

## Visions and Pathways celebrates 50 years in operation

For half a century, Visions and Pathways has helped put the pieces together for teenagers and young adults whose lives have been shattered.

In 2020, the nonprofit celebrates 50 years of mended young people's lives, and its supporters are reflecting on the organization's growth. From a single residence for abused and neglected youth, Visions and Pathways has expanded to nine residences in two counties and has established a host of outstanding programs in counseling, medical attention, education, recreation, career advice through mentoring, financial literacy, and outreach to homeless teens.

Today the organization employs more than 50 people, runs specialized departments in education, the arts, and behavioral health, and aids area families in distress through in-house case management.

"We've been able to do so much for youth in our 50 years," said David Walker, CEO and executive director, a graduate of Stanford University, Georgetown Law School, and Columbia University School of Social Work, where he received his MSW. "Strong Boards of Trustees over the years have guided our growth, and hundreds of individuals, companies, businesses, churches, and social and civic organizations have provided the funding to bring us to where we are today," Walker noted.

Additionally, he paid tribute to the caring employees and professional staff over the years who were and continue to be so dedicated to making Visions and Pathways a safe haven for youth at risk.

Looking back to 1970, the organization began life as the Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children, a simple shelter for teens who faced difficult family situations. Some were



50 years of helping homeless and at-risk youth

neglected; others were abused.

But with Central New Jersey, along with the rest of the country, facing mounting teen drug abuse, family dysfunction, homelessness, and even human trafficking, the non-profit began to build more group homes. It started to add services in outreach such as Street Smart, located in Morristown, along with abuse prevention programs and life skills instruction for those aging out of foster care.

In 2016, the Somerset Home changed its name to Visions and Pathways. Walker said the name change reflected the group's expanded mission, especially in family reunification and housing support.

What do the next 50 years entail for Visions and Pathways?

- The organization will look to place greater emphasis on preventing families from being displaced.
- The Department of Education has been

reformulated (see related story in this issue) to increase academic proficiency in the S.T.E.M. fields and to double team with personnel in local high schools where Visions and Pathways residents attend.

- Providing affordable housing for youth in transition is another part of Visions and Pathways' blueprint for the future. The group's proposed Bridge House project, now in the process of being funded, will provide an affordable place to live for older teens and young adults. "An enthusiastic team of volunteers is committed to making Bridge House a reality," noted Walker. Other housing avenues are being investigated, he added.

- The organization intends to work more closely with community-based programs for youth who may not reside in its group homes but who are in foster care. According to Walker, there is a tremendous need to teach life skills and financial literacy as these young people age out of foster care.

- As the 50th anniversary year started, Visions and Pathways elected a new board chair, Stephanie Durant. Longtime Senior Life Skills Counselor Steven Neblett was named Director of Residential Services, replacing Carlotta Spence, who retired after more than a decade.

"As we celebrate the success of our first 50 years, we look forward to what more in the way of support we can offer our youth in the future," said Walker.

## Following state directives during Coronavirus outbreak keeps Visions and Pathways youth and employees safe

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of everyone at Visions and Pathways. The organization provides housing and a nurturing environment for youth who have no place else to turn. Without it, many youth would be homeless. "

"It is imperative that our doors remain open," said CEO and Executive Director David Walker. "Throughout this crisis, we have preserved health and continue to provide food, clothing and shelter."

He stressed that Visions and Pathways strictly adheres to all CDC guidelines with respect to sanitizing facilities and other safe practices. "However, human contact is fundamental

to our services, and our staff in our homes cannot consistently follow social distancing recommendations," noted Walker.

"Like police officers, health care workers and other first responders, Visions and Pathways' staff jeopardizes its own safety for others' well-being. We serve meals, our Education Department assists with online learning, and our therapists continue to provide counseling and support."

During these uncertain times, Visions and Pathways remains true to its mission. "With your support," said Walker, "we will continue to provide sanctuary to youth who need a place to call home."



