Our Mission
Cardinal McCloskey Community Services strives to protect, empower and promote independence for at-risk children and families and those with developmental disabilities through quality community-based services.

Our Vision
As a dynamic organization, we will lead, advocate and serve to enhance lives by anticipating and responding to community needs.

Our Values
• Treating all people with compassion, dignity and respect
• Promoting responsibility for innovation and excellence
• Embracing the diversity and unique talents of all
• Helping each person to realize their potential

There’s no business like show business we know. The curtains opened, and there they were the stars of our 17th Annual Taking the Stage Talent Showcase. This year’s event was held at the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College in Purchase, New York. What started 17 years ago as a Literary event is now a full-fledged talent showcase where the children and adults in our care can showcase their talent.

2019 was an exciting year for our performers as they were joined on stage by our Co-host Kiana Gonzalez, Miss World America New York, who shared her story of triumph growing up in the deaf community as a child of two deaf adults. This was our very first year at this new venue, and it was a fantastic stage show that could rival Broadway!

From the children in our Early Childhood Education Division to the youth and young adults in our Foster Care programs and our adults with developmental disabilities, all demonstrated their talents, experiences, and their courage through song, poetry, and their artwork. It is clear how much effort and care our artists put into the preparation for this extraordinary day.

It’s a phenomenal experience for them to be able to step on stage, and hear the cheers of the crowd. The same is true for our artists who proudly stand by their paintings hearing compliments of how impressive their artwork is.

CMCS staff, who themselves have a background in art and talent, work with these children and young adults, and you can see the improvement and the evolution of their work over the years. It is more than just artwork and performances. However, it is an outlet for these children and young adults. It is a way for them to tell their story and share their experiences productively and healthily.

Before coming into care with CMCS, these children and young adults in our foster care programs did not typically hear admiration from those who were there to care for them. They were not encouraged to explore the talents they had or seek new challenges. On the contrary, these are children who suffered parental neglect, trauma, and abuse.

“Abandoned”
You left me there
it’s like you never cared
About my feelings or about yours
But it doesn’t matter you already left the door
I hoped you were coming back
But you didn’t and my heart was under attack
I never saw your face again
And I felt abandoned x10

Imagine their feelings as they step on that stage, almost too nervous about continuing, then hearing the applause and cheers of others. It is no wonder this day is a highlight for them, and one they do not want to miss, or will they ever forget?

A very special thank you to our event sponsors: Tim and Nancy Joyce, Kim Turner, Constance Curran, and Michelle Medina. And a special thank you to our Annual Sponsors: USI, Catholic Charities, Compufit, and Hudson Pharmacy for supporting Taking the Stage and all of our performers, poets, and artists!

Our 18th Annual Taking the Stage Talent Showcase is set for Saturday, November 7th, 2020 at 1pm at the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College in Purchase, New York. Come out and join us, it’s an event you won’t want to miss!
Happy Spring! I hope that both your holiday and winter seasons were pleasant ones. I am looking forward to the warmer months ahead, as I am sure you are too. This past year has been a time of dynamic change and growth for Cardinal McCloskey Community Services across all of our programs and departments. Our new Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School officially opened its doors in August 2019, welcoming 150 students in Kindergarten and First Grade. After many years of planning, the Charter School is a reality, serving at-risk children who have experienced trauma, including children in the child welfare system. The new Horizons of Hope (HOH) residential program at Hayden House is now open. HOH will serve up to 16 young men with complex behavior issues that will benefit from comprehensive services. In November 2019, we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the addition of our new location for our McCloskey Works! Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities. Heritage House is our most modern facility located in Ossining next door to Hayden House. We are currently completing renovations and expect the new building to be operational by the time you read this letter. Heritage House will also serve as a new home for our Westchester Treatment Family Foster Care Program and a satellite branch for our McCloskey Cares Clinic. Our Early Childhood Education Department (ECED) programs are actively promoting parent engagement to support healthy child development, school readiness, and long-term family well-being. The parent groups include Personal Best, Bright Beginnings, and Parenting Journey, all of which help to strengthen families. ECED offers an active fatherhood program, including monthly events for fathers (also open to grandfathers, uncles, brothers, stepfathers) and children to enjoy activities together, and group workshops where fathers can connect with their peers and learn more about child development. After many months of work provided by our leadership team, staff members, and our Board of Directors, our new 2020-2024 Strategic Plan has been approved. The new Plan includes goals for facilitating staff excellence and professional growth, maintaining and developing fiscal resources, investing in critical infrastructure, reinforcing a healthy organizational culture, and setting new directions for program growth. Please continue to read through our newsletter and share in the success that you have helped us bring to more than 5,000 individuals in our programs across Westchester, Rockland, the Bronx and East Harlem. I’m so excited for all that 2020 has in store for us… I hope you are too.

