



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Sarah Goforth, MS, CMC, CADCII Executive Director

"If we all work together, we can address the challenges of mental illness and make good things happen for many of the most vulnerable members of our community."

Dear Friends,

August 19, 2018 will mark five years for me as the Executive Director at VCS. Time flies when you are busily engaged in both challenges and successes with a steadfast belief in the VCS mission. I am frequently asked: what does VCS do *exactly*? Well, the answer is: VCS is an individual, family counseling and mental health treatment center with an anti-racist social justice mission and we save lives every day.

Our Mental Health Clinic celebrated three years in operation this June and targets 12 percent growth for 2018. As our Individual and Family Counseling Services Program approaches its 50th year it now holds two counselor candidate trainings a year in English, and two in Spanish. We continue to be one of the most sought after internship sites for people seeking master's degrees in behavioral healthcare. Our Services for Older Adults and their Families reach more and more people every day, as does our Parenting Apart Program.

Our Student Advocacy Program was recently funded by the Rockland County Department of Social Services. In continuing to provide low cost services where there is need, we launched our Spanish Language Counseling Program called Puentes (Bridges). We now have a bi-lingual bi-cultural Spanish speaking person in all of the programs we offer.

Our country is experiencing an unprecedented level of violence; VCS has answered the call for action. It all starts with our youth. Our in-school programs counsel families in the East Ramapo School District and was recently contracted to work in the South Orangetown Middle School. In addition, The Rockland County Youth Bureau, United Way and The Rockland County Community Foundation continue to fund this program.

MESSAGE FROM SARAH

The issue of domestic violence in our state continues to be one of the challenges that we face. Our New York Model Batterer Program not only serves the local community courts but is a national teaching model as well. Our partner, the Center for Safety and Change, wrote a grant that focuses on serving the Spanish speaking community. We were fortunate to be awarded funds through this grant enabling us to hire a bi-lingual bi-cultural retired NYPD police officer to the program.

As the political climate in our country changes we have had a record breaking number of attendees for the Undoing Racism Workshop that VCS hosts with partner, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. Additionally, VCS won a Non Profit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program grant for \$75,000 to create additional consultation rooms on the third floor, replace worn carpet, and repair the front steps of our building.

The VCS mission is carried out with a sense of pride and purpose by a unique blend of volunteer and professional staff and an active, vital Board of Directors. The report that follows is a synopsis of our work and accomplishments in 2017. The greatest measure of our success continues to be the number of individuals, young people and families who look to us for help. Our organization has been a Rockland County institution since 1970. We are proud to be a resource for countless people in Rockland County who otherwise would not be able to access services.

Thank you,

Sarah Goforth, MS, CMC, CADCII

Executive Director

Sarah Lofor



Counseling and Family Services

- Puentes (Bridges) services provided completely in Spanish (counseling, parenting, school advocacy & others)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender counseling by LGBT and LGBT affirming counselors
- Divorce and Parenting Apart Programs
 - ◊ Individual Counseling
 - Classes for separated parents to manage their interactions to best support emotional and other needs of their children
- Services for Older Adults and their Families
 - In-home counseling for homebound people over 60
 - Resource Center with crucial information for eldercare provided through in person and phone consultations, family meetings and workshops
 - Caregiver Support Group is offered twice weekly, daytime and evening
- Grandparents/Relatives Raising Children (RAPP) provides a monthly support group, school advocacy, counseling, home visits, case management & information and referrals
- VCS Mothers & Father's Group is conducted in English and Spanish.
- Employee Assistance Services for people within companies
 - ♦ Workshops
 - ♦ Counseling

"We each have our own journey but humanity is universal."

VCS SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Counselor Training Program

Lay people and professionals from the community are recruited, screened, trained and supervised to provide high level counseling to others. Training programs are held four times a year, twice in Spanish and twice in English.

Mental Health Clinic

The VCS Mental Health Clinic is licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health to provide outpatient mental health treatment, including individual therapy and psychiatric services to adults (age 18+) with a diagnosable mental health condition and who meet medical necessity for a higher level of care.

