

VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

Spring 2021 Newsletter

New Wellness Program expands health, fitness, art, faith-based activities

Keeping youth physically healthy while making sure they are emotionally strong is critically important to Visions and Pathways.

For this reason the organization just created a bold new Wellness Program that combines health, fitness, and faith-based programming and wraps them together with the former arts and recreation program. The program has proved extremely popular with Visions and Pathways' youth, according to Executive Director and CEO David Walker.

The Wellness Program involves much of the organization staff, working under the supervision of Director of Outreach and Prevention Jennifer Amaya.

"The ability to offer our youth different types of activities, including but not limited to sports activities, exercise, visual arts, performing arts, and spiritually focused conversations, encourages our youth's mental and physical health," noted Amaya.

Under the banner of Wellness, Visions and Pathways runs healthy eating workshops taught by volunteers, bringing nutritional cooking ideas to the youth. Among the fitness activities are volleyball, football, and basketball.

During the pandemic the Wellness Program has been especially helpful since residents are learning remotely and have been limited in what they can do outside Visions and Pathways. "Although our

activities are often for short periods of time," said Amaya, "these activities give our youth a much needed break from all that is going on around them."

Wellness Program Coordinator Emily Cataggio has kept residents active during the pandemic through apple picking, hikes at South Mountain Reservation and bike riding excursions, with swimming planned for the summer months.

She schedules careful field trips in the metropolitan area that encourage critical



PERSONAL FINANCE was the topic of a January workshop hosted for the youth of Visions and Pathways by Evangel Chapel in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Evangel Chapel partners with Visions and Pathways' Wellness Program to offer monthly seminars on everything from car maintenance to social etiquette.

thinking and a sense of adventure. Around Christmastime, a busload of residents enjoyed a trip to the (continued on page 2)



HOLIDAY LIGHTS at the Bronx Zoo on a night before Christmas was the destination of a Wellness Program field trip taken by the youth of Visions and Pathways. The new Wellness Program encompasses field trips, health, recreation, the arts, and faith-based programming. The Bronx Zoo trip was sponsored by Dombal Vogel Foundation.

Visions and Pathways starts Coins for Kids collection campaign

Don't be afraid of change! That is, the kind that accumulates in your wallet.

Supporters of Visions and Pathways are being asked to put their loose change to work by depositing it in new Coins for Kids collection boxes placed near the cash registers at area businesses. When filled, these coinboxes will be a lifeline for Visions and Pathways.

The organization has just begun its exciting Coins for Kids campaign, and area merchants are already being supportive.

Among the first merchants to sign up are Mailbox Business Center, Y&C Cleaners, Amwell Pharmacy, Belle Mead Co-Op, and Hillsborough Star Diner, all in Hillsborough; Liquor Saver in Somerville; Liquor Barn in Bridgewater; Boro Liquors in Raritan; and the Sunset Diner in Green Brook.

"We can't thank the businesses enough who are first to accept our Coins for Kids collection boxes," said Jennifer Amaya, Visions and Pathways Director of Outreach and Prevention. Retailers who agree to be a part of Coins for Kids can contact her at (973) 644-4666.



COINS FOR KIDS collection boxes to benefit Visions and Pathways are popping up at area retailers like Mailbox Business Center in Hillsborough, where Matt Schorr (right) is the owner. Ruth Alvarenga, a Visions and Pathways Prosperity Independent Living Skills counselor, demonstrates the new coinboxes.

Visions and Pathways has new Wellness Program that energizes youth

(continued from page 1)

Holiday Lights at the Bronx Zoo, and the Wellness Program rented out a movie theater for a holiday showing of "A Christmas Story."

As the pandemic starts to wane, the Wellness Program will be looking to visits to the Amazing Escape Room in Green Brook, where Visions and Pathways youth have to work in teams to solve clues. "This helps our youth strategize and think critically," noted Cataggio.

She also has plans for trips to Somerset Patriots games, Six Flags, The Splashplex waterpark in East Hanover, Turtleback Zoo, and to haunted hayrides and corn mazes as well as trips to the mall, a sunflower farm, an aquarium, picnics, minigolf, and bowling.