Ways to Give

Cardinal McCloskey Community Services is known for providing the highest quality and compassionate care through its programs and services. To maintain these standards, we seek private philanthropy to help meet these costs. A tax-deductible donation can be made by check or credit card. Please also consider giving to CMCS through:

**Check:** Please make your check payable to Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and mail it to us in the enclosed envelope.

**Credit Cards:** We accept American Express, Visa, MasterCard, and Discover. Please fill out the enclosed envelope, contact us by phone, or visit our secure website: www.cmcs.org

**Matching Gifts:** You can double your gift to CMCS if you or your spouse work for an organization with a Matching Gift Program.

**Planned Giving:** A Planned Gift is your commitment to the future of Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and demonstrates your lasting legacy to our mission.

**Bequest:** You can leave a bequest to CMCS in your will or trust. A donation through your will or trust is fully tax-deductible and enables us to provide critical assistance to those in our care.

**Real-Estate:** Gifts of personal residence can be made for an immediate income tax deduction. Or, with a retained life estate, the donor or designee can live in their home for the rest of their life. After that time, the real estate is owned outright by CMCS, without the complications of probate proceedings. This gift allows the donor to receive current income deductions for the discounted value of the property.

**Securities:** You can avoid capital gains tax on securities held long-term and provide an income tax deduction equal to the fair market value at the date of transfer. To transfer securities to CMCS, please contact Kerry Gutekunst at (914 997-8000 ext. 114 or kgutekunst@cmcs.org. Please consult with your tax advisor.

Thank You for your continued support.
We could not fulfill our mission without your help!
The atmosphere was full of energy, holiday spirit, and a desire to help with the joy that continued throughout the holiday season. The 2019 CMCS Holiday Toy Drive served almost 5,000 individuals this year – a true testament to our many, devoted donors. In addition to the joy it brought to our children and families, it put a smile on the face of every CMCS staff member, and volunteer from local parishes, schools, and organizations who assisted in the event. We are so grateful for the generosity of everyone who donated gifts and those who gave their time to help organize and run the drive.

Days were spent unloading boxes of donations and assisting staff members in picking out just the right gift for the individuals in our programs to open on Christmas morning, while seasonal music played and hot chocolate was enjoyed. Whether it was a warm pair of pajamas, a new toy, book, or art set, there was something special for every one of the individuals in all of CMCS’ programs.

The CMCS Toy Drive wouldn’t have been nearly as successful without the support and generosity of countless individuals. Whether you donated an individual item or hundreds, we are truly grateful. The holiday season is a difficult time for many of those in our care and to have someone give from the heart to brighten up their day is an act of love and kindness that they are blessed and thankful to receive. Thank you, we’re already looking ahead to the next event!

A special thank you to GHP Office Realty for once again donating the use of the space, rent-free, within the Valhalla office building. We would also like to thank our army of volunteers who gave countless hours to assist in every aspect of the toy drive but especially members of our Supported Employment Program, People’s Bank and Enterprise Fleet Management. You have the gratitude of everyone at CMCS and that of all those we serve.
**Donor Reception**

In December 2019, CMCS held their traditional holiday party at X2O in Yonkers, as a thank you to all of our donors. While dining and partaking in the exquisite food and drink courtesy of Peter Kelly and his staff, everyone in attendance was able to relax and enjoy a wonderful waterfront view.

During the evening Beth Finnerty, President & CEO of Cardinal McCloskey, addressed the room to share her appreciation and thanks on behalf of the agency. The donations received throughout the year are integral to the agency’s ability to provide programs and services to those in our care. Beth also took the opportunity to share some of the agency successes and program developments of the past year, most notably the opening of our new location, Heritage Hall in Ossining. As the evening came to a close, each donor received their parting “thank you” token of appreciation and were wished a hearty, “Happy Holidays”!

