

ANNUAL REPORT

STRONGER TOGETHER



SAVING LIVES IN SO MANY WAYS

The more things fall apart
the more we stay together

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

SOCIAL JUSTICE

ADVOCACY

**20
21**

SAVING LIVES IN SO MANY WAYS

Every day VCS saves lives in so many ways by providing counseling services and mental health treatment with an anti-racist, social justice mission. Working collaboratively with the community, VCS identifies and fills gaps in services with programs in behavioral healthcare, training, and advocacy for those most in need.

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Sarah Goforth,
MS CMC, CADCI
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I have had the privilege of being the Executive Director at VCS for the past nine years. We are now close to the end of a second year of a global pandemic that has taken so many good people from us. Isolation and living in a virtual world has taken a toll on our community, but we have learned that we are **Stronger Together**.

We meet adversity with determination. Combatting behavioral health challenges such as mental illness and a local and national lack of resources is exactly what VCS does every day. Mental wellness is a global public health initiative. The pandemic placed so much stress on an already beleaguered system of care that collapse is imminent unless we all strive to work together.

We seek the best way to deliver services to those who need them the most. When we needed a clinic because people with serious mental health issues could not access assistance, we opened a clinic. When the community needed Spanish speaking services, we expanded our capacity across all programs. LGBTQ knowledgeable psychiatry was hard to find and we hired an experienced and dedicated physician. When the pandemic started, we pivoted to telemedicine. Now, I believe a green space is essential, and once again, a talented team of staff and volunteers are planning for it and will complete it in the next year.

VCS is innovative, mission driven, and has been helping Rockland County residents for more than 50 years. VCS is often the last house on the block. We provide a multitude of services for people experiencing significant behavioral health challenges. Our work at VCS is rooted in the ongoing effort to strive for a more just environment. To this end, we are entering into a partnership with two local agencies to provide weekly seminars dedicated to clinical excellence within a diverse community. We have often sought our inspiration from inviting our partners to become part of our learning landscape. We believe that collaboration among community providers is the way to live our mission as opposed to just voicing it.

I could not be prouder to have had the opportunity to serve as Executive Director at VCS. I am grateful for our staff, volunteer counselors, Board of Directors, and people like you. VCS could not carry out our mission without the support of our generous funders and friends.

The VCS sign on South Main Street provides a beacon of hope to all who need it, desire it, or want to help support it. If you listen hard enough you will hear the hopeful voices of clients, staff, and volunteers alike as we navigate our way to a better and **Stronger Together** direction **Together**.

Thank you,
Sarah Goforth, MS CMC, CADCI

MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

Now in its seventh year of operation, the VCS Mental Health Clinic increased capacity from 366 to 427 clients. We worked with 748 unique individuals over the year totaling an astounding 16,176 appointments. This represents approximately 33% growth from the prior year. Our revenue target for 2021 was 35% higher than that for 2020, and we again exceeded even this increased target by 15%.

We continued to provide about 70% of our services via telehealth, which has been instrumental in delivering critically needed mental health services for many people who were unable to access clinic services even prior to the pandemic, such as: housebound older adults, children without a means of getting to the clinic, people with debilitating physical illnesses that impact their mobility, and women in violent relationships who are unable to get away from home.

Our telehealth services have allowed access for people in poverty, such as those who took three to four hours using buses to get to the clinic, and people working long hours in unstable employment, who can now access counseling from their workplace during a break or before or after work from their home or car. In these ways, we have furthered our mission of reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

We are in the midst of a multi-year project to integrate addiction treatment into our clinic services. With overdoses, alcoholism and opiate addiction all on the rise during the pandemic, it is becoming increasingly critical for mental health treatment to integrate an addiction approach. More than three quarters of our clinicians are now training in addictions treatment, we are screening for addictions at intake, and we have begun to prescribe medications to support people in their sobriety and recovery.

It has been a difficult year clinically. Suicidality, overdoses, depression and worsening mental health symptoms have all been escalating. The clinical staff's exposure to the painful and upsetting experiences in the lives of our clients day after day, alongside their own struggles, took its toll throughout the pandemic.

