

# VCS Annual Report 2024



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## Our Mission

VCS empowers people through compassionate, culturally sensitive counseling and clinical services that are accessible and affordable; fostering hope, and a healthier, more resilient community.

**Expand our reach,  
share our expertise,  
& strengthen partnerships  
to deliver the support people  
need to thrive; champion the  
premise that mental health care  
is healthcare, ensuring equitable  
access to quality services.**

## Our Vision

# Letter from the Executive Director



**Julie M. Prevost**

Executive Director, VCS Inc.

Dear VCS Friends and Family,

One of my favorite Disney movies and stories is Pixar's Finding Nemo, and like many people, I've always loved Dory's optimism and her mantra to "just keep swimming," moving forward and continuing on, even when the going gets tough.

Throughout VCS's history, the agency has been defined by perseverance and consistency. Challenges and changes to our agency structure, staffing, and funding have always been taken in stride and used to strengthen VCS moving forward. We always keep swimming, making sure that we do all we can to meet our clients' needs.

That's why when we lost funding for the General Counseling program that served as the backbone of VCS services since its inception, we didn't back down or abandon the program. Instead, we adapted, and General Counseling evolved into Wellness Coaching - a modern day solution that clients of any background can access and utilize to find greater life satisfaction. With the development of our own training program and coaching curriculum, we keep moving forward.

Whether it's building a skyscraper, organizing a new campaign, or ensuring the long term stability of an agency like VCS, success begins with laying down a strong foundation. 2024 was a year of foundation building for VCS. Bringing on more staff - including clinical support staff, a full time psychiatrist, and peer support staff - has allowed our clinic to accommodate more clients and provide more holistic care. This year, we added support staff for billing and marketing, and also reimaged our administrative makeup to better represent our services.

Today, we face yet another challenge in the form of Medicaid having an uncertain future and large cuts to government grants, both of which threaten nonprofits such as our own. There's no guarantee as to what the healthcare landscape will look like in a few years. Still, in the face of uncertainty, I believe that we are well situated for the next chapter of VCS's story. Like Dory, we'll just keep swimming, and we're grateful to our clients, friends, and supporters for swimming along with us.

With gratitude,

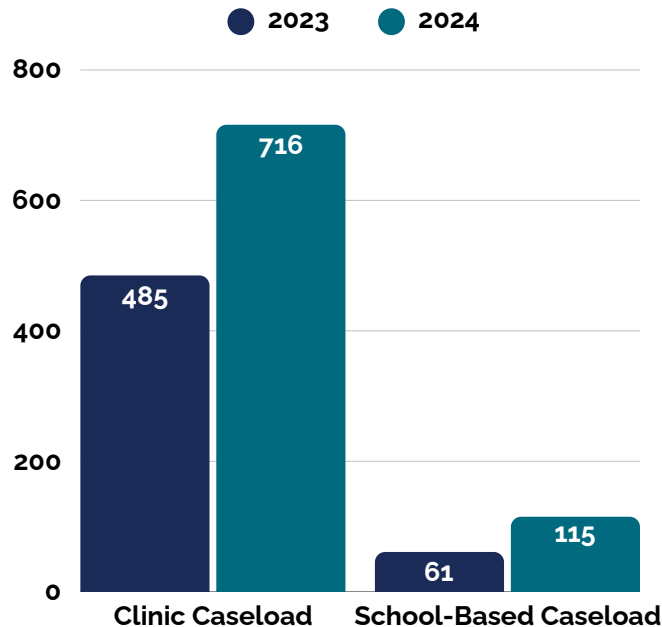
*Julie*

# Our Clinic

Compared to 2023, we saw:

**+81%** A huge increase in amount of time spent directly with clients in the clinic

**+63%** A big rise in the number of unique clients served



Our MHOTRS clinic caseload skyrocketed this year at our main office and at our school-based clinic sites



## 2024: Year of the Peer!

### What peer services do we offer?

Our peers are available to meet with existing clients (or their families) to provide non-clinical support for overcoming barriers associated with mental health care. Currently, our peers are licensed in 2 different areas:

#### Adult Peer Specialists

Peers services occur outside of the therapy session, and they work alongside clinicians to help clients meet personal and professional mental health goals and overcome barriers to treatment.

