



# MRSS Newsletter: Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties

*Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen*

## COMFORT IN TIMES OF NEED



During the holidays there may be multiple underlying sources of stress for youth and families. This year in particular has been remarked as challenging by many individuals for various reasons. During the holiday season it is important our youth feel supported and have tools to cope.

Our Mobile Response program has been able to connect families to multiple community resources based on individualized family needs. MRSS has been able to partner with local agencies to provide families with sustainable resources that can positively impact youth's progress.

Recently MRSS partnered with The Pioneer Family Success Center of Somerville, to create

a MRSS Comfort Care Bag. The Comfort Care Bag is given to all youth who have a MRSS dispatch, while supplies last.

Comfort Care Bags include items to assist youth with coping mechanisms, such as art supplies for self expression, notebooks for journaling and stress balls for sensory related relief, along with other items. Incorporating healthy coping skills into daily routines may enhance social emotional skills. We believe that helping youth develop coping skills at an early age may decrease behavioral health challenges later on.

Coping skills can be introduced to youth by family, school community, or mental health specialist. Ultimately

through continued use of coping skills, adolescents should begin to utilize their coping tools independently so they are able to deal with obstacles or challenges in healthy ways.

*Please click on pictures for additional resources.*

By: Danielle Cromartie-Williams, LPC,  
Program Director



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## SUBSTANCE USE: HSW MRSS CRAFFT DATA

The CRAFFT is an efficient health screening tool designed to identify substance use, substance-related risk, and substance use disorder among youth ages 12-21.

Children's Mobile Response utilizes the CRAFFT tool with youth throughout the Tri-County area while on dispatch. If concerns around substance use arise, then families can be connected with a Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor for 8 weeks to

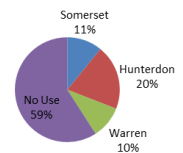
assist with counseling and linkage to further referrals as needed.

These two charts show our CRAFFT data for September 2020 through November 2020. We will continue to update you next quarter.

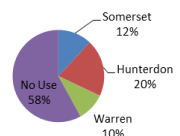
*Please click on pictures for additional resources.*

By: Gregor Thomas, Clinical Supervisor, LCSW

### Adolescent Alcohol Use



### Adolescent Marijuana Use



# PIONEER

Family Success Center

## COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS: PIONEER FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER

The Pioneer Family Success Center (FSC), was established in 2012 and was formally known as EmPoWer. Pioneer FSC is a community-based, family center where residents can go for family support. The Pioneer family success center offers various information and referral to services within the community.

Pioneer FSC connects families to helpful resources in Somerset County, NJ and brings families together through free events, programs & local activities. The agency mission of the FSC is to provide an environment to strengthen and em-

power individuals and families, and to build connections among families and the community. The FSC is conveniently located in downtown Somerville (50 Division Street).

FSC also has diverse staff, some bilingual, that work collaboratively with various community partners to bring together resources and activities into an integrated services system. The FSC provides monthly Family Fun Nights, offers workshops/trainings in parent education and life skills, makes referrals and links families/individuals to County and local re-

sources for food, clothing, housing, counseling, etc. Youth in 3rd-8th grade can get additional homework help virtually Mon – Thur 2:45pm-3:45pm.

Along with all the additional resources, FSC Director, Tim Wolf, also hosts a community work group of child serving agencies, looking for ways to meet the needs of 0-8 year olds in Somerset County.

By: Tim Wolf, Director of Pioneer FSC & Danielle Cromartie-Williams, LPC, Program Director

Click pictures to be linked to website

*“Pioneer FSC connects families to helpful resources in Somerset County and brings families together through free events, programs & local activities.”*



## PIONEER

Family Success Center

The Pioneer Family Success Center is a program of EmPoWER Somerset, a nonprofit organization. We offer the community a gathering place, connect families to helpful resources in Somerset County, NJ and bring families together through free events, programs & local activities.



**Our Mission:**  
To provide an environment to strengthen and empower individuals and families, and to build connections among families and the community.

