

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS)

1943 - 2021

1943 WJCS founded by a small group of Westchester residents who recognized a growing need for family services, particularly for Jewish families who were moving from New York to the County. Irwin Rosen appointed by Federation as "Administrator without portfolio" until 1946.

1944 Chartered by New York State. Budget was \$13,064 with two social workers and psychiatric and psychological consultants. Served 112 families from our Main Street office in White Plains.

1946 Joseph Antman hired as first Executive Director.

1947 First homemaker hired.

1950 Mt. Vernon office opened.

1957 Leonard Rohmer appointed as Executive Director. New Rochelle Office opened.

1958 WJCS' three offices licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health as Family Mental Health Clinics.

1963 C.K. Whitehill Counseling Service founded.

1967 Northeast Yonkers Office licensed as a Family Mental Health Clinic.

TARGET, a remedial education program for children that later grew into the Learning Center, serving adults and children with learning deficits, launched.

Central Yonkers Office licensed as a Family Mental Health Clinic.

1968 25th Anniversary. WJCS' staff has grown to over 50!

1972 Mother-Child Home Program, a pre-school early intervention program, established. In 1989, all 10 of the first year's participants graduated from high school and four entered college.

Panel Homemaker Service (forerunner to Home Health Services).

1973 Yorktown Office licensed as a Family Mental Health Clinic.

1974 Staff has grown to more than 100 employees and WJCS has an operating budget of over \$1,000,000.

1976 Apartments for the Frail Elderly established in White Plains.

1977 Panel Homemaker Service certified as a Licensed Home Care Agency.

1979 Rye House, first group home for the developmentally disabled, opened.

1981 Oscar Rabinowitz appointed as Executive Director. Palmer House and Harrison House opened as group homes.

1982 First WJCS satellite opened in Bedford Hills, as an adjunct of the Yorktown Heights Office. Bryant House and Bon Air House group homes opened, bringing the total number of developmentally disabled residents in the program to 52.

Victims of Incest Program began (forerunner to the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Center, which was later renamed Treatment Center for Trauma & Abuse).

1983 WJCS Head Quarters and White Plains Family Mental Health Clinic moved to Hartsdale. The budget grew to \$6,000,000.

1984 Mamaroneck Office, a satellite of New Rochelle Clinic, opened.

Westchester Self-Help Clearinghouse became an affiliate of WJCS.

WJCS accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations.

1986 Camp Rainbow affiliated with WJCS.

1987 Renee Pollack appointed Executive Director.

Renee Pollack Home Care and Geriatric Center opened in White Plains. Panel Homemaker Service, Inc. changed to Home Health Services, Inc.

Satellite of Hartsdale Family Mental Health Clinic opened in Elmsford to provide mental health counseling for people with HIV/AIDS and their families.

1988 Eugene Aronowitz appointed Executive Director. Certified Home Health Agency licensed in White Plains. Geriatric Continuing Day Treatment Programs in New Rochelle and White Plains acquired from Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center.

1990 Two Supportive Living Apartments for developmentally disabled people opened in Mount Vernon.

1992 Ronald Gaudia appointed Executive Director. Budget has grown to \$14,000,000.

WJCS Timeline Continued

1993 WJCS celebrated its 50th Anniversary.

Youth Counseling League merged with WJCS to be known as Youth Consultation League (YCL).

WJCS purchases community residences at Claudet Way and Cannon Lane.

1994 YCL's Ossining and Peekskill sites became NYSOMH licensed satellite clinics.

A Different Start joins the WJCS family.

CCAAAMHP (Comprehensive Child & Adult Ambulatory Mental Health Program) established in collaboration with Center for Preventive Psychiatry (forerunner to Family Matters).

1995 Social Club opened in Mohegan Lake.

Beach House opened in Mamaroneck to accommodate highly functioning adult women who are developmentally disabled.

Center Lane became County's first community center for gay and lesbian teenagers.

The New Rochelle Geriatric Day Treatment Program moved to 15 Leroy Place, purchased by WJCS.

Linkages - Juvenile Justice Program began at the New Rochelle Court House.

Partner Intervention Program - Initiated Domestic Violence Program.

KICS, a school-based initiative, began at Yonkers' Martin Luther King School.

1996 WJCS created the Women's Center.

WJCS' Behavioral Health Services were trademarked as WESTCARE.

Miracle Makers' Ball celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Mother-Child Home Program.

1997 Established Families First as collaborative community-based project between Family Matters (formerly CCAAAMHP), Project Intercept and the Center for Preventive Psychiatry.

Opened second Social Club within the Mohegan Park Home.

Westchester Seniors Housing incorporated.

1998 Harold Goldsmith appointed President.

Alan Trager appointed Executive Director. Established first apartments for adults with traumatic brain injury.

Dedication of new head quarters in White Plains.

