

*Families First  
in Essex County, Inc.  
Celebrating  
Thirty Years  
of Service to  
Families in need !  
1992 - 2022*



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518-873-9544 / [www.familiesfirstessex.org](http://www.familiesfirstessex.org)

# 2022

Families First in Essex County, Inc.  
30th Anniversary



# Greetings from the Families First Board of Directors on this our 30th Anniversary



Thirty Years of Families First: 1992-2022

Since its founding, Families First in Essex County has grown into an essential organization providing much needed support to families of Essex County.

From an initial budget of \$85,000, and a staff of 1.5 in 1992, we have grown to a projected budget for 2023 of just over \$3,000,000 with a projected staff of 40. The road has not been easy; government and state funding sources constantly changed the rules, and the team has had to continually adjust.

Under the strong leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, Families First has expanded their service to include working with young adults ages 18-21, as well as youth with medical and substance use challenges, and has extended their support area to include parts of Clinton, Franklin, Warren and Washington counties. This expansion demonstrates the need for and effectiveness of Families First.

The goal has always been keeping families together and children out of psychiatric hospitals and residential placements. Recently, the biggest challenge that Families First confronted has been the ongoing COVID pandemic, making it difficult for the staff to provide much preferred face to face services to children and families. The team weathered this challenge with exceptional creativity and commitment. They have consistently gone above and beyond to support their participants.

We as a board realize the impact this strong team with solid direction has had on the area and are proud of the work they accomplish. We look forward to supporting the continuation and growth of this amazing organization!

Respectfully submitted,

Hillary Stransky and  
Malinda Chapman,  
Board Co-Chairs

*I have represented Families First, and interpreted the organization's mission, work and values to the community. I have acted as an ambassador in support of Families First's goals to attract new Board members, volunteers, and donors to the organization.*

**Families First Values:** *All families have strengths that should be recognized and appreciated*

Growth brings opportunity, and I was fortunate to be able to grow with the agency. I moved through various positions within, being constantly challenged to develop and hone new skills. JoAnne and Tracey, who are our next longest serving staff members, also had opportunities for additional growth and responsibilities, as have others following. There were times when we stayed relatively stationary, in terms of growth, and had long periods of stability in programs and services. But with Medicaid Redesign, we have entered a sustained period of fast growth. We've seen opportunities increase for staff members to grow and take on additional new responsibilities. I will not be the longest serving staff member, as JoAnne will surpass my time in just over a year. My hope is that there will be many staff members who find a long and stimulating career at Families First.



I've spent a lot of time in recent months reflecting on my time at Families First. When you think about it, it's almost fair to say that some of us have spent more time with our co-workers than we do with our spouses, given that most of our waking hours are spent with colleagues. I've been so fortunate to have developed significant relationships that I will sorely miss, particularly with JoAnne and Tracey, whom I've served with for more than 20 years. But all of the relationships that I've developed here over the years have brought more depth and meaning to my life. These experiences and conversations, from sharing the joy of books and reading with Robin, working closely with our team of managers/supervisors Kayleigh, Mackenzie, Deb and Paul to develop greater infrastructure and support, seeing the Family Peer Advocates Buffy, Robyn, Lisa and formerly Tara develop their roles, getting to know our care managers, and office staff and continuing with all the new staff over the recent years, I've benefitted from and enjoyed getting to know you all.

I await this next period of my life with anticipation and some trepidation. I will have to reinvent myself! Who will I be, when I'm no longer an employee at Families First? Most days I envision this future with some excitement - plans for travel, for having the time to commit to daily exercise, for writing, participating in more civic opportunities, and spending my days with our beloved dog Thor, while waiting for Larry to retire. But there will always be a piece of my heart that remains with Families First, in gratitude for the unwavering support the agency gave me in the darkest and most difficult years of my life, the incredible opportunities for professional growth, and the friendships I've been able to develop. I wish the same support, professional growth, and friendships for you all.