Art is an important component of Wellness because Visions and Pathways believes strongly in fostering an appreciation of the arts among its population. A volunteer teaches a bi-weekly class in watercolors, and another art class taught by a professional is slated to begin in the fall.

Writing, journaling, and photography are also encouraged under the Wellness Program. Every youth is invited to share in one of the program's signature efforts, the Catch the Tea quarterly youth-produced publication. Catch the Tea was in existence

before the Wellness Program began but since has become one of the strong parts of the initiative. It is composed of a variety of forms of self-expression, such as art, photography, journal entries, poetry, "shout outs," and anything else the youth wish to share.

It provides a safe and creative outlook for youth to voice their opinions, according to Cataggio.

Faith-based programming

One of the mainstays of the Wellness Program is faith-based programming because, as Jennifer Amaya explains it, Visions and Pathways wants to "open minds to different faiths and spirituality ideas that the youth can explore further."

She has facilitated partnering with different church groups in the area to bring general activities to residents as well as spiritual conversations. "These partnerships allow youth to meet those involved with the faith and be able to ask questions," noted Amaya.

One of the new resourceful partnerships is with Evangel Chapel in Bridgewater, New Jersey. The church has extended an open invitation to Visions and Pathways residents every Friday night to join its youth groups and schedules a monthly visit by residents to the church, where members conduct seminars on everything from personal finances to safe driving, car maintenance, self-awareness, and social etiquette.

Church members have also covered captivating topics for special celebrations. A National Hispanic Heritage Month event included a presentation on Hispanic culture. For Black History Month, the church brought in an artist to teach the youth to draw a scene from the comic book "Black Panther."

"There is a spiritual underlay to the activities, but it is not the focus," emphasized Amaya. "Evangel Chapel's volunteers have done a great job working with our youth. They somehow know when the conversation or activity needs to be serious or more lighthearted and fun."

Added Cataggio, "We are grateful for this partnership as they are dedicated to helping our youth with important knowledge and faith-based lessons."

Other church and synagogue groups

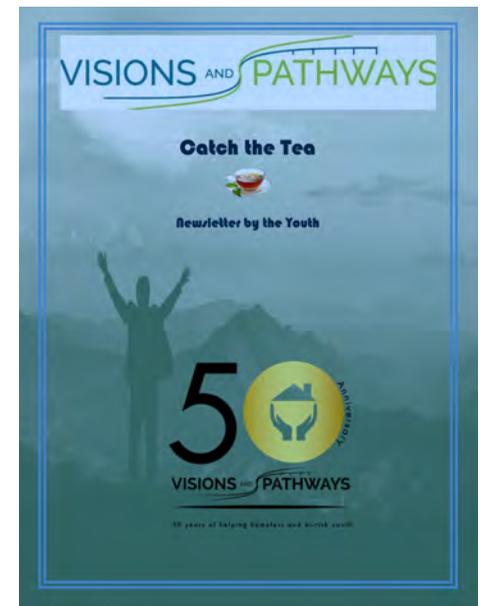


BICYCLING is a sport promoted by the Wellness Program that keeps Visions and Pathways youth fit.



PUMPKIN PAINTING was a fall activity for Visions and Pathways youth under the new Wellness Program.

involved in the Wellness Program are: Central Jersey Church of Christ in North Brunswick, the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties, Temple Beth Am in Parsippany, Temple Sholom of Bridgewater, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville, Our Lady of the Mount in Warren, Neshanic Reformed Church in Hillsborough, and St. Joseph Church in Hillsborough.



CATCH THE TEA is a vibrant publication produced by the youth of Visions and Pathways under the umbrella of the new Wellness Program. It comes out quarterly and contains writing, poetry, and art.

Residence expressly for LGBTQ youth on Visions and Pathways' horizon

Visions and Pathways openly welcomes LGBTQ youth into its programs, but now momentum is building for a separate residence expressly for LGBTQ youth.