50 Division Street Suite 303 Somerville, NJ

Office Hours M-F 9 am-4pm

For more information call us at: (908) 722-4400 or Check out [www.pioneerfsc.com](http://www.pioneerfsc.com)

Follow us @pioneerfsc

Se habla Español  

DECEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### Events

- 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th Zoom por las Tardes FSO
- 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th The morning Connection Support Group
- 2nd What is Sexual Assault?
- 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th The Virtual Support Group
- 3rd NHA - Transforming the Intense Child & Helping All Flourish
- 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st Zoom de Apoyo FSO
- 3rd & 17th Dad Chat
- 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th The Weekly Wind Down FSO
- 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th Story Time
- 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th Zoom Afternoons FSO
- 9th ¿Qué es la agresión sexual?
- 10th NHA- Transformando el niño intenso y ayudando a preparar
- 15TH & 16TH CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS
- 25TH MERRY CHRISTMAS!
- 31ST HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## NURTURED HEART CORNER

### 3 STANDS



#### 1. **Absolutely No!**

I will refuse to energize negativity.

#### 2. **Absolutely Yes!**

I will super-energize experiences of success.

#### 3. **Absolutely Clear!**

I will set clear limits and provide clear, un-energized consequences.

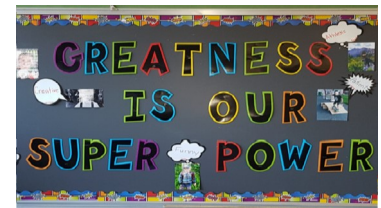
The Nurtured Heart Approach embraces three “Stands” of interacting with children that can help build a child’s inner wealth and greatness: Absolutely No, Absolutely Yes, and Absolutely Clear. This month, let’s talk about **Stand 2: Absolutely Yes!**

Think back through your last week. Which events stand out in your mind most? Did these events have a positive or negative effect on your day? The human brain is geared to react to “the negative” due to our negative bias created by previous events or outcomes. [Read more about negative bias here.](#)

**Absolutely Yes** encourages us to focus our energy on reinforcing the positive characteristics and behaviors we see, rather than the negative.

By: Courtney McIntosh, MSW Intern & Gregor Thomas, LCSW, Clinical Supervisor

\*Click pictures for additional information



## Celebrate your family’s GREATNESS!

### NHA Activity:

Items you’ll need: A blank paper of any kind, scissors, crayons or markers, and tape

Using a blank paper and scissors, cut out the shape of a snow globe (you may want to tape multiple pieces of paper together to make it bigger). Tape it on the wall and

use crayons or markers to draw your family inside. Then, cut out some snowflakes and label them with the qualities that make each of you GREAT. Take turns taping them inside the snow globe to create a winter wonderland!!

We want to see your family’s creation! Share a photo on social media with #NHChallenge so everyone can see!



“*Absolutely Yes encourages us to focus our energy on reinforcing the positive characteristics and behaviors.*”

## CRISIS INTERVENTION SPECIALIST SPOTLIGHT

MRSS responds to behavioral and mental health challenges 24 hours per day, year round. We would not be able to assist families in need without our dedicated CIS who work various shifts and travel throughout our three counties. Jessica Brown is one out of the two Primary On-Call CIS, who work nights, weekends and holidays.

Jessica has been with MRSS for 2 years and has been a shining star on the MRSS team, earning employee of the month during her

time in MRSS. Learn more about Jessica below.

#### What was your field of study?

I currently hold a Bachelors degree of Social Work from Centenary University.

#### How long have you been in the field?

I have worked in the mental health field for seven years.

#### What prior experience do you have?

I interned at DASACC in Washington, NJ during undergrad. I have also worked in different programs within Catholic Charities such as Families First, Family Preservation Services & Cross Roads Program helping youth

and families succeed.

#### What interested you about MRSS?

Working directly with youth and being able to provide wraparound support to the family as a whole.

#### What are some ways you engage with a youth on a dispatch who has anxiety?

I always start by asking the youth their interests, likes, dislikes, friends, family, and school. I try to help them regain focus by using deep breathing exercises, calming visuals, and mindfulness techniques.

#### What has been the highlight of your time at MRSS?

Being able to connect with families and

helping them through difficult times when they need it the most.

#### Is there anything you would want youth and families to know about you?

I am currently advancing my skills by starting my Master’s Program in Social Work. I look forward to continuing to serve families in Hunterdon, Warren, and Somerset County.