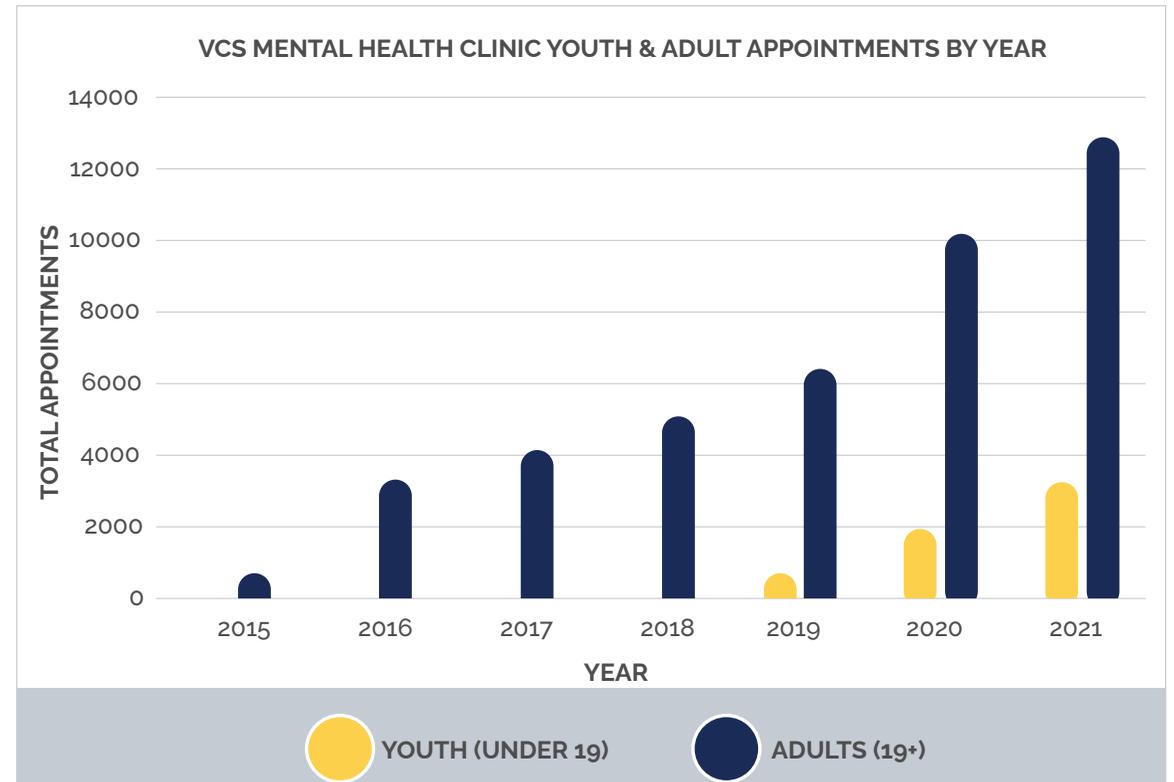
The strongest mark of our success has been our ability to support one another, and as an agency, in finding ways to support staff through the experience. We could not be more proud of our team for how we have survived and thrived while providing essential and complex mental health services during this challenging time.

CLINICAL SERVICES FOR YOUTH

The closing of our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in having to continue to provide services via telehealth through 2021. As the year progressed, we have seen continued growth and success engaging young clients via the telehealth modality. At the start of the year, we received approval to run a Ur Space Clinic at Pomona Middle School.

We are now successfully operating Ur Space Clinics in Spring Valley High School, Haverstraw Elementary School, and Pomona Middle School. We look forward to sustained growth of our school-based clinic services in Rockland County as we await our site license approval for the Ur Space Clinic in Ramapo High School.

In 2021 our Youth Services program at VCS has seen substantial growth with a total of 2,490 appointments for 117 clients under the age of 18. We hope to continue seeing steady growth with the implementation of telehealth services and the expansion of services in our local schools.



COUNSELING AND FAMILY SERVICES

THE GENERAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

- Still in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, we served 250 clients in 2021. Alternating between virtual and in person and back was difficult for many people. These are people of all ages, backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, dealing with mental health issues, domestic violence, adverse childhood experiences and other forms of trauma.

RELATIVES AS PARENTS PROGRAM (RAPP)

- 16 families raising grandchildren were assisted in 2021 via two Zoom meetings per month. One meeting was a support group and the other was an educational group. Outreach was conducted at DSS, BRIDGES, Literacy Solutions (New Americans) to increase membership. RAPP relatives were invited to participate in the DEI Festival in October 2021.