## Education program gets a makeover

“Expanded” and “upgraded” with emphasis on the S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects are the best ways to describe the new education directive at Visions and Pathways.

Visions and Pathways youth now have a two-hour study hall twice a week in the afternoons. There is one-on-one tutoring for the SATs and for those studying to get a GED. There is also a renewed effort to work with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators at the high schools residents attend.

What’s more, Visions and Pathways youth are responding positively to the enhanced program, according to Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker.

“We are already seeing results,” noted Walker. “Some of the youth here,” he noted, “because of the turbulence in their lives bounce from school to school. We realized one of our greatest needs was to strengthen our education component to close some of the gaps. Our youth are with us for a significant time. They enroll in local schools, and many of them need additional assistance to reach their academic potential.”

Walker brought in a former JPMorgan Chase technology officer turned South Bronx high school teacher to lead the education effort. Fred Irving, a West Orange resident, started work this past fall. He is a graduate of Stanford University and has a master’s degree in education.

Irving’s push is to help all Visions and Pathways residents succeed academically, whether they are just out of middle school or have graduated from high school and are looking to go to college. Having been in science and technology his entire life (he taught chemistry in the South Bronx), he feels strongly that teaching the S.T.E.M. subjects needed to be “more robust.”

But dealing with the emotional side of learning is just as critical, according to Irving. Making room for



**ELEMENTS** OF high school mathematics become clearer to grasp for Visions and Pathways’ residents like this young woman when they are explained by new Education Department Director Fred Irving. Irving is a former JPMorgan Chase technology officer.

personal attention and keeping youth motivated are among his principal goals.

“I am here to encourage and acknowledge kids’ efforts,” he said. “Some of these youngsters excel. Others won’t tell you if they are struggling academically. They have a lot of other things on their minds. My job is to establish connections.”

Irving knows when residents have tests or when to send them to Visions and Pathways’ new computer study center at the Passages residence to do research for term papers. He tutors residents in subjects where there is weakness and runs SAT tutoring for the college-bound.

Like a parent, Irving will go to school to talk to a teacher or child-study team member about a particular student, and he’ll make sure there is follow through, a

task that Visions and Pathways staff found hard to do in the past.

“I’m determined to make it a model program,” said Irving, who works with a teacher’s aide and a corps of volunteers. “Our kids learn that we care about their best outcomes, both academically and spiritually.”

He has taken on additional tasks, including running Visions and Pathways’ well known mentoring programs –Jewells for young women and Journey to Manhood for young men. Irving brings in inspirational speakers to talk to youth about the path to life and career success. This year Irving had former NBA player Eric L. Murdock address Journey to Manhood participants. Murdock grew up in Bridgewater and played for the Utah Jazz, the Milwaukee Bucks, and the Miami Heat, among other teams.

## Stephanie Durant takes over as Board of Trustees’ president

A nine-year veteran of Visions and Pathways’ Board of Trustees has been elected president.

Stephanie Durant, a Johnson & Johnson executive in Standards and Governance Support in Monitoring, has begun a two-year term, taking over from Nikkia Miller-Blakes.

During the years she has spent on the board, Durant has been responsible for a number of key initiatives, including starting the Spark! Gala, the organization’s largest fundraiser. That event is now in its fifth year. Durant was the first chairwoman of the gala and was instrumental in changing the location of the event from Morristown to Bridgewater three years ago. “We wanted to be closer to our base,” she said.

Another achievement for Durant, a Hillsborough resident, was the search for a new executive director that eventually led to the hiring of David Walker. She has also been a force in the board’s committee on strategic planning, which has formulated Visions and Pathways’ expansion into other counties and new programming as well as planning for the construction of Bridge House, an affordable housing apartment complex that will rise at 8 Third Ave, in Bridgewater. This residential unit

will accommodate very low-income young adults who have graduated from the life skills program.

Durant became active in Visions and Pathways after taking a volunteer leadership training program through Seton Hall University. Encouraged to volunteer at a local non-profit, Durant said she looked around “and found Visions and Pathways was a good fit.”

