



MADONNA PLACE

# With Gratitude

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



## GREETINGS FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF MADONNA PLACE,

2020-2021 has been an “interesting” year that has tested our capacity for change, to manage stress, to stay safe, and to secure needed financial and pandemic related resources. Most importantly, we needed to learn and implement new ways of providing very needed family support, parent education, child abuse prevention and basic needs services to our existing and new client families.

We began the fiscal year with COVID rates decreasing, which enabled us to safely conduct outdoor services as well as virtual. By September, the rates increased dramatically and our hopes to further open our programs’ services had to be scaled back. I am happy to report that despite the challenges, we have been successful. We were able to serve 914 unduplicated parents and children and had excellent service outcomes. With the advent

of vaccinations, decreases in disease rates and new public health guidance, we ended the year cautiously optimistic and committed to a full re-opening of programming for the new year.

Our positive response was thanks to the generosity of many foundations who provided us with COVID related grants, more funding and flexibility of spending. We also had a tremendous response from individuals and businesses in the community, whose donations helped sustain our programs, provided more basic needs assistance, and helped many families and children to have a very happy holiday season.

Thanks to the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, our fund development efforts were also strengthened by the addition of a new fund development coordinator position plus the opportunity to receive technical assistance and both a new donor and program database. Our Fund Development team has been focusing more on donor cultivation and peer to peer fundraising, as well as offering fun virtual events including Trivia and Bingo.

As horrific as the pandemic was, it has helped to shed light on the glaring health disparities that Brown and Black people experience in our Country. These inequities are due to the impact of race on the social determinants of health, which include economic stability, education and access to quality health care, neighborhood and environment, and social/community relationships. Madonna Place has been awarded two grants during the past year to

**83 CENTS OF  
EACH DOLLAR  
RECEIVED GOES  
DIRECTLY TO  
CHILDREN AND  
THEIR FAMILIES**

address maternal child health and COVID related health inequities and is proud to partner with our community to address these important concerns.

Additionally, thanks to the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, we are both proud and excited to be entering into a new partnership to provide coordinated and greatly expanded evidenced-based home visiting services to Eastern Connecticut. Home visiting is a highly effective way to prevent child abuse and neglect, promote health, and to strengthen families and children. Our partners include the Lead Agency TVCCA, the VNA of Southeastern CT, as well as Backus, Day Kimball, Lawrence and Memorial, and Windham Hospitals. Together, we will be creating a home visiting system in our Region which will provide choice and improved access for families. This new initiative will also focus on health inequities, and the needs of all at risk parents.

We would like to thank the dedicated staff of Madonna Place who have done a wonderful job during the past year with helping families and keeping us all safe.

I would also like to thank our volunteers and our board of directors for their tremendous gifts of time, talent, and expertise. A special thanks to all of our donors and sponsors, as your support of our fundraising efforts, whether through a direct financial gift, donation to the United Way, attendance at a fundraiser, or sponsorship of an event, are all crucial to the success of Madonna Place.

With Gratitude,

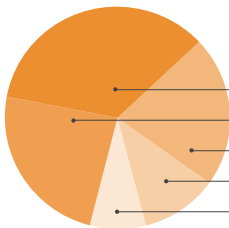


Nancy W. Gentes  
Executive Director



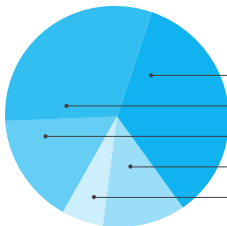
Michael L. Anderson  
Board President

## 34 YEARS OF STRENGTHENING FAMILIES



### SUPPORT AND INCOME FUNDING SOURCES \$1,205,822

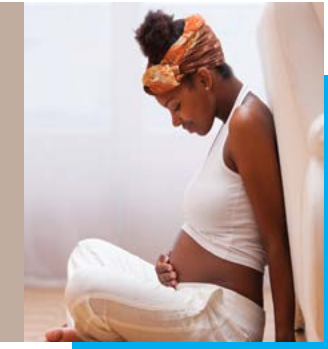
- Federal Government **35%**
- State Government **24%**
- Foundation & Agencies **22%**
- United Way **11%**
- Contributions & Other **8%**



