



## WCS Connection November & December 2019



*From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:*

### Just a Few 2019 Highlights

It's hard to believe that 2019 is coming to a close and we will soon turn our calendars and attention to making 2020 a year that fosters growth, hopefulness, and positive change. Before doing so, I believe it is appropriate to take a moment to reflect on some of the WCS 2019 highlights.

First, WCS is projecting that we will have served close to 17,500 individuals across all of our programs in southeast Wisconsin by the close of 2019. This number represents a slight increase from the number of individuals served in 2018. This growth can be attributed to expanded programming and increased utilization of community-based behavioral health and corrections services and programs. For example, our Forensic Services Programs, which include Opening Avenues for Reentry Success (OARS) and Conditional Release (CR) expanded in 2019 to serve more individuals with both mental health needs and criminal backgrounds, safely in our community.

This past year, WCS was also excited to receive our Child Placing License from the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. This license allows us to place up to 50 children/youth, ages 0-20 years, male and female in Treatment Foster Care. We are also implementing the Professional Foster Parent Program in coordination with Wraparound Milwaukee.

In November 2019, WCS received a zoning variance and approval from the City of Milwaukee Board of Zoning appeals to utilize a property in Milwaukee as part of our Outpatient Plus initiative. This initiative will create a new level of care for those in recovery from substance use that need a higher level of care than Outpatient Services. This project will serve as another important resource in our efforts to address the opioid crisis in southeast Wisconsin.

WCS also expanded Comprehensive Community Support Services (CCS) programming in 2019 to provide more support for individuals in recovery from substance use and mental health needs. This growth includes the addition of Ancillary Services for adults including Certified Peer Specialists and Support Specialists. WCS has fully embraced integrating Peer Support Specialists into many of our programs. We have gone from

employing five (5) Peer Support Specialists agency-wide two (2) years ago, to more than 30 across the organization today.

This December marks one full year of providing Residential Care services for male youth between the ages of 12-17 at our Bakari Center program. The Center was fully licensed earlier this year, and all staff are trained in the Integrated Treatment Model (ITM). WCS remains committed to growing the ITM as an effective method for providing community-based treatment and rehabilitation for adjudicated youth.

WCS also held the first fundraiser to support the Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability (CDLRE) in May, 2019. In November, we celebrated as the CDLRE was recognized as a national recipient of a Mutual of America Community Partnership Award.

These are just a few of the many highlights from WCS in 2019. We look forward to partnering with many of you in 2020 as we continue to strive to improve the quality of life for everyone in our community!



*Clarence Johnson*



## Mutual of America Community Partnership Award

The WCS Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability (CDLRE) was honored to be one of three programs across the country that was recognized by Mutual of America (MOA) with a 2019 Community Partnership Award. On November 13th, a delegation from Milwaukee representing Legal Action of Wisconsin (LAW), the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) was in New York City to accept the award which recognizes excellent partnerships between non-profit organizations and public, private and other social sector organizations. Since its inception in 1996, the MOA Community Partnership Award has recognized 240 partnerships from cities and towns across the United States. The other two national award winners were the Mobil Dental Unit program, operated by the West Virginia Health Right, Inc., and the Survivor Advocate Program, based in Los Angeles. As part of the Community Partnership Award, WCS received a program grant of \$25,000. MOA will host a Hometown Luncheon in Milwaukee on March 19th, the event will recognize the significant accomplishments of CDLRE and the ongoing work of staff and partners.



For more information on this exciting award, [CLICK HERE](#) to visit MOA's website!



## WCS Staff Lead Task Force Panel Discussion

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force hosted a panel discussion focused on the struggles of obtaining employment for people with justice system involvement and/or mental health, substance use, or co-occurring needs. The panel discussion was moderated by WCS Office of Consumer Affairs Supervisor Shirley Drake and CORE Employment/Education Specialist L.T. Austin was a panel member. L.T. shared a powerful message about his experiences re-entering the workforce following his involvement in the justice system. L.T. openly discussed professors steering him away from the helping profession and potential employers not providing opportunities based on his past. The story provided an inspiring message that recovery is possible. The audience applauded the efforts of Shirley and L.T. reaching their employment goals. L.T. proudly shared he will be pursuing his master's degree in counseling to further serve his community. WCS is thankful to have Shirley and L.T. part of the team!



## Thinking for a Change

In September of 2019, WCS and two agency employees were selected by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to participate in their Thinking For a Change Train the Trainer program. Thinking For a Change is an evidence-based curriculum utilized for cognitive behavioral programming across the country by correctional and community agencies serving participants involved in the justice system. The successful completion of the Train the Trainer program by Denise Rawski and Coey Sephus-Chapman now positions WCS to offer training for future internal and external facilitators of the Thinking For a Change Curriculum. For information on training opportunities, please contact Sara Carpenter at [scarpenter@wiscs.org](mailto:scarpenter@wiscs.org).



## Did You Know?

**WCS wishes you  
a safe  
and happy  
Holiday Season!**



**Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.**  
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*Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity.*

WCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit agency that provides services in southeastern Wisconsin.  
WCS has been serving the community successfully for over 100 years.

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