“I always loved children and had a passion for working with children,” she recalled.

Her first volunteer activity was helping to paint the interior of one of the youth residences. Feeling she could bring her corporate expertise to the governing board, she approached the organization leadership and in fall 2011 was named as a trustee.

The nine years have been extremely fulfilling, according to Durant. She said she was lucky to have served as vice president under immediate Past President Miller-Blakes, whom Durant called “a real leader.” Said Durant, “Following in her footsteps is a real opportunity for me.”

Her largest challenge going forward, as she sees it, is to make sure Visions and Pathways continues its services to its youthful clients over

the next 50 years, as it did during its first 50 years of existence. “I want us always to be looking at the landscape so that we stay current in trends and treatment services,” noted Durant. “And I want us to be financially strong over that time.”

Another goal is to bring additional people to the board who are “people of passion.” A third goal is to maintain relationships with current funders and to seek out new funders who can support the work of the organization. “That is how we will keep our doors open,” noted Durant.



**STEPHANIE DURANT**  
New Board of Trustees  
President

# Spark! Gala take place June 11 or could be postponed until fall



With uncertainties surrounding the coronavirus epidemic, Visions and Pathways is still hoping to celebrate 50 years of serving the community's youth at the Spark! Gala Thursday, June 11 at 6 p.m. at the Bridgewater Marriott.

However, if New Jersey regulations still prohibit large gatherings by that time, the gala will take place in the fall, date to be determined. "One way or the other our 2020 gala will take place," said Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker. "It is a time when our supporters come together to celebrate our achievements and those of our youth. The gala is doubly important this year because it marks our 50th anniversary."

The festive evening will include cocktails, dinner, music, a silent auction, and an awards ceremony honoring companies and volunteers for the positive impact they have made on the community and the lives of youth. Funds raised by the gala 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, more than 10,000 youth have benefited from the organization's work.

The gala is Visions and Pathways' signature fundraising event. Last year's gala raised more than \$80,000, the highest amount ever raised, and organizers are hoping to do even better this year.

This year's gala will honor Corporate Partner Award winner, Atlantic Health System, which operates hospitals and health care facilities in New Jersey.

The Dedicated Volunteer Award honors Visions and Pathways' Board of Trustees immediate Past President Nikkia Miller-Blakes, a vice president for IT at Johnson & Johnson.

"The gala is our biggest event of the year, where everyone comes together in support of our organization, and we recognize the companies and individuals who are so critical to our success," said Walker. "We know this year's gala will be especially uplifting because of our 50th anniversary."

The theme for the evening is "A Hopeful Future for Youth." Co-chairs of the gala are Lewis Gorden and Bonnie Hodge. Nichole Batts, Jinnee DeMarco, Krista Ramirez, Jill Scott, and Michelle Tyler are members of the Gala Committee. Music is by Ty Stephens and Soul Jaazz.



**LONGTIME SUPPORTERS OF** Visions and Pathways at last year's Spark! Gala, Maddy and Bruce Berlin of Lambertville, New Jersey, review the offerings at the event's fabulous silent auction. This year's the gala on June 11 will feature another superb silent auction along with cocktails, dinner, food, dancing, and an awards ceremony.

Sponsors for the gala include AT&T, Flemington Car and Truck Country, Somerset Patriots, Clinton Honda, LandRover Princeton, and Nisivoccia, LLP.

Tickets are \$150 per person. To get tickets, please get in touch with Development Associate Adriana Gonzalez at [agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org](mailto:agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org) or (908) 526-6605.



**NON-PROFIT** of the YEAR Award is accepted by David Walker, CEO and executive director of Visions and Pathways, from Juanita Painson of the Franklin Township Chamber of Commerce at a dinner Jan. 29.

## Franklin Chamber of Commerce selects Visions and Pathways as 2020 Non-Profit of the Year

The Franklin Township Chamber of Commerce has named Visions and Pathways 2020 Non-Profit of the Year.

