

# Bright Horizons

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~ Noelle

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## Summer 2023

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# Life-Changing Support

“I never thought I’d find myself in this kind of relationship at the age of 30. I started dating my boyfriend a few months after my divorce. Things were great at first, but the relationship quickly turned into a dangerous situation. I knew I had to leave before things got any worse.

In early March, I found myself at The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services where they provided me a safe haven in their shelter. Even though it was extremely difficult for me, I decided to leave my daughter with my ex-husband. I did not want her to be exposed to the hardships of living in a shelter.

Fortunately, throughout my time in the shelter, I was able to regularly see my daughter. Although there were many struggles during my stay, I found the help I needed to put the trauma and violence behind me and move forward.

I participated in domestic violence counseling which helped me work through my past trauma and develop coping skills. The staff helped me with housing applications and applying for assistance through the Department of Social Services. I was also able to find a job while I was at the shelter. That, along with the part-time job I already had, allowed me to save money for my own place.

I found an apartment a few weeks ago. The Umbrella Center paid the first month’s rent and security deposit. I’m in a safe place and can now provide for me and my daughter. I am getting better each day and continue to receive counseling which is helping me in my healing journey. The assistance I received from The Umbrella Center was immense and truly life-changing. I will never forget all they did for me.”

~ Noelle



*YOUR donation provides shelter, counseling, case management and other supports for victims to escape violent relationships.*

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## APW Testimony Secures JUUL Settlement Funds

Attorney General William Tong and representatives from BHcare’s Alliance for Prevention and Wellness, submitted testimony calling for funds received through the \$438.5 million multistate vaping settlement with JUUL to be directed to Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs) to combat youth vaping and nicotine use. Connecticut is due to receive approximately \$16 million through the settlement, which is to be used for cessation, prevention and mitigation.

“JUUL’s device was designed to be attractive to youth with it looking like a gadget and discreet to be able to JUUL anyplace. Their patented system uses a vaporized nicotine salt for faster absorption and a more powerful hit with fun flavors. The nicotine levels are three times higher than allowed in the European Union. These factors contributed to an increase in youth vaping and created nicotine addiction in youth along with a culture of Juuling/vaping as the norm.

The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated that 27 percent of youth in Connecticut are 30-day users of vaping products. RBHAOs, and the local prevention councils they fund, have been on the front lines of the teen vaping epidemic in our schools and communities, working to implement the same strategies that reduced youth smoking decades ago. From implementing anti-vaping curricula, to educating parents to changing perceptions and behavior among users and enacting local ordinances to control marketing to kids – we have undertaken these efforts on a shoestring.

The funds from the JUUL settlement will enable organizations to implement a science-based, consistent, coordinated strategy that integrates across communities and across the state. Vaping is a significant public health problem with lifelong consequences for our kids and young people and these JUUL settlement dollars represent a unique opportunity to address the vaping crisis in a holistic way.”

~ Pam Mautte, Director of Alliance for Prevention and Wellness.



*YOUR support is helping to protect our youth and creating healthy future generations.*

## A Positive Outlook

“Nine months ago, I ended up in the hospital with liver issues due to drinking and abusing painkillers.

I retired as Juvenile Parole Officer from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) after 25 stellar years. After my retirement, I created the Youth Behavioral Specialist position in a local school district. I was injured at work and needed neck surgery. While I was recovering, I was laid off. That’s when the real issues started showing themselves. This, along with Covid, made me feel isolated and alone which led to anxiety, depression and the abuse of painkillers and Lorazepam. I was self-medicating and drinking just to get through the day. I had lost my identity and structure. I didn’t recognize myself.

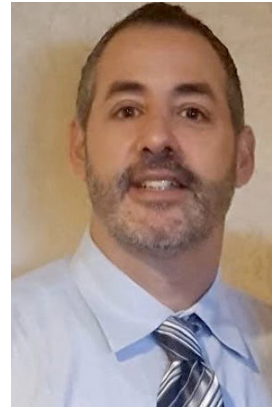
The hospital stay was a wake-up call, and I quit drinking and abusing painkillers cold turkey. The social worker at the hospital referred me to BH*care*. I was a little reluctant at first because I had been clean and sober for a couple of weeks, but I thought I’d give it a shot.