Graduate Student Internships

VCS continues to be a highly sought after and competitive placement for social work and counseling programs (MSW, Marriage and Family Counseling, Mental Health Counselors) throughout the NY Metropolitan area. Many interns go on to become VCS staff members or ongoing dedicated volunteers and are well prepared in their fields.

Domestic Violence Programs

- NY Model for Batterer Programs National Training Institute
- VCS Domestic Violence Program for Men
- Individual counseling available to domestic violence survivors/victims in collaboration with the Center for Safety and Change

Racial Justice Initiatives

- Administering the Undoing Racism Workshop, presented by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond
- Consulting with groups, businesses, institutions on issues of racial justice
- Monthly discussion group for Undoing Racism Workshop graduates are conducted once in the daytime and once in the evening

Youth Programs

The start of the 2017-2018 school year was tremendous for the FINS program. We implemented our pilot de-escalation program at Spring Valley High School that was a huge success in more ways than expected. It allowed us to identify additional ways to prevent crisis before it even begins. In the winter of 2017, we also piloted our Spanish group, Sonadores Sin Limites, which was open to all Spanish speaking students who have been in the country less than one year. Our students connected so well that they chose the name for the group and designed their own logo. (See picture.) Please stay tuned for more exciting FINS developments in 2018!



Student designed logo for the Pilot Spanish group

The **Rockland Student Advocacy** Program has continued to provide information, referrals and direct advocacy support to over 200 Rockland families in 2017. We help to empower parents to be good advocates for their children's educational needs. By providing parents with information about their rights and their children's rights, and helping them understand how to communicate effectively with their prospective school districts, we provide a valuable service to children in all eight Rockland school districts and Rockland BOCES.

In the year 2017 **Parenting Apart** recognized certain groups had specific needs. We began to offer parents and children in our program one-on-one counseling in Spanish with a bilingual counselor and a 4 hour weekend Parenting Apart class alternating between Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate Sabbath observers.

As expected, our case load of Domestic Violence cases has increased. We work collaboratively with the Center for Safety and Change to address these issues. This has been a focus of our work over the last 2 years. The feedback from clients indicates that our effort, in this regard, is appreciated and that they feel validated in their experience.



Counselor Training Program

Our Counselor Training Program is highly regarded throughout the county and by many prominent educational institutions as an effective and practical preparation for counselors. It is required for

anyone working, interning or volunteering at VCS. In 2017, we trained 33 lay community members and 7 interns who are now active and dedicated counselors. The diversity of this training group continually grows. We have counselors fluent in Spanish, Creole, Hungarian, Greek, Russian and Italian.

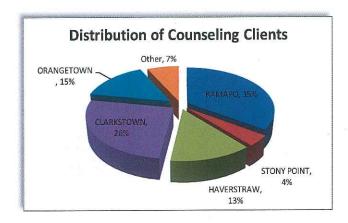
VCS COUNSELING AND FAMILY SERVICES

Services for Older Adults and their Families

The death of Ellie Jacobson in March of 2017 was a shock to everyone, and a great loss. Ellie's warm demeanor, combined with her immense knowledge of services for seniors in the county, are greatly missed. She had served VCS for over 20 years.

In August of 2017, Jill Bieber, a former volunteer counselor with VCS, came on board to coordinate the services for older adults.

- * The Outreach to Elders program (which provides in-home counseling to seniors) is thriving, with 8 volunteers serving 16 to 20 clients at any given time. These clients live in all parts of the county and represent a range of ethnicities and backgrounds. The majority are in their 70's and 80's, with health and financial concerns as well as emotional issues. Having a counselor come to their homes to meet with them on a weekly basis has been enormously helpful.
- * The Caregiver Support Group has expanded to include an evening group, which is very well attended. It is facilitated by Darcy Bauer, who works at The Office for the Aging and is a wealth of information and resources.
- * The Caregiver Resource Center continues to take calls on a daily basis, and responds to requests for information about subsidized senior housing, caregiver agencies and transportation options in Rockland County.