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**Introducing New Friends To CMCS**

Our Young Professionals Networking Committee held the third meet & greet, “Friends of CMCS” Cocktail Party on March 5th at Abbey Tavern in Manhattan. It was a fun night and an opportunity for young professionals who previously did not know about CMCS to be introduced to the mission, vision and values of Cardinal McCloskey Community Services.

While there was plenty of time to enjoy the pub faire of Abbey Tavern, the group did take pause to hear Committee Chair and CMCS Board Member, Elizabeth Houghton, speak about why she is so committed to helping CMCS continue the work they do. She then introduced committee member, Grace Lawton, who expressed how grateful she is to CMCS for all the care they have provided her brother and that CMCS truly “saved his life.” Grace’s brother, Jack, is autistic and resides and is cared for in one of our residential group homes.

When the event was nearing the end, it was time to pull raffle tickets sold throughout the night. Raffle prizes were all donated by the committee and Abbey Tavern. Raffle prizes included NBA Basketball Game Tickets, Spa Baskets, Cycling Classes and more.

We are so thankful to the Networking Committee: Elizabeth Houghton, Victoria Grossman, Andrew LaGreca, Grace Lawton, Tamara Linde, Molly Turner, Matthew Ursillo, Hannah and J.J. Woolley for the new friends they brought to the event and for their awesome commitment to CMCS. We would also like to thank Abbey Tavern for the great food and delightful service. We look forward to future opportunities to network, make new friends and enjoy a night to “meet and greet.”
Cardinal McCloskey Community Services 12th Annual Golf Outing & Dinner was held at Leewood Golf Club on Monday, September 16th. The event was superbly hosted by CMCS Board Member and Tournament Sponsor, John McCombe. Over $220,000 was raised to support the life-changing programs of CMCS. We are so appreciative of the incredible generosity of our friends and sponsors. More than 100 golfers enjoyed brunch before a noon shotgun start.

After a great day on the course, followed by cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, guests proceeded into the dining room where John McCombe introduced our guest speaker, Sabrina Pichardo. Sabrina shared her story of the many difficulties she experienced from the day she was born. At the age of 14, after several foster care placements, Sabrina arrived at Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and lived at the Tappan Group Home. She spoke to the guests about the change in her life that came by residing at the Tappan Group Home. Sabrina expressed how she flourished there at that she finally felt like part of a family. These were the closing words of her speech, “My husband and I now have three children, and I am living my best life. I promised myself that my children would never end up in the foster care system, and it is the values I learned at Tappan that ensured that would never happen. Thank you, Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and Karen and Ron Presha, for raising me right.” Sabrina’s heartfelt speech entirely moved everyone in attendance, and she received a standing ovation.

Next up for the evening’s festivities was the live auction with John McCombe presiding over the bidding. This year’s auction was comprised of great prizes including dinner for 12 at Oceana, tickets to the Tony Award-Winning musical “Hadestown”, a private sailboat trip to The Statue of Liberty, and more.

The 2019 CMCS Golf & Dinner Honoree was CMCS’ very own Sister Marie Hess. Sister Marie received the 2019 CMCS Humanitarian Award for her years of dedication to our Preparing Youth for Adulthood Program, a program she started. Thousands of graduates of the program have gone off to live very successful lives due to Sister Marie’s tireless commitment to helping those in need. Thank you, Sister Marie!

Thank you to all of our sponsors and participants. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who made this year’s Golf Outing & Dinner such an enjoyable time for all. We look forward to seeing everyone back on the links on September 14th 2020!
Our Stars Continue to Shine

Kiana Gonzalez, Taking The Stage 2019 Co-Host

Kiana Gonzalez is a proud Bronx native. She identifies as a CODA (children of deaf adults) because she was born into the Deaf community with Deaf parents. Kiana graduated from the University of Vermont with a dual Bachelor’s degree in neuroscience and linguistics with a minor in communication sciences and disorders. Currently you can find her working at the United Nations with the department of disabilities or coaching gymnastics at Chelsea Piers Sports Center. While working in NYC, she is gratefully and humbly holding the title of Miss World America New York focused on educating and advocating for individuals with disabilities.
at Taking the Stage
Developmental Disability Services
Self-Advocacy Members Give to Red Cross

by Noreen O’Connor, Director of Day Habilitation Services

The Self Advocacy Association of New York State is an organization founded and led by individuals with developmental disabilities for people with developmental disabilities. The goal is to help self-advocates develop the skills and confidence to speak up for themselves and others. The organization promotes awareness and recognition of rights and responsibilities. The belief is that the power of the human voice can help make a better world for oneself and others. The Self Advocacy Association works toward positive social change while embracing the following values: honesty, choice, inclusion, respect, equality and freedom.

