

Building Links toward the Brighter Future we all deserve.



PREVENTION LINKS | ANNUAL REPORT 2022



OUR MISSION

Fostering healthy, sustainable communities by empowering people through education, collaboration and by serving as the linkage to resources.

WHO WE HELP

Any person, family and community that needs us. By providing and connecting people to vital health & educational resources, we combat the negative impacts of drugs, violence, and inadequate educational and health institutions in our communities.

WHAT SETS US APART?

A combination of genetic, environmental, and developmental factors influences risk for addiction which is why we address all three. We set ourselves apart by approaching prevention and addiction efforts *holistically*, addressing each individual's, family's & community's needs at every age and every stage of life <u>using evidence-based strategies that work.</u>

Our services both tackle **root causes** of addiction to prevent it, and fight addiction by widening the doorway to recovery. By offering education and connecting people to resources, we empower entire communities to be the solution to the addiction crisis - **because we know they are.**

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4 Divisions Linked Together by One Purpose.

BUILDING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Community Prevention

Addiction, overdose, & health issues can be stopped before they start.

(Union County Health & Wellness Coalition, Elizabethport Community Center, One Community One Family Coalition, School-Based Prevention, Community Education & Awareness)

Family Success

Healthy families serve as the cornerstone for a healthy community.

(Bayway FS Center, Greenway FS Center, Skyway FS Center, Liberty FS Center, Palisades FS Center)

Recovery Community

Long term recovery sustained by a strong sense of purpose and with community.

> (Rise Up Recovery Center, Recovery Junction Recovery Center, Vision of Hope Recovery Center, Pathways to Success, Workforce Support, NJ Coalition for Addiction Recovery Support)

Recovery Support

Meeting people where they are and making recovery more accessible by providing multiple pathways.

(Recovery High School, Union County Support Team for Addiction Recovery, Northern Eastern United for Drug Affected Youth, UCHH395 24/7 Peer Hotline, Family Support Center)



A Letter from our CEO

Dear friends,

It is my honor and privilege to present our 2022 Annual Impact Report. After being so isolated during the pandemic, I believe I can speak for all of us when I say that these times have provided a renewed appreciation for the critical importance of community and connection. As the grasp of COVID-19 began to loosen, it was clear that meeting the needs of the community would require our agency to bravely pivot into unchartered waters. In 2022, Prevention Links was prepared to guide our communities to a path of resilience.

We had the privilege of continuing to expand our programs and services, in partnership with local communities, to create opportunity for greater connection to resources and support.

The Vision of Hope Recovery Center opened in New Brunswick, creating a safe space and hub for the Middlesex County recovery community.

We brought vital mental health counseling supports to the Hudson County community through our Family Success Centers in Kearny, Jersey City, and Union City.

All this in addition to the continued work of our existing Family Success Centers, Recovery Community Centers, Coalitions, and other vital programs that **impact more than 10,000 people each year.**

At Prevention Links, we leverage the strengths of our communities to empower individuals and families in leading their best & healthiest lives. Every day, we build links to brighter futures.

Our hands-on approach to prevention has put us on the frontlines of the crises following the pandemic. Tragically, we have witnessed the unprecedented rates of overdose, suicide deaths, and mental health issues skyrocketing locally and throughout the country.

The need for our services is greater than ever, and yet so many families who need us still don't know we are here. In the coming year, we are committed to making Prevention Links a household name in the counties we serve. We look forward to expanding our Harm Reduction services, school-based prevention education, state-wide recovery support, and youth clinical mental health services.

We need <u>your help</u> to make sure that every person who needs a helping hand can reach us in their time of need. I invite you to join us in our mission to foster healthy, sustainable communities and brighter futures.

Thank you for your being a part of our community and our impact.

In Service,

Morgan Thompson (She/Her), MSW CEO, Prevention Links



OUR IMPACT ®

Community Prevention

Our Community Prevention efforts have been in action since our founding year in 1970 and are at the heart of what we do. The central purpose of Community Prevention is to provide Union County and surrounding communities with the tools and resources they need to prevent addiction, overdose, substance misuse, violence and other issues which threaten the health & livelihood of our communities.

We do this by utilizing targeted, evidence-based prevention strategies - *that work*.
Our Community Prevention work enhances health literacy across the lifespan and advances programs & policies which contribute to prevention-prepared communities.

Whether we are at your child's school for a drug prevention presentation, giving your local seniors tips on staying healthy, or providing a family in your community with a holiday meal - we are there to make sure our communities get the brighter future we all deserve.