David Walker, CEO and executive director of Visions and Pathways, announced that the organization has started planning and fundraising for a new LGBTQ residence, possibly in the Plainfield area.

According to Walker, the residence would accommodate no more than six people and would be staffed around the clock, similar to Visions and Pathways' other residences. Counselors and social services staff would be headquartered at the proposed new house to provide support.

"I would say about 20 percent of our population are LGBTQ kids," noted Walker, who said statistics show about 7 percent of youth in the United States are LGBTQ.

"These kids are three times more likely to experience homelessness than kids in the nation's general population," Walker reported. "They face rejection when the families cannot accept their children's sexuality. They are bullied at school and not accepted at home. Many are just kicked out of their homes."

Some of these LGBTQ youth in New Jersey fortunately find their way to Visions and Pathways through its Street Outreach program, which operates in Somerset, Morris, and Union

counties.

"Many have told us they would feel more comfortable in a residence just for them," Walker reported. "It can be difficult for LGBTQ youth to live in a group home without specialized services. They can be ostracized, bullied, and subjected to violence. Opening a home specifically for LGBTQ youth will allow them to have peer support, strengthen their self-esteem, and enjoy a positive experience."

Enter Visions and Pathways' relatively new Sharing Joy Committee, a group of volunteers who honor the memory of the late Joy Mathiowdis, a longtime Visions and Pathways Board member who died in 2019. Members of the committee raise money for college scholarships for Visions



LGBTQ YOUTH are welcomed at Visions and Pathways, and now the organization is planning a new residence just for these teenagers, possibly in Plainfield.

and Pathways youth committed to equality and social justice. Now the committee has taken on the task to raise the funds for the proposed LGBTQ residence.

Walker said although the campaign to raise funds is in its early stages, a Realtor and an architect on the committee have already started looking at potential properties. The committee is thinking about locating in Plainfield because the city already has a sizeable LGBTQ population.

"We know there is a need," said Walker. "And now we have a group committed to moving forward on the project."

While the hunt for a suitable residence begins, Visions and Pathways has reaffirmed its commitment to the LGBTQ youth who are part of the organization. Skittlez is Visions and Pathways' mentoring and support group for LGBTQ residents.

Skittlez invites speakers in monthly to talk to LGBTQ youth, offering emotional support and positive reinforcement. There are also trips and arts and recreational activities.

Why Do LGBTQ Youth Experience Homelessness?

Family conflict is the most common cause of all youth homelessness. For LGBTQ youth in particular, the conflict tends to be over their sexual orientation or gender identity.

While rejection is the most frequently cited reason LGBTQ youth experience homelessness, it's not the only one.

According to service providers, additional reasons include aging out of the foster care system, poverty, and conflict in the home. Often it's not one thing that causes homelessness but a combination of many. The chart below illustrates some of those reasons.

Most prevalent reasons for LGBTQ youth homelessness

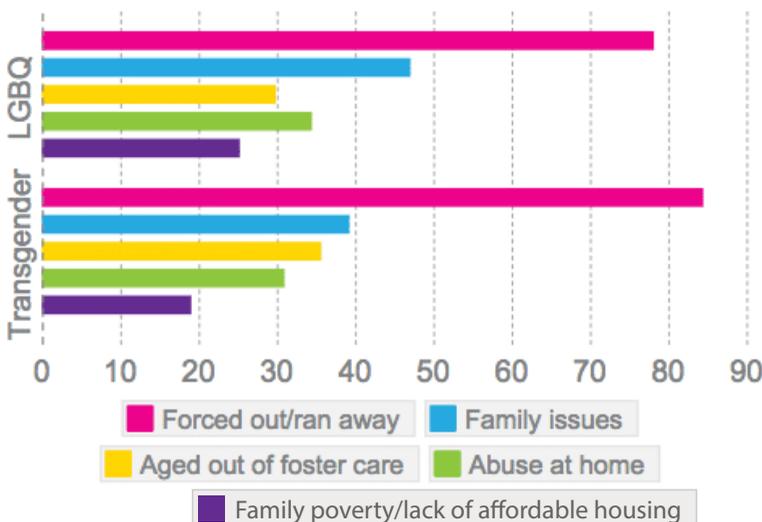


Chart created by True Colors United, 311 W. 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036

