



Child Welfare & Supportive Housing

RESOURCE CENTER



Family Stories



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Five grantees, representing over 65 public and private partnerships nationwide, are implementing family supportive housing, most for the first time. Behavioral health, public housing, family court, local child welfare agencies, homeless shelters and others are working across systems, sharing resources and expertise with the goal of providing supportive housing to nearly 500 of

Intensive Supportive Housing for Families
Connecticut

Families Succeeding

Like many of the cases we see, Joy is a young mother whose toddler son was removed from her custody because her parenting and ability to

our most vulnerable children and families by 2017. Here are some of the family stories that reflect the very personal side of the progress they have made to date.



Families Motivated

Families Moving Forward is a strong partnership of key organizations under the facilitation of the San Francisco Human Services Agency. As of September 2014, twenty nine (29) homeless families have been enrolled into the demonstration to receive supportive housing and are actively engaged by San Francisco's Families Moving Forward Team. Twenty seven (27) families have been accepted into the control group. Five (5) treatment families have entered into permanent housing with a lease. One of those families is headed by Debbie, who had been homeless while hooked on illegal drugs. She grew up with an abusive father and had been in and out of foster care placement -- and then on the streets at 16 years old. Debbie did whatever she had to do to survive. When she was placed into the Families Moving Forward initiative, everything about her life was her children and keeping them

keep her child safe was affected by her substance use. To regain custody of her son, she entered a residential substance abuse treatment program and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) placed her son with a relative. At the time Joy was referred to Connecticut's Intensive Supportive Housing for Families (ISHF), she had been in the treatment program for three months and DCF had allowed her child to be placed (but not officially reunified) with her in the program. ISHF immediately began searching for an apartment and Joy was allowed to leave the treatment program during the day to participate in the housing search. ISHF also worked with the treatment program extending Joy's stay while a housing voucher was secured and an apartment was leased. This enabled the family to move directly from the residential treatment program to an apartment, minimizing any further trauma or disruption to the family. The family entered ISHF with significant strengths. Joy had a circle of support consisting of immediate family and her son's paternal family members. Joy had already secured a high school diploma and completed some college courses. ISHF has now been working with Joy for about six months. In that time, she has become employed part-time as a waitress, participates in relapse

with her and out of foster care homes. She did not want them to experience the trauma she had lived through as a young girl. Debbie's case-manager helped her research housing options, fill out applications, and took her through the housing process. Because of the extensive supportive housing network surrounding her and her family, she entered a substance use treatment program and has been clean for several months. Right now, she's almost finished with her AA degree in medical assisting while interning at a local doctor's office and her goal is to become a registered nurse. Debbie is so grateful to Families Moving Forward for helping her through her struggles. Her kids keep her going and motivate her to achieve higher goals. She wants everything to be stable for them, and that means going to school near a real home. Debbie wants to be able to give her kids the life she never had as a child.



prevention therapy and a methadone outpatient clinic, and receives in-home parenting guidance through the local Triple P provider. DCF officially reunified her and her son, and then shortly thereafter closed her child welfare case because she had completed residential treatment, her child was safe and she would be receiving services from ISHF. While the DCF case was open, the DCF and ISHF case managers made several joint visits with Joy and ISHF service plan was supportive of the DCF plan and requirements. There was also frequent communication between the ISHF case manager and the DCF worker between visits to ensure collaboration. The case manager has worked with the client on locating and utilizing community resources and increasing Joy's natural support network of people who support her sobriety. In addition, Joy's case manager is helping her with budgeting and teaching Joy to advocate for herself with property management when issues arise with her unit. Joy's son was initially reserved but since moving into the apartment and having his own room, he has blossomed. His mother is applying the parenting skills she has learned using appropriate discipline and re-directing behaviors. Joy's circle of support helps with child care while she works and participates in her

Families Resilient

Valerie is a single mother of 5 beautiful children. She came into the HEART Alliance program with nowhere to sleep but in her car. Valerie was trying to find a steady job while keeping her children in school and dealing with behavioral issues and the hospitalization of two of her children. Initially resistant to services and interaction with the HEART Alliance, she eventually became more receptive to any support the HEART Alliance had to offer as the caring staff earned her trust.