*Anna Griffin*



**Families First Values:** *Services need to be flexible and designed to utilize families' strengths and meet their needs*



# Reflection from Anne Griffin as she prepares for retirement:

Thirty years...I never imagined when I started at Families First 30 years ago, that I would be retiring from the agency 30 years later. It was my first “professional” job at the age of 36 - most of my previous work life had been spent as a waitress. But I had recently graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in psychology. My experience as a parent with a son with mental health issues had given me an invitation to join the Parent Planning Committee in its final stages. When I joined I realized that not only could I help provide input regarding the needs of parents, but there might be a job in the offing too. The Founding Director wanted the first person hired to be a parent of a child with special needs and I interviewed and was offered the position.



I started work in a two room office in the small building on the corner of Water Street. I sat behind the oak desk that I still have today, with a phone with 2 lines, and waited for the phone to ring. I was the designated “red tape cutter” and the supportive listening ear for parents who really needed to talk and be heard. I had hours to listen to parents’ stories and offer support, both over the phone, and in our small office designed to function as a warm and welcoming “drop in center.”

Many of the stories I heard were eye opening. I was fortunate enough to grow up in a stable home and family, without abuse of any kind, and no worries about whether the electricity would be shut off or there would be food on the table. I was profoundly moved by the challenges many of our participating parents had experienced in their own childhoods, and how this impacted their own ability to parent their children. But even more, I was impressed by their unwavering determination to help their own children, to understand their needs and learn how to more effectively parent them. Every parent’s journey seemed to start from that place - from realizing that their child had different needs, and that they as parents needed help and support to better understand and help them.

I was just at the beginning of my own journey - one that included many challenges over the next years, as I experienced great upheaval in my personal life and ended up as a single parent raising two sons alone. Without hesitation, Families First offered me help and support, with case management, respite, wraparound, flexible dollars, and endless team meetings, all from a strengths based perspective. This wasn’t easy, and there were times when literally the entire agency of 7 knew everything about my life and its challenges. It raised issues that we had to work through - the dual roles we experienced as colleagues and case manager/participant, the different perspectives we sometimes had over services and how to understand each other’s view of what it meant to be a team member. The most wrenching time came when all services seemed exhausted and I made the difficult decision to have my son residentially placed. Due to circumstances, the placement never transpired, and my son began turning his life around. Families First supported me through that process as well, and together we celebrated every success we had. It took years, but eventually my life smoothed out and both of my sons became Marines.

Families First quickly grew in the first few years after taking on the Intensive Case Management program offered by OMH, and many additional programs subsequently. When our Founding Director left the agency, the Board and staff set up a Search Committee to identify the qualities we wanted our next Director to have. When the time came for interviews, we had participating parents as well as Board and staff members interview the candidates. We worked hard to live our values, involving parents in conferences, support groups, social activities, and advocacy groups. We recruited parents to act as representatives on committees, and encouraged their active involvement on a legislative level.

The following people have served as Board members during the past thirty years. The people pictured have served as Board Chairs. Names highlighted are current Board Members.

Mary Liz Alexander  
Linda Ames  
Pat Anderson  
Ruth Appleyard  
Jennifer Ashline  
**Karen Ashline**  
John Bernardi  
Judy Bertesche  
Joyce Bethlehem  
Tina Bigelow  
Joe Bogardus  
Mary Anne Brody  
Nicky Bryant  
Jae Lyn Burke  
Jim Burns  
Mary Burns  
**Ann Cammack**  
Ginene Carroll  
Fran Christian  
Janet Cross  
**Debra Cully**  
Ronnie Cunningham  
Lori Dahl  
Joyce Daniels  
Penny Dieffenbach  
Diane Dier  
Doug Dornan  
Bernard Duso Sr.  
JD Duval  
Lynn Edmunds  
Betty Eldridge  
Kim Feeley  
Ruth Fowler  
Elizabeth Frum  
Dick Gaffney  
Kris Gifford  
Tammy Goff

Bonnie Haberle  
Daphne Hallowell  
Leon Hebrink  
**JoAnn Husslein**  
Melody Hyatt  
**Linda Jackson**  
Phil Jackson  
Robyn Jones  
Pat Keller  
Kerri Klugman  
Allison Kohler  
Janice La Hart  
Holly Launderville  
Peter Lynch  
Linda Macintyre  
Gail Maicany  
Sue Malaney  
Patsy McCaughin  
Carole McGivney  
Bonnie Morgan  
Terri Morse  
**Maureen Moynan**  
Jeanne Nichols  
Vel Onni  
Sarah Pachla  
Sherry Perrin  
Sue Peterson  
Doreen Pfund  
Nancy Pierce  
Dan Pratt  
**Sue Reasor**  
Atea Ring  
Mary Rhoades  
Max Riley  
Karen Robillard  
Ken Robillard  
Dot Rushby

