

Portraits of Hope

Winter 2026 Newsletter

Celebrating over 150 years of service
to families and people like you.

150
YEARS OF CHILD
AND FAMILY
SERVICES



The Residential Treatment team was full of smiles this holiday season.

A Message From President and CEO, Elizabeth McPartland

Dear Friends,

This year marks an important milestone in the future of C+FS. As we move forward, we remain committed to making sustainable, long-term changes that support continued growth and lasting impact.

After a 14-month process, we officially completed the purchase of a new property that will become the fourth permanent home of our Stanley G. Falk School. This decision comes at a pivotal moment, as our lease at Roosevelt Elementary School ends in the summer of 2027, and the need for our specialized educational services continues to grow across Western New York.

The new site, formerly St. Andrew's campus, will become Falk-Sheridan, allowing us to serve approximately 160 students in grades three through six. This Town of Tonawanda location gives Falk School the opportunity to keep students close to their home communities while providing the individualized support they need.

Owning this property represents a meaningful step forward for C+FS and the Falk School. It allows us to build long-term equity, invest responsibly into our facilities, and tailor the space to meet the unique needs of our students.

Work is underway to prepare this location for the start of the 2026-2027 school year. Early this spring, renovations will begin with new roofs and window replacements, as well as a new cafeteria. Our Falk School and C+FS teams are actively collaborating with architects as we enter the design phase of this project. Much of 2026 will be dedicated to preparing the space, so it is ready to welcome students and colleagues in the fall.

This milestone is more than a real estate transaction. It is an investment in children, families, and the future of our community. It reflects what is possible when we plan thoughtfully, act with purpose, and are supported by a community that believes in our mission.

Thank you for your continued trust and support as we take this exciting step forward.

Warmly,



Elizabeth McPartland
President and CEO



Elizabeth McPartland,
President and CEO



Falk-Roosevelt students welcomed a furry friend to their classroom.

A Turning Point Toward Safety



Artwork created by a survivor in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

When Cassidy,* a Domestic Violence Advocate with Haven House, first connected with her client, Ella,* through a Domestic Incident Report from the local police department, Ella was experiencing ongoing, severe domestic violence.

Cassidy reached out and began providing regular advocacy services, prioritizing trust and safety. Understanding Ella's hesitation to cooperate with law enforcement due to threats from her abuser, Cassidy met her where she was. Together, they developed a personalized safety plan to help navigate moments of heightened risk.

Despite these efforts, violence continued and Ella's abuser was arrested. When Cassidy learned he was going to be released from custody, she attempted to contact Ella to make sure she was safe. After repeated attempts were unsuccessful, Cassidy grew concerned.

Acting quickly, Cassidy contacted the local police department and accompanied officers to Ella's home, where she was found in critical condition. This moment became a turning point as Ella was ready to leave her relationship.

"Leaving a relationship is often dangerous and may not feel like an immediate option for victims," shared Cassidy.

Cassidy remained by her side, providing ongoing support during this difficult transition. She assisted Ella in relocating to a new area and worked with community partners to secure moving assistance, first month's rent and a security deposit. Ella was finally able to begin again in a safe place.

"I have seen Ella's character development and how much growth she has had over this last year," Cassidy reflected. "It is very rewarding to know that she is in such a great place now."

Today, Ella is rebuilding her life free from violence. Her journey reflects the complex realities of domestic violence and the importance of consistent, compassionate support. Our domestic violence advocates walk alongside survivors not only in moments of crisis, but as they move forward into new chapters.

*Names changed for confidentiality.

Care That Goes Beyond the Holidays

Just before the holidays, a Falk School family found themselves facing an unexpected hardship. A single mother and her five children had recently lost their home and were temporarily living in a hotel, navigating uncertainty during a challenging time of year. With limited space and resources, even necessities felt out of reach.

When Jodi Fodero, Principal of Falk-Mullen, learned about the family's situation, she knew support was needed right away. Luckily, the Adopt-a-Family program was in full swing. With more than 20 years at Falk, Jodi has seen firsthand how programs like Adopt-a-Family can step in during moments of need. It goes beyond gifts, offering comfort, stability and a reminder that families are not alone.

"There is something so meaningful about connecting with families in need, reviewing their wish lists and heading out to shop with purpose and heart," she shared.

Each year, the Falk team looks forward to participating in Adopt-a-Family, knowing the impact it can have on students and their families. This year, Jodi was able to put that experience into action.

Through Adopt-a-Family, the family received a double stroller, along with kitchen appliances such as a toaster, crockpot and coffee maker. She also made sure there were winter jackets, hats and gloves for each child. Blankets, games and crafts helped bring moments of comfort and joy, and gift cards provided additional support for ongoing needs.

"No family ever wants to struggle to provide for their children, and during the holidays, those challenges feel even heavier," shared Jodi. "Adopt-a-Family brings so much hope to these difficult times."