Engage with Us

- Like our page on Facebook
- @visionsandpathways
- Like our page on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter
@VisionsandPathwaysNJ
@StreetSmart_NJ
- Add us on Amazon Smile

A second 'Giving Thanks' virtual concert to be May 13

Building on the popularity of Visions and Pathways' first "Giving Thanks" virtual concert and interfaith multicultural celebration of music and dance last fall, the organization will sponsor another concert Thursday, May 13 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Performers will come from various New Jersey faith organizations, including Temple Shalom in Bridgewater, the Worship Team of Evangel Chapel in Bridgewater, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville, and Calvary Baptist Church in Morristown. Individual performers are Renee Connell, Buddy Williams, Elizabeth Alfaro, Selena Ramirez, and more.

Tickets are \$10. To purchase tickets, visit the user-friendly internet platform <https://one.bidpal.net/visionsandpathwaysconcert>.

The November concert attracted more than

Visions and Pathways asks donors to consider current pressing needs

Visions and Pathways is always in need of personal and household items for residents, and there are many ways our supporters can donate items directly.

Every time a new client comes to live at Visions and Pathways, he or she receives personal items, so these are needed in bulk. Some of the new client items needed are: pillows, comforters, sheet sets, towels, washcloths, hampers, combs and brushes, deodorant, shampoo, soap and body wash, sanitary supplies, shower item carriers, toothbrushes and toothpaste, shaving cream, Tylenol, razors, peroxide, and cotton swabs.

Household items needed include: vacuums, storage containers, mixing bowls, seasoning racks, plastic silverware, sets of pots and pans, sets of knives, plastic glasses, dinnerware sets, hot cup sets, utensils for cooking, shower curtains, blinds and shades, bathroom rug sets, solid color curtain sets with rods, throw pillows, area rugs, mattresses, garbage cans for trash and recycling, four-slice toasters, potholders, and pantry racks.

Appliances are in great need. They include: refrigerators washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, industrial stoves and ovens, and freezers.

For program supplies, the organization is looking for donations of face masks, liquid hand soap, plastic gloves in size XL, hand sanitizer refills, hand sanitizer dispensers, paper towel dispensers, toilet tissue dispensers, hand soap dispensers, body wash dispensers, and toilet tissue.

Also, trashbags - 40 by 47 inches, trash bags with white drawstrings, sponges (20 per case), Pine Sol. - 24 oz. or larger, Lysol disinfectant spray - 12 per case, Lysol wipes, paper towels- 7.5 inches, laundry detergent - 100 oz. and four per case, dish detergent - 84 to 100 oz., dishwasher detergent, Fabuloso (lavender scent), Clorox bleach, Clorox Bleach cleaner in a spray bottle, and Brillo Pads.

Any donations can be dropped off at 49 Brahma Ave. in Bridgewater, New Jersey and by appointment only at 175 Washington St., Morristown, first floor.

225 virtual visitors and raised more than \$7,500 for Visions and Pathways programs. Volunteers Aileen Torres and Diana Dorsey coordinated the event. Brenda Price from Star 99.1 radio in Zarephath was the emcee, and she has agreed to emcee the May 13 concert as well.

Musical performers included: Elizabeth Alfaro, Alejandra Colindres, and Ruth Alvarenga; the Evangel Chapel Worship Team (Spanish Band); Renee Connell; Buddy Williams; Temple Beth Am Group from Parsippany, New Jersey; and Rabbis Cece Beyer and Ron Isaacs from Temple Shalom.

Performing traditional Indian dances were dancers from Bhaarat Nritya Academy in Bridgewater, New Jersey, Rekha Srinivasan, founder and artistic director, and the Siddhendra Kuchipudi Art Academy in Edison, New Jersey, Swathi Atluri, founder and artistic director.