Jim Russ  
Becky Santillo  
John Sawyers  
Mary Savage  
Teresa Sayward  
Richard Schoenlank  
David Schoorens  
Kathy Scott  
Elizabeth Scully  
Don Shambo  
Linda Sherman  
Tracey Sherman  
Carolyn Sicher  
Charlie Smith  
Bob Sorey  
**Audrey Sparre**  
Rhonda Speshock  
Laura Steenburg  
Maria Stitt  
John Sweeney  
Betsy Thomas -Train  
Libby Treadwell  
Steve Valley  
Dave Vandenburg  
Al Walden  
Alice Walter  
**Ken White**  
Robin White  
Sue Wolson  
Shelley Winters  
Tammi Wrest  
Molly Wynne



Sandy Murphy



Angie Gilbo



Richard Kelly



Fred Shaw



Monique Weston



Trisha Forrest



Kip Thompson



Margie Emery-Ginn



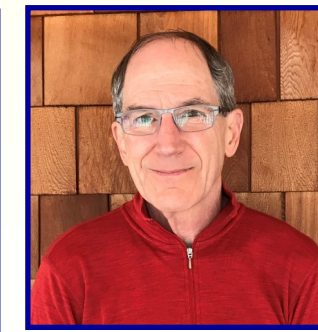
Malinda Chapman



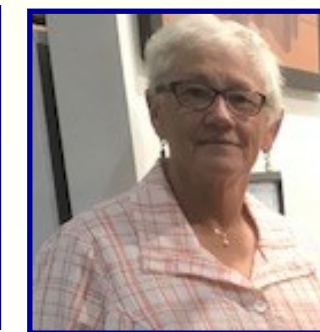
Hillary Stransky



Sharon Cook



Joe Bogardus



Winky Thomas

# A Message From the Chief Executive Officer

In November 2022, Families First turned 30! How amazing that this agency has stayed true to its founders' vision and values through all of the changes and growth, for all of these years.

I have seen and participated in most of that growth as November is also my anniversary with Families First. In 1993, I remember seeing an advertisement for a Children's Case Manager position at Families First and wondering, what is Families First? So, I did a bit of research and applied for the position. I was coming from the world of the adult developmental disability field and knew that I really always wanted to work with kids. I was a bit nervous as Families First had only been in existence for one year. I remember wondering, will this agency last? I was so impressed with the founder, staff and Board members in my interview, that I accepted the position and took a chance! Apparently, I made the right choice, as 29 years and multiple position changes later, I am still here!

When I started at Families First, there was the founder, Naomi Tannen, Anne Griffin, the first staff member hired and John Sweeney. I was the fourth staff member. We were so small and everything was so new. I remember early on asking to see a Program Manual for the Case Management Program and being told, we're still developing that. I was a bit concerned! A little bit later, we hired a staff member named Priscilla Hurd. She was a parent of a child with special needs and the plan was for me, as a Case Manager, to partner with her in the field working with families. Keep in mind that back then utilizing peers in this field was a new concept. Wow, were my eyes opened quickly! The immediate connection that she was able to make with the parents that we were working with was amazing. They afforded her a respect that I was not given as a professional, because she had lived and felt the same emotions and stress that they had. From that day forward at Families First we utilized peers as often as we possibly could and the partnership made a world of difference!

Today we have grown to a staff of 38 and a budget of over \$3 million. We have many more programs and services to offer assistance to the families we partner with but we still hold true to the original values set in place by our founder.

I have truly enjoyed working with an amazing set of staff and Board members. Most people that come to Families First maintain some form of commitment including our donors. We have numerous donors that have been with us for many, many years. Over the years they have helped us create an Endowment Fund to help prepare for our future. This started with a donor directed fund and donation of \$25,000 and now we have two endowments totaling \$251,173.

