CHP 2019: Stepping Up, Stepping In

Sometimes it happens that “when you build it they will come.” Other times, a community need is already percolating and needing an individual or an organization to step in, to fill a void with services, funding or a partnership.

At Community Health Programs, our growth in the community in recent years has been just this: a series of responses to shifting challenges in our region’s healthcare and family services landscape. This year is no different, and it could be extraordinary for CHP, its patients and clients.

This month, CHP is expanding our dental care services to North Adams and extending some of our Family Services support programs into Dalton. And in a big move for our organization, we have begun to provide new or enhanced behavioral health services on-site, at five CHP practice locations while adding psychiatric supervision to oversee these new mental health clinicians.

In each instance, CHP is acting to mitigate risks to our neighbors’ physical health, or we are responding to a pressing need for behavioral health services among our very own patients, or a shortage of family support services and food security in Central Berkshire and its hill-towns.

CHP’s history is filled with such responses to community need: medical practices seeking to partner with us for business reasons, or bringing medical care back to North Adams following the closure of the city’s hospital, or taking over management of the dental residency program in Pittsfield at Neighborhood Dental Center.

This kind of action is the essence of more than 1,400 community health centers around the nation. This kind of “whole person, whole community” approach is at the core of our mission. Increasingly, we are learning that there is no need to built it and hope that people will come.

What’s needed is to listen to our neighbors, look at the shifting voids in corners of the Berkshires, and ask, “what can we do to answer the healthcare and well-being needs of our community?”

Thank you for supporting our journey in answering the needs of our community.

Lia Spiliotes, CEO
Donor Spotlight

Kids First: Nick Boraski’s Gift Brings Behavioral Health Services to Pediatric Patients and Families

With their three children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren launched and making big marks in the world, Nicholas Boraski and his late wife Ruth were always mindful of other people’s children, those less fortunate, those with limited access to opportunity, health and education.

The Boraski generosity has touched numerous local organizations serving children. Their scholarships have helped educate dozens of students at Berkshire Community College and beyond.

With Ruth’s passing eight years ago, Nick has carried on their shared commitment to children. The bottom line for Nick: Every child deserves an equal start in the world.

Now, Nick has stepped up as a leader for Community Health Programs, with a gift enabling CHP Berkshire Pediatrics to bring mental health services to its young patients. Berkshire Pediatrics, serving 12,000 patients, was the first in line as CHP began expanding its behavioral health services at several practice locations.

Nick’s interest is in serving the children first. His influence inspired others to give as well.

“One thing that always bothers me is that some kids just don’t get the early benefits that others do, but they all deserve equal and proper attention from birth, for their physical and emotional health,” said Nick. “CHP is reaching into the whole county and making it easier for people to get healthcare.”

Nick is a retired GE executive, World War II navy veteran and son of immigrants. It was education, however, that changed his life. He attended college on the GI Bill and was lit up with a new awareness of his potential and smarts. A mechanical engineer, he spent 38 years at GE, rising in the ranks. (cont’d next page)

Mission Moment

In 2018, Corrie (name changed for privacy) moved to the Berkshires. She wanted to be closer to her family, get a fresh start, and build a foundation for her new life as a single parent to her young daughter.

Corrie learned about CHP from her sister, who lives locally. When her sister’s kids were little they would come to playgroups, use the clothing exchange, and were patients of CHP physicians. Corrie wanted the same healthy outlook to life, as her sister had with her own family.

Starting off slowly, Corrie and her daughter attended a playgroup together. There, Corrie met other parents who, with the support of the Family Services team, encouraged Corrie to attend a parent workshop and sign up for WIC. Corrie says, “There are a great mix of people who my daughter and I meet at events and playgroups. The staff is welcoming and feel like an extended family to me.”

Today, Corrie and her daughter participate in playgroups and parent workshops, they receive services through ParentChild+ and WIC, and have become patients of CHC, BOG and GB Dental. They are taking in the full realm of all that CHP has to offer, and are truly working toward good foundational health for both parent and child.