#### Family Peer Advocates:

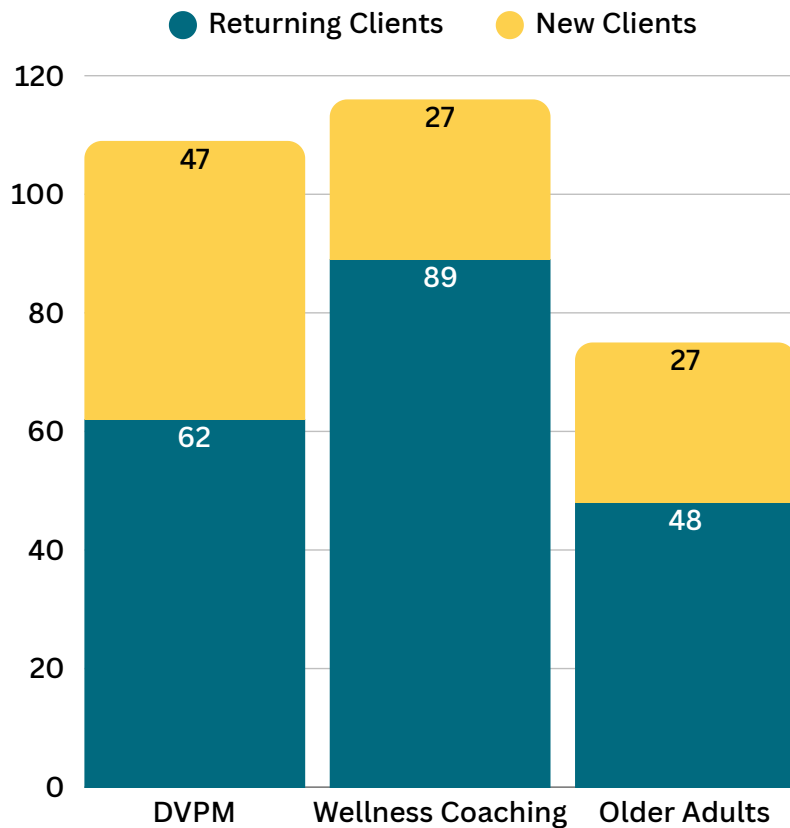
Offer support for parents & caregivers of VCS clients under 21 years old. Advocates provide emotional support and resources to families, and services are based on each family's individual determined need.