The impact reached far beyond the items themselves. The family shared their deep gratitude for the care and generosity they received, which is a powerful reminder of what's possible when a community comes together to support families during difficult moments.



Adopt-a-Family volunteers organizing donations for families.

From Adoption to Advocacy: Marilyn's Journey

Thirty-four years ago, Marilyn's life changed forever through Child and Family Services. Today, her story is a powerful reminder that the impact of our Agency can last a lifetime.

When Marilyn and her husband were newly married, they dreamed of starting a family. Although they were unable to have children of their own, Marilyn remained determined to become a parent. That determination led them to explore other options, such as foster care and adoption, and learn about agencies like C+FS.



Marilyn with her son and grandson.

From the beginning, Marilyn was committed to exploring her options. She and her husband attended meetings, waited patiently for the right opportunity and even connected with a couple who had recently adopted through C+FS. Hearing their experience inspired Marilyn to reach out to the Agency and share her hope of becoming a parent.

Not long after, Marilyn received a call from C+FS that an opportunity to welcome a child into her family had become available. The timeline moved quickly, and just two days later, she brought her son home.

While she was elated to begin her future with her son, Marilyn always made a point to remember his past. One of her treasured possessions is a heartfelt letter from a foster parent who cared for her son before Marilyn.

"It meant so much to hear about his first weeks," shared Marilyn. "Her words helped me feel connected to the love and care my son had already received."

Now, more than three decades later, Marilyn's gratitude for C+FS remains as strong as ever. Her support of the Agency spans many years as a donor, and after retiring, she began dedicating her time as a volunteer, most recently with Adopt-a-Family.

While her personal connection to C+FS is a powerful motivator, Marilyn says she is equally inspired by the Agency's ability to support young people and families. Through volunteering, she has built meaningful connections with others who share her passion for giving back and creating positive change in the community.

The True Impact of the Employee Assistance Program

When stress begins to follow someone everywhere, into home life, relationships and work, it can feel overwhelming to know where to turn. For Mark, a mechanic who takes pride in his work, that pressure had been building quietly for some time.

Child 
Family
Services

Employee Assistance Program

(716) 681-4300

After experiencing significant loss and ongoing family conflict, the weight of it all became hard to manage. Mark found himself distracted, quick to become angry and struggling to stay focused, both at home and on the job. Though he knew things were getting out of hand, deciding to get help wasn't easy.

"Reaching out for help can feel like the hardest step," shared Megan Andrews, Director of EAP. "When they do, it is important that they are met with support and not judgment."

To help Mark, a trusted colleague recommended Child and Family Services Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Mark connected with EAP and, within a day, he was sitting with a counselor in a safe space, designed to help him pause and begin to sort through everything he was carrying. Through EAP, Mark learned practical tools to manage his anger and slow his reactions in stressful moments. With clearer thinking came calmer communication, especially at home, where conversations began to feel more productive.

As those changes occurred, Mark noticed a difference at work as well. He felt more focused, less reactive and better able to stay engaged throughout the day. When personal stress no longer dominated his thoughts, his job performance improved right alongside his well-being.

"Even small steps at the right moment can make a meaningful difference in someone's life," Megan explained.

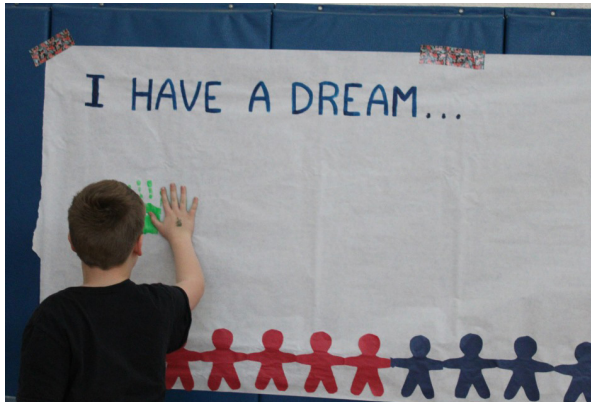
By the end of his EAP sessions, Mark felt more confident and prepared for what came next. He left with tools he could continue to use, a plan for ongoing counseling and a clearer head to face daily challenges.

Mark's experience reflects the true impact of our Employee Assistance Program.

In Case You Missed It



The Stanley G. Falk School held their eighth annual spelling bee competition.



Children in our Residential Treatment Program came together to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Employees from our lead sponsor, Amazon, volunteered at Adopt-a-Family.



Artwork created through the Haven House Art Empowerment Program was unveiled at Erie County Family Court.



Falk-Mullen students participated in a Winter Olympics Day.



Kaleida Health Laboratories participated in Haven House's largest donation drive, Toyland.

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Tri–Main Center
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(716) 362-2323

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Cheektowaga, New York 14225
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Buffalo, New York 14209
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Downtown Counseling
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824 1/2 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14209
(716) 882-0555

Haven House
Domestic Violence Hotline
(716) 884-6000
www.cfsbny.org/hh-chat/

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