Home Health Services accredited by JCAHO.

Mother-Child Home Program (renamed Parent-Child Home Program) Endowment Fund was completed.

1999 Broadened after-school services in Yonkers in collaboration with The After School Corporation. Received \$1 million contribution to support the Learning Center and other Endowment Funds. Prepared agency technologically for "Y2K."

2000 "Swing Into Spring" Gala fundraising completed the Learning Center Endowment Fund.

Opened a community residence on Gramatan Avenue in Mt. Vernon and a supportive apartment on Barker Avenue in White Plains; received approvals for two additional homes and three additional supportive apartments.

Family Center in Yonkers began day care services and parent support activities.

Center for Women's Issues replaced Women's Center. Established office within the Northern Westchester Alliance UJA-Federation site in Mt. Kisco.

Expanded anti-violence and sexual abuse services and established the Treatment Center for Trauma and Abuse to coordinate all programs related to violence and abuse.

Budget has grown to \$20 million.

2001 Maida Silver appointed President.

The Valdale Residence opened to accommodate six consumers in Yonkers.

Special grants supported the establishment of the End-of-Life Care and Bereavement Center.

Jewish Programming services expanded to meet needs of Westchester Jewish residents.

First Pillars of Community Award presented to Larry and Yvette Gralla.

Began the WJCS Jewish Spiritual Healing Center.

2002 Provided extensive community programming in the aftermath of September 11th tragedies. Expanded services in the Peekskill area, including the opening of a new clinic site, expanding the Center for Trauma and Abuse into the community and implementing school initiatives.

Pillars of Community Award presented to Dr. Jack Posen of The Pammy Fund.

2003 Celebrated 60th Anniversary with "Twist & Shout" Gala to support the Jewish Programming Endowment.

Pillars of Community awarded to the J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation.

Opened Hudson Terrace Residence.

The Learning Center became the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Learning Center

Launch of WJCS Undoing Racism Alliance dedicated to eliminating societal racism by presenting speakers and educating on issues relating to racial injustice.

2004 Robert Stavits appointed President
Pathways to Care, a comprehensive program for people coping with advanced illness and bereavement, became the Westchester regional center of the UJA-Federation Jewish Healing and Hospice Partnership.

2005 The Peekskill Family Mental Health Clinic expanded and moved, incorporating services previously provided by Catholic Charities.

WJCS Timeline Continued

Agency launched an extensive Strategic Planning initiative to set priorities for the coming years.

A changed environment for senior adults prompted the closing of the Enriched Housing Apartments for the Frail Elderly and residents were successfully relocated.

2006 Senior Services in Mt. Vernon at Sinai Free Synagogue began programming for older adults previously served by the Rose YM-YWHA.

Milestones Early Intervention Program opened in New Rochelle.

Margaret's Place safe rooms were situated in four schools in partnership with The Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation.

The Autism Family Support Center, funded by UJA-Federation of NY, began providing resources and services for families with children on the autism spectrum.

Created positions of Director of Children's Services and Director of Senior Services were created.

2007 Michel Araten appointed President.

Began implementation of Child & Family Clinic Plus to provide emotional health screenings and services for children entering public schools.

Treatment Center for Trauma and Abuse celebrated its 25th Anniversary

Weinberg Learning Center celebrated 40 years as a WJCS Program.

Parent-Child Home Program celebrated 35 years of service.

Home Health Services celebrated 60 years.

Launched Early Childhood Matters and Child Care Home Programs.

Began Early Step Forward-Building Better Beginnings.

Established Milestones satellite at Pleasantville JCC.

Incorporated Hardy Girls/Healthy Women curricula in 10 WJCS programs.

2008 Celebrated WJCS' 65th anniversary.

Opened Maple House in Harrison.

POINT (Pursuing Our Independence Together) was established to provide a supportive community for adults with special needs, enabling its members to live, work, and socialize independently.

Established Juvenile Fire-setting Evaluation and Treatment Program. Began Envision to encourage and support the academic and career goals of young women. Collaborated with Crossroads in Jerusalem.

Began Family Caregiver Network providing support and referrals. Became partner in Gramatan Village Project.

2009 WJCS was noted among the top 10 in the Top Rated List of NonProfits in New York resulting from a survey by Great NonProfits.

Discontinued services at the Yorktown Heights Mental Health Clinic.

Opened Chai House in White Plains for young Jewish women.

Opened the Mary J. Blige Center for Women.

Terminated the Family Center daycare program in Yonkers.

Began Connect to Care to help Jewish community affected by economic downturn.

Launched Guiding Parents Through Services (GPS) to link families to resources.

Collaboration of Project Trust with White Plains Police Dept and WJCS Trauma Center.

Began Women Helping Women, assisting women displaced by economic downturn.