### Why?

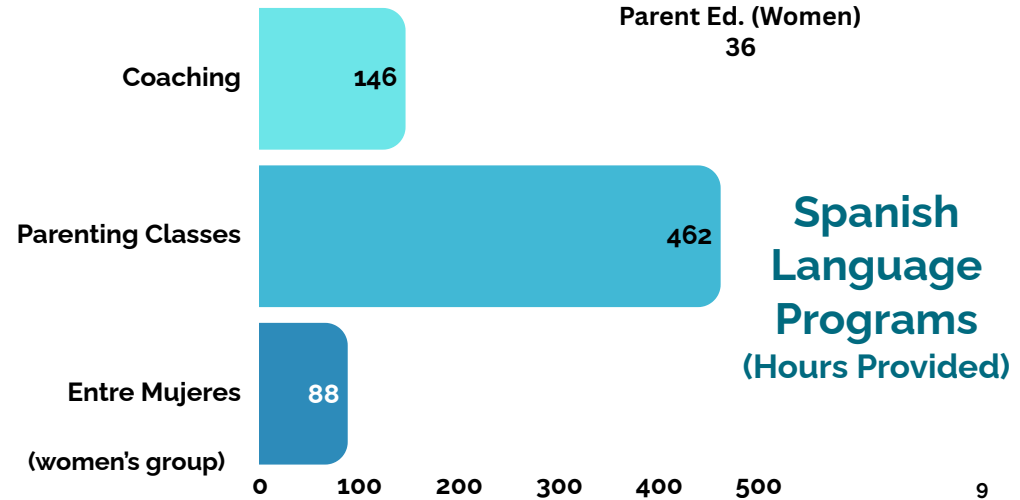
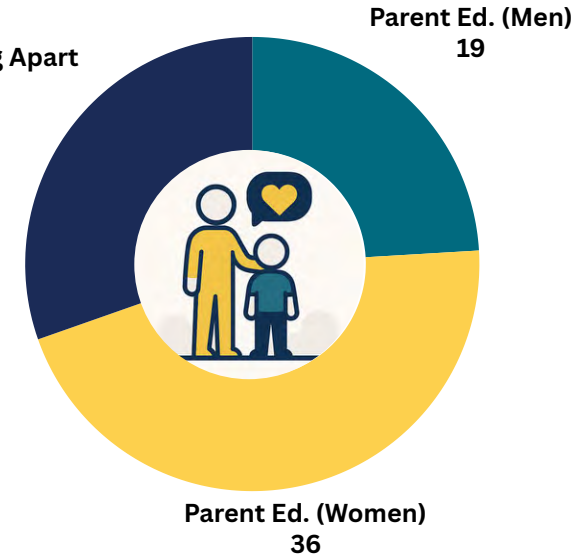
Peers are able to see **eye-to-eye** with clients, building their relationships on **mutual experience** and understanding. Often, peer support can feel more **comfortable** than therapeutic relationships. All of our peer services aim to help clients be as successful as possible in their time at VCS.

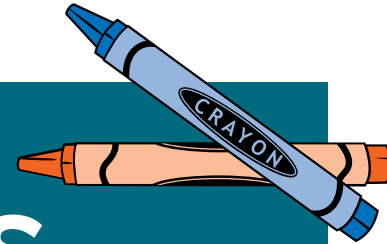
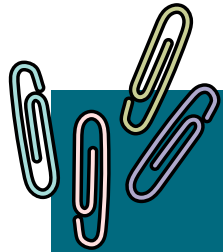
# Growth of Community Service Programs

Our Domestic Violence Program for Men, Wellness Coaching program, and Older Adults program all saw jumps in enrollment in 2024!



## Parenting Programming (Clients)



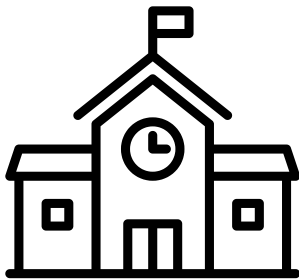


# Student Success

## School-Based Clinics

In 2024, clinicians and interns served well over 100 students across the following schools:

- Haverstraw Elementary School
- Kakiat Steam Academy
- Pomona Middle School
- Ramapo High School
- Spring Valley High School



## The Beth Kipperman Student Advocacy Program

With her retirement in 2024 after 25 years leading VCS's Student Advocacy program, we renamed the program after Beth Kipperman to commemorate all of her work to help students succeed. Thank you, Beth!

In 2024, the student advocacy program helped over 90 students (and their families) succeed in school!



# Stories of Us



## Wellness Coaching

"El tiempo que trabajamos juntas me ayudó mucho para aprender nuevas formas de hacer frente a lo que me sucede y ahora también sé que haciendo cambio en las cosas que no me hacen bien puedo encontrar la paz que necesito. Muchas gracias por la ayuda y que dios la bendiga para que siga ayudando a otras personas que lo necesitan."



## Wellness Coaching

"The time we worked together helped me a lot in learning new ways to cope with what happens to me, and now I also know that by changing the things that aren't good for me, I can find the peace I need. Thank you so much for your help, and may God bless you so you can continue helping others in need."



## Entre Mujeres

"I am so grateful for the group of women, for the contribution of each person they have selected to lead it. In the group, we have found empowerment and growth. We have recovered our worth. It inspires us to live with hope, remembering that we are alive and that there is so much to be thankful for. Thank you for guiding us to know that together we are strong."



