

# VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

## Year-End 2020 Newsletter

### Foundation dedicated to bridging digital divide of youth at risk gives much needed technology boost to Visions and Pathways

New computer hardware, training, coding lessons, and internet upgrades have fortuitously entered the lives of Visions and Pathways youth this year through the generosity of the Arman Roy Foundation, a New Jersey non-profit that wants to close the digital divide for at-risk youth.

Still to come is a 21st century technology center that the Arman Roy Foundation will create at Visions and Pathways' Brahma House. Foundation Chairperson Manisha Roy hopes the technology center will become a computer hub where youth can learn and prepare for internships and careers.

Roy said the harsh reality is that not everyone is equipped for the rapidly evolving digital American economy. Today, more than 20% of young adults still lack access to basic computers and internet. These are needed to gain exposure and experience necessary to learn programming, computer science, networking, and more, according to Roy, a Readington Township resident and senior director at Johnson & Johnson.

While many children have the opportunity to participate in computer workshops, robotics competitions, and STEM-enabled classrooms, she pointed out, there are young people, like those at Visions and Pathways, who will "never have the opportunity unless we come together to find ways to light that spark of hope for them."

The mission of Roy's foundation pays

tribute to Manisha and Pryia Roy's son Arman, who tragically passed away in his sleep last year at the age of 15. Arman was a technology whiz who attended The Hun School in Princeton, New Jersey. He mastered everything tech at a very young age, guided the school's robotics team, learned block chain technology, and even started a crypto-currency business in his parents' garage.

"He was always smiling, had a selfless way of helping others, and an extraordinary gift for technology," noted his mother.

Following his death, the family and many friends were inspired to start a foundation in Arman's name to try to change the lives of vulnerable youth by "opening a window to wonder, opportunity, and hope through technology," said Roy.



CHECK FOR \$1,000 from the Arman Roy Foundation went last spring to Visions and Pathways to improve internet capabilities in the residences. From left are Mohini Jaiswal, treasurer of the Arman Roy Foundation, Visions and Pathways Arts and Recreation Coordinator Emily Cataggio, Visions and Pathways Director of Administration Zoila Gonzalez, and Manisha Roy, chairperson of the Arman Roy Foundation. Roy and Mohini Jaiswal are sisters.

Visions and Pathways first came to the foundation's attention through one of Manisha Roy's Johnson & Johnson co-workers, who told her about the "incredible work" being done by Visions and Pathways.

After connecting with the organization and taking a tour of the facilities, Roy said she felt "instantly" that the foundation could really help Visions and Pathways youth.

First, the foundation made a gift of board  
*(continued on page 2)*



TECHNOLOGY TRAINEES from among Visions and Pathways youth work at their computers during a three-day virtual seminar coordinated and donated by the Arman Roy Foundation.

### 'Thank You for Not Coming' event raises \$53,500

When it became clear that Visions and Pathways' annual Spark! Gala couldn't take place in June because of COVID-19, the organization turned immediately to Plan B: a virtual fundraiser.

This event, which was billed as "Thank You for Not Coming," offered longtime gala patrons the opportunity to bid via the internet on luxury items in a silent auction as well as a second "fund-a-need" auction. This second auction, new for 2020, asked supporters to donate specific items for Visions and Pathways' youth.

Exceeding everyone's expectations, 'Thank You for Not Coming' raised more than \$53,500. More than 100 people participated in both auctions.

In the needs auction, supporters could elect to

pay for one month of food for six residents, music therapy for 12 youth, or a pizza night, among others good deeds. A popular item was purchasing work uniforms and interview clothing for Visions and Pathways youth going out into the job force.

Among the 50 items in the silent auction were art, wine, trips to Napa and Canada, overnight stays at luxury hotels, handbags, and gift certificates at local stores.

Co-chairs of the event were Lewis Gorden and Bonnie Hodge.

Sponsors in the Visionary category included Flemington Car and Truck Country, Somerset Patriots, Clinton Honda, and Land Rover Princeton. The Shining Light sponsor was AT&T.

## Message from the Executive Director

# Systemic and institutional racism and Visions and Pathways

COVID-19 sparked a discussion about racial disparities in health care. Following closely on the heels of this concern, George Floyd's murder ignited activism to combat racism in policing and a broader examination of racism. The stark reality is that racism is deadly.