Spanish Language Counseling

In 2017 we served approximately 70 Spanish speaking clients. The Program now has its' own name and logo due to the ever present need for Spanish counseling services. We continue to offer services in individual counseling, parenting and couples counseling. We also assist clients with receiving services in the following programs: Parenting Apart, School Advocacy, Domestic Violence and our Mental Health Clinic.

Our collaboration with community organizations has expanded. We are collaborating with the following organizations for the convenience and benefit of our clients: Central Presbyterian Church in Haverstraw, Hudson River Health Clinic in Haverstraw, Hudson River Health Clinic in Spring Valley, Haverstraw Community Center, Creative Response to Conflict, Family Connections & Center for Safety & Change.

"Let me say, VCS received glowing comments from the people I spoke with. The things people liked most about VCS were the highly qualified and caring staff, the short wait time for an initial visit and the referrals to community supports and services that augment the recovery process."

From Brigid Piggott, LCSW of Rockland County Mental Health

2017 was the VCS Mental Health Clinic's third year in operation, and was another successful year. We increased our team to twelve staff members, including two interns who began working with us in September. The staffing increase allowed us to increase our capacity to 150 clients. We worked with 246 unique individuals over the year in a total of 4,190 appointments (about 30% growth from the prior year).

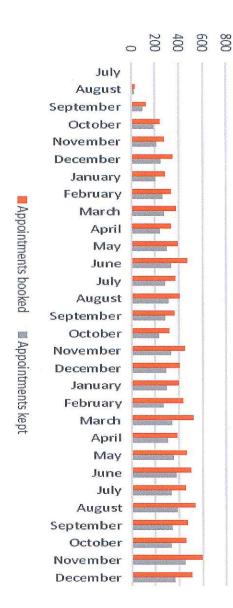
The expansion resulted in some growing pains for us, but thanks to the hard work of our team, we were able to create new clinical space at VCS, and refit the clinic team room to accommodate our growth. A grant from DASNY, New York State's developer made this construction possible. We are also grateful Finkelstein Library, Bernhardt Moving and the Rockland PC Users Group for supporting our growth and donating time and equipment to assist in our expansion.

We are also happy to report that we, once again, overshot our budget target for the year by about 10%. We could not have achieved this without a highly dedicated team of clinicians and administrative staff, each one of whom played an integral part in another very successful year. We are excited to continue to grow in 2018 and to sustain our reputation in the community for professional, effective, and compassionate service to our clients.



New consultation rooms for our expanding Clinic

Appointment Attendance





Bottom Row: Reka Foster, Willie Mae Murphy, Stella Farrell Kalish, Felicia Asch, Evelyn Carayannis, David Shipper Top Row: Ester Ben-Dov, Jamie Hopper, Ian Laidlaw, Bill DeSiena, Elora



Highlights for 2017

"We have had a record breaking number of attendees for the Undoing Racism Workshop that VCS hosts with partner The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond"

Working together for Racial Justice

- Administered 6 Undoing Racism Workshops 262 participants
- Facilitated morning monthly community discussions and began monthly evening discussions
- Continued ongoing racial justice training with VCS staff and counselors
- Consultant to Nyack Public Schools towards achieving racial equality

Domestic Violence Presentation to NYC Transit Workers Union



NYS School Board Regent Judith Johnson and Phyllis B. Frank



Ron Chrisholm, Founding Director, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond



Barbara Major, Core Trainer, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond



David Billings, Core Trainer, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond

VCS RACIAL JUSTICE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INITIATIVES

NY Model for Batterer Programs National Training Institute

- ♦ Rockland County, NY in May and October
- ♦ Buffalo, NY in May



VCS Domestic Violence Program for Men

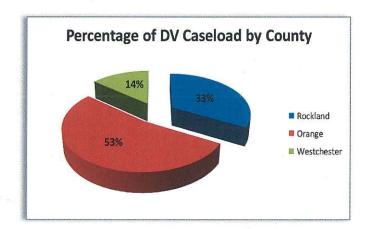
Classes for court mandated participants were conducted in Rockland, Orange and Westchester Counties serving domestic violence, criminal, family and IDV courts in those counties.

