



*Children and Family
Services of New York*

NEWSLETTER

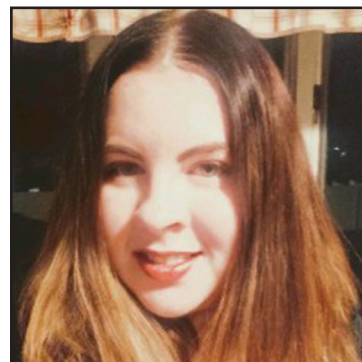
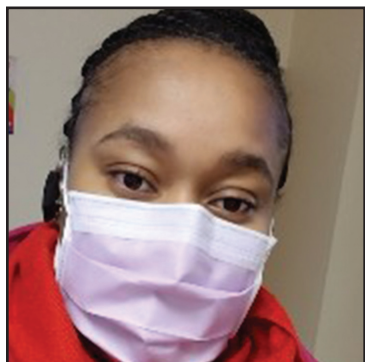
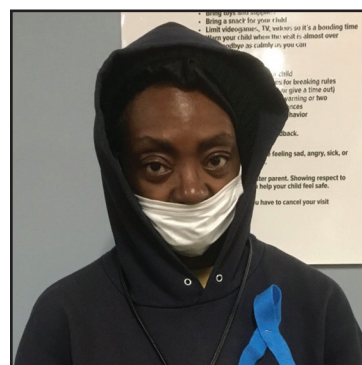
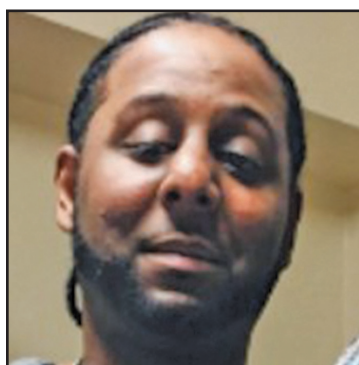
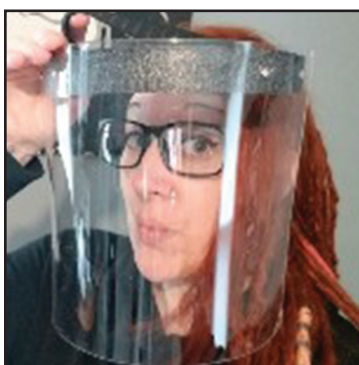
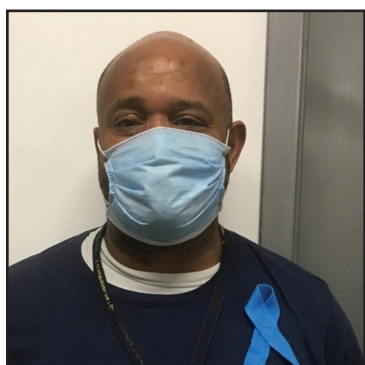
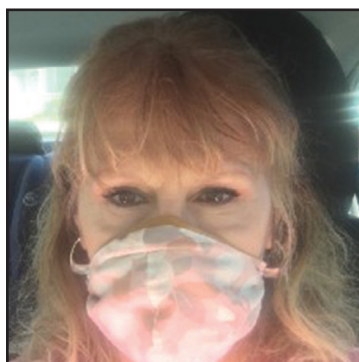
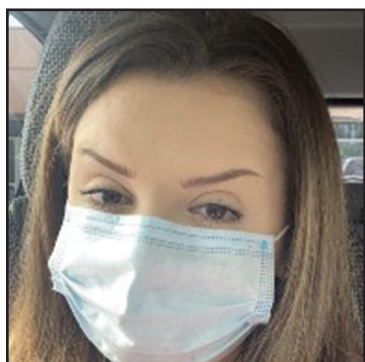
A Publication for Friends of Little Flower Children and Family Services of NY

Summer 2020

CELEBRATING LITTLE FLOWER HEROES

COVID-19 brought much change to our world and our communities. But what has not changed is our commitment to improving the well-being of those we serve. Through it all, Little Flower continues to ensure the safety and security of the children, families, and people with developmental disabilities in our care.

Our remarkable essential workers are on the frontlines of that important work every day. We thank all our Little Flower Heroes for their commitment and service to the children, families, and residents with developmental disabilities that depend on us.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer – Corinne Hammons



Dear Friends,

I hope this issue of the Little Flower newsletter finds you and your family safe and well.

So much has happened in our world in the last few months. Like so many of you, the Little Flower family grappled with a new normal and did so in such a way that it makes me proud to be a part of such an amazing organization. Our work is essential and has continued operating and serving our clients 24/7.

Our remarkable team of frontline workers – caseworkers, child care workers, direct care professionals, nurses, therapists, facilities, and maintenance teams – never wavered in their commitment to the children and families in their care. Partners like our foster parents have done a phenomenal job in continuing to care for the children in their homes while ensuring they remained connected with their families.

Our staff ensured families had access to weekly telephone calls/virtual visits with children and families and in-person visits only under safe conditions. We are thrilled to offer telehealth mental health therapy sessions to meet the needs of both the child and parent. We can ensure children are receiving their medications and therapy services. Youth in the residential treatment center enjoyed time outside while practicing social distancing. And, our direct care staff are finding innovative, new ways for our adult residents to learn, live, and have fun at home.

