes.

## CASE MANAGEMENT

We developed a case management program in partnership with Widener University's School for Social Work Education. Through that program, we were able to serve 8 clients, connecting them with resources like food and housing, identifying priorities, setting goals, developing action plans to reach them, and supporting clients as they follow through. We are continuing that partnership and service in 2020-2021.

## COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

We had one Community Ambassador who completed our survivor support program. We began training with her, but were interrupted by COVID-19. We provided her a stipend of \$15/hour for 5 hours per week. This foray into peer education made it clear that development of a curriculum, a training structure, and resources for emotional support for Ambassadors is essential to this program's success. It is our duty to provide the skills to share their experiences in ways that protect their psycho-emotional well-being and have the intended impact on their audiences.

### MEDIA

We hosted **4 one-hour shows** over a month on Chester's community radio station CMPRadio.net, netting 1,967 views. We were featured in the Winter 2019 edition of **Good News Quarterly**. And we have been building our social media presence across **Facebook** and **Instagram**. Since May 2020, our presence has grown from 154 followers to 195 followers on Facebook, and from 56 followers to 106 followers on Instagram.

We have distributed quarterly **newsletters** to our 390-person distribution list.

We completed an overhaul of our **website** thanks to the **Catchfire** program sponsored by the Philadelphia Foundation.



## TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

We provided **53** Chester Upland School District teachers and ancillary staff with training in being trauma-informed educators. The workshop curriculum is from the US Department of Education.

We continue to deliver Mental Health First Aid training in Delaware County.

We partnered with **Community Life Links** to train 84 individuals in two different sessions. A third, scheduled for March, was canceled due to coronavirus concerns.

Our therapists provided training to **69** individuals during 2019-2020 on trauma, secondary trauma and self-care through partnerships with other community-based organizations.

## OUTREACH

In FY20, we recorded **~5514** encounters. This number was impacted by the limits of our capacity - with one full-time employee - to support direct hires, coordinate programming, build community networks, contribute to fundraising, and conduct outreach. Also, we were severely constrained by COVID-19.

## FINANCIAL

During FY2020 (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020), CCC received **\$62,556** in new grants, **\$156,559** from multi-year grants awarded in prior years and **\$24,698** in donations.

In addition, **\$14,405** of salary and benefits were forgiven through Urban Affairs Coalition's Paycheck Protection Plan loan.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

✓ We are working with Cure Violence through the **Chester Peace Initiative** on violence prevention. We sat on their hiring panel, helped to recruit applicants, and are drafting an MOU to outline expectations and duties. We are also establishing a partnership with the local hospital, Crozer Chester Medical Center, to more immediately respond to survivors of gun violence and prevent retaliation and/or murder. We have received 3 referrals from the hospital in FY20 and successfully engaged with 1.

✓ We partnered with The Boys and Girls Club of Chester, Chester Upland School District, the Chester Education Foundation, and Team MAC (Making a Change) Group to support their constituents experiencing grief and trauma.

✓ We partnered with the City of Chester to provide training on trauma-informed care to their **Amachi Mentoring Program**. We delivered training to staff, mentors, mentees and their families on August 20th and 26th.

✓ We have explored the idea of a coalition with positive response from behavioral health, educational and social service organizations in Chester. We do not have the capacity, currently, to move those conversations to action, but are actively seeking ways to do so.

✓ We still participate in the Delaware County Trauma Alliance and the Delco Area Resource Network.



Jessica Davis, Natasha Serrano, LCSW, Alex Johnson, MA, ATR-BC, LPC, Dr. Erika Dawkins, PsyD, MEd., Anneka Vanderveen, LSW



## SUPPORT OUR WORK

We are working to hire an additional therapist to provide therapy to families in the first months after an assault or murder, when they need individualized support. Risk of retaliation is greatest during the first weeks after a violent attack; we believe that intensive therapy and case management services during this period can prevent retaliation and slow the cycle of violence in Chester. We are working closely with the [Chester Peace Initiative](#) (a [Cure Violence project](#)) and Crozer-Chester Medical Center in this effort.

Every single donation helps. By helping victims of violence cope with their trauma, we can reduce community violence.

Here's a link to [donate](#) or [volunteer](#).