Racism has a direct impact on all aspects of Visions and Pathways. Approximately 78 percent of Visions and Pathways' youth are Black or Latinx. Over 68 percent of our staff are Black, and among our supervisors 58 percent are Black, 17 percent are Latina, 17 percent are white, and 8 percent are Asian.

Racism is a causative factor in the need for our services, how we interact with our youth and ultimately our interventions' effectiveness. It impacts our day-to-day operations including, but not limited to, fundraising.

Racial disparities are an indicator of systemic racism. Wellness indicators undergird familial stress and can fodder the need for a child to run away, be kicked out of the home, or otherwise cause a youth to need V&P. Some of the key disparities include:

- In New Jersey, Blacks represent 15 percent of the population
  - There is a 12:1 Black to white disparity in incarceration -- the highest in the nation.
  - The Black poverty rate is approximately 2.5 times higher than whites.
- National studies and data show:

- Eleven percent of Black children have a parent who is incarcerated as compared with 4 percent of Hispanic and 2 percent of white children.
- Approximately one in every five African-American children who come to the attention of child welfare agencies have a recently arrested parent compared to only one in 10 white children and one in 20 Hispanic children.
- Black children are four times more likely to be in foster care than white children.
- Net worth of white families is 10 times that of Black families (higher than at the turn of the century).
- An average white adult high school dropout earns more than a Black adult with a college degree (earning is approximately 33 percent less).

In addition, a Wisconsin 2008 study indicates that families earning under \$15,000 are six times more likely to be involved with the child welfare system than families with higher incomes. Accordingly, the racial disparities in poverty and income contribute to disproportion in Black family involvement with the child welfare system.

Racism's impact on our youth is multifaceted and deeply ingrained in V&P's very existence. It is an inescapable factor in the reason most of our youth arrive at our doors. Our core mission is to help our youth become self-sufficient. Preparing them to live in a often racist society is integral to

fulfilling this mandate. It is imperative that we ground our approach to teaching independent living skills, providing career guidance, arts and recreation, mentoring, counseling, and all aspects of our work in this reality.

On May 1, 2020, the *New York Times* published an article by Paul Sullivan titled "In Philanthropy Race is Still a Factor in Who Gets What, Study Shows." The article describes the tremendous disparity in funding between nonprofits run by Caucasians as compared with comparable organizations with Black or Latinx leadership. The study referenced in the *Times* article is consistent with other studies that examine charitable giving and the nonprofit sector.

Organizations that are run by Blacks and Latinx come under a higher level of scrutiny and receive significantly less financial support.

These are transformative times. During the last seven years, Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children became Visions and Pathways. Somerset Home's client demographics were comparable to V&P's; V&P helps more Latinx youth than Somerset Home. In stark contrast with V&P, Somerset Home's leadership did not reflect its client demographics and its approach to helping youth was not culturally responsive. The moment and our mission dictate a thorough re-examination of V&P's identity and our priorities. As is true for our nation, it is time for additional transformative organizational change.

## Visions and Pathways receives gifts of technology

(continued from page 1)

games, and outdoor sports equipment, followed by a pizza lunch for all youth. Last winter the foundation sponsored a technology workshop at Brahma House and was planning a careers-in-technology seminar when COVID hit.

Realizing that the pandemic would be long lasting, the foundation donated 10 Google Chromebooks so Visions and Pathways youth suddenly studying remotely would have the resources needed to do so. The Arman Roy Foundation then donated \$1,000 to upgrade internet connections in both Brahma House and Passages.

In the spring, the foundation brought in the Montclair Learning Center for a three-day pilot program over Zoom to teach coding and computer education interactively.

"My husband, my sister, and I stopped in to see the project in action," reported Roy, "and it was so fulfilling for me personally because we saw kids really learning technology. And we saw Arman's face in all those kids."

Now, she said, the foundation is making a contribution toward desktop computers and sophisticated equipment for training in a little used space at Brahma House. This space will be dedicated as the Arman Roy Tech Center.

Roy has also involved Visions and Pathways in another of its programs, #Login2hope,



LETTER FROM a Visions and Pathways youth, Quianna Sumpter, thanks the Arman Roy Foundation for its donation of 10 Google Chromebooks to help those who suddenly had to switch to remote learning.

which sets up at-risk youth in technology internships at area companies. There, employees and executives act as mentors.