## Entre Mujeres

"Estoy muy agradecida por el grupo de mujeres, por el aporte que cada persona que han seleccionado para dirigirlo, en el grupo hemos encontrado empoderamiento, crecimiento, recuperamos nuestro valor, nos inspira a vivir de manera ilusionada, recordando que estamos vivas y que hay tanto por agradecer. Gracias por guiarnos a saber que juntas somos fuertes".



## The Beth Kipperman Student Advocacy Program

Rachel began the school year alongside her peers and was initially enthusiastic about her 8th-grade experience. However, by October, she began to experience significant symptoms of depression and anxiety, resulting in her missing several months of school. In response, her mother contacted the VCS Student Advocacy Program for assistance in supporting Rachel's return to education. The Advocacy Team promptly coordinated a meeting with the school district, and Rachel was placed into a therapeutic educational environment which provided Rachel with daily therapeutic support, including individual and group counseling; academic continuity, allowing Rachel to stay current with her coursework; and supportive setting to build peer relationships and regain confidence. Rachel gradually found connection and comfort, becoming an active participant in both therapeutic services and peer groups.

**She is now looking forward to returning to school and is expressing excitement about entering high school.**



## Clinic

When John started therapy he wasn't sure he could stick with it. He shared that even though he wanted to commit, he was worried he might not be able to show up consistently. Since then, John has attended sessions every week. He's fully engaged in the work, and over time, our therapeutic relationship has grown stronger. As a result, John has made meaningful changes in his life. He's become more present, built stronger relationships, & recently applied for a job — something he never thought he could do before. His insight is growing, and **he's creating the kind of life he always wanted**, with support by his side.



## Peer Support Services

"One of my clients came to VCS needing help finding employment. In our work, we practiced with mock interviews and discussions about the client's skills. Now, he is employed by multiple locations and is meeting his income goals!"

— Adult Peer Specialist



# What's New

## I

### Realignment of VCS Divisions

Internally, created a 2-division structure at VCS:

#### **The Division of Clinical Services and Workforce Development,**

led by  
Laurie Montanaro

&

#### **The Division of Community Services,**

led by  
Kristine Lopez Morell

## II

### Evolution of General Counseling Into Wellness Coaching

Volunteers have been instrumental to the history and growth of VCS, so even as “Counseling” became a professionalized term, we developed the **VCS Wellness Coaching model** through which we trained volunteers to be coaches, focused on helping clients succeed in all areas of their lives

## III

### Expansion of Administrative Support

To support the growth of VCS we:

1. Hired our first Clinical Administrative Assistant to aid clinic staff with handling higher numbers of clients
2. Hired our first Billing Specialist to stay up to date on payment collection
3. Hired our first Marketing Specialist to modernize our social media, website, and promotional literature

# At VCS

## IV

### Strengthening of the Clinic

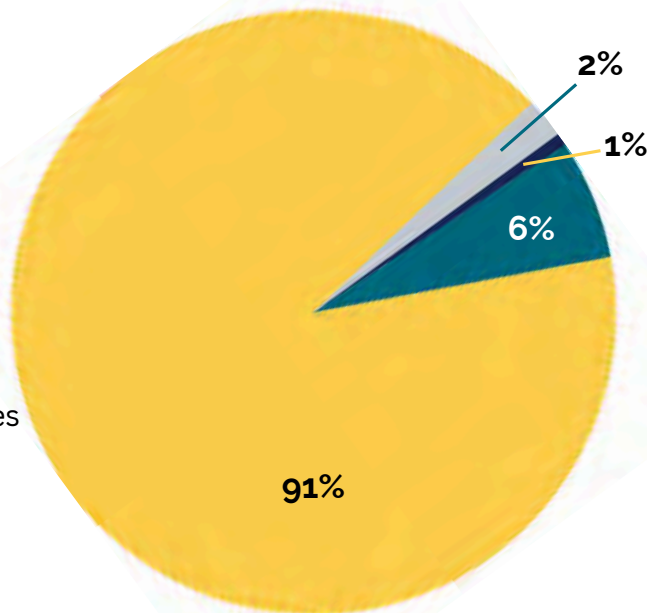
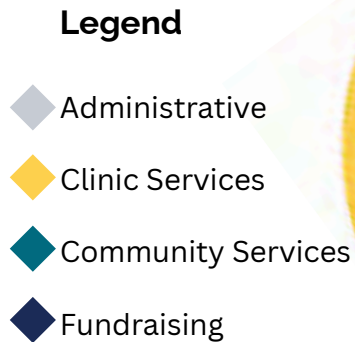
We bolstered clinical services by:

1. Introducing Adult Peer Specialists & Family Peer Advocates to provide additional holistic support to clients and their families
2. Hiring a Full-Time Psychiatrist to accommodate a growing client population



# 2024 Budget Breakdown

2024 Budget by Category



Total 2024 Budget: \$3,220,158.90

2024 was a year of **investment** in the future of VCS, focusing on these main areas:

- Staff
- Medical Services
- Infrastructure
- Office Space
- Interns & Young Professionals
- Marketing
- Coaching Development



# A Year In Photos



# Collaborations & Memberships

VCS continued its rich history of collaboration and mutual support with the following organizations:

- BRIDGES
- Center for Safety & Change
- East Ramapo Central School District
- Finkelstein Memorial Library
- Haverstraw Community Center
- Montefiore Nyack Hospital
- Refuah Health Center
- Rockland Community Foundation
- Rockland County Pride Center
- Rockland County School Districts
- Rockland Works
- United Way of Rockland County
- Westchester Community Opportunity Program

VCS is a proud member of the following organizations:

- Rockland Business Association
- Rockland Community Foundation
- Rockland Teachers Center Institute
- Rockland Business Women's Network
- The Alliance For Rights & Recovery
- United Way of Rockland County

# Funding Sources

During 2024, VCS received funding from many generous private foundations, corporations, and individual donors as well as the following federal, state, and local agencies:

- Medicare
- New York State Medicaid
- New York State Office of Children & Family Services
- New York State Office of Mental Health
- Rockland Community Foundation
- Rockland County Department of Probation
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Rockland County Office for the Aging
- Rockland County Department of Mental Health
- Rockland County Youth Bureau

*Thank you for supporting our mission & vision.*

# Our Donors & Special Recognitions

## \$5,000+

- The Chazen Foundation

## \$1,000 - \$4,999

- Anita Levine
- Arthur & Marlene Rudder-Rogovin Family Foundation
- Bernard & Mimi Gelb
- Beth Kipperman
- Derek Nelson
- Elijah Reichlin-Melnick
- Mario Occhicone
- Mimi & Lee Hoffman
- John Sadowski
- Jonathan Cooper
- Julie Wendholt
- Steven Breen
- Terry Knight

## \$500 - \$999

- Bari Lewart
- Douglas Landy
- Judy Ryan
- Julian Caridi
- Montefiore Nyack Hospital
- Sarah D. Jerrell

## \$250 - \$499

- Brian Wilson
- BRIDGES
- Mitchell Kahn

## \$100 \$249

- Aimee Pollak
- Brenda Robinson
- Daniel Vachon
- Danilo Sulit
- Dwayne M. Bodie
- Electronic Office Systems
- Finkelstein Memorial Library
- Heather Koubek

## \$100 \$249 (continued)

- Jessica Mitrani
- Joan Balfour
- Kara Pollack
- Laura Greenberg
- Linda Mower
- Paypal Giving Fund
- PC Renew
- Richard & Susan Baumeister
- Spencer Chiimbwe

## Under \$100

- Ampara Barbanl
- Amy Castillo
- Ana Valiente
- Anne Ludwig
- Annette Martinez
- Benjamin Moore
- Beth Davidson
- Brendelle Logan-Charles
- Carol Boesch
- Daniel Moldovan
- Denise Weiner
- Dina Nejman
- Dr. Shaw
- Ellen Palop
- Fatima Valtiena
- Friend Unknown
- Gloria Bruzzano
- Jane Kelman
- Jeff Shannon
- Jillian O'Donohoe
- JoAnn Henderson
- Julie Prevost
- Karen Hunt