The award was presented Jan. 29 at the organization's Annual General Meeting and Awards Ceremony. It took place at The Marigold in Somerset. Keynote speaker was New Jersey Assemblyman Joseph Danielsen.

The Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to supporting the business community in Franklin Township. Some of its members participated this winter in a multi-week youth entrepreneurship workshop that took place at a Visions and Pathways' residence and at the Somerset County Business Partnership in Bridgewater.

This small but dynamic chamber represents quite a few area businesses, including L'Oreal USA, Terumo Medical Corporation, Philips Lighting, The Palace of Somerset Park, The Imperia, and Korman Communities.

# VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

## IMPACT KIDS | GET INVOLVED!

"We help kids" find a **vision** and a **path** by giving safe housing, food and support services to at-risk and homeless NJ kids, ages 13+. **And we need your help!**

### HOW?

**Mentor Kids** ● Our residents benefit from life skills, financial literacy, public speaking, cooking, conflict resolution, trades and other professional & life skills

**Volunteer** ● Paint a room, plant a garden, build benches, and attend events

**Connect with us** ●    

**Operational Services** ● Share your skills updating or managing our website, create or support a fundraiser, research/write grant requests, draft a brochure or write a blog. We've never found a professional skill that didn't help our kids!

**Financial Support** ● Financial donations, donations of a car or home, fund a scholarship or legacy /endowment, start a birthday Facebook or GoFundMe fundraiser, do a Memorial donation in lieu of sending flowers, and select Visions & Pathways on Smile.Amazon.com

**Become an e-helper** ● No time to volunteer and still want to help? Become an e-Helper by giving us your email address and a few times a year, we'll email you when a homeless teenager asks a special request not covered by our budget... Can I go to the prom, join the basketball team, can I get dress shoes for my job? Fulfilling these requests help youth living at Visions and Pathways get the same opportunities as their peers who live at home. E-helpers who can contribute let us know they're either sending a check or donating instantly online. There's no obligation to respond to each request, but every little bit helps. Email Adriana at [agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org](mailto:agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org) if you're interested in e-Helping.

### You can involve your company too!

Ask us about volunteer days, mentoring, event sponsorship & "Adopt a Charity"!

Join us at [Visionsandpathways.org](http://Visionsandpathways.org), [streetmartoutreach.org](http://streetmartoutreach.org) or at our Bridgewater and Morristown locations

## Run and Walk raises \$22,855



**EMCEE OF** Visions and Pathways' Oct. 19 Run and Walk for Our Youth's Future, TV and radio personality Bill Spadea, gets the runners ready with event co-chairs Joanna Machalaba (center) and Fran Smith.

Runners and walkers plus their families and friends came together at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey on Oct. 19 for Visions and Pathways' 21st Run and Walk For Our Youth's Future. The sum of \$22,855 was raised.

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. Spadea, a Princeton resident, is also the morning drive-time host on Radio Station 101.5. Dynamic co-chairs of the event were Joanne Machalaba of Novartis in East Hanover, New Jersey and Fran Smith of Roche Diagnostics, Branchburg, New Jersey.

Premier fundraisers for the Walk and Run were Gregory and Julie Hirsch of Branchburg, New Jersey.

## Zeus in Branchburg is special corporate partner for Visions and Pathways

Non-profits recognize that donations from corporate partners can come in one year and not the next. But donations from Zeus in Branchburg have been made regularly over the past 13 years to support Visions and Pathways' Run and Walk For Our Youth's Future, which is held every fall at Duke Island Park.

The \$65,000 in donations from Zeus over the years have helped support a traditional 5K run and a 2-mile walk that attracts hundreds of participants and their families.

Zeus manufactures polymers for the medical, aerospace, energy, fiber optic, and fluid management sectors.

## Know more about us . . .

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's programs for vulnerable youth include: 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.