The companies include Comptech Associates Inc. in Somerset, New Jersey, and Mindcracker Inc. in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Through the program two Visions and Pathways young people will soon

have tech internships.

"We love working with Visions and Pathways," said Roy. "It is an amazing partnership, and we are so inspired by everyone that we have met," adding that she has been impressed with how the organization is able to move quickly to implement programs recommended by foundation officials.

"I feel this is just the beginning of what we can do to help the youth at Visions and Pathways," added Roy. "It takes all of us working together to create a home and a hopeful future."

David Walker, executive director of Visions and Pathways, said his organization is exceptionally fortunate to partner with the Arman Roy Foundation to be able to provide homeless youth with access to the digital world.

Katie Huber, Visions and Pathways Director of Behavioral Health, thanked the foundation for opening young people's doors to opportunities, especially now when the coronavirus pandemic has set back education and training for many. "Our youth have successfully utilized donations from the foundation to create self-care plans to remain present and occupied during this strange and challenging time," stated Huber.

## Expanded scholarships give Visions and Pathways youth a chance at college

New scholarships, included one in memory of a beloved mother who was a teacher and another in memory of a former board member who died in 2019, have invigorated the Visions and Pathways educational program.

Director of Education Fred Irving said the new scholarships came about through the generosity of individuals who believe strongly in the Visions and Pathways mission. One of them is Jeffrey Meissner, a member of the Visions and Pathways Advisory Council and one of the organization's most active supporters.

This year Meissner, a Hillsborough resident, created a \$3,000 scholarship in memory of his late mother Ruth, who was a teacher. Meissner said his mother believed strongly in the power of education.

Another exciting new scholarship is called the "Sharing Joy" Scholarship to honor the memory of Joy Mathiowdis, who was a strong advocate for social justice. She served on the Board of Visions & Pathways for many years, and her efforts directly helped thousands of youth.

David Walker, CEO and executive director of Visions and Pathways, called her "a beacon of light for many and is continuing to do so."

Mathiowdis was a valued colleague to many from Schering-Plough, Merck, Novartis, and GlaxoSmithKline, and after her death from cancer these friends raised \$11,500 to create the scholarship.

Sharing Joy Scholarship holders will be youth who exemplify Mathiowdis's dedication and compassion to improving the lives of others, promoting civic engagement, and especially fighting discrimination of any kind.

The first annual Sharing Joy Scholarship was awarded to Jazmeer Evans-Harris. "Jazmeer was awarded this scholarship for his continued efforts in advocating for social justice and commitment to education," said Jennifer Amaya, Visions and Pathways' Director of Outreach and Prevention, who heads the Sharing Joy Scholarship Committee.

Irving paid tribute to the Visions and Pathways Scholarship Committee for fundraising and administering the comprehensive program that



TO HONOR THE MEMORY of his mother Ruth, a teacher, Visions and Pathways Advisory Council member Jeffrey Meissner (third from left) created a scholarship for deserving youth graduating from the program. At the first ceremony naming scholarship winners are (from left) recipients Selena Ramirez and Hokulani Lando, Meissner, his wife Jodi Meissner, and recipient Stephanie Arias.

provides high school seniors with money to go to college. In addition to the new scholarships, the committee administers the prestigious Warren Scholarship, the AT&T Pioneers Scholarship, and several other Visions and Pathways Scholarships.

Among the first recipients of the Ruth Meissner Memorial Scholarship are Stephanie Arias, Nestor Vasquez, Selena Ramirez, and Hokulani Lando.

Arias, who is attending the University of Notre Dame, not only received the Meissner Scholarship but earned the Warren Scholarship and a scholarship from Visions and Pathways.

Fellow graduate Nestor Vasquez, who earned the Meissner Scholarship and is pursuing a criminal justice degree at Kean University, also received the AT & T Pioneers Scholarship and a scholarship from Visions and Pathways.

Nestor's upbringing and high school experience have been far from typical. As part of a family of six he spent his early years residing in one room with minimal cooking and refrigeration facilities.

With the death of his mother, his father lost custody, resulting in Nestor and his siblings being placed in separate foster homes. Nestor spent the next few years at several foster homes leading up to Visions and Pathways.

He credits Visions and Pathways for giving him "the stability and discipline" to focus on his studies. Nestor's teacher and guidance counselor at Roxbury High School described him as an "optimistic, goal-oriented, compassionate and resilient student."

