

# Bright Horizons

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~ Adam’s grandmother

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## Changing Families' Lives



**Your support helps change the life of children in need and makes a family's life healthier and happier.**

"We've had custody of Adam since he was three years old. His first few years of life were filled with neglect and abuse, so the courts decided it was best for him to be raised by us. We have had our share of ups and downs as his guardians, but things got bad when he turned 13. He started to fall behind in school and his grades were suffering.

Adam was referred to the Parent Child Resource Center's Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) following several inpatient hospitalizations for suicide attempts and ongoing self-injurious behaviors. When he gets overwhelmed by stressors in his life, he often resorts to harming himself or makes threats of suicide.

Our grandson is transgender. He was born a female but identifies as male. My husband and I were raised in a much different time and with more conservative ideas than those of today. We were both frustrated and overwhelmed with his behavior. We wanted to help Adam, but it was hard for us to see that this wasn't just attention-seeking behavior.

Through the support from the IOP group and our weekly parent guidance sessions, we all made great progress. Adam was able to develop a sense of belonging, and healthy coping skills to help manage his depression and feeling overwhelmed. He finished the IOP program and ended school on a positive note.

Adam was transferred to a home-based program, and we continue with intensive family therapy. We all are doing well, especially Adam who has remained safe and out of the hospital. I am so grateful for the folks at the Parent Child Resource Center for helping Adam and teaching us how to be the best support system possible."

~ Adam's grandma

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## Addressing Overdose Deaths

BHcare's Alliance for Prevention and Wellness (APW) has received funding to renew and expand its efforts to address overdose deaths in the Connecticut River Valley, which includes the towns of Essex, Old Saybrook, Westbrook, Deep River, Chester, East Hampton, East Haddam, Durham, Middlefield, Haddam and Killingworth.

Through a partnership with the Connecticut State Police, the Office of Probation Services, the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance, and a network of drug-free local prevention councils, the Combating Overdose Through Community-Level Intervention Grant will provide drug use prevention, harm reduction and access-to-treatment services for adults and their families in this underserved rural area of Connecticut.

APW was also awarded a grant from the CDC Foundation in partnership with the State Police Statewide Narcotics Taskforce to launch PHAST (Public Health and Safety Team). PHAST uses guiding principles, strategies and tools to help jurisdictions: 1) develop a shared understanding of the local overdose crisis; 2) optimize local capacity to prevent overdose deaths and 3) establish shared accountability for implementing effective overdose prevention efforts.

Several initiatives have been launched as a result of the funding including a mobile harm reduction van and our Handle with Care program. The van is equipped with fentanyl test strips, Narcan, band aids, condoms and a syringe exchange and provides referral assistance. Handle with Care ensures children who are exposed to a traumatic incident (overdose, death, violence, weather related incident, etc.) receive appropriate interventions so they can succeed in school to the best of their ability.

"The van is meeting people where they are and providing immediate help," said Andrew Penna, Overdose Response Coordinator for APW. "Handle with Care notifies a child's school if they have experienced a traumatic event making the staff aware that the child will likely be in a sensitive place."

**Your donation allows us to provide support to individuals and families and enhances our harm reduction, prevention and education efforts.**

# Empowering Survivors

"I am one of the blessed ones that escaped the violence and I stand here today to tell you there is a way out. I am not a victim; I am a survivor who has a story to tell.

Like so many, my story is about the abuse I received from someone I mistakenly thought loved me. The nightmare I was living needed to end as I feared for the safety of my children. I chose to protect my family no matter what the cost or consequences.

I was fortunate enough to find help at the Hope Family Justice Center. With the constant reassurance, love and positivity I've received at the Center, I gained the courage to walk away from my abuser. The staff did their best to help me get through this difficult process. I received legal help, coaching, counseling, childcare and housing services. Whatever my children or I needed, the staff found a way to help.

They enlightened me on the true meaning of domestic violence and I have learned a lot about healthy and unhealthy signs in a relationship. They have given me the resources to help cope with the aftermath of the storm. They have truly turned my life around.

Now I look at this as a bump in the road that has made me stronger as a woman. My children and I thank everyone at the Hope Family Justice Center for being there for us.

I encourage others to tell their stories and tell them loud! We are survivors!"

~ Elizabeth



Because of **your** generosity, we can continue to provide support and empowerment for survivors and their families.

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## Paying It Forward



With **your** help, we are bettering the lives of our clients so they can better the lives of others.

"I was a functioning alcoholic for years and tried to get sober several times. I'd spend three or four days in a hospital, get 30 days of sobriety under my belt, then relapse. I thought I could be a casual drinker and that a few drinks would be okay, but that ended up with me drinking nearly a liter of vodka a day.

My so-called rock bottom was when I needed surgery for a shoulder injury. I showed up to the pre-op appointment drunk, it was then that I realized I had to quit and get help. I needed to learn how to live without alcohol so I started an IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program) at BHcare.

Through IOP, I learned what triggered me to drink and how to avoid those triggers. I developed coping skills that helped me manage my cravings, learned you can't be afraid of failing and how to celebrate small successes. I made a commitment to myself and take one day at a time. I am becoming a better person and no longer let alcohol get in the way of my goals. I put every ounce of effort into my recovery, know I am responsible for my success and hold myself accountable.

BHcare has so many resources available to help with recovery. The programs are individualized so you and your clinician can pick and choose what is right for you. Everyone that I have met is so helpful. Even if you just need someone to talk to because you are having a bad day, they are there for you.

I have been sober for seven months now and am forever grateful for all that BHcare has done for me. My goal is to get my Master's Degree in social work so I can pay it forward. It is my turn to make a difference."

~ Jim

# HOW I'M HELPING



"I am a survivor of physical, sexual and verbal abuse. As a veteran, I did seek help, but the help wasn't available immediately. I worked with a therapist and counselor, but I needed more to help me get over the trauma I experienced.

I felt very alone. I did some research on domestic violence and stumbled across BHcare's A Chance to Shine event. The Walk to Remember resonated with me and something inside me told me that I needed to volunteer for this event.

The day of the event I worked at the table where people could purchase signs to walk in memory of a lost loved one. I can't even begin to tell you how these few hours have changed my life. I met so many brave women who openly shared their abusive relationship stories. Their stories were so emotional and touching, I felt I was amongst peers and no longer alone. A small group of us vowed to stay in contact with each other. This is exactly what I needed in my life.

I know the purpose of volunteering is to help others in need. What I didn't realize was the impact it would have on me personally. This was truly a life-changing experience for me. It is giving me a chance to heal and the passion to continue volunteer work. So many positive things have resulted from this experience and will affect the rest of my life. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to work the event and plan to be involved with A Chance to Shine for as long as I can. In addition, I will look for other opportunities to give back."

~ Jacqueline

*Learn about ways you can help at [BHcare.org](http://BHcare.org).*

BHcare is supported by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Connecticut Health Foundation, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, Katharine Matthies Foundation, the Guilford Community Fund, the Guilford Human Services Council, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, The Valley United Way, United Way of Milford, The Valley Community Foundation, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Towns of Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven and Woodbridge.

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