



CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Educate. Empower. Transform.



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Growth and Gratitude

Our Vision

At Millhill, we envision a thriving community where everyone has access to limitless possibilities.

Our Mission

Millhill empowers children, youth, and families through individualized and culturally-sensitive educational and behavioral health services.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This year marks a major milestone in our history: We are celebrating 50 years of service AND we are recognizing the many accomplishments of a very extraordinary year!

The past year has been challenging for us, for our region, and for the world. But we have triumphed and are stronger than ever. This is due in no small part to our incredibly generous and steadfast supporters and partners that make our work possible. This support has enabled our creative and diligent



staff to change how we deliver programs and develop new programs and services in response to the needs of the people we serve. This report is an opportunity for us to recognize the resiliency of our community— young children engaging in education in new and different ways; youth graduating and looking to the future; and families willing to put aside the stigma of mental health to get the care they need.

As we look to the next 50 years of Millhill, we know we have what it takes to serve our community with integrity and compassion. Our staff stands ready to design and deliver high quality programming and supportive services that are within our areas of expertise—education, mental health counseling, youth engagement, family support, and community collaborations. We are committed to realizing our vision of **a thriving community where everyone has access to limitless possibilities.**

Thank you for your support.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia H. Oberkofler".

Cynthia H. Oberkofler, Executive Director

“I believe that there is nothing more important than giving children a strong foundation. Millhill does that.... The agency is well managed and has been able to adapt to meet challenges, including the pandemic. I am proud of the time I spent on the Millhill Board of Trustees in its early years.”

– Eleanor Horne



Advancements in Alternative Therapy Options: Teletherapy Is Here to Stay

At Millhill, we are committed to meeting the individual needs of our clientele even as circumstances change and obstacles present themselves. In the area of mental health counseling, we have seen an increased need for services during the pandemic, just as in-person delivery became impossible. Fortunately, we had done the research on necessary technology and various models of care and had positioned ourselves to pivot quickly to counseling via telehealth.

With the vital assistance of our board and critical help of supporters, we were able to convert an onsite, in-person operation into a virtual one in a matter

of two and a half weeks. We have added staff, with more than 40 therapists now serving 500-600 people on a regular basis as we also work to address additional needs of those on our waiting list.

Thanks to our generous funders and our nimble and resourceful staff, we turned a crisis into an opportunity for growth and enhanced quality of programming. As a direct result of our using telemedicine, we have been able to partner with organizations such as Mercer Street Friends, a local nonprofit organization that has embraced the community school model, which provides extended services within the school environment.

They coordinate services that children need within the classroom setting as well as beyond what school traditionally provides, such as mental health counseling—which is where we come in. Our existing collaboration with Mercer Street Friends has been strengthened through the introduction of teletherapy, expanding our reach and impact among a highly vulnerable constituency.

The bottom line is that telehealth is working both in our collaborations and in our own mental health initiatives where participation has increased by more than 8%. In addition, we're finding that young people [tweens and teens] are thriving because they find the telehealth platform more open and more accessible; they are more willing to share because they're comfortable with the format.

Our plans for the future include forging additional collaborations and increasing our ability to serve the community. Telehealth will continue to play a key role in reaching these goals. We are deeply grateful to all our supporters who have helped us bridge this difficult transition and look forward to continued partnership on behalf of our community.

Empowering Youth. Inspiring Change.

Education provides the key to possibilities. The possibility for growth and advancement. Exposure to exciting ideas and technologies. The possibility of a fulfilling career.

Millhill's Youth Engagement Programs work to tap the energies and creativity of young people and to put higher education within reach for all our participants. Building on our childhood education programs, we offer a continuum of opportunities for youth, starting with our STEM

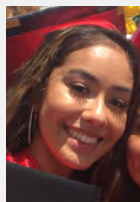
Explorers middle school summer camp and continuing through Trenton PEERS (Performing, Educating and Engaging about Responsible Strategies), Rising Stars, and the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. In each program, we use strategies to empower the youth, and provide them with resources to support their academic, and social-emotional needs so they can design a future with limitless possibilities.

Education-Focused Youth Programs

The Trenton PEERS (Performing, Educating and Engaging about Responsible Strategies), and the Rising Stars programs saw tremendous success in 2021. The Class of 2021 achieved a 100% college acceptance rate, of which 63% are first-generation college students. We are immensely proud of all our graduates!

The graduating students have secured invitations to prestigious institutions, including The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Stockton University, and the United States Naval Academy. Our youth successfully navigated the rigorous procedures of college applications and financial aid with the assistance of our committed team and supporters, and are now prepared to establish a bright future for themselves.