YOUTH PROGRAM FINS (FAMILIES IN NEED OF SUPPORT)

- At the start of 2021, our schools remained closed for in person learning which created some obstacles for running our school based FINS Program. As the schools reopened in the Fall, the FINS program quickly began to thrive. By the end of 2021, we served 24 children and adolescents in the East Ramapo Central School District and North Rockland School District.

OLDER ADULTS COUNSELING PROGRAM

- When we experienced a decrease in the numbers of older adults attending the support groups, we realized there were many challenges for older adults to come to VCS. Therefore, we shifted our focus to bringing individual or group counseling services to community residents. Toward this end, VCS launched three interactive peer support groups; one at Haverstraw Place, another at The Promenade at Blue Hill in Pearl River and a men's group at Sunrise Adult Living Facility in New City.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

- VCS continued to offer three dynamic caregiver support groups, in-person or via Zoom. For those older adults, who did not have access to technology for Zoom meetings, the Rockland County Office the Aging provided free iPads, for the ability to connect to individual or group counseling sessions. Caregiver support groups offer support to anyone who is taking care of a relative age 60 and over.

INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

- Clients and family members can call for information regarding the services that are available in Rockland County. This information can help them to know what options are available if they have issues with children, older adults, home care agencies, etc.

PARENTING APART

- In 2021 we offered all of our counseling remotely to 13 parents and individuals.
- The remote process for attending the class made it possible for us to double the usual amount of classes and help nearly 40 families.
- We continued to offer classes alternating between Saturday and Sunday.

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

- Parent education sessions for men and women continued to be necessary as we dealt with the pandemic crisis. Classes were held virtually and served 26 men and women.

ROCKLAND STUDENT ADVOCACY PROGRAM

- Approximately 160 families received information, referrals or direct advocacy in 2021. School meetings were conducted remotely and in person. We provide information regarding a child's right to an education, how to communicate effectively with their school districts, and to help parents become strong advocates for their children.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Provides workshops and/or counseling services for people within companies. We work with 10 to 20 employees from local organizations every year.

GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- VCS is a highly sought after placement for social work and counseling programs throughout the New York Metropolitan area. We are deeply invested in the workforce development of the helping profession. In 2021 we accepted 14 graduate students who developed their clinical practice skills through field work across all of our programs.

COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM

- In 2021 we trained 11 new volunteer counselors. We currently have counselors who are fluent in Spanish. We launched our first virtual training program with more diversified presenters in the General Counseling training.

PUENTES

- In its fourth year, PUENTES offers individual counseling to the Latino community. 19 counselors served approximately 83 clients. This program was impacted by the pandemic as many Latinos do not have access to computers and/or Zoom. The annual fundraiser for PUENTES was held at Town & Country in October, 2021 and it was well attended. PUENTES trained five new counselors who are now active.

EL GRUPO DE MADRES

- This parenting group is a 12 session program designed to educate and support women who are at risk of losing custody of their children. 35 women attended in 2021.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INITIATIVES

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) became a major initiative for VCS at the end of 2020. The purpose was dual: to provide awareness, education and support for staff and volunteers, and to incorporate DEI policies into the VCS organization, programs and services. A committee was formed to initially develop a mission statement that we could uphold while assuring everyone is welcomed and treated equitably.

On March 12, 2021 we arrived at a mission statement. The final version was adopted as follows: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a body within VCS representing the anti-racist social justice mission of our agency including identifying and alleviating bias. By centering the voices of historically excluded communities, our clients will experience a greater depth of counselor knowledge and professionalism, as they explore their own goals and personal challenges.

Over the year, several initiatives with emphasis on the principles of DEI were incorporated into the VCS environment. VCS leadership introduced new counselors to the concepts of DEI. A DEI Festival was held on October 29th. Many cultures were represented by food, music, dancers and giveaways. A Google survey was created for everyone to complete, suggestion boxes have been placed around the agency, and a book club was started. All of these initiatives were created to help gain cultural knowledge to incorporate within VCS programs and policies.

DEI Committee members: Elizabeth Alvarado, Virginia Geerdes, Maria Gonzalez, Azú Nieves, Marie Pierre, Darla Salmon, Patti Trichon, Laurel Villarente

Photos From the DEI Festival . . .