David Walker, executive director of Visions and Pathways, said he was so pleased to see so many



HOURS OF PLANNING went into the first Visions and Pathways' virtual Giving Thanks concert last November that featured musical performers and dancers from area religious institutions. Organizers included (from left): videographer Harold St. Louis, Zoila Gonzalez, Visions and Pathways' director of administration, emcee Brenda Price from Star 99.1 radio in Zarephath, and Cynthia Ramsey, Visions and Pathways program manager.

turn out for the first Giving Thanks concert. "It has not been the easiest year for people amidst the coronavirus health crisis," Walker stated. "Our virtual concert brought people of different denominations and cultures together. We hope to do the same with our May event."

All proceeds will go to the support of Visions and Pathways Street Smart program and the Loving Care Homes women's shelter in Plainfield. For more information, please contact Development Associate Adriana Gonzalez, agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org.

An Interfaith Multicultural Celebration of Music and Dance.

VISIONS AND PATHWAYS INVITES YOU TO OUR:

Emceed by Brenda Price

"GIVING THANKS" VIRTUAL CONCERT

MAY 13, 2021

7:00PM - 9:00PM

Mid-Day On Air Personality at STAR 99.1FM

\$10 Love Offering

To benefit youth who are homeless or at risk of being sexually abused or exploited.

With participation from various faith organizations like Temple Shalom, Evangel Chapel Worship Team, Renee Connell, Buddy Williams, Elizabeth Alfaro, Selena Ramirez, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Calvary Baptist Church and more!

Visit <https://one.bidpal.net/visionsandpathwaysconcert> to purchase tickets!

CONTACT ADRIANA GONZALEZ AT AGONZALEZ@VISIONSANDPATHWAYS.ORG FOR DETAILS

GIVING THANKS VIRTUAL CONCERT, the second one Visions and Pathways has done, is slated for Thursday, May 13 from 7 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online.

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 11,000 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.

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Donors change lives forever

THANK YOU to the companies, foundations, and service organizations that have made generous monetary contributions from December 2020 to date* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation
Anonymous
Arman Roy Foundation
Atlantic Health System
Belle Meade Co-Op
Benadon Consulting, LLC
Branchburg Girl Scout Troop 60956
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
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*As of December 2020

2020/2021 Facebook Birthday Fundraisers \$1,000 or more

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

Annual Run and Walk now moves to April

Visions and Pathways has moved its Annual 5K Run, Walk, or Relax fundraising event from October to Saturday, April 17, but Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey remains the location where the event has been held for 23 years. Run, Walk, or Relax which last year raised \$28,000, will be held in person as well as virtual.

New this year is Visions and Pathways' partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Somerset Hills to help sponsor the event.

Although it is the 23rd year for the in-person Run, Walk, or Relax, this is the second year that the event is also virtual. In 2020, Visions and Pathways had to turn to a virtual event when state laws banned large gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These laws have recently been lifted.

However, in holding the event virtually Visions and Pathways found so many new supporters that it decided to continue the virtual component in 2021 alongside the in-person fundraiser. Some of those virtual supporters came from as far away as France and the United Kingdom.

All participants can register through the online fundraising platform <https://p2p.onecause.com/visionsandpathways5k> anywhere at anytime between now and April 17.

There will also be a Virtual Silent Auction component, which supporters can access at: <https://one.bidpal.net/auctionforkids>.

Visions and Pathways is looking to enroll both new and past participants to help homeless and abused youth in New Jersey have a brighter future.

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 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, streetSMARToutreach.org or at our Bridgewater and Morristown locations

Murder Mystery evening new fundraiser for 2021

Who done it? Follow the clues and help solve a crime when Visions and Pathways sponsors a new experience, an exciting Murder Mystery Evening, on Thursday, Sept. 9 at Royce Brook Country Club in Hillsborough, New Jersey.

The Murder Mystery Evening is Visions and Pathways' chief fundraising event for 2021, replacing the annual gala, formerly held each June. The event, involving live actors, will have all the fun and hoopla of the gala. Along with the thrill of solving a mystery, the night will include a needs auction, where supporters donate specific items for Visions and Pathways' youth, and a silent auction featuring art, wine, stays at luxury hotels, handbags, and gift certificates at local stores.