The Loving Care Homes residence for homeless women is our most recent initiative. In addition, V & P has an affiliation agreement with Newark's International Youth Organization (IYO), IYO has

served Newark's highest need youth for almost 50 years.

Since 1970, over 10,000 youth have come to seek shelter, food, clothing, and support services.

For more information, visit [visionsandpathways.org](http://visionsandpathways.org) or contact Executive Director David Walker, Esq. MSW at [dwalker@visionsandpathways.org](mailto:dwalker@visionsandpathways.org).

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Bonnie Hodge

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**David Walker**

*CEO/Executive Director*

## Donors change lives forever

**THANK YOU** to the companies, foundations, and service organizations that have made generous monetary contributions from November 2019 to date\* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

Affinity Federal Credit Union  
Aldersgate United Methodist Church  
Atlantic Health System  
AT&T  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company  
Clinton Honda  
EJ Benadon Consulting  
Flemington Car & Truck Country  
Hope Church  
IBM  
Investors Bank  
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Liquid Church  
Morris Arts  
Neshanic Reformed Church  
NJM Insurance Group  
Page Hill Foundation, Inc.  
Readington Reformed Church  
Rite Aid Foundation KidCents  
Somerset Patriots  
Swiftwater Foundation, Inc.

## Visions and Pathways mourns death of former Board Secretary Joy Mathiowdis

One of Visions and Pathways' most dedicated supporters died in late 2019 of cancer, creating a void in the governance of Visions and Pathways.

Joy Mathiowdis, a former resident of Bridgewater who retired and moved recently to Millsboro, Delaware, was the secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Mathiowdis began volunteering more than 20 years ago for Visions and Pathways' annual fall Walk and Run. Because of her experience in corporate management and her enthusiastic support of organization events, she was named to the Board of Trustees in 2015.

CEO and Executive Director David Walker said her death strongly impacts the work on the Board of Trustees. Fellow Board members said Mathiowdis drove many of the recent accomplishments of the organization.

Currently, Visions and Pathways is considering a "creative way" of honoring Mathiowdis, reported Walker.

"A dynamic group of friends, family, and supporters has formed to plan a way to recognize the contributions Joy made to our organization," he said. Look for a formal announcement later in the year.



The late Joy Mathiowdis

## Volunteer Spotlight Just when you think a NJ radio personality can't do more for young people . . . she does

Visions and Pathways super volunteer Zonie LeSane operates at one level – high octane.

Since getting involved with the organization less than a year ago, LeSane has collected \$5,000 for Visions and Pathways programs, spoken at a mentoring event about entrepreneurship, and helped cook Thanksgiving dinner for residents.

Through her vast list of contacts (people call her “a connector”) LeSane has persuaded prominent businessmen and women and professional athletes to come to Visions and Pathways to speak to our youth.

Not only that, she often mentions Visions and Pathways on her public radio show on Friday nights, 7 to 10 p.m. on Station WFDU, which operates out of the Fairleigh Dickinson campus in Teaneck, New Jersey. Through the show, which is on 89.1 FM and is called “Back in the Day,” people across the state get to learn about the Visions and Pathways mission. David Walker, executive director of Visions and Pathways, has been a guest on the program.

LeSane, who lives in Hackensack and is a paralegal with the County of Bergen, said she learned about group homes when she was young. She happened to visit a friend who resided in a group home. “That visit always stuck with me,” she recalled. “That was back in the 1980s.”

Fast forward to 2019 when she learned about Visions and Pathways from Facebook friends (she has 4,000 followers) and jumped headlong into volunteering.

She believes in how Visions and Pathways gives at-risk youth a fresh start and much that will mean to them when they start their adult lives. “Adults shouldn’t forget where they come from,” she said. “That is what made you the person you are today.”

On Nov. 13 LeSane spent a few hours talking to residents about careers and entrepreneurship at Visions and Pathways’ bi-annual mentoring workshop.



**THANKSGIVING DINNER** was cooked and served to Visions and Pathways residents by volunteer Zonie LeSane and students from Bridgewater-Raritan High School.