By: Danielle Cromartie-Williams, LPC, Program Director and Jessica Brown, BSW, Crisis Intervention Specialist



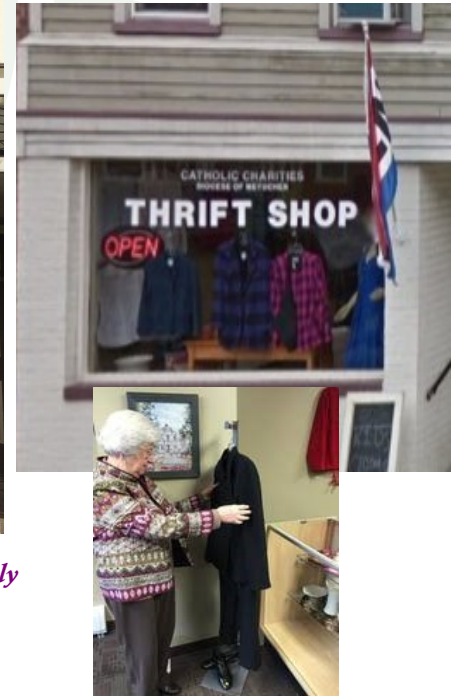


## COMMUNITY CORNER

### Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen: Social Service Center

Contact Information:  
387 South Main Street,  
Phillipsburg, NJ  
(908) 859-5447  
www.ccdom.org

Hours of Operation:  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday :  
10am–3:30pm; Thursday 1pm–3:30pm  
\*If a person/family cannot visit location during  
these times, center accommodates to ensure food is  
picked-up or delivered at a convenient time.



*"The program has provided guidance, food and has greatly improved my quality of life." -Food Pantry Recipient*

### SSC: WARREN BASIC MATERIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

People from all walks of life come to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen for help in Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset and Warren counties. They respond through 100 programs with expertise and compassion. The Social Service Center in Phillipsburg sustains those who are struggling to make ends meet. The pandemic has had a profound impact on the already economically disadvantaged who experience food insecurity.

Components of Warren Basic Material Needs Program consist of a limited choice food pantry, thrift store, information, referral, advocacy and case management services, nutrition classes and health screenings. Their goal is to aid families to decrease food shortage problems, receive proper nourishment, improve health, uphold financial stabilization and prevent homelessness.

Food assistance represents our primary service.

Each month households accept a five to seven day supply of groceries for the preparation of nutritious meals. The Food Pantry maintains an inventory of grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy and protein products. We also provide personal hygiene items and domestic products to supplement the well-being of the person. Commodities are delivered to the local senior living complexes on a quarterly basis.

**Eligibility Criteria:** Eligible families reside in Warren County and are able to demonstrate a need for food assistance. Appointments are not arranged as service is offered on a walk-in basis. We do not maintain a waiting list or charge a fee to receive provisions. Documentation is not required at this time.

**COVID-19 Impact:** Due to the current crisis, our procedure for distribution is curbside pick-up. If possible, please call the Social Service Center (908-859-5447) prior to your visit which

will allow us to prepare your bags to avoid being outside for a length of time in inclement weather. Please wear a face covering and stand by the designated marker to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

**Interested in Helping:** Volunteer opportunities are available to support the various functions of the Food Pantry and Thrift Store. In addition to the gift of your time, we gratefully accept perishable and non-perishable food items, monetary contributions and gift certificates.

**Thrift Shop Activities:** There are weekly sales, a 10% Military Discount every day, and a 20% Senior Discount every Wednesday.

By: Sr. Michaelita Popovice, Program Director of Social Service Center

## ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen



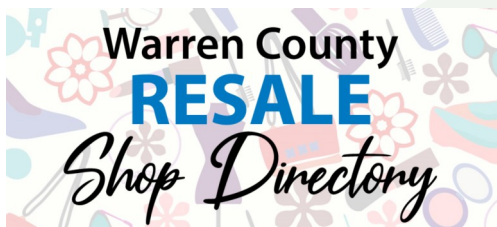
Harvest Family Success Center



Traditions Family Success Center



Warren County Resale Shop Directory



The Food Bank Network of Somerset County



Flemington Food Pantry



Family Support Organization



TriCounty ResourceNet