643

students participated in the **Safe Dates** program to prevent dating violence.



4,000+

students received the Don't Get Vaped In presentation.



48

community members participated in the The Eport Nutrition and Food Security Program, receiving a total of...



840

...boxes of nutritious food distributed to community members.

#GrowingOurCommunityTogether

From the first day we went to Elizabethport Community Center, they have made my children and me feel like family...I loved it so much, I became I volunteer. They go out of their way to help every family. The center has something for everyone, from the senior program, to the drug free program, to the community partner meetings (which are so informative.)

They even helped me create my own meaningful walk for my daughter to raise suicide awareness. I appreciate them all so much! I am thankful for this center being there, it is a blessing to all who have found it.

-Mom from E-Port









seniors participated in the Wellness Initiative for Senior Education program.



70 families were provided with holiday meals in November.



34

families with young children attended and graduated from one of our parenting/family programs.



120

families were provided with holiday meals in December 22'

OUR IMPACT ♥ Family Success



Healthy & happy families are the cornerstone of healthy & happy communities. Family & community not only teach each and every one of us how to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, but shape & mold how we view and navigate the world. This is why family is so important to us here at Prevention Links, as we build towards a brighter future for our communities.

Our five Family Success Centers serve to empower children and their families to thrive in a world that doesn't always make it easy. Our free services widen the doorway to family success, ensuring that any family seeking support - regardless of their socioeconomic status, cultural background, or education level - can get the help & support they need.

By preventing crisis, neglect, or abuse before it can ever begin, we raise children who feel loved, supported, and inspired to make a positive change in the world. This is a shared responsibility with society which we are immensely grateful to be a part of.







186 parent education workshops with a total of 1,119 attendees to bolster parenting skills and child-parent relationships



2,568 people reached and served through our 106 community outreach events where we distributed a total of 295 items.



78 sessions of Homework Club, with a total of **433 child attendees** to help our kids succeed in school.



255 child parent activities with a total of 2,836 attendees to increase meaningful connection between parents & their children

... When I first became involved, Christina Armstrong was the first person I met. She had gone above and beyond to help me and my family with any and everything we could have possibly needed.

I could call her for anything, and if she didn't know the answer or a resource off the top of her head, I always would get a phone call directly from her shortly after and without fail, she would always have a solution to my problem(s). I could ALWAYS count on her.

As time went on I met other employees and much to my surprise, they all had the same drive to help people not because it was their job but because they truly cared. I couldn't think of a better name because not only do they help families thrive and succeed, but they themselves make you feel like family. Finding them was one of the absolute best things that has ever happened to me.

I can't really put into words how much I appreciate everything that everyone there has done for me and helped me with over the years. I wish I had found them sooner. They are an irreplaceable resource in our community, they continue to amaze me as they grow... I highly recommend them to everyone I meet.

-Jennifer V.









827 Backpacks provided to 1,235 children & their families through our 7 backpack drives.



200 health events provided 1,909 community members with vital health information and 1.496 health items distributed.



1,336 items such as baby supplies, turkeys, winter coats, PPE, gift cards, and eye glasses provided to 816 children, families & community members through our 31 distribution events.

OUR IMPACT ®

Recovery Services

More than 140,000 people die from excessive alcohol use in the U.S. each year, and in 2021 alone, 106,699 people lost their lives to a drug overdose. (CDC) These devastating statistics are one of the many reasons our slogan, "everyone knows someone, help prevent the next one" rings true.

These numbers do not discourage us, but fuel us to expand our recovery services - to make sure no family or loved one has to lose someone to addiction or face it alone.

We are grateful to offer families and individuals hope, healing, opportunity & community. Whether that be a guide to treatment, job coaching session, referral to a community resource, mutual aid meeting, family support session, recovery event or simply a listening ear - we are there each step of the way.

No shame, no stigma, just support.







1,342

individuals provided with free recovery services.



76

families provided with family addiction recovery support.



2,800+

hours of one on one peer recovery support.



810

free social, educational, and wellness events/groups for the recovery community.







"Rise Up Recovery Center's SMART Recovery Meeting was one of the first meetings I attended when I came out of Detox. I've been attending regularly ever since and find the dialogue and tools to be a wonderful way to stay focused. I've learned in my recovery that regular meeting attendance is critical to staying sober. What's great is the camaraderie within the group and that we all have the common issue of addiction and discuss it openly."