Our Day Hab individuals have formed a Self-Advocacy Group called the McCloskey Freedom Walkers. The group meets three Wednesdays a month. On the 4th Wednesday the group attends an interagency meeting. At this meeting Self Advocacy Groups from the Westchester Area meet and discuss upcoming events, topics of interest and community projects. Self-Advocacy topics include how to register to vote, how to speak up for oneself at meetings, how to find volunteer positions and competitive employment, how to resolve conflicts and how to pursue educational and recreational interests.

After hearing about Hurricane Dorian, the McCloskey Freedom Walkers wanted to help. The group decided to have a Bake Sale to raise money to donate to the Red Cross to be used for individuals affected by the hurricane. The Self Advocacy Group raised $165 at the Bake Sale. The group wanted to meet with someone from the Red Cross to discuss other ways they could help those in need.

Mary Davis, a representative from the Red Cross, came to speak with the group. When Mary arrived, the group members were eager to ask many questions and learn about the Red Cross mission. Mary explained that the Red Cross assists in many types of crises throughout the world. Mary expressed gratitude for the money the group had raised through the Bake Sale. She explained how important donations are as they enable the Red Cross to have the means to assist those affected by crises such as fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and other dangerous situations.

The members asked how they could be of assistance to the Red Cross through volunteer work. Mary explained to the group how they could get involved and would let us know when there are projects in our area.

Vice President of the McCloskey Freedom Walkers
Self Advocacy Group Elected

by Noreen O’Connor, Director of Day Habilitation Services

The Self Advocacy Association of New York State is an organization founded and led by people with developmental disabilities for people with developmental disabilities.

The Self Advocacy Association Board of Directors is made up of people with developmental or other disabilities. The Board Members speak up for the region in which they reside. They are the voice of those whom they represent. There are up to 18 Board Members from around New York State. The state is divided into six regions: Western, Central, Capital District, Hudson Valley, NYC and Long Island.

Board Members are elected by self-advocates. We are so happy to announce that Tamisha Martinez, the Vice President of the McCloskey Freedom Walkers Self Advocacy Group has been elected to represent the Hudson Valley Region. As a Board Member, Tamisha will have 3 core responsibilities: attend four 2-3 day meetings in Albany each year, represent her region by attending self-advocacy meetings to hear from self-advocates and speak at public events and attend regional and statewide events as scheduled.

We wish Tamisha success in her new role. We are so proud of her!
Foundation Grants

(received Aug 2019 – Jan 2020)

Thank you to our corporate, foundation and government grantors for their generous support of CMCS programs and projects:

The Strategies for Success Program, our educational advocacy and support program for youth in foster care, received grant funding from the Thomas & Agnes Carvel Foundation, the Hagedorn Fund, the George Link, Jr. Foundation, Inc., the Rosalie J. and C. Daniel Maldari Foundation, People’s United Community Foundation and the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation.

The McCloskey Cares Clinic received a first-time grant from the Rose Badgeley Charitable Trust for clinician training at Hayden House, our group home for youth in the Horizons of Hope Program, received grants from the Charles A. Mastronardi Foundation and St. Faith’s House Foundation.

Our Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) Program received a third grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters for the needs of youth in school or vocational programs.

Adoption Services received a renewal of the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids Grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to place children who are most likely to age out of foster care with adoptive families.

CMCS thanks all our funders for their partnership in supporting our response to critical unmet needs of the more than 5,000 families we serve.
Our Employee Corner

ELIZABETH RENDE-BAKSHI
Director of Foster Care Programs
by Elizabeth Rende-Bakshi

I started with Cardinal McCloskey Community Services (CMCS) in 2009 as a Supervisor in the Foster Boarding Home program. I transitioned into the Therapeutic program in 2012 as their Unit Supervisor. In 2013, I was promoted to the position of Adoption Coordinator. Once in this role, I was responsible for maintaining oversight of the Adoption Unit for both Family Foster Care and Treatment Family Foster Care. In 2015, I was promoted to Administrative Supervisor within the Treatment Family Foster Care program, in 2017 to Director of Care Management Services, in 2019 to Director of Homefinding and Intake. I am currently the Foster Care Program Director since September 2019.

