



FORESTDALE, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Families at Forestdale make advances because of and sometimes in spite of local and national trends. This year, seismic shifts occurred in the areas of immigrant' and women's rights, as well as college support that impacted the families we serve. Forestdale is honored to work with families and communities across Queens who labor to maintain their families, heal from trauma, and build stronger communities so the next generation of children can thrive. With 2.3 million people living in the great borough of Queens (including immigrants from more than 120 countries), we are "the world's borough." In Queens, you can have a bagel for breakfast, shawarmas for lunch, and dim sum for dinner, all on the same block. In 2017, Forestdale continued to support the mosaic of Queens' families we serve as individuals and communities responded to attacks on immigrant rights, women's rights, education equity, civil rights, and equal access to healthcare. The world can sometimes be cruel, but families come to Forestdale to push forward together.

- When refugees were detained at airports in Queens and around the U.S., Queens' families came together in massive demonstrations to call for the protection of immigrant rights (including DACA). At Forestdale we see the stress and concern as dads in our Strong Fathers Program confront the fear of deportation of a loved one and potential loss of protections for their children. At our recent Strong Fathers graduation one participant spoke of the hardships his father had faced as an immigrant; his father never expressed warmth or affection toward his children. This man looked at his small son seated in the second row of the auditorium at the Queens Museum and spoke of passing on the good things he got from his father but adding important things he never received. As he walked into the luncheon holding his son's hand, it was clear that he was making good on his pledge.

- People have come together across New York State to make college education more attainable. We are grateful for a 3rd consecutive year of the Fostering College Success Initiative (FYSA) that has helped to cover the cost of college for hundreds of young people in the NYS child welfare system. Our Forestdale Scholars have benefitted from these college supports, as the number of Forestdale youth in college doubled in 2017. We congratulate them one and all!

- As people across the world have stepped forward to denounce sexual harassment and demand gender equity, participants of our Strong Mothers program are taking significant steps towards self-determination in their careers, education, housing, and parenting education. These pregnant & parenting young women are raising the next generation of children who will hopefully honor all genders as equal and the next generation of women who will lead the way to a more just world.

Forestdale continues to embrace families and provide innovative programs to help them through their struggles, as we have been doing for more than 164 years. While we are undeterred in our mission, our needs continue to grow. For this, we must rely on our neighbors, community, and family. While the pendulum of power swings, changing the course of social institutions in the country, we will continue to be family when families need us and provide necessary services for the long run.

Looking forward,

William Weisberg
Executive Director

Robert Whiteford
Chair, Board of
Trustees

2017

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Forestdale's commitment to ending child poverty is expressed primarily through our work to strengthen individual families, helping them break the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In 2017, Forestdale continued this work with children healing from abuse or neglect, and through programs for teens and parents



CHILD WELL-BEING STARTS WITH PARENTING

Strong Mothers & Reproductive Health program – over 100 pregnant & parenting young women received services to help them delay unplanned pregnancies, improve maternal and childbirth outcomes, expand parenting skills and resources, and attain academic and career goals.

Moreover, more than 280 teens increased their knowledge of responsible sexual behavior through workshops led by our talented crew of trained adolescent peer health educators.

Strong Fathers – 229 fathers participated in parenting, co-parenting, anger management & other workshops, leading them to increase their engagement with and financial support of their children. Both are measures that have been demonstrated to significantly improve the lives of children.

STRONGER FAMILIES RAISE HAPPIER & HEALTHIER CHILDREN

Strong Families, Foster Care – We worked with 585 foster children, ages 0-21, assisting them with social, emotional and academic supports to help them thrive. In 2017, 40 children were adopted by their forever families.

Strong Families, Preventive Services – We served 308 families; more than 99% of these families averted foster care involvement due to participation in our services. On this crucial outcome measure, our General Preventive program was ranked #1 in the city!