-Bob





"I participated in this program to support young people in recovery. It is so important to be a part of a community and know you are not alone during a big transition of your life. This program has given me many amazing friends and a safe space to go. I have people I can relate to on a deeper level and we can be sober and have fun doing it!"

-Valerie



134

outreach events attended in the community.



112

individuals attended and completed the CCAR Recovery Coach Academy training to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS).



253

participants received workforce support services & internships



774

mutual aid meetings, offering multiple pathways to addiction recovery.

The story of how Prevention Links came to be is just one small part of a much larger addiction prevention & recovery movement that happened, and is still happening, in our country.

Over 70 years ago, Marty Mann, the first woman to achieve sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, knew that "stigma would be our greatest foe." What she didn't know is that her public stance addressing the addiction crisis in the United States would eventually lead to the founding of our organization:

Prevention Links.

Marty was born into a life of wealth and privilege in Chicago in the early 1900s. As a charismatic young woman with plenty of connections, she launched a career in the world of public relations working as an art critic, magazine editor, and photojournalist for renowned magazines such as Vogue, Harpers, and Tattler.

Within 10 years, both Marty's career and relationships had withered away in the face of a crippling addiction to alcohol. Two suicide attempts nearly killed her, and desperate drinking threatened to finish the job. Homeless abroad in London with nothing left to lose, she returned to the U.S. in 1936 to seek help.

Marty became a patient at Blythewood psychiatric inpatient center where she spent months unsuccessfully attempting to achieve recovery under medical care, until a doctor's last ditch effort to help changed her life forever: in 1939, Marty was given a manuscript of "Alcoholics Anonymous" to read, provided by her doctor Harry Tiebout.



When Marty read the first chapters, she had a profound realization:

"I wasn't the only person in the world who felt and behaved like this! I wasn't mad or vicious...I was suffering from an actual disease that had a name and symptoms like diabetes or cancer or TB – and a disease was respectable, not a moral stigma."

This one-time debutante and successful business woman, turned unfulfilled and sick with alcoholism, began her journey into addiction recovery. Marty became one of the first-ever women to successfully achieve sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, and subsequently brought her passion for recovery far beyond the walls of the 12-step meeting room.

From societal stigma to blatant misinformation, Marty soon discovered that there were many misunderstandings about addiction which kept people from getting help. This disappointing revelation was the spark which led to her declaration of war on the social stigma attached to addiction. In 1944, Marty established what's now known as the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), an organization started to serve a dual purpose:

First, to have a proactive national education and advocacy program attacking the stigma and misunderstanding about addiction, treatment and recovery;

Second, to operate service centers in communities across the country staffed by professionals helping individuals and families with addiction problems (sound familiar?).

Eventually, NCADD affiliate offices were brought to New Jersey, one of which was opened in none other than Union County's town of Westfield. Later becoming known as Prevention Links, our agency has stayed true to the model created by Marty Mann while building towards a brighter future:

- 1. Helping people find help.
- 2. Reducing stigma by educating the community about addiction.
- 3. Reducing the number of people that use substances and preventing addiction through education and awareness.
- 4. Enhancing services in a meaningful and person-centered way.

In 1970...

Prevention Links was officially established. In our over 50 year history, our agency has had only five Executive Directors: Theresa Mahgeary, Gladys Kearns, Diane Litterer, Pamela Capaci and Morgan Thompson. And in the tradition of Marty Mann, our agency has stayed focused on our mission through the strong leadership these great women.

In 1981...

we were almost 100% volunteer managed and operated.

In 1996...

the agency budget was \$150,000 per year with 2 employees and \$50,000 of debt.

In 2022...

our budget is nearly 6 million dollars with 100+ employees and 9, soon to be 10 locations, serving tens of thousands of residents in five counties.

Today we remain true to our founding principles:

We've always been helping people find help;

We've always been advocates for prevention & recovery;

We've always believed in the resilience of families;

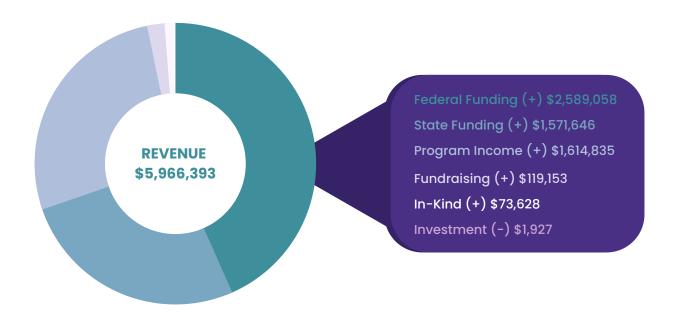
We've always been building towards the brighter future our communities deserve.

