Strategic alliance forms with Newark youth organization

Visions and Pathways has just embarked on a new strategic alliance with a dynamic Newark community-based non-profit for youth that will combine the strengths of both agencies and open the channels for a bright financial future for each.

David Walker, CEO and Executive Director of Visions and Pathways, said the alliance with the International Youth Organization (IYO) will leverage each organization’s “abilities to strengthen families and implement intervention strategies designed to foster stabilization.”

Walker noted that IYO has “an incredible reputation, with real grass-roots credibility.” He called the alliance “unique” in that Visions and Pathways has a suburban environment while IYO is based in an urban setting. This gives the new venture extraordinary potential to help at-risk youth in the region, explained Walker.

Some day Visions and Pathways’ expertise in establishing and operating temporary housing facilities for youth might help IYO create residential space at its building on 12th Street in Newark. This location could also serve as a base for Visions and Pathways’ outreach activities.

Forming this alliance, according to Walker, is consistent with Visions and Pathways’ strategic plan to find innovative ways to help disassociated teenagers and young adults.

“We opened an office in Morristown more than three years ago,” Walker said, “and last year we helped more than 200 kids in Morris County. Through the relationship with IYO, now we will be able reach so many more vulnerable youth and help them stay drug-free and on the path to being self-sufficient.”

Corporate partners of Visions and Pathways offer life skills programs

Once a month a group of seven Visions and Pathways youth go banking.

Under an innovative financial literacy program run by Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation, the teenagers travel to the bank’s branch in Basking Ridge to learn many of the skills they will need when they leave Visions and Pathways: how to set up a budget, how to use credit cards, how to set up a savings account, how to purchase an automobile, and to plan and pay for a vacation.

Affinity says that through the financial literacy program offered to Visions and Pathways teens it is leveraging its contributions “to make impactful investments in local, grass roots charitable organizations.”

This program is one of several that corporate partners of Visions and Pathways have initiated over the past few years.

Area corporations also offer to match funds when employees donate to Visions

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For the first time Visions and Pathways held its annual Spark! Gala in Somerset County at the Bridgewater Marriott, and it was a fortuitous move for the organization. The event raised more than $70,000, the highest amount raised in the four years Visions and Pathways has been putting on the Gala.

The funds will go to support the agency’s programs, including outreach and prevention services (which combat the opioid epidemic and help human trafficking victims), temporary housing, arts and recreation, counseling, life skills training, scholarships, and more.

Since 1970, over 9,000 youth have benefitted from the organization’s work.

“It made a difference holding the gala in Bridgewater,” said Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker. “More members of the business community, our volunteers, and supporters were able to come together for the gala,” he noted.

The theme for the evening was “A Hopeful Future for Youth.” Co-chairs were Takeena Deas, a longtime volunteer for Visions and Pathways’ special events, and Pamela Walker, a volunteer from Meridian Health.

Carissa Lawson from News 12 NJ acted as master of ceremonies and helped ensure that everyone enjoyed an uplifting experience. She is a recipient of an Associated Press Award for feature reporting and was a part of the CBS affiliate team who received the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for best newscast. She graduated from NYU.

Walker opened with remarks discussing the mission of Visions and Pathways. “We are increasing our emphasis on prevention, fighting the opioid epidemic and helping aged-out youth,” he told the audience.

Alquon Hodges, a motivational speaker about empowering young men, was the principal speaker. A Global Project Manager for Roche Diagnostics in Branchburg, he volunteers with Visions and Pathways’ Journey to Manhood mentoring program. He has a new book coming out, The Road to Success, a guide to teaching young men how to navigate their careers.

The evening included a cocktail hour, silent auction, dinner, and an awards ceremony honoring volunteers and companies that have brought their time and talent to the organization and for the positive impact they have made on the lives of youth. This year, Bristol-Myers Squibb in Hopewell, New Jersey received the Corporate Partner Award, Brandon and Mimi Baker of Victory Subaru in Somerset, New Jersey received the Community Partner Award, and the Nu Xi Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was honored with the Community Leader Award.