SERVICES LAUNCH YOUNG PEOPLE INTO MORE SUCCESSFUL LIVES

Strong Futures – Approximately 70 youth each month, from middle school through college, are assisted with college enrollment, career, academic, and life skills workshops, academic tutoring, and paid internships. As of the end of 2017, a total of 30 of our youth were in college; 8 of those started college in September 2017. This 30 represents a 67% increase from last year's figure of 18.

Strong Bodies, Strong Minds – More than 150 young people received individual therapy, and mental health supports to address trauma, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and other mental-health challenges. More than 400 young people received expert medical and dental services thanks, in part, to our partnership with NYU schools of dentistry and nursing.

WHAT'S NEW AT FORESTDALE IN 2017?

Since 2012, Forestdale has been focusing on healing trauma – both at its onset, as well as continuing through childhood into adulthood, where our clients may directly experience different forms of abuse, or witness unrest, dysfunction, and violence within their homes and communities. In 2017 we turned our trauma-informed and evidenced-based lens to our parenting and young adult programs. Below is a summary of a few 2017 highlights:

Helping Small Children by Treating Maternal Trauma: Forestdale's Strong Mothers Program serves young mothers (ages 12-24), many who need help with mental health concerns, domestic violence victimization, and regulating their emotions (anger management) – 3 issues that can negatively impact children's long-term health. We have seen how past trauma (including exposure to domestic violence, involvement in the foster care system themselves, and having their children involved in the system)



effects these young women's ability to be the best parent they can for their children. In late 2017, we received funding from the Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund and the Nancy and Edwin Marks Family Foundation, for our Strong Mothers Domestic Violence (DV) and Mental Health Program. One of the central aspects of the trauma-informed expansion will be the stabilization of the mother so she can create a stronger bond with her child and gain a better understanding of her child's emotional, psychological, and physical development. We look forward to this beginning and are so grateful to our funders for their support!

Creating Intentional Communities of Foster Homes: Forestdale is awarded a Home Away From Home grant. In NYC there are insufficient numbers of volunteers who step forward to take in a child when a child is in danger and is removed from his or her birth family's home. The NYC Administration for Children's Services awarded several grants for agencies to implement innovative approaches to



expand the number of new, quality foster homes and increase support to existing ones; Forestdale is pleased to be one of the recipients. This award bolsters Forestdale's 24/7 support of foster parents and provides immediate child care assistance (when a family accepts a small child into their home). It also funds evaluation of our practices from a national expert affiliated with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and allows implementation of an incredible model for creating intentional communities of foster

families, the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM). In MFM, clusters of 8-10 foster homes work together, with one "hub" home hosting training, organizing social events, and providing respite care for the other community members. Foster parents in these intentional communities help pick up each other's children after school or share advice on child rearing. It is still early, but our first two pilot clusters are excited, community-minded, and productive.

Improving Outcomes for Youth after Foster Care: Exciting new Life Coaching Program sponsored by the City Council: In the face of very bleak national statistics reflecting poor outcomes for many youths who have survived abuse and neglect, Forestdale is committed to helping these youth launch into fulfilling careers and lives,. To this end, in early 2017 with funding from the NYC Council, Forestdale started a new & innovative Life Coaching program bringing professional life coaching to young people (ages 16-24) who have aged out or are about to age out of foster care. After an assessment, goals are set in one or more of 4 areas: academic engagement, career planning, housing stability, and family relations/ connection to a caring adult. The Life Coaching program has helped young people find housing and employment, and get back to Watch out Life, here comes our well-coached team!

Better Health, Too: Forestdale starts its Health Homes Program. The purpose of the Statewide Health Homes effort is to make sure that high need children have access to much needed healthcare; at the same time, to reduce health costs by making sure things are taken care of before a child ends up in the hospital. Our Care Coordinator program helps young people (up to age 18 who have significant health needs) and their families identify health needs, select high-quality providers, and then make sure the young person gets care in a timely fashion before it becomes an emergency.