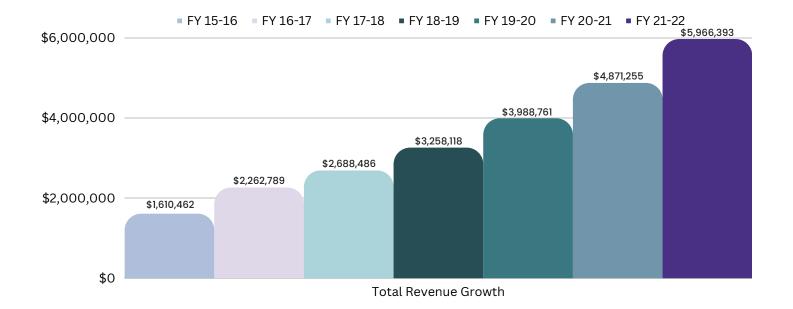


FINANCIALS \$

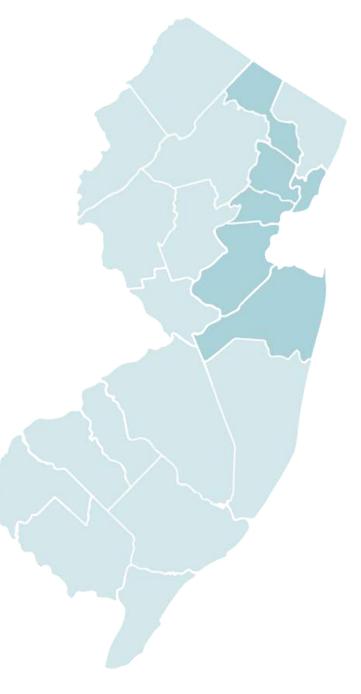
FY July 1st, 2021-June 31, 2022

Our total revenue was nearly \$6M in FY 2021-2022, up 26% over the previous fiscal year—our second consecutive year posting revenue growth of 25% or more. With a 90% increase in our fundraising revenue from FY 20-21 to FY 21-22, our fundraising growth trends remain strong moving into FY 22-23.





PROGRAM MAP



Prevention Links broadly serves the Northeastern and Central NJ Metropolitan areas within Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic, Somerset and Union counties.

Each program is created with the unique needs of each community in mind, taking into consideration the latest research, community feedback, and existing resources. At the heart of each service we provide is our preventative mission, and the earnest desire to set up our communities for the best future possible.

We are always expanding, seeking new ways, collaborations and sources of funding to help more people in other geographical locations.



Program Coverage:

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training & Internship Program
- Northeastern United for Drug Affected Youth (NU-DAY)
- Prevention Education
- Recovery Employment Services

ESSEX COUNTY

Program Coverage:

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training & Internship Program
- Rutgers Infectious Disease –
 Recovery Management
- Northeastern United for Drug Affected Youth (NU-DAY)
- Prevention Education
- Recovery Employment Services

SOMERSET COUNTY

Program Coverage:

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training & Internship Program
- Recovery Employment Services





The New Jersey Coalition for Addiction Recovery Support (NJ-CARS) is a membership coalition and the only statewide program of Prevention Links. NJ-CARS brings together professionals, family members, advocates and other community members who work collaboratively to strengthen recovery support services across the continuum of care. Learn more about membership on our website: nj-cars.org

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HUDSON COUNTY

Jersey City: Skyway Family Success Center

Recovery Junction Recovery Center

Union City: Palisades Family Success Center **Kearny:** Liberty Family Success Center

Program Coverage: • Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training & Internship Program

• COVID-19 Health Equity Support

Mental Health Counseling

Northeastern United for Drug Affected Youth (NU-DAY)

Recovery Employment Services



UNION COUNTY

Roselle: Prevention Links Headquarters

Rise Up Recovery Community Center

Raymond J. Lesniak ESH Recovery High School

Elizabeth: Elizabethport Community Center

Bayway Family Success Center

Program Coverage: • Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training & Internship Program

• COVID-19 Health Equity Support

• Family Addiction Peer Support

Health & Wellness Coalition (HAWC)