At school, he played lacrosse and participated in fundraising for the Children's Cancer Hospital, all the while holding a job at ShopRite. Nestor rode his bike one hour each way to and from school in pursuit of his goal to be the first member of his family with a college degree.

Irving said that endowing a scholarship is a very fitting way to honor a loved one, a friend, or a co-worker. Those who are interested in setting up a scholarship should contact David Walker, executive director, at (908) 526-6605, ext. 304.



**Nestor Vasquez:** scholarship winner



**Jazmeer Evans-Harris:** scholarship winner



**Stephanie Arias:** scholarship winner

## Colorful mural brightens grounds at Brahma House



A vibrant mural created by the youth of Visions and Pathways and assisted by the Somerset County Youth Council now graces the exterior of the garage at Brahma House. The theme of the mural is “Words of Empowerment”

The idea for the mural originated with the youth of Visions and Pathways. Emily Cataggio, Visions and Pathways’ arts and recreation coordinator, then worked with Psian Aviles-Quinones from the Somerset County Department of Human Services to curate the concept of the mural.

Visions and Pathways youth began the painting, and members of the Somerset County Youth Council came in to help out. The Youth Council was established to develop leadership skills and give Somerset County teens and pre-teens a forum where their concerns reach county government.

Over the course of a couple of days all the young artists painted one garage wall with colorful images and individual words or phrases that truly encapsulate the culture of today’s youth. What was just a garage is now a showcase for mural art.

BRIGHT COLORS of a new mural (photo above) enliven a wall of the Brahma House garage. “Words of Empowerment” is the theme of the mural, which was painted by youth from Visions and Pathways and the Somerset County Youth Council (photo below). They worked with the Somerset County Department of Human Services and Visions and Pathways staff on the project.

## Giving Thanks concert to take place Nov. 12



Visions and Pathways will host “Giving Thanks,” a virtual concert, on Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. The concert will feature choral groups from local churches and synagogues.

Brenda Price from Star 99.1 radio in Zarephath was slated to be the emcee.

Tickets are \$10, and all proceeds go to the support of Visions and Pathways Street Smart program and the Loving Care Homes women’s shelter in Plainfield.

We invite all to get tickets through <https://one.bidpal.net/givingthanks>. Ticketholders will be given an access code to tune in to the concert.

## Visions and Pathways has first fundraising yard sale; may go annual

Board members, staff, and friends of Visions and Pathways emptied their basements and attics for the organization’s first fundraising yard sale this summer.

July 18 happened to be a scorching hot day, but yard sale enthusiasts flocked to the location in the Brahma House parking lot. The sale raised more than \$1,300 for Visions and Pathways projects.

The yard sale was so successful that Visions and Pathways is thinking of making it an annual event.



FIRST YARD SALE to benefit Visions and Pathways took place in July in the Brahma House parking lot. Volunteers included neighbors, friends of Visions and Pathways, and members of the Board of Trustees.

## 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).

### Board of Trustees

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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 January 2020 to date\* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

3M + KCI  
Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation  
African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ  
Anonymous  
Arman Roy Foundation  
AT&T  
AT&T Pioneers  
Atlantic Health System  
Belle Meade Co-Op  
Benadon Consulting, LLC  
BlackRock Gives  
Branchburg Woman's Club  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company  
Christian Fellowship Club of Concordia  
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Flemington Car and Truck Country  
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Hope Church  
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Jolyn Foundation  
Junior League of Morristown  
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Liquid Church  
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Neshanic Reformed Church  
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Readington Reformed Church  
Reformed Church at Finderne  
Rite Aid Foundation KidCents  
Rotary Club of Morristown  
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Somerville High School "For Kids By Kids"  
South Branch Reformed Church  
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Strength Condition  
Target  
Trinity United Church  
Tyler Foundation  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills  
United Methodist Women - First United Methodist Church  
Walmart  
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.  
With Intentions, LLC  
Zeus Industrial Products, Inc.