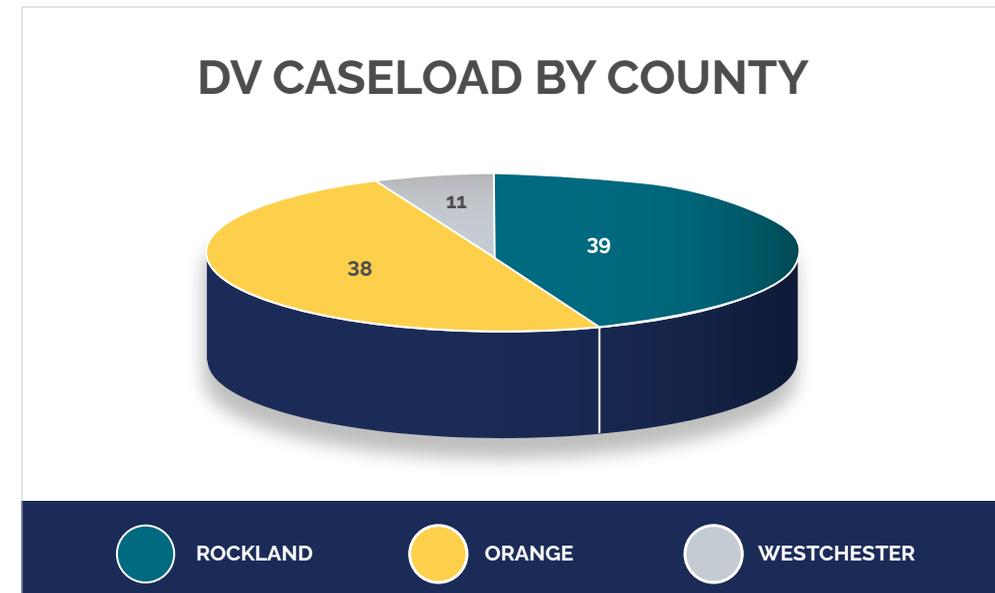
VCS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM FOR MEN

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

Rockland: # of men ordered	27
Rockland: # of men who became participants.....	39*
Orange: # of men ordered.....	31
Orange: # of men who became participants.....	38*
Westchester: # of men ordered	6
Westchester: # of men who became participants.....	11*

*The number attended is more than the number ordered as there were several ordered at the end of 2020 who would not be counted in the "Ordered" but would be counted in the "Attended" for 2021.

In keeping with our multi-language support, there were 11 Spanish registrations for 2021.



VCS AT A GLANCE

"WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR COUNTLESS PEOPLE ACROSS THE LIFESPAN WHO WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE ACCESS TO SERVICES IN ROCKLAND COUNTY."

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chief Financial Officer

ELIZABETH ALVARADO
Chief Operating Officer

AZU NIEVES
Director of Counseling & Family Services and PUENTES



SARAH GOFORTH
Executive Director

IAN LAIDLAW
Director
Mental Health Clinic

BARI LEWART
Executive Administrator

PATTI TRICHON
Special Project Coordinator

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM FOR MEN



CLINIC SATELLITES:
SPRING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
HAVERSTRAW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
POMONA MIDDLE SCHOOL
RAMAPO HIGH SCHOOL

- GENERAL COUNSELING PROGRAM
- RELATIVES AS PARENTS PROGRAM
- SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS & FAMILIES
- YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN NEED OF SUPPORT
- PARENTS EDUCATION & SUPPORT
- ROCKLAND STUDENT ADVOCACY PROGRAM
- EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
- GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
- VOLUNTEER COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM
- EL GRUPO DE MADRES
- ALL SERVICES PROVIDED IN SPANISH IN THE PUENTES PROGRAM



VCS IN THE COMMUNITY



DEI FESTIVAL



HAVERSTRAW MOTHERS GROUP



PRIDE ROCKLAND



COUNTY DONATES COMPUTERS



DOOR DEDICATION & OPEN HOUSE



ARC ROCKLAND JOB TRAINING



*May the door to VCS always be open to all who seek hope
Dedicated in loving memory of
"Mama"
♥♥♥♥♥
Mario Occhicone and Family*



17TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
TO SUPPORT VCS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMS
AT ROCKLAND COUNTRY CLUB ON AUGUST 2



EVENT SPONSORED BY:



3RD ANNUAL PUENTES CELEBRATION
TOWN & COUNTRY
OCTOBER 7



DONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

\$10,000 or more

Jerome A. Chazen Donor
Advised Fund
Professional Disposable
International, Inc.
(Jonathan Kupperman)

\$1,000 - \$9,999.99

Activeviam
Apple Bank
Arthur and Marlene Rudder-
Rogovin Foundation
Atlantic, Tomorrow's Office
Berry Industrial Group, Inc.
Ed Mooney and
Lisa Lundgren-Mooney
LCM247
M & T Charitable Foundation
Mimi and Lee Hoffman
Mimi Gelb
Nancy Seeback
Pell Wealth Partners/Ameriprise
Peter Sudol
Ravi Buckredan
Sarah Goforth and Geoff Cabrera

\$500 - \$999.99

Bari and Jordan Lewart
Beth Kipperman
Brooke Malloy
California Closets
Chaya Pilla
Daniel Quintero
DeCicco Family Markets
Getler & Gomes, PC
James Barry
John and Julie Sadowski
Kim Persson
M & T Bank

Michael Seidenfrau
Montefiore Nyack Hospital
Prestige Employee
Administrators, Inc.
Rockland County Pride Center
Steven and Michele Breen
Wegmans

\$250 - \$499.99

Apple Bank
Brian Raines
BRIDGES
Carmen Olavarrio
Cecilia Halverson
Colin and Sandy Pahal
Construction by Allison
Danny and Janis Rivera
Dina Nejman
Dolores and Andy Fliss
Don Simmons
Evie and Victor York
Good Samaritan Hospital
Hon. Harriet D. Cornell
Janine Getler
Jawonio
Jessica Kane
Julie Wendholdt
Judy Ryan
Lauren Eisen
Mark and Elora Kalish Foundation
Matthew Warbet of Keller Williams
Myrnia Bass-Hargrove
Nancy and Guillermo Rosa
RRC CPA's, PC
Sun River Health
Total Advanced Communications

\$100 - \$249.99

AFLAC
Aimee Pollak
Ana and Jose Santos
Ann Byne
August Kalmus
Berard & Associates CPA's, PC
Bluehill Construction Inc.
Bonnie Werk
Boyd Weinstein
Chana Getter
Connie Coker
Courtney Barron
Daniel and Rosemarie Mascano
Dara and David Warren
Doreen Hurley
Doug Heilig
Eyes of Nanuet
Fawn Hurwitz
Ginny Geerdes
Shadow Photography
Gloria and Ricardo Jorges
Hendo Contracting, Inc.
Ian Laidlaw
James Gallagher
Joan Balfour
Jon Cooper
Jose R. Rodriguez
Josephina Silva
Kareen Ruiz
Karen Caretsky
Kenneth Shaw
Kurt Bridges
Laurie Peek
Lee Vazquez
Linda Mower
Maria Forman
Maribel Guzman
Mario Occhicone
Marta Delgado Ramirez

Mary Lazin
MHA Rockland
Michael L. Naclerio
NAMI of Rockland
Nancy Forbes
Orangetown Smiles
People to People
People's United Bank
Pet Nutrition
Peter Roy
Phyllis Eisenberg
Rena Finkelstein
Roy Wooters
Sandra Wolf
Sazone Restaurant
Sharon Lorman
Hon. Sherri Eisenpress
Stephanie Bulgar
Steven Kurtz
Supervisor George Hoehmann
Supervisor Howard Phillips
Susan R Lopez and Emerito Castro
Susanna Cruz
The Little Diner
Tonayan Mexican Restaurant
Tracie & Raymond Florida
Vanguard Cleaning Systems
Yemaya Massage & Wellness Center

Under \$100

Annette Saviet
Aroldo Lodolini
Belinda Cash
Bonnie LaBar
Brenda and Lamont Milner
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Debra Bunnell
Eduardo Collazo Sr.
Ellen Palop
Emily Malin
Eva R. Steen
Gary & Evelyn Fiore
Gloria Delgado
Haki Baruti
Jake Cataldo
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Linda Gartenberg
Luisa Cerna
Maria I. Souto
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Mirna Franco
Morton and Ava Strauss
Nancie Eliscar
Nancy A. Bowen
Phil Rockfeld