· Mental Health Counseling

Northeastern United for Drug Affected Youth (NU-DAY)

Prevention Education

• Prevention Hub Warmline

Recovery Employment Services

• Senior Wellness Initiative

Support Team for Addiction Recovery (STAR)

Union County Helping Hands 365 24/7 Peer Hotline

• Union County Prevention Hub Warmline



Woodbridge: Greenway Family Success Center

New Brunswick: Vision of Hope Recovery Center

- Program Coverage: COVID-19 Health Equity Support
 - Family Addiction Peer Support
 - Northeastern United for Drug Affected Youth (NU-DAY)



The Raymond J. Lesniak ESH Recovery High School is where education and recovery go hand in hand. The Recovery High School serves all students from any public school district and generally receives incoming students throughout the North and Central NJ regions. Learn more on our website eshrecoveryschool.org

Let's cut to the chase.



What if you could make a direct, positive impact in the <u>here and now?</u>

What if that impact was inherently designed to have a ripple effect, creating an even bigger positive impact for future generations?

As a non-profit organization that's been operating for over 50 years, our long-term sustainability is dependent on the investment of our community.

Grants are amazing resources and make up a bulk of our funding - but limited, restricted funds can limit and restrict our impact.

This is why we are asking for your collaboration. Your donation is a collaborative effort and long-term investment in the wellness of your community.

As we come out of the pandemic and face another health & financial crisis, we find our communities in an extremely fragile place.

We cannot afford to wait for government funding to increase. Action cannot be postponed until legislation changes.

Communities cannot persevere without organizations like ours to empower, educate, and foster their growth.

Our programs build towards the brighter future we all deserve while breaking cycles of addiction, poverty and trauma. We know this because we see it happen everyday for participants like Jennifer, a mother of two beautiful children:

"Finding you was one of the absolute best things that has ever happened to me."

All this to say - we believe in a brighter future for <u>your</u> community.



"Happiness doesn't result from what we get,
but from what we give."
-Ben Carson





More ways to give. W



We are always looking for corporate partners who want to make a profound impact with a recurring investment in the 'Bottom Line' of our community's well being.

As a Brighter Future Partner, your company will be highlighted as a leader in the community with a commitment to the health and well-being of its citizens. If social responsibility is part of your corporate or personal creed, please join us!

Memorial Funds & Planned Giving

For family members who want to celebrate their loved one's life with a memorial fund at Prevention Links, we are honored to help you raise funds, create an awareness campaign and more.

Planned giving provides future generations a proud legacy. For those interested, we can help you with including Prevention Links in your will, trust or estate plans.

25th Annual Red Ribbon Day October 21st, 2023

Get ready for our quarter of a century event! This year we will be celebrating 25 consecutive years of Red Ribbon Day. Each year, we gather to raise awareness for prevention education, addiction recovery, overdose prevention and overall community wellness.

If there was ever a time to get involved, this is your year to start! Visit our website to learn more about peer-to-peer fundraising, registration and sponsorship opportunities.

Volunteer Opportunities

From program support, to administration, to advisory committees - Prevention Links has volunteer opportunities for everyone!

By volunteering, you become a Links to Brighter Futures member, joining a community of our supporters who get highlighted for their efforts and invitations to special events.

Learn more at: preventionlinks.org/get-involved



Jack Harris Memorial Fund V

In October of 2022, we received a call from Amy, a mother from Union County who had recently lost her son Jack to a heroin overdose. She expressed a desire to start a memorial fund in her son's memory with our organization, so we invited her to come speak with us in person.

What Amy described to us was a story too many of us at Prevention Links are familiar with.

Jack was a kind, sensitive young man with an effervescent smile. Jack loved animals and his family. He was curious, delving into any topic he found interesting to gain deeper insight. His family loved him and was always on his team, no matter what. What this tells us is that even the most brilliant people - who have the support to thrive - can still fall prey to addiction.

Jack had made numerous, earnest attempts to recover from his addiction to opiates. From detox, to residential treatment, to mutual aid meetings, to medicated assisted treatment, Jack was still met with a struggle many of us know (but don't always talk about) - feeling like there is no way out.

The truth is that Jack was in recovery for two years before his death. All it took was one time of use to

take his life because of an increasingly lethal drug supply of fentanyl. This is why prevention education is a crucial and life-giving resource we provide and advocate for in our communities.

It takes immense courage to shine light where it hurts the most. We are beyond grateful that Amy and her family chose Prevention Links as the conduit to honor Jack's legacy. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for trusting us and believing in our mission.