The Dedicated Volunteer Award went to Marsha L. Montgomery of Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, immediate past president of the Visions and Pathways Board of Trustees.

Visions and Pathways youth also were on the program. Selena, a resident, sang a very moving rendition of “The Greatest Love of All.” A dynamic speech was made by Ana, who connected with Visions and Pathways in 2015, left, and then returned after a year and half after realizing she made a mistake leaving. Today, she is excelling in school, gainfully employed, and making better choices.

Visions and Pathways clients Allanah Fischer and Tyon Forney-Hush were honored as recipients of the Lisa A. Warren Scholarship. Kyle Pino was honored as the recipient of the AT&T Pioneers scholarship, which was presented by Suzanne Balian from the AT&T Pioneers. The scholarships recognize academic achievement and commitment to community service.

WINE PULL was among the most popular activities at the Spark! Gala. Guests were asked to put in $20 and were guaranteed a bottle of wine either equal to that or worth much more. Gala co-chair Pamela Walker looks over the selection of wines.

Silver sponsors for the gala included AT&T and Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Patron sponsors were Nisivoccia and the Drinker Biddle & Reath law firm.
When The Dream Project of New Jersey was considering which organization to support during its annual fundraising bicycle ride from New Jersey to Miami Beach, the Rutgers University students doing the pedaling selected Visions and Pathways as the deserving recipient. Following a 30-day trip covering more than 2,000 miles, The Dream Project was proud to support Visions and Pathways’ mission with a check for $10,000.

The Dream Project of New Jersey, which raises money for non-profit organizations through month-long bike rides, is dedicated to empowering young adults to become leaders within their communities through service and civic engagement. Executive Director Gabrielle Rossi said participants are mostly students at Rutgers University’s three campuses.

According to Rossi, participants decide what type of organization they want to support and tour several organizations before deciding on that year’s beneficiary. “The team this year knew they wanted to work with at-risk teens,” she said. “After we met with a few organizations, the team found that Visions and Pathways really stuck out because of its hands-on approach to helping teens.”

Each member of the five-person team committed to raising $3,500. Before the bicycle ride began in May, team members set up a community service agenda at Visions and Pathways, including organizing a coding class for our youth, mentoring some of our teens, and painting at Brahma House.

In July, freshly back from Miami Beach, the team presented Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker with the check for $10,000. “We couldn't have been more thrilled to receive these funds,” stated Walker. “The amount of effort that went into raising this money was formidable, and we humbly thank each and every member of the biking team for completing what he or she started out to do. And we are grateful to Gabrielle Rossi, the executive director of The Dream Project, for coordinating it all.”

The Dream Project is just one of several local volunteer organizations that contribute to Visions and Pathways by raising money and doing service projects at various Visions and Pathways facilities. Some are faith-based groups, among them the Central Jersey Church of Christ in North Brunswick, the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties, and Liquid Church of Parsippany.

Faith-based groups

Young people from the Central Jersey Church of Christ volunteer every other month on Saturdays at Brahma House. Church youth volunteer Giuliani Dupuy said her group learned about Visions and Pathways from a congregant a few years ago, and ever since teens and young adults from the church have been spending weekends as games and recreation leaders, showing movies, and holding baking and cooking classes.

Another longtime supporter of Visions and Pathways has been The Jewish Federation, located in Bridgewater. Events held by the Federation in fall 2017 and Spring 2018 led to a $5,900 donation to our organization. Liquid Church donated $4,600 to replace the carpet in one of Visions and Pathways’ shelters. Each fall, the church, as part of its Love Weekend Outreach, donates hygiene kits to homeless teens in the Visions and Pathways’ Street Smart program and makes a $1,000 donation to Street Smart outreach around the holidays.
Alliance goes forward between Visions and Pathways and Newark’s IYO

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adequate job skills.
IYO alumni number 40,000.
According to Walker, the initial idea for the alliance came from one of Visions and Pathways’ volunteers, Angel Vargas, who is with the Essex County Latino American Chamber of Commerce. IYO, still run by Wallace’s wife Carolyn, 83, had been going through some changes recently, according to Walker, and Vargas thought there might be jointure possibilities since IYO’s mission was consistent with that of Visions and Pathways.