GRADUATING PEERS



Ashley Salguero
PHYSICIAN



Lesly Yax
DENTIST



Jayden Hamlett
SCIENTIST



Ernest Hall



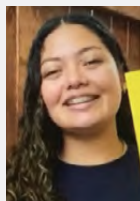
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SCIENTIST



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LAWYER



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Zyashia Vaughn
NURSING





Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program

Every summer, millions of young people across the United States look forward to getting their first job—an important early work experience that can put them on the path to a meaningful career. Since its inception in 2016, our trailblazing Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program has provided more than 500 Trenton youth with enrichment opportunities so they can have summer work experiences that prepare them to thrive in today's competitive workplace.

Our program continues to experience steadfast successes. In 2021, we served 48 participants who successfully navigated the challenges of a virtual workspace despite the pandemic. With employer partnerships, mentors, trainers, and staff support, the youth explored career options, discovered personal interests and strengths,

learned about work culture, built professional networks, developed skills and earned a paycheck.

This year the youth had the option to choose from one of two tracks in the program. Track 1 offered 63 hours of virtual learning over 6 weeks and the opportunity to earn up to \$820 in educational scholarships. For those who were passionate about exploring experiences in the nonprofit sector, Track 2 gave the youth an opportunity to do virtual work with area non-profit employers.

With the ongoing support from our donors, partners and stakeholders, we look forward to growing our program's capacity, continuing to expand employer engagement, and increasing access to meaningful summer experiences for our youth.

Empowering Young Scientists in Trenton

Millhill's new STEM Explorers program completed its first ever cycle this summer, bringing mentorship, social emotional learning, and hands-on experiments to middle school students who are excited about science. The six-week summer program provided youth with all the technology and supplies needed to complete assignments and test out their own science experiments. The program also provided participants with a \$300 scholarship to support their exploration of science education. Youth had the opportunity to explore topics like robotics, engineering and coding, as well as the invitation to bring their own interests into a creative science fair.

“Millhill to me is a place that I can always come back to, in appreciation for what they have done not only for me but for my fellow Trentonians as well. Millhill has opened my eyes in different ways of how I can help my community.”

– Ranai Morgan, Trenton PEERS



Continued Commitment to Child Development

For the past 50 years, child development and parent support programs have been the cornerstone of Millhill.

Our free preschool, open to all Trenton's residents, provides children with academic instruction and social emotional learning so they can successfully transition into kindergarten and feel confident in their ability to do new things.

Millhill's preschoolers flourished in 2021 despite the disrupting effects of COVID 19. The children, parents, community, and staff have all exhibited flexibility, fortitude, and commitment in the face of enormous challenges by transitioning from remote learning to returning to in-person school in the Fall. The pandemic has been distressing for many of our children, as their families

have endured painful experiences such as illness, financial hardships, isolation, and inadequate nutrition. Significant research in early childhood education points to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a way to improve coping skills in children, and improve a range of adulthood outcomes, including mental and physical health, interpersonal relationships, educational achievement, and civic involvement in later life.

Cynthia Oberkofler points out, *"SEL has always been an important part of the preschool curriculum at Millhill. However, it became even more vital as it provided our children with powerful tools with which they can mitigate challenges*

through these uncertain times." Remote learning created barriers for children in feeling connected to their school friends, and teachers. On the other hand, heading back into the classroom in the Fall brought on anxieties about being separated from their families after months of togetherness. Working closely with Millhill's Family Support Services programs, teachers and staff ensured that SEL was strategically implemented in Millhill's preschool throughout remote learning and transitioning back into the classroom.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, our children, families, and staff have found innovative ways to continue to grow and embrace the changes that are a very real part of our daily lives. We could never have predicted the events that began in 2020. However, we've been able to respond to the evolving needs of the students, families and communities we serve with the help of our supporters and partners – for whom we are deeply grateful.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Millhill

CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Educate. Empower. Transform.

50 FACES OF MILLHILL

Happy 50th Anniversary Millhill

What do you do when your 50th anniversary celebration gets swallowed up by a global pandemic? You keep the celebration going! Since safety is always a top priority at Millhill, we have pushed back our 50th anniversary celebration so that we can mark the occasion properly and at a time when our staff and supporters will feel comfortable coming together.

In the meantime, we have enjoyed commemorating our 50 years of service by highlighting success stories and plotting out our hopes for the next 50 years. Please stay tuned. We are truly hoping to send you a save-the-date invitation in the near future.

As we celebrate 50 years of our innovative and collaborative programming, we have collected reflections from staff, students, supporters, leaders and friends for “50 Faces of Millhill.” These are a few of our favorites! Read more on our site at millhillcenter.org/50-faces-of-millhill, where you can also submit your own message about what Millhill has meant to you!



Jayden Hamlett

I think my favorite thing about Millhill is the friendships I make with other young adults around my age and with the adults as well. Especially being in the PEERS program, there are people I meet that I will forever remember because of the shared experiences I have had with them. Knowing that there is a place where I can truly call these people I meet my second family really uplifts me.



