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The Year in Review

by Melissa A. Gertz, Esq.,
Executive Director

The Community Justice Center began 2011 with operational support from The Harbourton Foundation and the Princeton Area Community Foundation, allowing us over the course of the year to welcome our 200th client! In March 2011, as we celebrated our 2nd anniversary, we expanded our services into Middlesex County, thanks to the generous support of The Bunbury Company. A few months later, we were selected by the Mercer County Division of Community Services, Office on Homeless Services, as recipient of a two year contract to provide legal services to Mercer County's indigent population.

Awareness of the Community Justice Center's services among service providers who help the low-income homeless and veterans throughout New Jersey has grown exponentially. The phones are ringing constantly, with calls from Bergen County to Cape May County. For now, we have opted to concentrate our services within Central New Jersey, as the demand has been so great, but we never leave a caller without at least some information and a referral.

There is no doubt that the current economic climate has hit the Central New Jersey especially hard. We have seen a surge in client need as other sources of relief have disappeared, and expect that trend to continue. Your support is crucial to our ability to meet this demand. If you have not done so already, please visit our website, and join our Facebook page and mailing list by emailing community.justice.center@gmail.com. As always, thank you for your support!



Making Strides in Middlesex County

by Lisa A. Turowsky

In March 2011, the Community Justice Center announced the expansion of its services into Middlesex County, thanks to the generous support of The Bunbury Company. Through a partnership with the New Brunswick-based non-profit Elijah's Promise, a multiservice resource center for the disadvantaged, the Community Justice Center began establishing a presence in Middlesex County. Our emphasis on assisting the homeless complements the mission of Elijah's Promise: to **E**mpower **L**ives, **I**nvoke **J**ustice, and **A**lleviate **H**unger.

Shortly after announcing the expansion, the Community Justice Center was invited to join the Middlesex Community Resource Council, a collective of Middlesex County government agencies and service providers, established and run by the United Way of Middlesex County. In early March 2011, Executive Director Melissa A. Gertz gave a presentation to its members, many of whom are area agency directors. After Ms. Gertz generated



local support, I met with representatives from the Middlesex County Department of Human Services, Division of Social Work Services and the Office of Aging, the Office of Social Concerns and volunteers for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen, and established an ongoing relationship with the UMDNJ PATH Homeless Outreach Coordinator. In just a handful of monthly outreach sessions, the Community Justice Center has now provided information and referrals to approximately 75 people, brief service to approximately 30 people, and is now fully representing six residents of Middlesex County, including a homeless family.

I look forward to our ongoing presence in Middlesex County, as we explore additional collaborative options. For more information about Elijah's Promise and The Bunbury Company, a private foundation with a focus on Mercer and Middlesex Counties, please visit them online at www.elijahspromise.net and www.bunburycompany.org.

CJC Participates in Central New Jersey's Veterans Service Events

Disability Rights Advocate Lisa A. Turowsky represented CJC at two veterans service events in 2011: the 2011 Job and G. I. Bill Fair at the Lawrenceville Armory and a Veterans Service Fair, sponsored by the office of U.S. Senator Frank L. Lautenberg, and held at Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus. Many attendees were especially glad to learn of CJC's active role in assisting disabled veterans with obtaining benefits to which they are entitled, whether they be Social Security disability or veterans' service-connected compensation benefits.

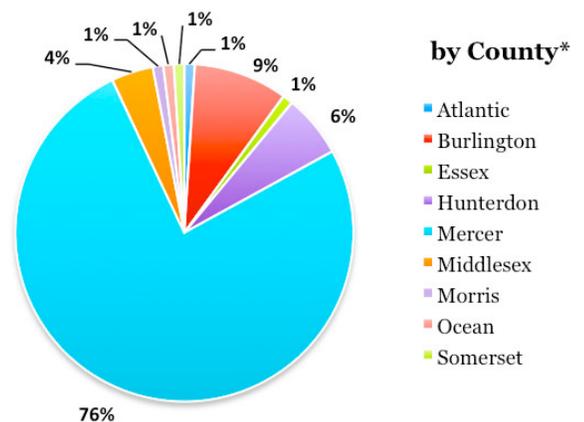
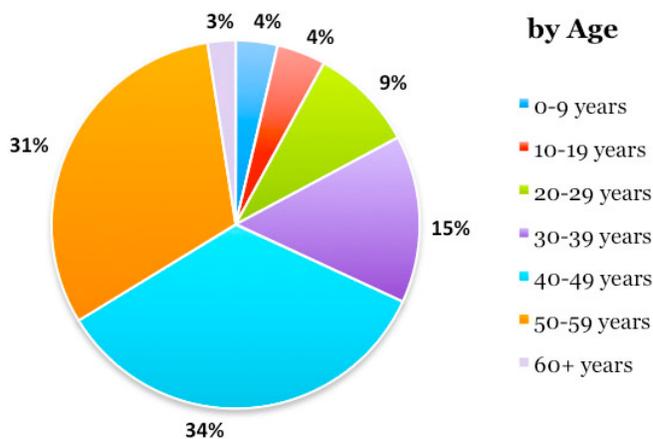
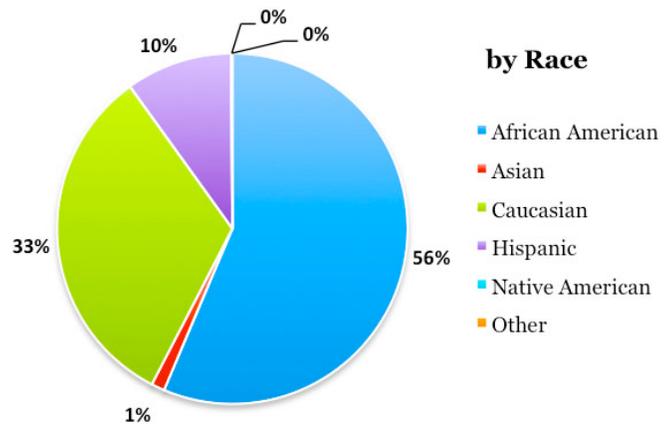
Through these events, Ms. Turowsky connected with some important programs that give veterans the treatment they need to attain the highest level of productivity possible, including: 1) Bancroft, a South Jersey-based provider of service for brain injury, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which has launched an Assisted Living Pilot Program for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury, for veterans facing combat and non-combat related brain injuries and those who are helping to care for them. The VA will fund, and Bancroft will operate, a variety of residential options for VA-enrolled veterans in numerous locations, including Cherry Hill, Mullica Hill, Brick and Plainsboro; 2) a peer-to-peer mental health hotline, funded by UMDNJ and staffed by volunteer veterans, which provides real-time suicide prevention counseling and referrals to other agencies that provide services to increase veterans' stability within their communities. CJC is looking forward to an increased presence within and collaboration with these and other veterans service providers.