With advice from the Victoria Foundation and the Support Center for Nonprofit Management in Newark, the two organizations began talking earlier this year. The discussions were aided by Claire Calandra, a retired attorney who is a former president of the Visions and Pathways Board of Trustees. By the summer formal agreements had been signed.

Wayne Smith, former mayor of Irvington and chairman of the board of IYO, said he is excited about the partnership and the “positive impact we expect it will have on the region’s youth.” Smith has just become a member of the Visions and Pathways Board of Trustees, and Walker has joined the IYO Board.

Smith is an alumnus of IYO, as is Ras Baraka, the mayor of Newark. IYO has long been considered a training ground for urban leaders.

According to Carolyn Wallace, IYO not only identifies and nurtures future urban leaders but also provides services for young people in areas such as GED preparation, job training, counseling, careers, getting drivers’ licenses, exposure to culture, and field trips. “We want them to become productive citizens,” said Wallace.

She believes Visions and Pathways and IYO are a good fit and had this to add: “What do we do well? Job training and construction. What does Visions and Pathways do well? Housing. It’s a matter of bringing the two agencies together.”

Managing the resources of both will be the task for the future, she added.

The Visions and Pathways management and staff call Mrs. Wallace by her formal name, but just about everyone in Newark calls her “Mom.” How did she get the name “Mom?”

“It just developed,” said Mrs. Wallace. “I became everybody’s mom as time moved on.”

Noted Walker, “When you walk through the streets of Newark, she’s a real celebrity. Everyone knows her.”

Just in September the BET Black Girls Rock awards honored Mrs. Wallace for her dedication to the development of young black women.

Visions and Pathways and IYO are already combining talents. The first joint event will be a brunch in the spring of 2019.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION building off Springfield Avenue in Newark, adorned with portraits of organization founders Carolyn and James Wallace, could one day be used by Visions and Pathways for jointly operated programs. The two groups will embark on their first fundraising venture this spring.

Visions and Pathways pays tribute to our volunteers

Volunteers have assisted with many tasks for the organization, especially at fundraising events and Visions and Pathways’ facilities. Among the valuable assistance has been meal preparation, emergency snack and hygiene kit assembly, and school supplies drives.

Thank you, volunteers. We couldn’t have done it without you!

2018 Volunteer Groups
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Nu Xi Omega chapter
Atlantic Health System
Center for FaithJustice
Central Jersey Church of Christ Deloitte
Dental Care Hillsborough
Direct Energy
Dream Project of New Jersey
Gateway Church, Bridgewater
Girl Scout Troop # 60711
Hillsborough High School
Home Depot
Janssen
Jersey Cares
Johnson and Johnson
Junior League of Morristown
Liquid Church
Nestle
Novartis
Novo Nordisk
Randolph Kiwanis Club
Roche Molecular
Rutgers University
Synchronoss Technologies, Inc.
United Health Care
Visions and Pathways provides abused, neglected, homeless, and runaway youth with housing, a stable environment, and supportive services that guide them in becoming self-sufficient.

The agency runs 11 programs for vulnerable youth: Brahma House residential crisis intervention program; Passages, My Place and Whitney House residential transitional-living programs; Prosperity independent-living skills education program; Street Smart street outreach program; Transitional Learning Center for in-house education instruction; Bridge House and Village House, supportive-housing for aged-out youth, an Arts and Recreation Program, and the Transitions Aftercare Program.

Since 1970, over 9,000 youth have come to seek shelter, food, clothing, and support services.