## Under \$100 (continued)

- Lyndsay Falco
- M. Bass Hargrove
- Margarita Guina
- Maritza Gomez
- Marley Oakes
- Melissa Garcia
- Michelle Boyd
- Mireya Zatarain
- Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Silver
- Oscar Tinoco
- Paola Farias
- Philly Pretzel Factory
- Quisha Joacin
- Rebecca Tipa
- Red Bat Press
- Rita Sub
- River Court on Main
- Ruth Colon-Wagner
- S. Popov
- Sabrina
- Sean Hoyle
- Stayla Beauty Box
- Sylvia Miller
- Vanderbilt Hardware & Paint
- Woodglen Sunshine Faculty Association

Special **Thank You** to the  
Anonymous Donors who  
contributed over \$2600!

*Thank you all.  
You make it all possible.*



# Our Team

## Board of Directors

### Executive Board

Derek Nelson – President  
Jon Cooper – Vice President  
Steven T. Breen – Treasurer  
John Sadowski – Secretary

### Members

Simona Chazen, LCSW  
Beth Kipperman  
Terry Knight  
Anita Levine  
Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

## Executive Staff

Julie M. Prevost – Executive Director  
Kevin Greco – Director of Strategy & Compliance Officer  
Logan Meda – Executive Administrator

## Administrative Staff

Rita DeSantiago – Billing Specialist  
Matilda Vanderpuije – Compliance Assistant  
Amanda Veras – Marketing Specialist

## Division of Community Services

Kristine Lopez-Morell, MA – Division Director of Community Services  
Darla Salmon, MFT – Director of Coaching  
Maritza Gomez – Support Services Coordinator - Spanish  
Marie Wood-Smith, MHC – Support Services Coordinator - English  
Monica Mandell, PhD, LMSW – Student Advocacy Program Coordinator

## Division of Clinical Services

Lauren Montanaro, LCSW – Division Director of Clinical Services & Workforce Development  
Santiago Agudelo Velez, LMHC – Assistant Clinic Director  
Douglas Landy, MD – Psychiatrist  
Patience Ampofo, PNP – Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner  
Melissa Novick, MHC-LP – School Clinic Services Manager  
Snathalia Supreme, LMHC-D – Staff Development Specialist  
Azu Nieves, LCSW – Student Internship Coordinator  
Paola Molina Vivar – Clinic Coordinator  
Naketa Volcy, MSW-LP – Clinical Administrative Assistant  
Victoria Jean – Clinical Administrative Assistant

# Our Team

**Thank you to our wonderful interns & volunteers for their contributions! Without them, our work would not be possible.**

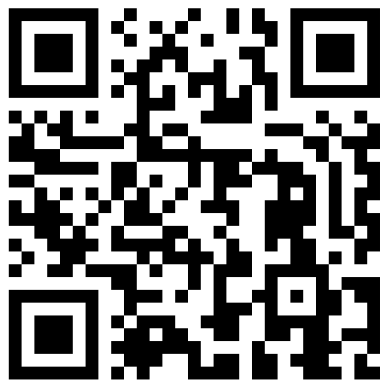
## Colleges & Universities Represented By Our 2024 Interns

Fordham University  
George Mason University  
Hunter College  
Lehman College  
Long Island University  
Manhattan College  
Mercy University  
New York University  
Ramapo College  
University of Buffalo



# Donate Here

Your support allows us to keep furthering  
our mission each and every day.



*All donors will receive documentation for your  
annual tax purposes, and will be featured in next  
year's annual report.*



*Thank you to Sarah for  
hand making this  
beautiful glass mural!*



# *Special Thanks*

to the Board of Directors, Staff, and Volunteers  
of VCS Inc., and especially to Maria Vanessa  
Cipolla and Finkelstein Memorial Library



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[vcs-inc.org](http://vcs-inc.org)