### EXPENSE ALLOCATION \$1,159,746

- Great Beginnings **35%**
- Fatherhood Initiative **31%**
- Family Support Center **16%**
- Management & General **12%**
- Fundraising **6%**

# PROGRAMS



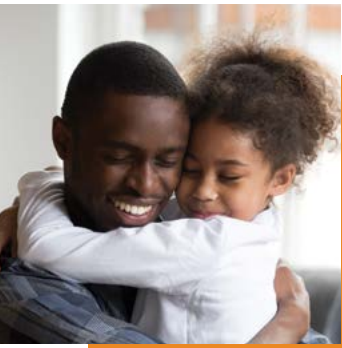
## GREAT BEGINNINGS

**Great Beginnings** uses Parents as Teachers, an evidence-based parent education and support home visiting model. Following the Healthy Families model, Great Beginnings provides pregnant women and their families with information, support, skills, and encouragement to help reduce the risk of poor birth outcomes and provide infant care that supports optimal child development during the crucial early years of life. There is a focus on preventing health disparities and increasing access to services for underrepresented populations with outreach from a community health worker. Weekly home visits are conducted and learning materials, books, food, diapers, and other support resources are made available to empower families and prevent child abuse and neglect.



## FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The **Family Support Center** provides family friendly, “one-stop” comprehensive services for at-risk families. This unique program helps families to increase their parenting skills, receive emotional support and mentoring, obtain basic and emergency needs items (such as diapers, formula, school supplies, toiletries, books, and educational toys), and improve access to information and resources to make-ends-meet. The Family Support Center also provides food distributions, an “open kitchen” for families to enjoy free meals together, developmental screenings for children, English as a Second Language classes for adults, playgroups, and numerous educational and enrichment programs for families. Our children’s programming is run year-round and includes a weekly story time, playgroups and an academic Summer Connections Program for children.



## FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

The purpose of the **Fatherhood Initiative** program is to increase positive involvement and interaction between fathers and their children. We work with fathers to help them improve their ability to meet their parental responsibilities of providing social, emotional, medical, educational and financial assistance to their children. A program expansion in full collaboration with DCF helps any fathers involved in the courts and DCF to increase positive outcomes through the support of our Fatherhood Engagement Specialists. Madonna Place has the only Certified Fatherhood Program east of the Connecticut River.

Through support from various community resources, we have found ways to safely and effectively assess and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and children in the community.

Claire Silva, Incoming Executive Director



## GREAT BEGINNINGS

**118** parents and children served

**92%** of children are currently up-to-date with immunizations and well-child care

**613** home visits conducted

**100%** of families had no new substantiated child abuse or neglect while enrolled

**100%** of mothers received prenatal care and delivered healthy babies

## FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

**729** parents and children served

**15,600** meals or snacks provided

**280** families received emergency diapers or formula

**52** parents completed a parenting class

## FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

**426** fathers and children served

**64%** of fathers increased involvement with their child(ren)

**94%** of fathers are highly satisfied with the results of their experience in the Fatherhood Program

**914** UNDUPLICATED PARENTS & CHILDREN WERE HELPED BY OUR PROGRAMS OVER THE PAST YEAR



**“HONOR THE PAST.  
ENGAGE THE PRESENT.  
BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE.”**

This quote has been adapted from those of several different speakers through history, and it really did resonate for us in a hopeful manner. It is difficult to say goodbye to a critical visionary leader, and this year, Madonna Place was faced with that scenario. After 30 years of dedicated service to Madonna Place, our beloved Executive Director Nancy Gentes retired. Like any organizational change, Madonna Place has embraced this opportunity to not only look back to honor our successes, but also look forward to what the future holds as we welcome new Executive Director Claire Silva. We have taken this moment to speak to both our outgoing and incoming Executive Directors to gain insight into their thoughts about Madonna Place, where we have been and where we are going in the future.