Look for information to go out in the beginning of the summer.

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 is Nowhere Else To Turn . . . 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.

SP21

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

Erinn

Erinn is a female youth who has been residing in Loving Care Homes residential program since September 2020. Errin came from a single-parent household run by her mother. After her mother became incarcerated, Errin found temporary shelter in an adult shelter before entering Visions & Pathways.

Upon first entry into the program, Errin did not have employment. She began working with her case manager to strengthen her resume and identify the skills that would make her a great team member. Errin successfully landed two part-time jobs, one at Amazon and the other at ShopRite, which she works faithfully.

She also has developed personal growth by engaging in therapeutic services while in the program. At first, Errin denied wanting to receive services but then through time was able to identify issues and stressors that needed to be worked on. Errin has been meeting regularly with her therapist to continue her personal growth. She is aware by doing this she will be able to handle herself better in negative situations.

Erinn has also been an active member in participating with events in the program and has been able to build relationships with other residents. Errin has demonstrated her



willingness to grow and to become successful in all future endeavors.

Visions and Pathways will continue to work with Errin to provide support and assist her with developing and strengthening her independent living skills.

Jade

Jade has been with Visions and Pathways' Street Outreach program for over one year. She has battled housing issues and has been working very hard to obtain employment. Jade finally earned a position in food services at Morristown Medical Center and will be using this as a stepping stone within the company to climb the

ladder. Her dream is to be a social worker, and she will be going back to school in the fall at Rutgers. We have also found Jade stable housing, where she will be able to have her own space and not have to depend on her friends for a couch.

Christina

Christina is a 22-year-old who has been with Visions and Pathways since 2019. V & P has assisted her in staying independent from her father for 3 and 1/2 years. It has never been easy. Christina came to New Jersey from Puerto Rico to stay with her father. However, her father didn't feel that he had to support his daughter, so he kicked Christina and her sister out.

V & P helped find them a room to rent and assistance in furnishing that room. We assisted Christina in finding employment and then assisted both her and her sister in finding another location to rent. V & P helped her move to her new apartment in Plainfield, and through an anonymous donor we were able to assist with furnishing that space as well.

Cristina found out she was pregnant (expecting in May) and began to feel overwhelmed. We linked her to our Behavioral Health Program, and our therapist began remote sessions because of COVID-19. Christina has now learned techniques to cope with her anxiety.

Here is the Spring 2021 issue of your Visions and Pathways newsletter.

Thank you for investing in the future of our youth!

Johnson & Johnson crowdfunding platform called Caring Crowd helps Visions and Pathways buy new van after old van gives out

Though the generosity of Johnson & Johnson's crowdfunding project, CaringCrowd.org, Visions and Pathways has raised \$27,000 to purchase a used passenger van to transport youth to school, medical appointments, and more.

The van will replace the old 16-passenger van that is no longer in working condition. Having lost the use of the old van was limiting the organization's ability to support clients and residents, according to Visions and Pathways executives.

Late last year a wonderful individual stepped forward with a donation of \$10,000 toward a new van as long as Visions and Pathways could raise the matching funds. To find those matching funds, the organization reached out to Johnson & Johnson, which operates



a global public health crowdfunding platform patronized both by employees and outside donors.

Through CaringCrowd, Johnson & Johnson matched each employee donation toward the van at a two-to-one ratio. So, for example, if an employee gave \$100, the company added \$200. Additionally, Johnson & Johnson matched outside donors' contributions

by half. More than \$12,500 was raised during the three-month campaign, which began in December and ended earlier this month.

Funds pledged during Giving Tuesday in late 2020 provided the remainder of the van's purchase price.

"This van allows us to bring our residents to medical appointments, school, jobs, social service appointments, and more," said Visions and Pathways Executive Director and CEO David Walker.

"We are very grateful to everyone, especially our very generous donor and Johnson & Johnson, for helping us acquire this much needed van. Not having a safe and reliable mode of transportation for our youth would have seriously affected the quality of life for this vulnerable population."