2010 Carol Corbin appointed President.

Adapted clinic services to accommodate NY State's Clinic Restructuring Initiative.

Opened Claremont House in Mt. Vernon.

Young People Achieve received the Westchester County Board of Health Distinguished Public Health Services Award.

Initiated Project SEED to help synagogue nursery school educators address challenging behaviors.

Home Health Services became a provider for the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion program.

The Partner Abuse Intervention Program was highlighted NY State's Office of Mental Health Comprehensive Plan.

Closed Day Treatment Center in White Plains and the New Rochelle Clinic, expanding services in Peekskill, Yonkers, and Mt. Vernon.

Received NYS Office of Mental Health grant to partner with community groups in coordinating emotional/developmental screenings of children in Yonkers.

Launched Facebook page, a blog on senior issues, and online reference guides.

Expanded Supporting Children's Opportunities and Parents Empowerment in Schools (SCOPEs) in Oakside School in Peekskill.

2012 Parent-Child Home Program celebrated 40th Anniversary.

25th Havorah Community Seder for Developmentally Disabled people hosted 200 guests.

Delivered Crisis Counseling and other programming after Hurricane Sandy through a FEMA Grant.

WJCS Timeline Continued

POINT program celebrated its fifth anniversary. Coordinated Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) Incorporated.

CBHS Became Partner in New York Integrated Network (NYIN).

2013 Barry Kaplan appointed President.

WJCS celebrated its 70th anniversary.

The Academic and Career Support (ACS) program launched at the Mary J. Blige Center for Women in Yonkers through the support of David and Pam Zaslav.

The Taft Community Room in White Plains opened as a community space for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. (It later expanded to include a vocational center, social, recreational and educational activities.)

Hartsdale Family Mental Health Center underwent a major renovation through the support of the Leon Lowenstein Foundation and was renamed "The Maxine Bendheim Center."

WJCS closed its Achieving Milestones program after seven years of providing effective, comprehensive, early intervention services to the Westchester community.

2014 The Off the Street after-school program at Hamilton Elementary School won a five-year grant of \$870,000 from NY State Office of Children and Family Services, allowing expansion to five days a week and doubling the number of children served to 125.

In August 2014, WJCS received a \$2,000,000 endowment from the Henry Rothschild Irrevocable Trust to support Home Health Aide Training activities. (Additional payment received in 2016.)

Youth Mental Health First Aid launched in collaboration with Westchester's Department of Community Mental Health to equip adults to support youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.

2015 The Wiener Academy for Young Women at the Mary J. Blige Center for Women was created to provide girls in Yonkers, grades 4 to 8, with after school and summer experiences designed to build character, enhance social development, and promote health and wellness.

2016 Neil Sandler appointed President.

Budget is now \$40 million.

WJCS implemented an intensive training program for all program staff to become trauma-informed in recognition of the pervasiveness of trauma.

WJCS established an alliance with Greyston Bakery to provide care management services to their employees.

WJCS received \$2.2 million VAP (Vital Access Providers) funding from New York State to help pay for a new Electronic Health Record, finance software, and other efficiencies.

2017 The Treatment Center for Trauma and Abuse celebrated its 35th Anniversary and was renamed the Trager Lemp Center for Treating Trauma & Promoting Resilience.

To address the serious opioid epidemic, WJCS acquired a clinic license to treat substance abuse to individuals also struggling with a mental illness.

2018 WJCS celebrated its 75th Anniversary.

POINT celebrated its 10th Anniversary.

WJCS launched its first one-week Center Lane Pride Camp.

Alan Trager retired after 20 years as Chief Executive Officer.

Seth Diamond appointed Chief Executive Officer.

2019 Mariquita Blumberg appointed President.

Launched Westchester's first NNORC (Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) in Yonkers to help seniors age safely in place.

Provided trauma trainings to first responders to help them handle the stressful circumstances of their jobs.

Began screening all mental health clients for substance use to improve treatment outcomes for those with co-occurring disorders.

2020 In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, pivoted to providing behavioral health services via telehealth video chat and phone sessions.

Direct Support Staff provided 24/7 care to 90+ WJCS group home residents whose day programs were canceled and whose families couldn't visit due to social distancing prohibitions during the pandemic.

WJCS announces partnership with the YWCA Center for Racial Equity to ensure a diverse and inclusive agency culture.

2021 Introduced numerous programs in response to critical needs due to the Covid pandemic, including the College Wellness Initiative, the Digital Equity Project, and the Covid Relief Hub, in partnership with UJA-Federation of NY.

Provided bereavement training for social workers across WJCS because of the many clients who lost loved ones in the pandemic.

Conducted vaccination clinics to ensure that WJCS staff, who are essential workers, could get vaccinated.

Provided transportation so that many of our Holocaust Survivor clients were able to be vaccinated.

Launched newly-designed WJCS website at wjcs.com.