These new initiatives are all part of Forestdale's plan to make sure that throughout the trajectory of childhood and adolescence, an environment is created for the happy and successful development of each child.

AN EXCITING FUTURE

At Forestdale, we share the vision for a world in which children have everything they need for healthy development because we know that if children get what they need, a safe and loving home, a stimulating environment, and equitable opportunities; they can flourish. We also wish that families of all kinds can always be welcomed and feel included; that all workers receive a living wage, so no child goes hungry; that affordable housing is available so children do not live with instability, and for great schools that children can't wait to get to in the morning. What needs to be done to make all of this a reality in Queens? Forestdale continues to work with others to advocate for those changes while focusing on relieving immediate distress for children and families in a way that helps them be more resilient in the face of future challenges. Our array of parenting, family, and youth programs are designed to provide expert service to the vulnerable children and parents who have survived abuse or neglect. Our results have been excellent. To become even more effective, we are jumping forward in three areas:

Offer the most up-to-date expertise to help survivors of abuse heal and thrive. This expertise depends upon a well-trained, well-supervised, advanced and stable workforce. We have been able to attract the best casework,



treatment, and supervisory staff, and want to retain them and help them continue to augment their skills. To this end, we have designed new core training, developed new supervisory routines, offered staff financial support for graduate study, fund off-site staff training, increased our starting salaries, and even brought in Mister Softee to serve free sundaes during the hot weather.

Identify unmet needs and find the best programmatic responses to meet them. We are making sure that families recovering from trauma have everything they (reasonably) need at Forestdale. This includes the new mental health and domestic violence services for mothers, to the expansion of our Attachment and Bio-behavioral Catchup (ABC) intervention which improves parent-child bonds, to new co-parenting services for fathers, to additional psychiatric services and new full-time housing and addiction specialists. In each case, when many families requested help for critical things they could not find, our staff research best methods & practices, and generous partners sponsored new pilots to implement these new models.

Dignity starts with your surroundings. Did you ever notice that you can tell whether an office is serving rich people or poor people by the decor and the presence or absence of a lovely, hot cup of coffee when you enter? Why should physical spaces serving low-income families not be appealing and welcoming? Thanks to the NYC Council, New York State, and our generous donors, Forestdale is updating every one of our 75-year old buildings at our headquarters in Forest Hills, Queens. These five buildings are being renovated to become more attractive, modern, and welcoming for all who enter our doors. This summer 2018, we look forward to the opening of our new Teaching Kitchen (you will want



to cook and eat there) and main lobby and waiting areas. Next, we will be breaking ground on the state-of-the-art maternal-child and education/career centers. New Health and Prevention renovations will follow. Join us any time to view the progress into the next age of Forestdale.

In the end, it is all about mending the wounds of survivors of childhood trauma and averting future distress. Improving long-term programs and starting innovative new ones are all in the service of these goals. We cannot do it without hundreds of partners. We, as a society, have eradicated polio & other diseases – we, as a society can eliminate childhood trauma and poverty in our lifetime. Thank you for helping us travel this road healing childhood trauma one child at a time.

SUPPORTERS

Forestdale's work is made possible through long-term partnerships with public and private foundations, corporate partners, and generous individuals. In order to continue the high-quality and innovative services we provide to the families we serve, we require engaged and committed partners including governmental agencies, private foundations, corporate entities, and individuals.

- Anonymous
- Astoria Bank
- Barclays
- Child Welfare Fund
- Cicatelli Associates, Inc.
- Community Resource Exchange
- Dammann Fund
- Deloitte
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- Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation
- First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills
- FPWA
- Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund
- Fund for Public Health in NY
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- Nancy & Edwin Marks Family Foundation
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- Women's Club of Forest Hills
- Yellowstone Hardware Supply Inc.

Likewise, thank you to all of our tremendously generous individual donors





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