\*As of Sept. 3

### 2020 Facebook Birthday Fundraisers \$7,000

David Dvorin  
Michelle Drapkin  
Keraya Jefferson  
Annemarie Mattia  
Kate Meade  
Cynthia Ramsey  
Jill Scott  
David Walker

### 2020 Volunteer Groups

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Nu Xi Omega chapter  
AmeriCorps  
Arman Roy Foundation  
Central Jersey Church of Christ  
Evangel Chapel  
Junior League of Morristown

## Annual Run and Walk goes virtual

The annual 5K Run and Walk, the 22nd time that Visions and Pathways has held the event, had to switch to virtual this fall because of state laws banning large gatherings.

Although Visions and Pathways had to quickly adapt a new strategy for the Run and Walk, supporters of the organization signed up in impressive numbers. The event raised \$28,000.

Participants were able to register through an online fundraising platform and received a free T-shirt and drawstring bag. Runners and walkers could rack up the miles any time between mid-September and Oct. 3.

When the event concluded, Visions and Pathways was excited to see participants from as far away as Boege in Southeastern France and Lymington in the United Kingdom!

Team Run for Joy was the 2020 event's top grossing team with 1,700 points, and David Buckman was "super supporter" with 1,046 points.

Co-chairs Joanne Machalaba and Fran Smith worked hard to make the virtual event a success. Committee members included: David Dvorin, Alvin Gonzales, Veona Martin, Laurie Pellegrino and Karen Yutsus.

A huge thank you to our sponsors: Zeus, Nisivoccia LLP, Peace and Delivery-Gregory Hirsch, Hightower - Egan Wealth Advisors, Strength Condition, Benadon Consulting, Paycom, Dave's Suburban Disposal Service, and NJM Insurance Group.

## Effective Measures by S.C.

I'm a tenant in this tenement we choose to call  
America

Our shackles cause hysteria, it should make it ap-  
parent that Freedom's a delusion that we wanted to  
believe

It cost a man his trachea, his life for us to see WE  
HAVE VALUE.

It leaves me incensed, doesn't make any sense A  
man is to die for us to realize

That we hold potential for yielding success  
We're relentless

Strength being put to the test, it's  
A civil war of 2020 with hopes of reform I  
don't think of COVID anymore

BLM on every forum

You're against them or your for 'em

Seemingly endless prejudice will no longer be ignored They  
fight back, because equality's foreign to them Tase, shoot, and pretend  
They're the protector of men

We have the energy, but we need a plan

Are we fighting some officers or the injustice of man Can we incorporate  
diplomacy in our cavalry?

You know the two go hand-in-hand Distinguishing the rocks from the  
grains in sand

It's okay to be brazen when raising raiders, rebelling But if they ask, you  
can't say I'm chasing everyone else Get a hold of yourselves

Fighting for more than yourself

I don't cry from all the trauma, I just wrote how I feel (Should be avenging  
some kills

By amending some bills) ——removed

As a person of color, I've been a victim my whole life

So if there's a chance for change, I wanna make sure it's done right

Our youth are part of the solution. They are our future.



TIE-DYED T-SHIRT MAKING was one of the most popular activities at the Family and Friends Picnic Sept. 12 at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey.

## Family and Friends Duke Island Park picnic was safe, fun-filled day

Visions and Pathways hosted its annual Family and Friends Picnic at Duke Island Park on Sept. 12, which turned out to be the perfect fall day to enjoy a day outdoors.

Wearing masks, staff, youth, family, and friends enjoyed an event full of creative and physical activities planned by the Arts and Recreation Department.

The highlight of the picnic was the t-shirt tie dye station. "Creativity was flowing among all the participants, and it really showed in their designs," reported Emily Cataggio, arts and recreation coordinator.

Cataggio said the organization would like to thank volunteer Vicki White for capturing all of the great moments from the day through her camera, and David Tucker from EAB Group for donating Rita's Italian Ice in several classic flavors, a perfect cool-off treat after a game of volleyball.

Months of hard work went into planning the event. "While it may have not looked the same as in past years, Visions and Pathways was determined to create a safe, fun-filled day," noted Cataggio.

Visions and Pathways would like to thank all who attended and contributed to the picnic. "Please join us next year for some more family friendly fun," said Cataggio.

## 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.

YE20

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

### Jazmeer

Jazmeer has completed his freshman year at William Paterson University.

He became involved with the child welfare system at the age of 5. Shortly after that, he entered foster care.

He was 17 when he became a part of Visions and Pathways' Prosperity independent living skills program. Prosperity helped him set personal goals and a plan for success.