Lastly, thank you to all of the families who generously donated to Jack's Fund, which has amounted to nearly \$9,000 - your compassion provides hope where it's needed the most.

We are heartbroken that we didn't get the chance to meet Jack and provide him with the muchneeded community that he was seeking. With these funds, we are determined to provide others like him with the opportunity, support, and sense of belonging needed to persevere.

Because we believe - beyond a shadow of a doubt - that recovery is possible.









Thanks to you, these funds will support:

Our 24/7 Union County Helping Hands 365 Peer Hotline, connecting individuals and their loved ones to recovery support services; recovery case management and peer support services; our Recovery Centers which provide mutual aid meetings, recovery coaching, and social events for the recovery community; workforce support and internship programs for people in recovery and/or impacted by addiction; our Family Support Center, providing peer support and social events for individuals and families who have a loved one with a substance use disorder; the Raymond J. Lesniak ESH Recovery High School; Harm Reduction education and outreach; and overdose prevention initiatives throughout the organization.

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Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield has been an incredible partner of Prevention Links in 2022. Not only have they provided us with nearly \$20,000 in funding to support our prevention and family success programming, but they have also generously donated the time of their staff to enrich programming at our events. We are truly grateful to be partnered with a company as committed to health accessibility and equity as Horizon.

Thank you Horizon BCBS!



...a big THANK YOU to our major Red Ribbon Day Sponsors!





















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THANK YOU to our funders...

We extend our gratitude to our funders for choosing, investing, and believing in our organization to carry out this work.

- Blessed Ministries
- Center for Disease Control
- Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
- City of Elizabeth
- Clark Municipal Alliance
- Cranford Municipal Alliance
- DOJ Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
- Department of Labor
- Elizabeth Municipal Alliance
- Healthcare Foundation of NJ
- Horizon
- Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth
- Hudson County Department of Health & Human Services
- J.C. Kellogg Foundation
- Kenilworth Municipal Alliance
- Mental Health Association of NJ
- Mountainside Municipal Alliance
- NJ Department of Children & Families
- NJ Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

- NJ Prevention Network
- Plainfield Municipal Alliance
- Prevention Resources
- Rahway Municipal Alliance
- Roselle Municipal Alliance
- Roselle Park Municipal Alliance
- Rutgers University Infectious Disease Clinic
- Somerset Treatment Services
- Springfield Municipal Alliance
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
- Township of Woodbridge
- Union County Board of County Commissioners
- Union County Department of Human Services
- Union County Prosecutor's Office
- Union Municipal Alliance
- Urban Workforce Advantage
- WellCare

... to our Board of Directors

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... and last but not least,

Thank you to our Links who have supported us through your *extraordinary* fundraising efforts and individual donations. Together, we continue to empower communities in creating a safer, healthier and happier place to call home. Thank you for helping us build towards the brighter future we all deserve.

- The Desrosiers Family
- The Feldman Family
- The Harris Family
- The Hepworth Family
- The Kline Family
- The Landriau Family
- The Lessing Family
- The Lindell Family
- The London Family
- The Miccio Family
- The Morin Family
- The Merren Family
- The Poland Family
- The Sandelman Family
- The Sorrenti Family
- The Thompson Family
- Absolute Awakenings
- Allstate Insurance
- Brookdale Recovery
- Columbia Bank
- The Counseling Center
- County of Union DHS
- Cranford Fire Department
- Cranford Police Department
- Cranford Prevention & Wellness Coalition
- Forge Health
- Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

- Groundworks Elizabeth
- Hafetz and Associates
- Hance Family Foundation
- Horizon BCBS
- Industrial Cooling Corporation
- Lifeline Technology Solutions
- NJ Water & Mold
- Park Ave Acura
- Park Ave BMW
- Phase 2 Technology
- Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery
- Pinnacle Risk Solutions
- Plainfield Municipal Alliance
- Seabrook Rehab
- Serenity at Summit
- Seton Hall University
- Sharp
- Union County Board of Chosen Commissioners
- Union County D.A.R.E. Officers Association
- Union County Municipal Alliances
- Union County Parks and Recreation
- Union County Police Department
- Union County Prosecutor's Office
- Union County Sheriff's Office
- United Healthcare
- Your Part Time Controller

OUR MISSION

To foster healthy sustainable communities by empowering people through education, collaboration and by serving as the linkage to resources.