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Seymour and Pearl Weinstein
Sheila Kamens
Siobhan O'Grady
Susan Deyette
Suzanne Ryba
Svetlana A. Popov
Sylvia R. Miller
Terry Knight
Veronica Gonzalez
Vivienne Von Wiederhold
Wil Velez
Hon. William P. Warren

2021 Special Recognitions

All the first responders, board, staff, and volunteers

Maria Forman for assistance with golf auction baskets

Interstate Toyota for the hole-in-one car prize at our golf outing

Matt Friedland of Color Swell for the donations of children's art supplies

The generosity of friends and family in memory of volunteer counselor, Tina Chamak

VOLUNTEERS

COUNSELORS

Margie Adames
Deana Adams
Denet Alexandre
Amy Aronson
Barrie Austin
Kathy Bareket
Kelly Barron
Larry Beck
Vivian Bencosme
Kathy Bernhardt
Ruth Berrios
Nancy Bowen
Shelly Burns
Liz Carl
Luisa Cerna
Zack Chaikin
Simona Chazen
Tess Coggins
Susanna Cruz
Jason Dana
Ravi Dasari
Vara Edara
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Joan Faison
Michelle Francois
Andrew Fuge
Eleanor Gaffney
Lynn Gartenberg
Ginny Geerdes
Charleny Genoval
Marina Gigante
Tiffany Grosso
Nati Guillen
Sarah Hatkoff
Taylor Jarrett
Deanna Joy
Jessica Kane
Ben Kaufman
Bonnie LaBar
Ileana LaGrutta
Nicole Larkins
Jackie Leary
Helen Lehtinen

Martine Littlewood
Graciela Londono
Sharon Lorman
Amanda Lugo
Debby Marcarelli
Angelica Marte
Andrea Massoud
Gail Maurer
Xiomara Menendez
Christina More
Linda Mower
Azú Nieves
Eve Pacheco-York
Ellen Palop
Ana Marcela Patino
Wonda Perez
Barbara Pfingst
Marie Pierre
Colin Pohl
Andrew Raska
Beth Resnick-Folk
Suki Robins
Jose Rodriguez
Kareen Ruiz
Judy Ryan
Marsha Safran
Steve Safran
Darla Salmon
Nayelhi Sanchez
Sue Saslaw
Dale Singer
Neil Singhal
Phyllis Sirois
Celine Stillman
Snathalia Supreme
Alice Taylor
Rebecca Tipa
Melissa Turk
Rosanna Ventura
Kimberly Vetrano
Laurel Villarente
Chrystelle Wade
Edna Ward
Joan Wasser
Eli Waxler

Zvi Weiss
Lukas Westbrook
Samantha Wood
Marie Wood Smith
Alba Zayas

STUDENT INTERNS

Raquel Abreu
Santiago Agudelo
Vanessa Boutin
Jason Dana
Madelaine Dwier
Jillian Gallo
Charleny Genoval
Daiane Kong
Jon Kriz
Ileana LaGrutta
Nicole Larkins
Neil Singhal
Wonda Perez
Snathalia Supreme
Lukas Westbrook

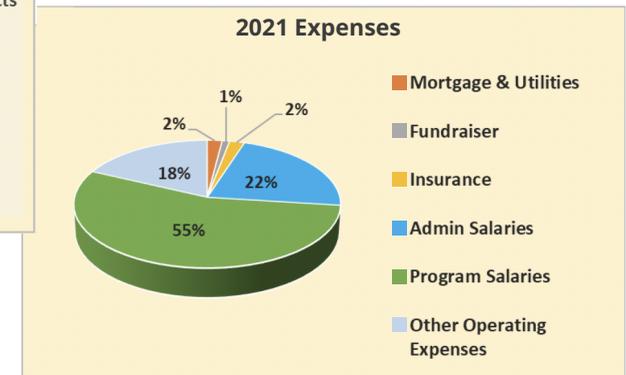
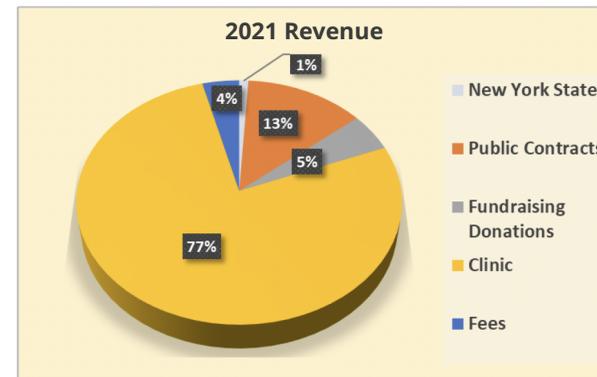
SUPERVISORS