A special thank you to our incredible funders for partnering with us by supporting a range of our efforts, such as providing PPE to our staff and clients, sustaining our enhanced cleaning, providing laptops to our kids and families, and overall, furthering our mission of transforming caring into action.

On top of the pandemic, we are living in a world filled with loss, injustice, and pain. Old wounds are reopening and a new generation is picking up the mantle against discrimination and racism. At Little Flower, we are reaffirming our commitment to race equity. Not only have we issued an anti-racist statement but we have also developed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement that solidifies our responsibility and commitment to anti-racism and ensures a fair, equitable, and welcoming environment for our all our staff and clients.

We look to the future with optimism and hope that, together, we will get through this. In the meantime, Little Flower will continue, with your partnership, to improve the well-being of the children, families, and individuals with developmental disabilities in our care and continue our work of making racial equality real.

Sincerely,

Corinne Hammons, *Chief Executive Officer*

Living our Values

The past few months of COVID have felt relentless – full of loss and pain and uncertainty, plus a sense that the most vulnerable among us were being lost. On the heels of that moment comes the explosion of pain all around the country over the death of George Floyd.

Little Flower's commitment to race equity has always been a thread woven throughout our work toward our mission since our founding. However, believing inequity is not enough.

We must combat the racism of the world by actively opposing it. We do this through living our values, through our service and speaking out with our coalitions with a message against racism.

The first of many steps toward fulfilling our commitment to living our anti-racist values is the development of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement, which can be found by visiting our website at www.littleflowerny.org. We look forward to sharing with you more of our journey to becoming a more fair and equitable community for the entire Little Flower family.

Thank You to Our Most Recent Class of Funders

We are honored to receive support from such inspiring organizations and businesses and thank them for partnering with us in our efforts to ensure the well-being and safety of the children, families, and individuals with developmental disabilities in our care!

Schulke Inn Family Foundation



MY FAMILY TREE

We are proud to share with you a winning essay from the 22nd Annual Awards for Youth in Foster Care, submitted by one of our young adults in foster care.

My idea of a true family is contained in a quote from an unknown source: "Family isn't always blood, it's the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are. The ones who would do anything to see you smile, and who love you no matter what."

When I was small I imagined growing old with my sisters and my parents, but instead I came into care about five years ago. I was afraid because I didn't know what the future had in store for me, but I got an amazing foster mother who cares for me and my sisters.

My foster mother made me feel comfortable and valued. My sisters were discharged from foster care and got to go home. I, on the other hand, made the difficult choice to remain in care and stay with my foster mother. I miss my sisters dearly.

Until I turned 16, I wasn't able to really define what family meant. Now, I understand that family goes beyond blood. My family is made up of my close friends, supportive teachers, my foster mother, and her family.

Growing up in foster care, I felt lonely and like I didn't belong. I desperately wanted to fit in and have my own family. Due to an unhealthy relationship with an adult, I ended up pregnant. At the age of 15, I gave birth to my son.

I didn't believe that I was fit to be a mother. 2017 was a really hard year for me, but my foster mother ("grandma") was there to support me. She gave me advice about how to stay safe and how to build good and appropriate relationships with others. I was able to get my life together.

I entered 9th grade that year. School was rough, and I had late nights where my son cried and cried. I got frustrated because I was tired, but my grandma was there to support me. She showed me she was part of my family.

At first I didn't have a good relationship with my grandma's daughters, but with time things improved. I began to hang

out with them more often. We went to the movies, out to eat, shopping. Then I felt part of the family as a whole. Now I come to my grandma's daughters (my aunts) whenever I need advice and support.

My teachers support me academically and share life lessons. And my two closest friends are a part of my family because they create a safe and fun environment where I can be myself. When I feel self-conscious my friends reassure me that I am just ordinary in the best way possible.

My close friends, teachers, and my foster mother and her family, have become the family that I always wanted. They love and support me. I care for them and make sure they are safe and well.

It is nice to know that I can create a family through the relationships I form. My family is like a tree. The leaves are my friends and teachers, they come and go but are there for me. I am always able to form new friends as the seasons come. The branches of the tree are my close friends and mentors. They stick with me because they are connected to the trunk. My foster mother and her family are the roots of my tree. Without them, the tree would have never been able to form and expand.

In the future, I hope to plant my own tree and create a family of my own.





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Give the Gift of Hope

Little Flower work is essential work. With your help we can continue to care and provide for so many, as we have done every day since 1929. Your support will allow us to serve the community in many ways, including, but not limited to the following:

- Offering programmatic assistance to help our 150+ residents with developmental disabilities maximize their potential for self-care and increase their social, emotional, and physical well-being
- Empowering the 400+ youth in our foster care program so they can reach their full potential
- Delivering personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our 500+ essential workers
- Providing electronic devices to our clients so they can participate in remote mental health therapy sessions and virtual family visits
- Executing socially distant group activities that promote feelings of well-being and a sense of community



NEW! Recently, the federal government passed the C.A.R.E.S Act, allowing individuals to deduct up to \$300.00 of their cash donations to qualifying charitable organizations, without itemizing deductions.

We hope you will consider making a \$300.00 gift to Little Flower.

Transform caring into action today! Give on-line at: www.littleflowerny.thankyou4caring.org
or Text HOPE to 522-36

*If you prefer to mail your donation, please use the envelope provided to send in your check made payable to:
Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York.*

☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ other_____