Families First has survived a fire, an ice storm, a flood, budget cuts, numerous program changes, staff changes, a possibility of a merger, Medicaid Re-design, and a Global Pandemic! I expect we will be around for many years to come!

I believe that Families First has been successful because we have always worked together as a team. I have been successful as the director since 2001, because of the team of people that have been around me. I would especially like to thank Anne Griffin, Priscilla Hurd, John Haverlick, Tracey Serlock, Andrea Kuhn, Robin Nelson, and all of the Board Chairs for helping me learn, grow, and keep Families First moving forward.

Here's to another 30 years!

JoAnne Caswell  
Chief Executive Officer



**Families First Values:** Every creative effort should be made so that children can stay in their own homes and communities.



Families First hires our first Youth Peer Advocate!



Participating in a County-wide System of Care Grant with the primary focus on Transition-Aged Youth



Agency held our annual Apple Cider Pressing Event after a two-year hiatus!

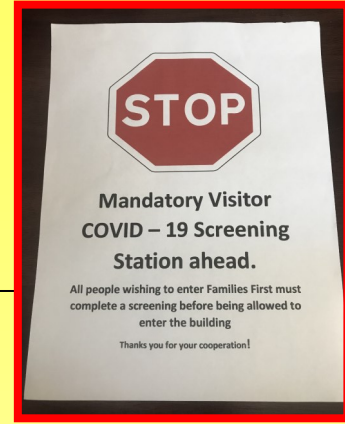
Budget - \$3,000,000;  
Staff - 38;  
190 families in HH Care Mgmt. Program



Summer Camp with Southwoods ends - due to Budget changes and cuts

**COVID!**

Building closed to all staff and community for three months. Transition to remote service delivery to all kids and families. Established Zoom accounts, bought laptops and cell phones for all staff so they could deliver services remotely. No \$10,000 Raffle; No Social or Recreational Groups; NO Summer Camp. Staff returned to the office, on rotating, limited basis later in 2020.



2020



CFO resigned with 2 weeks notice, Agency/ Board decides to outsource Finance Department and contracts with DALLE Accounting out of Albany.

Transitioned Payroll and most HR services to a company called Paycom

Covid continues: office open with a mask mandate, limited youth activities, No \$10,000 raffle, No Summer camp

2021



Agency and Staff participated in E-town Day again after a two year hiatus!

New EHR System put in place - Netsmart



Covid: Agency fully open mid year, mask mandate eliminated later in the year. No \$10,000 raffle, youth groups back !

2022

*The following people have served as Staff members during the past thirty years. The people pictured have served as Executive Directors. Names highlighted are current Staff Members.*