For more information, visit visionsandpathways.org or contact Executive Director David Walker, Esq. MSW at dwalker@visionsandpathways.org.

AT&T PIONEERS GROUP is a longtime supporter of Visions and Pathways, raising money for academic scholarships.

Youth get advantage of life skills programs

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and Pathways.

“Our corporate partners not only help fund the work of our organization, but they have come up with inventive programs that give our youth the life skills they need for success,” said Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker. “These corporate programs involve many hours of planning, scheduling, and staffing. We are very lucky and thankful that our partners are committed enough to allocate the resources to run these programs.”

Another supportive corporate partner is Merck. Merck runs a Street Law program consisting of legal and civic workshops at the company's campuses in Rahway and Kenilworth. Merck volunteers teach teens about landlord/tenant laws, credit, and cyberbullying, among other legal hurdles they may face after they leave Visions and Pathways.

Teens also learn how to combat inequality and participate effectively in their communities. Career advice is a big part of Street Law as well, and youth receive information how to map out a career path that may or may not involve higher education. Workshops always include refreshments.

Street Law has been going on for about five years, and Visions and Pathways youth are always enthusiastic about their participation, according to Walker.

A faithful corporate partner over the years has been the AT&T Pioneers. The group raises money to provide a $1,000 scholarship to a deserving Visions and Pathways client headed for higher education. The scholarship is awarded based on academic achievement and the recipient's efforts to contribute to society through volunteering.

One more partner is Ashland, a global chemical company in Bridgewater. Ashland provides birthday bags to Visions and Pathways residents and this year gave youth much needed school supplies.

Walker said he is always available to talk to area corporations about employee matching fund programs and partnership projects.
Under 2018 tax laws, charitable contributors may consider bunching

Interest in helping homeless teens, both now and in the years ahead? A simple, flexible and versatile way to ensure Visions and Pathways can continue our work for years to come is a gift in your will or living trust. Your gift also entitles your estate to an unlimited federal estate tax charitable deduction.

Some of the legacy investments you can make also include:

* **Retirement Plans** – Designate Visions and Pathways to receive part or all of what remains of your retirement plan after your death. Such transfers can be a tax-efficient way of making a gift. For example, heirs may receive as little as 30 percent of a retirement plan from a large estate after estate and income tax, while Visions and Pathways would receive 100 percent of it.

* **Insurance policies**—Designate Visions and Pathways Endowment Fund to receive all or part of a life insurance policy. Ask your insurance company for a beneficiary designation form.

We also welcome donations of stock and other securities. To learn more, please contact Visions and Pathways Director of Finance Indumati Patel at 908-526-6605 or ipatel@visionsandpathways.org.

If you include Visions and Pathways in your plans, please use our legal name and Federal Tax ID.

For Recreation
Art supplies
Batteries (AA, AAA for games, electronics
Headphones/ear buds
Chess games
Movie theater passes
Journals
Sketch books
3D puzzles
Yoga

For School
Highlighters/white board markers
Notebooks
Pens/markers
Reference CD-ROMs (Dictionary, Thesaurus, Atlas, Encyclopedia)
Scientific graphing calculators (for high school math classes)

Sponsor Something Special
* Donate tickets or money for a group outing (adventure, aquarium, museum, movie, bowling, theme park, laser tag, Broadway show, sporting event).
* Donate funds for creating special school memories (school yearbooks, class rings).

With the new tax laws increasing the standard deduction to $24,000 for married couples filing jointly, New Jersey taxpayers who previously elected to itemize their deductions will now look to the standard deduction.

However, this means individuals who do not itemize receive no tax benefit from their charitable gifts to organizations like Visions and Pathways.

One innovative strategy to achieve tax savings involves “bunching” deductions for charitable contributions, medical expenses, and state and local taxes into a single tax year to maximize savings in that year. Bunching is extremely useful in a year contributors have significant one-time income events such as capital gains from a sale of an asset, significant bonus compensation, or payout from a deferred compensation plan.