Jazmeer displayed great leadership skills in high school. He was president of the Gay Straight Alliance club. His club held events, discussions, and fundraisers to bring awareness to social injustices within the community and around the world.

Jazmeer considered several colleges. Ultimately, after V&P staff facilitated a campus tour, he decided that he wanted to attend William Paterson University. V&P helped him complete the application. After few weeks, Jazmeer learned that he was accepted and received a partial scholarship!

At William Paterson he is thriving well both academically and socially. A sociology major, his goal is to become a social worker. He has a 3.7 GPA, joined the Ebony Club and plans to join the LGBTQ club. He is laying the foundation for a bright future.



### Greg:

After being placed at Brahma House through the Street Smart Outreach Program, Greg has continually expressed feeling comfortable and safe. He has been able to continue attending virtual school daily and has connected with Residential Services staff. The staff at Brahma House has provided him with positive relationships Greg previously did not have.

He remains at Brahma House and is looking to transition to one of our other transitional living homes to remain with Visions and Pathways while he completes his high school education and continues to receive the supportive services we offer.

### Jazmine:

Since entering our Whitney House Supervised Transitional Living Program Jazmine has fully taken advantage of the supportive services offered to her. Jazmine has attended weekly counseling sessions consistently since her arrival about one year ago. This has assisted with stabilizing and improving Jazmine's mental health, as well as helping her identify a positive support system.

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### Melanie:

Since entering Brahma House, Melanie has connected with her therapist and leaned on her for support throughout her stay. Melanie has successfully been reunified with her family. But since she has established a positive and healthy therapeutic relationship with her therapist Melanie will continue weekly individual counseling.

Soon she will begin family therapy sessions with her Visions and Pathways clinicians. This will assist Melanie and her family to strengthen their communication skills and rebuild their relationship.

Here is the Year-End 2020 issue  
of your Visions and Pathways  
newsletter.

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

## A special THANK YOU

Albert Family  
Arman N. Roy Foundation  
Basking Ridge Meals  
Emily Benadon  
Bridgewater, Raritan, Branchburg, Somerville Moms Group  
Brown Bags for Health  
Central Jersey Church of Christ  
Civil Air Patrol  
Cooper Family  
Christine Walker  
Evangel Chapel  
Fraternal Order of Eagles AERIE 2137  
Helen Reep  
Jersey Cares  
Pam Lester  
Natalie Lyszyk  
The Mask Squad  
Lara Martin  
Laurie Pellegrino  
Elisa Rivera  
Patty Sirubi Ross  
Kunal Shah  
Nishaant Shah  
Jill Scott  
The Junior League of Morristown  
Lisa Collado Stokes  
Mairead Chong  
Mac Gorman Family  
Sandra DeOliveira  
Sarkar Family  
Michele Tyler  
Christine and Stephen Walker  
Watchung Hills Regional High School  
With Intention, LLC  
Zarephath Christian Church

## COVID changes life for residents, staff

Because of new COVID-19 health precautions, when entering a Visions and Pathways residence or office the first procedure is have your temperature taken. Visions and Pathways is fortunate to have new wall-mounted thermometers that make temperature taking so much easier.

More than \$160,000 in improvements like the wall-mounted thermometers have been acquired through grants from the New Jersey's Department of Children and Families and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Additional funds have come from the NJ Housing Alliance and the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund, which was overseen by Gov. Phil Murphy's wife.

The County of Somerset Department of Health also contributed toward the health effort.

With the much needed grants, Visions and Pathways has been able to replace the flooring from carpeting to hard wood floors at the Brahma House youth shelter and purchase new mattresses in the youth beds in an effort to make sure they can be easily sanitized weekly.

Visions and Pathways officials placed hand sanitizer machines throughout all facilities and installed plexiglass dividers in all offices.

Director of Administration Zoila Gonzalez said the grants helped purchase PPE supplies for all facilities plus those needed by the Street Outreach program to distribute to its clients and educate them about COVID.

In addition, the grants have enabled Visions and Pathways to begin sanitizing the houses and offices twice a week and perform overall internal sanitation on a monthly basis.

"When the quarantine started and some staff started to work remotely, we were able to provide them with business cell phones and laptops in order to do their work," said Gonzalez.

She paid tribute to the many local residents and non-profit organizations that generously delivered PPE supplies to Visions and Pathways. "They have allowed us to stay COVID-free," she said.