**Susan:** “Nancy, what makes Madonna Place so special for the community?”

**Nancy:** “Madonna Place has never gotten away from its core mission. We are a grass-roots agency, directly connected to the clients we serve, providing easily accessible, comprehensive, non-

bureaucratic family support services to families. Our staff stay directly involved in the community and flexibly serve clients to help prevent child abuse and neglect.”

**Susan:** “Nancy, what do you see as a few of the most pivotal developments in Madonna Place’s history under your leadership that led us to where we are today?”

**Nancy:** “There are so many things that have shaped Madonna Place and helped make it the Agency it is today. Several things really stand out to me in our history though:

1. The human services system that Madonna Place is an integral part of has worked to develop a much better array of prevention and intervention services for families. We helped to shape and establish a much more comprehensive, family focused and effective service to strengthen families and help prevent child abuse and neglect. Our focus on community partnerships, collaborations and involvement within the communities we serve has been crucial to our long-term success.

2. Our Agency has been a leader in the evolution of services which have focused on the importance of promoting fatherhood. Traditional systems worked less with fathers, focusing almost solely on mothers and their children. We know fatherhood is critical and we promoted it, acting as a pioneer and leader in Eastern CT and statewide for this work. We formed valuable partnerships with DCF, DSS and many other sister agencies around the state to accomplish this goal.

3. Although we are not a current provider of supervised visitation services, our previous work efforts were pivotal for families. We operated a highly regarded and necessary supervised visitation service for families who needed a safe place to visit their children and to work on gaining skills and knowledge for reunification or increased contact with their children.

4. Recently we have focused on resources to address health disparities in general in our region, and specifically, to improve maternal and child health. Madonna Place has been a leader in this work through our collaborative network locally and statewide, incorporating both a Minority Outreach position and a Community Health Worker position to our Agency with additional efforts underway to address health equity.

5. The home visiting services we have provided since 1995 have evolved greatly over the years helping to support child development and prevent child abuse and neglect. This small collaborative grant expanded to formal connections and contracts with the State of CT, including Children's Trust Fund, Department of Public Health, Office of Early Childhood, the United Way of Southeastern CT, and many foundations. Last year we began implementing this program with several agencies regionally, including three hospitals, joining together to provide coordinated, accessible home visiting services utilizing the Healthy Families Model.

6. Madonna Place has developed and grown through time. We could not have done that without the help that Lord Properties gave us to secure a larger location. Our original space, kitty-corner to our building today, housed only three staff in 1,500 square feet. In 2000, to expand programs and serve more clients,



the Lord Family helped us secure our current 6,390 square foot Agency location at 240 Main Street, Norwich to help us best meet the needs of the community."

**Susan:** "Claire, you are taking over as the visionary leader of a highly successful Agency. What about Madonna Place is most special to you now, and where do you foresee it going in the future?"

**Claire:** "When I started in the position, I was lucky to have Nancy's guidance for the first two months. I celebrate everything Nancy, staff members, our Board of Directors and our volunteers have been able to create and build through the years. The services Madonna Place provides are crucial for the most vulnerable families in Eastern CT. The addition of two Community Health Worker positions to provide outreach and advocacy for our families is really exciting. I hope to expand our services and make them more accessible to families that need support and guidance."

**Susan:** "Thank you Nancy and Claire. We appreciate our past and welcome the exciting things we will achieve together in our future."



# THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

July 1, 2020 through  
June 30, 2021

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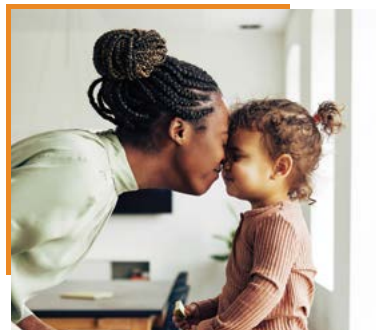
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# Serving Families With Gratitude

Since 1987



The mission of Madonna Place is to provide services which strengthen families, promote health, and prevent child abuse and neglect. We offer three programs that help parents to build strong support systems in their lives.

MADONNA PLACE INC  
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P: 860.886.6600 | F: 860.892.5411  
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