“As a single mom, CHP Family Services has provided much of the support I needed. I feel good about the parent that I am to my daughter. With help, I work to be a better parent and provider for her. My daughter is headed to nursery school in the fall and I have plans to continue my own schooling at BCC. These are the steps for our small family to have a happy, healthy future. CHP has been there for me.”
**CHP’s mission is to improve the health of people throughout the Berkshires by delivering exceptional, compassionate health care. As a federally qualified health center, we care for patients and work with families whose needs are not always reimbursed by health insurance. Your support matters. Please donate today at www.chpberkshires.org/donate/**

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## Breakfast with Lia

Getting employees and top management together in a casual setting can foster understanding and improve communications.

To bolster employee relations and create a two-way flow of ideas and respect, Lia Spiliotes, CEO, has started a “Breakfast with Lia” series giving employees the opportunity to interact with her in a casual setting.

“I really look forward to listening to what our front line staff have to say.

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## Creative Thinking

Plaskolite is a leader in the plastics industry. "Within this team is a remarkable spirit of cooperation, loyalty, decency, hard work, boldness and unselfishness. This attitude has permeated through the rest of the workforce and is the true reason why Plaskolite is poised to remain the industry leader in the years ahead" This quote from their website highlights the generous spirit of their employees. According to Cindy Race, Marketing Manager in Sheffield, when the time came to replace the reception area furniture, they wondered if there was a way to help others. In a unique move - they held an employee auction for the furnishings - all proceeds toward the auction went to Project Milk, (CHP’s emergency food program). The employees took home some great furniture, Plaskolite had a clear lobby to refurbish, and their employees gained a sense of awareness of CHP in the community and how their simple actions can help others.

**If you have an innovative donation idea, contact Betsy Strickler today at bstrickler@chpberkshires.org.**

**Maybe we’ll feature your unique idea in our next CHP News!**

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I wanted to thank you all so, so much for overwhelming warmth generosity and support that you all offered. Those play groups were such a saving grace; an incredible resource of community, playtime, kindness, humor and general good cheer. It was a stressful time for us and my daughter relished going to playgroups, LOVED Jenny and still sings the songs she learned there (as well as the hand gestures!) I can’t thank you all enough for what you do.

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**Annual Consignment Sale**

**May 18th  9:00am - 2:00pm**

**May 19th  9:00am - Noon**

**CHP Main Campus**

444 Stockbridge Rd, Gt Barrington

**Volunteers still needed. 413-528-0457**

We thank our sponsor partner

**The Children’s Attic**

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(boraski cont’d)

Knowing how education changed his own life, he strove to make sure his children had it, and then that other people’s children could have it too – thus the scholarship gifts. Education and health, he believes, are the two key building blocks children need to rise out of poverty, discover their potential and venture into the world. As for his gift to CHP, Nick -- now in his 90s -- has just one wish: “I want to see kids get medical care from Day 1, physical and emotional care, with no exceptions. You want to improve the lives of children, you take care of them.”

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Steps Forward: CHP Answers Behavioral Health Need With Expanded Staffing & Supervision


If these seem like challenges for mental health professionals, they are. Patients often reveal such troubles during visits with their primary care provider. A prior partnership with the Brien Center provided some on-site support for our patients, but Community Health Programs had no behavioral health staff of its own until now.

“By adding behavioral health professionals to our CHP network, we can enhance on-site behavioral health support that is so deeply needed in our community,” said Lia Spiliotes, CHP’s CEO. “We are fortunate to have recruited excellent professionals to answer this growing need.”

This spring, we have begun to grow our behavioral health services at several practice locations. This team includes four skilled, experienced licensed clinical social workers and a supervising psychiatrist, Dr. Leslie Fishbein.

“Berkshire County has a dearth of behavioral health professionals who can prescribe and manage medication, in addition to providing psychotherapy services. My hope is that this initial program will eventually grow into a more comprehensive behavioral health service.” ~ Dr. Fishbein

Three generous gifts, from Nicholas Boraski of Pittsfield, Greylock Federal Credit Union, and Berkshire United