During my tenure at CMCS, I was able to become certified as a trainer in several areas - DDI - a management series training for supervisors and administrators and MAPP - New York State’s comprehensive foster parent certification workshop. Additionally, I became a certified Field Instructor for social work students/interns who were pursuing their Masters in Social Work (MSW). I passed my LCSW exam, which has allowed me to continue my clinical assessment of our children and families both in the Foster Care programs as well as with our families being served by the Care Management program. My career trajectory has indeed come full circle, and I am thankful to the teams who have collaborated with me and for my supervisors who have helped to shape me into the leader, I am today.

ELIES ROSA
Administrative Director of Pre-K for All, Special Education and Special Initiatives
by Elsie Rosa

Since 2010, I have experienced working in different capacities in the Early Childhood Education Division (ECED) at CMCS as a Teacher, Education Director; Deputy Director; Administrative Director of Pre-K for All & Special Education Services and currently as a Senior Administrative Director of Program Quality and Support for the ECED at Cardinal McCloskey Community Services. In my spare time, I enjoy volunteering in various agency initiatives year-around, such as the Annual Toy Drive, Walkathon, Taking the Stage, Golf-Outing and supporting the commencement of the Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School.

My education started in a New York City Catholic School, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs. As a first-generation college graduate, I take pride in paying forward the Catholic Foundational Values instilled in me through my family and education as a child within the CMCS community.

In the Fall of 2019, I received the Meritorious Service Award at the Convening of Catholic Charities Federation Award Ceremony. It was an honor to be recognized for my outstanding work and long-term commitment to CMCS.

In 2010 I received a Master’s of Science for Teachers Degree in Childhood Education from Pace University and a Master’s of Science in Early Childhood Special Education Degree from Fordham University in 2016. Over the next few years, I am looking forward to completing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy from Fordham University.
**Becoming A Foster Parent**

by Bonnie Doran, Administrative Director of Children’s Services

Jamal Needs You! Change the Life of a Child by Becoming a Foster Parent!

Jamal is a young adult who has been in foster care since he was 10 years old. Jamal has a relationship with both his parents, but unfortunately he could not live with either of them due to their inability to care for him. Since being in foster care Jamal moved to several homes, until he was moved to Ms. Jacob’s foster home. Jamal finally found a foster mother and home that provided him with the guidance, nurturing and structure for him to be able to learn, grow and succeed. Ms. Jacob’s compassion, understanding and support provided stability and structure for Jamal as he was navigating through life and the struggles and trauma’s experienced due to being in foster care.

Cardinal McCloskey Community Services is in need of more loving, nurturing caring adults like Ms. Jacobs to provide compassion and care to youth in foster care. Our foster parents provide temporary care to children of all ages from infants through adolescents and of various ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. Adults who are committed to opening their hearts and homes to inspire, teach and support children in our foster care programs make the best foster parents. Our devoted staff will assist you through the process of becoming a foster parent and continue to support you throughout your foster parent journey of supporting and nurturing youth in foster care.

For additional information on becoming a foster parent for children in our Bronx programs please call 718-993-7700. For our Westchester program please call 914-620-5043.

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**Happy Valentine's Day From Concord!**

by Noelia Arias, Family Worker (ECED)

The Early Childhood Education Division has a strong Fatherhood component based on the 24:7 Dad National Fatherhood initiative. Each program site offers monthly male involvement events for Fathers (open to grandfathers, uncles, brothers, and stepfathers). The Concord staff focused on Valentine’s Day for their monthly fatherhood activity. Look at the smiles on their faces!

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**ECED & The Five Senses**

by Paula Belli, Education Director at Monsignor Boyle Head Start

At Monsignor Boyle, our two year olds are studying the five senses. As a fun activity, they learned how to make orange juice from fresh oranges. Although this specific activity focused on taste, the process of squeezing oranges helps the children to develop their muscles in their hands and fingers. The children enjoyed the process and the best part (if you asked them) was when they were finally able to drink the fruits of their labor!
Save the Date

POSTPONED

STEP UP FOR CMCS
AT THE 10TH ANNUAL WALKATHON
4/25/20

Save the Date

CMCS’ ANNUAL GOLF OUTING & DINNER
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2020

For more information, please visit www.cmcs.org
or contact the Philanthropy Office at (914) 997-8000, ext 114
or KGutekunst@cmcs.org