Please remember CJC as you plan your year-end giving! All new donors of \$50 will receive our inspiring CJC T-Shirt featured above, or you may purchase it for \$15. All donations made on or before December 31, 2011 are tax-deductible for this calendar year. Visit www.nj-communityjusticecenter.org for information on how to donate, including online via Paypal.

Any Way You Slice It, We're Reaching the Community

The Community Justice Center assists the low-income (that is, 175% of the poverty level or below) disabled. The primary populations currently served are the disabled homeless and veterans and their families. Assistance includes full representation, brief service, education/information, and referrals when necessary. Demand for services has been high. Represented below is the demographic spectrum of the Community Justice Center's **163 clients** for which it has provided full representation in 2011. (Numbers are valid through and as of November 1, 2011.) Of the 163 clients, 55 matters were closed, 43 of which were resolved successfully, and the balance of which were closed due to loss of merit. Of the remaining 108 open matters, 56 were opened in 2011. From inception in March 2009, the Community Justice Center has fully represented 200 people. Brief services have been provided to approximately 45 people, and information and referrals have been provided to hundreds.



* Please note that roughly half of CJC's clients are homeless—they have been included in the county in which they receive emergency services.

A Reward Unparalleled

by Raymond Baldino, Rutgers School of Law-Newark, '13
Summer 2011 Intern



Raymond Baldino

I am glad to have spent a summer working with the disabled at the Community Justice Center, whose clients are typically faced with some of the most unfortunate circumstances one can imagine: crippling illnesses such as schizophrenia, epilepsy, or brain injury, combined with traumatic childhoods and struggles with poverty. In many cases, their ability to survive and maintain a measure of peace amidst a bureaucratic process that would test any ordinary person's sanity is remarkable. As an intern, I also learned firsthand that the judges who sit at the top of that process are more often than not sincerely compassionate individuals who do endeavor to help the disabled. Through my experience, I have been reminded that life is clearly not fair, but that sometimes when we are determined, we can create justice.

I would not trade the experience I had at the Community Justice Center for anything, from the people I met, some of whom dealt with the unfairness of life in a manner that astonished me, to all I have learned about one of the largest agencies in United States. Most of all, I am grateful for my experience here because I want to live in a world where people help each other, and I met others who want to make that possible too. Seeing the difference that a disability check makes to someone chronically sick or a father struggling to support a disabled child is a reward that is really unparalleled.

Our Support

Key to our success has been the generous financial support, talent, and time from our donors. Thanks to each and every one of you for believing in the Community Justice Center and the vital role it plays in the health and well-being of Central New Jersey's low-income disabled and veterans. Special thanks to Frank Connell and the **Tir Na Nog**, 1324 Hamilton Avenue in Hamilton, who hosted our Barbeque & Beer Benefit on July 7, 2011, and to all of the musicians who graced the stage and entertained us all. We hope to see everyone again next year!

Acorn (\$1-\$249)

Afam Akamelu
Linda & Jim Ake
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Asteris Fenikos
Kristin Frasier
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Gay Hong Hua
Andrea Kanefsky
Tim Korzun
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Debra Owens & Herman Kummeler
Lisa Phifer & Judy Gertz
Eileen Pittenger & John Butaud
Al Pontani
Dennis & Penelope Rodgers
Patricia Sayles
Sheak & Korzun, PC
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James Trowbridge

Seedling (\$250-\$499)

Carmen Guzman
Michael Kozlowski

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Nicholas McClary

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Trader Joe's
Trenton Thunder
Wegman's

Government

Mercer County Div. of Community Services,
Office on Homeless Services

In-Kind

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Shaun Ellis
Patty & Eric Gertz
Matt Gertz
Sean Gibson
Tom Glover
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Joe Kildea
Catherine DeCarolis Medovich
Mohel Elliott Bauer & Gass CPAs PA
Monica Parsons
Matt Pillischer
Justin Pope
Andrew Rothman
Tir Na Nog
James Trowbridge
Lisa A. Turowsky

Foundational Support

The Bunbury Company
The Harbourton Foundation
Princeton Area Community
Foundation

**2nd Annual Barbeque & Beer Benefit
July 7, 2011**

More pictures on our Facebook
page @ CJC Trenton!

SAVE THE DATE for next year:
~ July 12, 2012 ~



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