An energized LeSane then went out and collected new winter clothes for residents. After “asking a few friends for donations,” she was able to collect \$5,000, which she presented in a check to the organization.

A few weeks later, this dynamo was back at Visions and Pathways cooking and serving Thanksgiving dinner with students from Bridgewater-Raritan High School.

New volunteer projects include a sneaker drive and more fundraising.

The ideas she has for volunteering to benefit Visions and Pathways are seemingly endless. But

Le Sane is equally dedicated to other non-profit causes. She is active in politics, does mental health counseling related to displacement, and is board president for the Bergen CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). This group recruits and trains advocates for a child or a sibling group who has been removed from their homes by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. New Jersey Family Court Judges assign children to available advocates like LeSane, who ultimately become their voice in court.

“I want my carbon footprint to give back to the community,” noted LeSane.



**VOLUNTEER ZONIE LESANE** presents a check for \$5,000 to Visions and Pathways CEO and Executive Director David Walker.

## You can make impact: a gift in will or trust

Interested 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 Home 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.

# 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](http://www.visionsandpathways.org), or use one of the payments to follow.

SP20



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


## SUCCESS STORIES

### Louis:

Louis is 15 years old. His mother is incarcerated serving a long term, and he was living with an aunt. The aunt used him as a "Cinderella." He rarely went to school, ate meager meals, and was treated harshly. Feeling hopeless, Louis ran away from his

aunt and contacted Street Smart outreach.

Street Smart placed him at the Brahma House emergency group home, and the staff contacted child welfare. Louis' father lives in North Carolina and had been searching desperately for his son. Louis' dad did not know about his mistreatment by his

ex-wife's sister. He was relieved when he learned that Louis is safe at Brahma House. Louis' dad is taking the steps necessary to be reunited with his son.

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### Jenny:

Jenny came to us after her foster mother passed away. She was in foster care because her parents died in a car accident. Jenny lived in a loving middle-class household. However, she was left alone and without family after her foster mother died. Despondent with no place to turn, she ultimately found Visions and Pathways.

First, she lived in our Passages Group home, where she received intensive counseling. As she became more independent, she moved to Whitney House.

While she was with us, she obtained her Associate Degree at Raritan Valley Community College. Jenny continued her education and graduated from Rutgers with a B.A. in journalism. She plans on writing and using her story to motivate others.



Here is the Spring 2020 issue of your Visions and Pathways newsletter.

*Thank you  
for investing in the  
future of our youth!*

## JCP&L pre-apprenticeship program comes under V&P's wing

A much recognized JCP&L program to find talent among youth of color for careers in energy will come under the direction of Visions and Pathways beginning in September.

For the last few years this pre-apprenticeship program with a community college

component was run by the Urban League of Morris County. That agency is turning over the reins to Visions and Pathways, which has the staff to monitor and grow the program.

JCP&L's Stan Prater is on the Visions and Pathways Advisory Council and recommended that the organization form

a partnership with JCP&L when the Urban League could not continue.

"JCP&L is reaching out to hire more people of color," noted David Walker, CEO and executive director of Visions and Pathways. "This is a great program. After completion, young people have enormous earning potential."

Salaries start at \$70,000 a year, according to Visions and Pathways Director of Education Fred Irving, who called the program "awesome."

Starting in the fall, recruiting and training will take place at Visions and Pathways' Morristown location. Participants must be seniors in high school on track to graduate or who have already graduated. They go to a two-year community college with tuition paid by JCP&L. After that, they take apprenticeship training to work for FirstEnergy Corp., the parent company of JCP&L, repairing power lines and operating substations.

"This is an incredible program for at-risk youth," said Irving. There is an entrance examination, and he is currently tutoring several Visions and Pathways youth to take the test, which has a math and an English component.



**RESPECTED** JCP&L program to train youth of color for careers in energy comes under the direction of Visions and Pathways this fall.