FALL 2018 NEWS

- New Board President
- Nuestro Center’s Reading Program
- Youth Counseling
- Senior and Caregiver Services
- “Melodic Pathways” Therapy
- Nuestro Center’s New Computer Lab
- Immigration Support
- Upcoming Events

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Welcoming Rich Basofin, Our New Board President

Rich, a resident of Highland Park, brings extensive business and nonprofit experience to our organization. Following a career in corporate consulting, Rich has focused exclusively on helping nonprofits succeed—as a consultant, coach, executive, and board member. “I am honored to serve Family Service of Lake County as Board President. For almost ninety years, this organization has made it its mission to ensure that supportive services are available to all in need. I am looking forward to embarking on the next ninety years working closely with our outstanding board and staff.”

Volunteers on a Mission

Nuestro Verano Summer Camp’s Reading Program

This summer our Nuestro Verano camp offered reading-enrichment for incoming 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade first-generation Latino students, to help them close the achievement gap with their peers. Fourteen volunteers, including educators and a reading expert, collaborated with staff to create an age-appropriate reading curriculum. Each tutor read with one or two children assigned to them, for half an hour two days each week of the five-week camp.

The children were engaged and excited to meet with their tutors. The volunteers assessed their students’ reading capability and interests each session, and encouraged them to develop joy in reading. With a jumpstart on the school year, these students will continue to improve their reading as the program continues at Nuestro Center’s After-School Homework Club.
Imagine you are at Nuestro Center’s After-School Homework Club and have a school assignment that must be completed on a computer. The only computers available are old and very slow. Imagine you are trying to learn English at an ESL class, and have to do research on one of those same old, very slow computers.

That was the situation faced by Nuestro Center’s students and families until the North Shore Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood came to the rescue. Thanks to their support, a new computer lab is now available at Nuestro Center, complete with up-to-date computers, software, the latest tools for learning, and a new printer.

Family Service’s Nuestro Center is a well-known resource for the Highland Park/Highwood Latino community. When we receive requests for clarification of immigration policy changes, we provide helpful referrals to partners with expertise in immigration matters. Among those are Highland Park-Highwood Legal Aid Clinic and Mano a Mano Family Resource Center. Upcoming in November 2018 and March 2019 are “Know Your Rights” presentations, a collaboration between our Latino and youth staff, Highland Park-Highwood Legal Aid Clinic, and De Padre a Estudiante of Highland Park High School, and to be hosted at Highland Park High School.

David is a middle-school student. His parents recently divorced. While there is a history of physical and emotional abuse by his father, the custody arrangement requires David to spend time with his dad. David was depressed and insecure. He found connecting with his peers and with his teachers difficult.

Our Youth Therapist worked with David to identify achievable goals and establish an action plan. After a few months, David became more confident and empowered, even trying out for and making the school’s basketball team.

David’s parents benefit from our lowest sliding-scale fee, which at times is waived entirely due to significant financial distress. David is just one of the hundreds of area residents who benefit from our counseling services.

We are committed to offering barrier-free, professional counseling services. Generous donors help close the funding gap with gifts that benefit those needing support in their communities. Their impact is evident in the comments we receive from grateful clients:

- I feel that Family Service saved my life and now continues to make it better.
- Something that has really benefited me with counseling is the awareness that spread to my family. It’s made my parents understand what I’m going through and that has helped me a whole lot.

**YOUTH COUNSELING by the Numbers**

- 21% of our clients are youth
- Nationwide, 20% of youth 13-18 face a mental health issue.
- Only about 40% received mental health support in the past year.
What Most Concerns Seniors and Caregivers?

This summer, our Counseling staff facilitated a survey of seniors and caregivers to determine their primary concerns. So far, 62 adults ages 47-86 have considered five areas of potential concern: Money & Finances, Caregiving, Medical & Health Concerns, Loneliness & Isolation, Need to Relocate.

The survey will continue into 2019. Here’s what we know so far: Medical & Health Concerns rate high with all ages. Loneliness & Isolation are additional concerns of the 54-64 age group.

How We Can Help Seniors and Caregivers

Judy is both a senior client and a caregiver. She has a degenerative disease that severely limits her ability to ambulate or drive. She requires assistance in most areas that require physical ability. She is very depressed because her husband, diagnosed with a form of dementia, had to be moved to a memory-care facility. Since leaving her home in Florida to relocate near her adult children, Judy has suffered many losses this year. She no longer feels independent, and feels guilty and sad to be reliant on her children.

Services are available at no out-of-pocket cost to seniors and caregivers. In a safe, supportive, and caring environment, our counselors offer ways to help, including:

- Individual counseling to address depression and other issues.
- Collaboration with physicians and family members as needed.
- Recommendation of concrete resources for support, such as funds for home modification, time for respite from caregiving, and legal services. These resources are available through our Caregiver Resource Center.

Partnerships Present New “Melodic Pathways” Therapy Experience

This fall, Family Service is joining with the Institute for Therapy through the Arts (ITA) and Sunrise of Highland Park to present a musical experience designed for caregivers, families, and their loved ones with dementia. This guided support group, made possible by a grant from the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation, promotes interaction and sustained relationships between those with dementia and their family members, caregivers, and friends.

Families will learn novel ways to connect with their loved one using communication strategies, music, movement, and instrument play. Personal consultation and support will teach families and caregivers how music can promote interaction and sustain relationships.

The program will be led by board-certified music therapist Bradley Drozdowski. Brad’s clinical experience includes working with people with a variety of disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental disabilities, Parkinson’s disease, and at-risk youth. We’re excited to partner with ITA. Their therapists use only approaches that are empirically and/or qualitatively researched. Their advanced creative arts therapies set the standard for treatment, practice, and training within the field, through a continuity-of-care-model.