I immediately clicked with the staff and felt comfortable. They gave me the tools and skills I needed to get back to who I was 30 years ago. I learned about mindfulness and journaling, how to express myself and to be more patient. Everyone was professional and the support came at the perfect time in my life. The staff listened to me and helped me more than anyone knows.

It was also extremely helpful to be in a group setting with others who were experiencing some of the same issues. I could speak and not be judged. I disclosed everything about my life, and it felt like a heavy weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Often, I would answer questions about DCF processes and regulations asked by other group members. Being able to help them gave me a positive outlook on life and I knew was here for a reason.

I am truly grateful for all BH*care* has done for me. Their support, along with the support of my family and friends has turned my life around. I honestly feel that they saved my life.”

~ Danny



*YOUR gift is helping clients like Danny, reclaim their lives and find purpose.*

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## Gaining Independence

“My daughter, Brianna, began services at the Parent Child Resource Center when she was 11 years old. Following the pandemic, she had significant difficulty with anxiety which impacted her ability to attend school regularly, independently go into the community and be around large groups. We were very concerned because she was having panic attacks due to her anxiety.

Brianna began participating in outpatient therapy and started learning tools to improve her ability to cope with anxious thoughts. She was able to develop appropriate coping skills and began going into the community independently to gain confidence. As treatment progressed, Brianna was able to go into stores without me, order for herself at a restaurant and had improved eye contact with individuals. She was also able to attend her school’s football games. Her clinician showed my husband and me appropriate ways to support Brianna in difficult situations.

As she turned 12, her school attendance improved, and she made stronger connections with peers. Brianna was able to meet her treatment goals and was discharged from services. We were so pleased with her progress, especially her improved ability to cope with stressful situations and be more independent. Brianna now has healthier coping mechanisms and confidence in her ability to manage future anxiety-provoking situations.”

~ Brianna’s mom



*Because of YOUR generosity, children and families are receiving services needed to cope with the aftereffects of the pandemic.*

# How We're Helping

"The Guilford Community Fund (GCF) has been supporting BHcare's mental health and domestic violence programs for many years. I've been on the board since 2015 and from then until today, the fund has given over \$74,000 to BHcare.

GCF supports nonprofits that serve Guilford residents in need. Most of our money is raised during our annual appeal where we ask the Guilford community to donate to the charities we support. We currently support 22 local nonprofit agencies.

Our all-volunteer board meets regularly with member organizations to review their impact in the Guilford community. Since our overhead expenses are at a minimum, 100 percent of the funds we raise go straight to helping the nonprofits of Guilford.

Even though funding was a bit down this past year, GCF was still able to present a check for \$7,000 to BHcare."

~ Mark Jenusaitis, Treasurer, Guilford Community Fund



Emily Granelli, Chief Business Development Officer, BHcare and Mark Jenusaitis, Treasurer, Guilford Community Fund

## How You Can Help

You can help a child start the school year on a positive note by being a Back-to-School hero. This year, with your help, we will provide backpacks and school supplies to the children served by BHcare programs and services, including the Parent Child Resource Center, Domestic Violence Services and our Supportive Housing program.

Children who need more than supplies will receive a complete head-to-toe outfit for their first day of school. This includes pants, shirts, socks, a jacket or winter coat and a pair of shoes. For more details, please contact Melissa Simoni at (203) 446-9739 ext. 1327 or [msimoni@BHcare.org](mailto:msimoni@BHcare.org).



Valerie Abenante Brower, President, Seymour Lions Club and Melissa Simoni, Development Coordinator, BHcare

BHcare is supported by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Katharine Matthies Foundation, the Guilford Community Fund, the Guilford Human Services Council, The Valley United Way, United Way of Milford, SAMHSA, Henry Nias Foundation, US Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Towns of Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven and Woodbridge.

BHcare is accredited by the The Joint Commission and is licensed by the Department of Public Health and the Department of Children and Families.

BHcare is a partner agency of CommuniCare, Inc. An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

*We apologize for any omissions or oversights. If your department, foundation or municipality has been overlooked, please bring it to our attention.*



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