Taxpayers who bunch itemized deductions can always go back to the standard deduction in subsequent years.
When There’s No One Else To Turn To... We Give Homeless Youth A Home and Hopeful Future

Yes! I/We want to help youth at Visions and Pathways

Name __________________________ __________________________ __________________________
Address __________________________ __________________________ __________________________
City, State, Zip __________________________ __________________________ __________________________
Email __________________________ __________________________ __________________________

My/Our gift is ❑ in honor of or ❑ in memory of: __________________________ __________________________ __________________________

Please send a notification (without amount ) to:
Name __________________________ __________________________ __________________________
Address __________________________ __________________________ __________________________
City, State, Zip __________________________ __________________________ __________________________

Your tax-deductible donation provides operation funds for food, clothing, shelter, crisis intervention, counseling, basic education and independent-living skill education.

You can put your money to work immediately by making a secure gift online at www.visionsandpathways.org, or use one of the payments to follow.

Option A

Here's my heartfelt gift of: ❑ $20. ❑ $25. ❑ $50. ❑ $75. ❑ $100. ❑ $250. ❑ other ________________

Check enclosed, payable to Visions and Pathways
❑ One-time or ❑ Monthly gift charged to my credit card
❑ VISA* ❑ MASTERCARD* ❑ AMEX*

Amount $ ___________________ Exp. Date ___________________
Card No. __________________________ __________________________
Signature __________________________ __________________________

❑ Employer's Matching Gift form enclosed.

*A gift of $250 or more entitles you to a brick in our Walk of Wishes, a garden walkway at Visions and Pathways, as a permanent symbol of your generous support.

What name or message would you like on your brick?
Up to 3 lines with a total of 15 letters and spaces on each line

Volunteer Spotlight

Madeline Berlin involved with Visions and Pathways for 11 years

Non-profit organizations cannot survive without dedicated volunteers, and for Visions and Pathways, former Board of Trustees Vice President Madeline Berlin has been such a lifesaver. For 11 years Berlin, a resident of Lambertville, New Jersey, served as a board member and then board officer and member of the executive committee, leaving at the end of last year. However, that did not stop her service to the agency nor being a strong advocate for the well being and development of young people. Berlin continues to sit on focus groups, support and attend the gala and fall run, and lend her advice and good counsel. "I intend to stay active in various ways," said Berlin.

She joined the Board of Trustees of our predecessor organization, the Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children, when she was an executive with Hewlett Packard Financial Services in Murray Hill, New Jersey. "One of my managers was contacted by a member of the board, Caroline Zachary, who was stepping off because she was moving out of the area," recalled Berlin. "I had worked with Caroline when we were at AT&T; and I knew of the Somerset Home. So when my manager asked me if I was interested in being on the board, I said I was."

Berlin was a good fit because she has a bachelor's degree in sociology from Temple University as well as a master's degree in adult learning and organization development. Moreover, she had done community social work. Throughout her 11 years on the board, Berlin cycled through a few key positions, including being second-in-command and chairing the Human Resources Committee when the agency was looking to hire a new CEO and executive director.

In her estimation, some of the most valuable work she did was helping the Somerset Home transition to Visions and Pathways. Berlin worked closely with former Board Presidents Claire Calandra and Marsha Montgomery to redefine the mission of the agency and create a strategic plan "to lead us in the direction we wanted to go."

Berlin believes deeply in the goals and objectives of Visions and Pathways. "We have a wonderful mission to help youth and a compelling story to tell," she noted. "We’re an agency that touches people’s hearts and touches people’s minds as well. That’s what keeps me involved. You cannot forget the children and young adults we serve."

Run and Walk for Visions and Pathways

Runners and walkers plus their families and friends came together at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey Nov. 17 for Visions and Pathways’ 20th Run and Walk For Our Youth’s Future.

There was a traditional 5K run and a 2-mile walk around the park. The event supports Visions and Pathways’ arts and recreation program.