Joyce Trotman-Jordan

Millhill is that safe haven all children and families could benefit from as they grow and strive in our urban community... Millhill is a beacon of light providing the guidance needed for social, emotional and educational growth, teaching our youth and families how to courageously advocate for themselves and their neighborhoods.



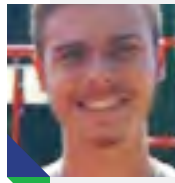
Narcissa Delgado

Millhill is an organization that offers many benefits to support the development of children and families. Being part of Millhill has represented an extraordinary opportunity for me. The fact that I'm involved in the children's future academic success makes me happy. Seeing the smiles on every child under my care is priceless.



Peg Forrestel

We have been long-term supporters of Millhill because your programs enrich the lives of vulnerable children and their families, realizing positive outcomes both in the near- and long-term. You convene and galvanize community partners to work together to address systemic challenges that no one organization can tackle alone. Essentially, what you do is helping to transform our community. Happy 50th Anniversary Millhill, keep up the good work!



Omar Morales

My favorite thing about Millhill is the staff. With all the programs I've been a part of I can truly say that the staff has always gotten the best out of the members, whether that be getting us out of our comfort zones or making us feel welcome, there has never been a dull moment!



Bernie Flynn

Millhill has been a critical support to children and families in the Trenton community for now one-half a century. They are laser focused on improving the emotional and educational well-being of our young people and their parents. Executive Director Cynthia Oberkofler is a tremendous leader who operates in an inclusive and collaborative manner with her many nonprofit partners so as to ensure maximum collective impact and Millhill's wonderful staff follow her example. Thank you Millhill and congratulations on sustaining 50 years of dedicated service!

Community of Giving: Surviving and Thriving with the Help of Our Supporters

Sometimes, when a crisis hits, you can witness the true bounty of the human spirit. Most of what we do at Millhill is in person, from education to therapy to outreach and combating food insecurity. When faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, we could have been paralyzed. But that was not the case. We endured and we persevered, thanks in large part to the help of our supporters.

Our funders helped us pivot so that we could serve the community safely and efficiently, using innovative approaches and new technologies. They gave us the flexibility we needed to carve new paths and overcome obstacles. We introduced telehealth and discovered a whole new way to reach the people who benefit from our services. Our supporters came to our aid when

we needed them and their kindness and generosity bolstered us by not only keeping the lights and computers on, but by motivating us to work harder and smarter. Their support filled us with purpose and gratitude. As noted by Cynthia Oberkofler, Executive Director at Millhill, “The generosity of the community is inspiring. It has helped us keep our spirits up because it reminds us that we aren’t alone.”

The stress and anxiety of the pandemic persist, but we are growing and flourishing in the new normal. And people who invest in us make a critical difference in our continued vitality. We don’t take for granted the trust they put in us and will continue to earn that trust by doing everything we can to serve our population with the resources they need to grow and thrive as individuals and families in a community where they have access to limitless possibilities.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

*If we have made an error or omission,
please accept our apologies and
notify us @info@millhillcenter.org*

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Alexander and M. Jennifer Zbinden

Millhill is Proud to be One of Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders

50 FACES OF MILLHILL

In early 2021, Millhill began the year with the exciting news that we had been selected to be one of Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders, their signature philanthropic program that invests in economically sustainable communities by empowering nonprofit leadership that is committed to advancing this goal. Millhill received a \$200,000 grant, leadership



BANK OF AMERICA

training and the ongoing support of Bank of America as well as other peer organizations to further our impact. As a Neighborhood Builder, Millhill has committed to expanding high-quality mental health resources and support systems in Trenton, which has seen an increased demand for mental health support since the onset of the pandemic in 2020. Bank of America has been an outstanding partner to Millhill and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing commitment to empowering Trenton families.



Michelle Martino,

Senior Vice President, NJ Community Relations Manager - Bank of America

Millhill Child and Family Development has done a tremendous job providing behavioral health services and resources to members of our community who are struggling. Millhill provides support to the entire family and is truly a great partner in the community. We are deeply grateful for our partnership over the last few years and congratulate the team at Millhill, a 2020 Bank of America Neighborhood Builders awardee, for reaching this impressive and well-deserved milestone!

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OUR CORE VALUES

Teamwork

We achieve more when we work together

Adaptability & Flexibility

We respond to the needs and realities of those we serve

Dignity & Respect

We believe everyone should be met with compassion and treated with dignity and respect

Diversity & Inclusion

We embrace our differences and celebrate the strength of all voices

Professional Excellence

We hold ourselves to the highest standard of service

Ethics & Trust

We build relationships based on trust and integrity

