

# Bright Horizons

BHcare Winter 2026 Newsletter

## JAMES

“After everything he’s been through, seeing him smile and try his best means everything to me.”

~ James’ Grandmother

**James has been living with me since he was three years old.** He’s ten now, and he lives with me and his big sister. He’s a good boy with a big heart, but he’s been through more than any child should ever have to go through.

Before James came to live with me, there was a lot going on in his life. **Too much yelling, too much trouble and too many things no little boy should have seen.** His father passed away from drugs, and his mother struggled for a long time. James saw violence and fear, and it stayed with him. I could see it in the way he got angry so fast and didn’t know how to calm himself down.

At home and at school, James had a hard time controlling his emotions. He would act out, get physical and say scary things when he was upset. We tried different programs and hospital visits, but it never seemed to last. It felt like we were always starting over, and it was exhausting for both of us.

When James started getting help at school in 2025, through **BHcare's Parent Child Resource Center**, things slowly began to change. It helped that he didn't have to go somewhere new or miss time because of rides or schedules. At first, he didn't want to talk about his past at all. He would shut down or get mad, and I didn't push him. I just wanted him to learn how to handle his anger better.

Over time, I started to see progress. James is learning how to talk about his feelings instead of blowing up. He's getting better at noticing what makes him upset and using what he's been taught to calm himself down. **Having someone see him every week has made a big difference.** He feels safer, and that's helped him open up.

James still has work to do, but he's doing better than he was before. He keeps going to his school-based sessions every week and takes his medication, and I can see the changes. **I'm proud of him every day.** After everything he's been through, it means so much to see him smiling more and trying his best.

~ James' Grandmother

## Community Action That Saves Lives

Motivated by their work with Yale Emergency Medical Services, Gabi Gutierrez and Marco Guzman witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of accidental overdoses in New Haven. These experiences inspired them to take action beyond emergency response and focus on prevention. Recognizing the critical need to increase bystander access to naloxone, they set out to develop a community-based project that would **empower residents with the tools and confidence to save lives.**



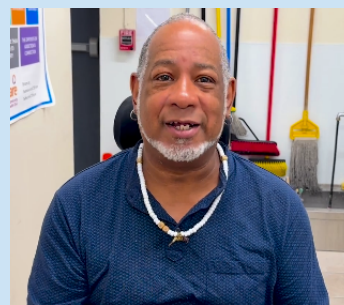
Several months ago, Gabi reached out to **BHcare's Alliance for Prevention and Wellness (APW)** seeking guidance and support to bring this vision to life. Following conversations with **APW Prevention Manager Lorrie McFarland**, it became clear that a collaborative approach would allow the initiative to reach more community members. Through this partnership, Gabi and Marco received training support using APW's evidence-based curriculum, assistance with scheduling and promoting community trainings, and access to no-cost Narcan kits.

Gabi and Marco have proven to be exceptional young adult facilitators, bringing compassion, empathy and professionalism to their work with community residents. To date, two community-based trainings held in New Haven have resulted in more than **50 individuals being trained** in the administration of Narcan. These sessions not only provided critical life-saving education but also fostered meaningful conversations around substance use, safety and stigma.

The impact of this partnership continues to grow. Interest in the Community Narcan Training Program has increased, with additional requests already being received for future training events. This collaboration between **APW and the Global Shapers Community – New Haven Hub demonstrates the power of prevention-focused partnerships and the meaningful difference** that can be made when emerging leaders and community organizations work together **to protect and strengthen our communities.**

## A Place Where I Finally Belong

Life was not good for a long time. **I struggled with drug use, legal problems and even homelessness.** When I moved into an apartment in Ansonia, **I began using BHcare services, and everything started to change.**



The staff helped me overcome my drug use and work through my legal issues. My caseworker supported me when I couldn't make rent and helped me get food when money was tight. With their care and guidance, **I began to feel stable again.**

Even as I improved, I still felt alone. That's when I was referred to the Valley Social Club. At first, I kept to myself, **but I was welcomed with open arms.** The warmth and kindness there helped me open up and feel at home.

Painting is something I love, and at the club I not only get to create, but also help others with their art. It gives me purpose and joy. I still rely on the staff for guidance and support, **knowing I'm never alone.**

**Being part of this community feels like having the family I never had.** My heart has opened, and I am finally enjoying life in a way I once thought was impossible.

~ Robert

## A Journey Towards Healing

"I am profoundly grateful for the support I received from **The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services** during one of the most challenging periods of my life. My daughter and I experienced homelessness after fleeing an abusive home, and I felt overwhelmed and uncertain about our future. From the moment we arrived, **The Umbrella Center provided safety, compassion and hope.** Colleen became a steady source of guidance and encouragement, reminding me that I was not alone.



With The Umbrella Center's support, **I was able to rebuild my life step by step.** I secured employment within weeks of arriving at the shelter, and through their rapid rehousing services, my daughter and I moved into a safe, stable home close to her school and my work. The emotional encouragement from the staff empowered me to pursue and complete my Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. **This achievement marked my journey from survival to self-confidence.**

Today, I work as a Milieu Counselor at Yale and was promoted to Milieu Counselor II in September. This success would not have been possible without the foundation The Umbrella Center helped me build. **They guided me from homelessness to stability, from fear to hope and from crisis to opportunity.** I will always be grateful for their belief in me and for showing me a path toward a brighter future."

~ Linda

## Save the Date: June 6 at Quarry Walk in Oxford

### A Chance to Shine

Mark your calendar for **June 6** and join us at **Quarry Walk in Oxford** for **A Chance to Shine**, BHcare's signature annual fundraising event that brings our community together for a day of purpose, connection and impact.



This annual fundraising event is more than a celebration. It's an opportunity to **shine a light on hope, healing and resilience**, and to raise vital funds that support the children, adults, and families who rely on BHcare's services every day.

### Why Your Involvement Matters

Because of generous supporters like you, BHcare is able to provide comprehensive behavioral health, prevention and domestic violence services that improve lives and strengthen our communities. Funds raised through **A Chance to Shine** directly support these critical programs that help thousands of individuals find stability, safety and a path forward.

### Ways You Can Get Involved

There are many meaningful ways to be part of this special event:

- ★ **Attend** and enjoy an inspiring afternoon with friends and community partners
- ★ **Sponsor** the event and showcase your commitment to community well-being
- ★ **Donate** to help make our mission possible
- ★ **Join the A Chance to Shine Committee** and play a role in planning and outreach
- ★ **Volunteer** your time and talents to help bring the event to life
- ★ **Spread the word** by inviting friends, family and colleagues to join us

Whether you have time to give, ideas to share or connections to offer, your involvement makes a meaningful difference.

### Join Us and Help Others Shine

When you get involved in **A Chance to Shine**, you're doing more than supporting an event, you're investing in hope, healing and brighter futures for those who need it most.

We invite you to stand with us, lend your talents and help our community shine. If you are interested in getting involved, please email [development@bhcare.org](mailto:development@bhcare.org).

*Together, we can make a difference.*

***[achancetoshinect.org](http://achancetoshinect.org)***

**Organizational Update:** BHcare Foundation will be dissolved, and all charitable activity will be consolidated under BHcare to streamline operations and strengthen alignment with our mission. BHcare remains a 501(c)(3), and all funds will continue to be managed in accordance with donor intent, with no changes to supported programs or reporting.



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**BHcare's funding sources can be found at [BHcare.org/giving/support-funding/](http://BHcare.org/giving/support-funding/).**