•	Rockland: # of men ordered	69
•	Rockland: # of men who became participants	73*
•	Orange: # of men ordered	112
•	Orange: # of men who became participants	115*
•	Westchester: # of men ordered	33
•	Westchester: # of men who became participants	30



*The number attended is more than the number ordered as there were several ordered at the end of 2017 who would not be counted in the "Ordered" but would be counted in the "Attended".

Instructors: Haki Baruti, Linda Berns, Barry Goldstein, Tony Garnere, Alan Gilliam, Denise Johnson, Sylvia Nieves, Jose Roman



Community Recognition

- In Celebration of Women for Venture, Camp Venture, Sparkill NY, 2017

 Phyllis B. Frank was honored for her Social Justice leadership in Rockland County.
- LGBTQ Pioneer Award, Rockland County Pride Center, 2017
 Inaugural award was presented to Phyllis B. Frank and named the
 Phyllis B. Frank LGBTQ Pioneer award recipient to be chosen each year.
- Rosa Serrano-Delgado was asked by the NYS Kinship Navigator to present the CURA Award for outstanding service to Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee on their behalf in Albany.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Rockland) presented the Florence Gould Gross Award to VCS, as a non-profit organization that has provided accessible and affordable counseling services to families and individuals since 1970.
- VCS was one of 12 non-profits chosen to participate in Active International's Circle of Hope at the 2017 Rockland-Bergen music festival in Tappan, NY. This venue afforded the non-profits the opportunity to interact with the public and get to know one another.
- VCS was invited to participate in the Rockland Boulders/Active International Charity Challenge.



Marie Wood Smith presenting Sarah Goforth with NAMI Rockland award



Phyllis B. Frank, presenting at a NYC Domestic Violence Convention

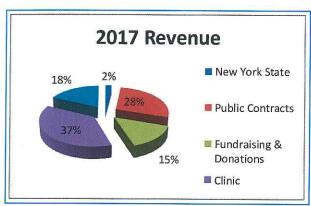
AGENCY INFORMATION

VCS Funding Sources

During 2017, VCS received funding from many generous private foundations, corporations and individual donors, as well as the following contractors:

Active Cares
BOCES
Camp Venture
NYS Medicaid
NYS Medicare
NYS Office of Children & Family Services
NYS Office of Mental Health
Rockland Community Foundation

Rockland County Dept. of Probation Rockland County Dept. of Social Services Rockland County DA's Office Rockland County Office for the Aging Rockland County Office of Mental Health Rockland County Youth Bureau United Way of Rockland County Village of Spring Valley





2017 Volunteer Counselors and Student Interns

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Felicia Asch Barrie Austin Kathy Bareket Rebecca Bassin

Darcy Bauer Maria Bautista Diane Bender

Joseph Benedikt Richard Benfield

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VCS VOLUNTEERS



2017 VCS Reception Desk

Danielle De Courcey Fran Greenberg Madeline Newman Myrna Price

2017 VCS Special Recognition

For years of service to VCS El Grupo de Madres **Eileen Burge**

For Photography

Ginny Geerdes, Shadow Photography

For special help with decorations at our events

Maria Perez

For providing VCS Staff with Yoga Classes at VCS Betsy Benjamin

For presenting VCS with a new volunteer **Daria Salmon**



Ryder Salmon

2017 VCS Golf Committee

Diane Campbell Barry Dorfman Susanne Fitzpatrick Phyllis B. Frank Ginny Geerdes Sarah Goforth Nancy Kupperman Bari Lewart Douglas Mattliano Patti Trichon

Special Thanks
Judy Andersen ~ Maria Perez



Barry Dorfman golfer and VCS Board Member



Peace



Simona and Jerry Chazen

\$10,000 or more

The Chazen Foundation PDI, Inc. (Jonathan Kupperman)

\$1,000 - \$9,999.99

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\$49.99 or less

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* Any omissions to our donor list are not intentional. We deeply appreciate all the support we receive.

"VCS has taught me how to have a healthy relationship and accept people for who they are."

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