Elizabeth Alvarado
Shelly Burns
Liz Carl
Kathy Carty
Simona Chazen
John Corcoran
Phyllis Eisenberg
Lynn Gartenberg
Sarah Goforth
Ian Laidlaw
Gail Maurer
Dina Nejman
Azú Nieves
Judy Ryan
Marsha Safran
Steve Safran
Rosa Serrano-Delgado
Dale Singer
Celine Stillman
Alice Taylor

FUNDING SOURCES

During 2021, VCS received funding from many generous private foundations, corporations and individual donors, as well as the following contractors:

- Camp Venture
- Jerome A. Chazen Donor Advised Fund
- Medicare
- NYS Medicaid
- NYS Office For The Prevention Of Domestic Violence
- NYS Office of Children & Family Services
- Rockland County Dept. of Probation
- Rockland County Dept. of Social Services
- Rockland County Office for the Aging
- Rockland County Office of Mental Health
- Rockland County Youth Bureau
- United Way of Rockland County



COLLABORATIVES

The VCS General Counseling Program continues to collaborate with the following organizations:

- Center for Safety & Change
- Family Service Society of Yonkers
- Haverstraw Community Center
- Montefiore Nyack Hospital
- Refuah Health Center
- Rockland County School Districts
- Seneca Family of Agencies, Todo Por Mi Familia
- Westchester Community Opportunity Program

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF



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Beth Kipperman, Student Advocacy Program Coordinator
Dina Neiman, MSW, Services for Older Adults & Families Coordinator
Debra Roth LCSW-R, M.Ed., Student Intern Program Coordinator
Darla Salmon, MFT, Services Specialist
Rebecca Tipa, Youth Program Coordinator

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Bridget Middleton, Clinic Coordinator
Richard Price, MD, Psychiatrist
Rebecca Tipa, Youth Program Coordinator

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Reka Foster, LMFT
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Colleen Gallagher, LMSW
Jillian Gallo, MSW
Hunter Harrow, LMSW
Eva Hernandez, LCSW-R
Jamie Hopper, LMFT

Jackie Kelly, LMSW
Bonnie LaBar, MHC
Ileana LaGrutta, MHC
Ricardo Lima, LMSW
Jamer Linares, LMSW
Maria Lucibello, LMHC
Brianna Morrell, LMSW
Geraldine Ryan, LMHC
David Shipper, LMHC
Snathalia Supreme, MHC
Jill Torrente, LMSW
Migdalia Valdes, LMSW
Alex Vangel, LMSW

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Susanne Fitzpatrick, DVPM, Records & Administration
Maria Gonzalez, DVPM, Registrar, Court Liaison; English/Spanish;
and PUENTES Coordinator
Darla Salmon, MFT, DVPM, Services Specialist

RISING UP TO THE CHALLENGES WITH RESILIENCE & STRENGTH



Our services to the community are always growing.

In order to continue to flourish and provide valuable service to the individuals and families, we rely on our generous donors. You can make a difference in someone's life with a donation to VCS. Visit us online at vcs-inc.org to find the best way to contribute.

Services currently available in several languages.
Please call for more information: (845) 634-5729



**CELEBRATING
50 YEARS**

OUR SERVICES

MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

COUNSELING & FAMILY SERVICES

- General Counseling Program
- Relatives as Parents Program
- Youth & Family Programs in Schools
- Services for Older Adults & their Families
- Parents Education and Support
- Rockland Student Advocacy Program
- Employee Assistance Program
- Graduate Student Internship Program
- Volunteer Counselor Training Program
- El Grupo de Madres

PUENTES: All VCS Programs & Services in Spanish

SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES AND TRAININGS

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Domestic Violence Program for Men

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