Valerie was able to obtain all of her documentation for her housing voucher and she finally received it after obtaining valuable guidance from her case manager. With voucher in hand, she found a beautiful three bedroom town house and completed all the necessary paperwork on her own. Valerie also was able to access appropriate services through her children's school to meet their needs. Valerie is in the process of returning to school herself to become a home-health aid so that she can assist others in need.

Valerie is a resilient champion of the HEART Alliance who is willing to fight for what she believes in, and work towards maintaining a healthy and safe environment for her children.

continued recovery activities. Joy is now in a position where she wants to "give back" and help her family members who are currently not doing well and she is even considering returning to college.



Memphis Strong Families Memphis, TN

Families Overcoming

Hope was homeless at the time she was enrolled into the Memphis Strong Families Initiative (MSFI) last year. She had been incarcerated at the Shelby County Division of Corrections for 19 months on charges ranging from identity theft to Driving under the Influence. During Hope's incarceration, she was housed in the Mental Health Unit and diagnosed with manic depressive disorder. Her children - Faith and James - resided with Hope's adult cousin. It is alleged that during the time Faith stayed with the cousin, she was raped by an 18 year old young man who lived down



the street. Although the cousin was Faith's guardian, she failed to notify police and in fact taunted the victim and her family about the sexual assault. As a result, Faith is still suffering to this day from the trauma of sexual abuse. Since Faith and James did not have much structure in their cousin's home, they became accustomed to doing whatever they wanted, which made for a difficult transition when Hope was released from incarceration. An altercation between Hope and Faith over a school dress-code issue resulted in a report from school officials and a child protective services investigation. The child welfare agency has put intensive in-home services in place to help Hope and Faith form a stronger, aggression-free relationship. Faith's behavior both in school and at home has improved. In fact, she is maintaining honor roll status. Both mother and daughter are receiving mental health services toward recovery.

**Partners United for
Supportive Housing
Cedar Rapids**
Iowa

Families Innovating

PUSH-CR is implementing a modified version of Family Critical Time Intervention (FCTI). FCTI is a "time-

limited intervention designed to provide homeless families headed by a mother with a mental illness with transitional housing, continuity and focus of care, and service linkages during their transition from shelter to permanent housing in the community.”[1] In Cedar Rapids, PUSH is implementing a three-phase CTI program with each phase being approximately 4 months long (rather than the tested three phases, 3-month model). The intervention design decreases the intensity of the supportive care management over the twelve-month period while working with the family to increase its connectedness and community resources.

One family’s story serves to illustrate this approach.

In the first two phases of family engagement, approximately nine months, the PUSH-CR Service Coordinator and family focused on identifying needs and goals such as stability and self-sufficiency. Following initial assessments in the first few weeks after the family had been housed in an apartment; a Service Plan was developed with the family and shared in a Family Team Meeting. Over the course of the nine months, on-going Family Team Meetings (with the family and including community supports and the Department of Human Services) helped this mother stay on track and stay motivated. The Service Coordinator supported this family with addressing mental health and substance abuse treatment needs as well as supporting continuing efforts to close the family’s child welfare case. The mother made

significant progress within the first two CTI phases (8 months). The Service Coordinators continue to work with the mother on reunification with her children. She is now nearly halfway through the third and final phase of CTI. In this final phase, the current focus is on maintaining housing stability while focusing on reunification with her children and closing the family's child welfare case. She is enrolled in vocational training at the partnering Community College and working on gaining long term employment through the program. She is using the skills gained in the first two CTI phases to successfully engage community supports independently. She is very proud of her accomplishments!

As PUSH-CR approaches its one-year anniversary and an increasing number of families have entered the final service phase, it has learned a good deal about implementing this approach and has added a family progress measurement system to better guide decision making about moving families from one phase to the next.

[1] Samuels, Judith, et. al., Homeless Families Program Final Report: Homeless Families in Westchester County, N.Y.