The emcee was Bill Spadea, host of "Chasing News," which is on Channel 9 at 11 p.m. and later on Fox 5 News. Spadea is also the morning drive-time host on Radio Station 101.5.

Participants warmed up before the events with fitness trainer Hillarie Scanelli of Impact Training in Hillsborough, a new 4,800 square foot facility that offers one-on-one training, group training, and team training for athletes along with nutrition, weight loss, boot camps, and more. As prizes for runners, Scanelli donated two gift certificates for training sessions.

While the adults were running, Visions and Pathways volunteers hosted children with sack races and bean bag toss games. New this year, the games for kids were organized by a team of teenage volunteers led by Rohit Agrawal from Bridgewater Raritan High School.
Save the Date!
Mark your calendar for
November 2, 2013
9 a.m. at Colonial Park
Somerset, NJ
Somerset Home’s 15th Annual Run for Runaways is a great way for people of all ages to get out and run, walk or sprint; enjoy snacks, massages and games; bid in a silent auction; and raise much-needed funds to provide a safe haven and support services for abused, neglected and runaway youth.

Find out how to register to run, volunteer, become a sponsor or advertiser, or make a donation. Visit runforrunaways.com.

WEBSITE GETS A MAKEOVER
Somerset Home’s website has a bold new look, but even better, it gives you a glimpse of how your support makes a difference in the lives of abused and homeless teens. Take a look online: somersethome.org.

THANK YOU to the companies, foundations, and service organizations that have made generous monetary contributions from January 2018 to date* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation
African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ
Aldersgate United Methodist Church
Alpha Kappa Alpha Nu Xi Omega
Allen & Gerrissen
Allstate Foundation
Anonymous
Apple Food Services NJ
Arc Foundation, Inc.
AT&T
AT&T Pioneers
Atlantic Health System
Bank of America
Bound Brook Garden Club
Branchburg Township Local 397
Bridgewater Woman’s Club
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Broadbent Reach Benefits
Butler Built Cabinets
BUS Shop
Chiesa, Shahinian & Giantomasi, PC
Christian Fellowship Club of Concordia
Cigna Foundation
The Congregational Church of Bound Brook
Curtis McGraw Foundation
DACS, Inc.
Direct Energy
Dombal-Vogel Foundation
The Dream Project
Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP
E.A. Boniakowski Agency, Inc.
Ensemble Health Partners
Ethicon
First Energy
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GlaxoSmithKline
Greater Houston Community Foundation
Hillsborough Irrigation and Landscape Service
Hillsborough Reformed Church
Home Point Financial Association
Hope Church
Hyde and Watson Foundation
IBM
Investors Bank
Investors Foundation, Inc.
J. Williams & Company
Janssen Pharmaceuticals
The Jewish Federation
Johnson & Johnson
Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc.
Joly Foundation
Kiwanis Club of Randolph
Liquid Church
Merck
Merck Foundation
Morgan Lewis & Bockius, LLP
Morris Arts
Morristown Cotillian
Morris County
Neshanic Reformed Church
New Providence United Methodist Church
Nisw SCC LLC
NJM Insurance Group
One Simple Wish
Our Lady of the Mount Church
Paycom
Peapack Reformed Church
Petrocks Bar and grille
Pfizer
Phillips-Van Heusen Foundation
Potterville Reformed Church
Prespere Corporation
Princeton Wealth Advisors
Provident Bank Foundation
Prudential Foundation
Readington Reformed Church
Reformed Church at Findernae
Rite Aid Foundation KidCents
Rotary Club of Morristown
Somerset County
Somerset County Business Partnership
Somerset Hills Kiwanis Foundation
Somerset Local Arts Program
South Branch Reformed Church
St. Joseph’s Catholic Church
Strength Condition
Subar’s of America, Inc.
Swiftwater Foundation, Inc.
Trinity United Church
Tyler Foundation
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills
United Methodist Women – First United Methodist Church
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.
Zeus

*As of November, 2018.