- |                         |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alysia Ahrent           | Jamie Ganter            | Michele Paulson             |
| Jennifer Allen          | <b>Brian Gay</b>        | Stephanie Perry             |
| <b>Robyn Anson</b>      | Rita Gelineau           | Patti Phillips              |
| Melanie Bain            | <b>Taylor Gohlke</b>    | Eliza Pillard               |
| Andrew Baron            | <b>Anne Griffin</b>     | Brittany Pope               |
| Sara Barrachina         | Sue Holmes              | <b>Paul Pulsifer</b>        |
| <b>Janelle Bausman</b>  | Priscilla Hurd          | Lorrie Putnam-Rafferty      |
| Noelle Bessette         | Alyson Hutchins         | <b>JoAnne Rice</b>          |
| <b>Jeanne Brown</b>     | Whitney Jackson         | Anne Raymond                |
| <b>Jeannie Calderon</b> | <b>Michelle Janisse</b> | Stacey Raymond              |
| Michaila Callis         | <b>Jim Jaquish</b>      | Karen Robillard             |
| Jennifer Carlo          | <b>Peter Casanova</b>   | <b>Kasey Roselli</b>        |
| <b>Peter Casanova</b>   | Sheri Kennedy           | Wendy Sargent               |
| John Chesnut            | Deb Koechel             | <b>Tracey Serlock</b>       |
| Teesha Coolidge         | Andrea Kuhn             | <b>Lisa Sheehan</b>         |
| Fayla Coons             | <b>Kari LeClair</b>     | Brenda Sherman              |
| Ronnie Cunningham       | <b>Mackenzie LaHue</b>  | Sherlene Simpson            |
| Bonnie Daigneault       | Nicole La Valley        | Linda Snow-Perry            |
| Lori Anne Daniels       | Meaghan Lee             | <b>James St. Denis</b>      |
| Linda Deal              | Jennifer LoIacono       | Martha Stratton             |
| Angie DeGross           | <b>Buffy Marcil</b>     | <b>Tara Stockwell</b>       |
| <b>Destiny Demar</b>    | Anna McKee              | Liz Stuart                  |
| <b>Jennifer Deyo</b>    | Tim McKeown             | John Sweeney                |
| Karen Disogra           | Nicole Meager           | <b>Jessica Thompson</b>     |
| Ellon Dougon            | Christina Mitchell      | Shannon Trombley            |
| <b>Kathy Drew</b>       | <b>Deb Mitchell</b>     | Lorraine Turgeon            |
| Amanda Dunham           | Heather Morrison        | <b>Stacey Vaughn</b>        |
| Kierstin Egge           | Sara Mussaw             | <b>Natalya Vuozzo</b>       |
| Donna Farrell           | <b>Robin Nelson</b>     | <b>Kayleigh Wojewodziec</b> |
| Courtney Farrington     | Donna Norton            | Tammy Wojewodziec           |
| Judy Feigenbaum         | Emma Jean O'Kusky       | <b>Olivia Worden</b>        |
| Mallory Finnegan        |                         | Elora Yellott               |
| <b>Heather Ford</b>     |                         | <b>Ryan Yellott</b>         |
| Shelly Fracalossi       |                         | Theresa Zerbe               |



Naomi Tannen:  
Founder / Executive Director, 1991 - 1996



John Haverlick:  
Executive Director, 1996 - 2001



JoAnne Caswell:  
Chief Executive Officer, 2001- present



Staff Retreat 10.2022 - Sagamore, Bolton Landing, NY

# How Did All Of This Get Started?

## Looking Back – 30 Years

In 1991 Families First in Essex County was just a dream. How amazing it is that 30 years later it is a thriving, vibrant organization, still totally dedicated to respecting families, and working together with them in a partnership. It is deeply satisfying to me to see that my original vision has not only been sustained but enhanced, thanks to the dedication, skill and hard work of the director, staff, and the participants.

By 1991 I had worked with children who had serious emotional problems and their families for 34 years. I knew how hard it was for families to get the services that would be really helpful to them. Frequently instead of being listened to, they were blamed for their children’s difficulties. I dreamt of establishing a program that was designed and implemented by the people who needed it, instead of solely by professionals who thought they knew what was best. I believed that children had problems because of a combination of complex reasons, and that parents love their children and want the best for them.

First, I spent a year talking to families in their homes, asking them three simple questions: What has been most helpful to you? What hasn’t been helpful? If you had three wishes for things that would help you and your child what would those be? Then I worked with a group of six parents, took the information from the interviews and designed a program. What emerged was something wonderful, something new and revolutionary – yet full of common sense and really simple. We imagined a place where families would feel welcomed and respected and comfortable. No blame or shame! By 1992 we had received enough grant money to start the program. Parents said that they needed information, so we established a library. We encouraged parents and kids to help each other. I remember a struggling young single mother with three daughters bringing pots and pans for a father who was establishing a new home for himself and his daughters. At Families First participants felt that they not only had needs but they had something to offer someone else. Our motto became “People Helping People”.

Each year brought new grant money and the ability to expand the program. Staff worked with people in their homes, developed programs for youth, respite for parents, and created opportunities for mutual support at meetings, parties and special events. There were camping trips, hikes, cider pressing, trips to theme parks, and holiday celebrations. “Families First is my family” one mother told us.

Using these non-traditional methods brought results, and people who ran agencies and made decisions on the state and federal level took notice. We were keeping children out of expensive out of home placements and hospitalizations by offering intensive services in the home - designing programs that would meet each family’s needs and strengths.

Everyone involved with Families First – director, staff, participants, professionals from other agencies, Board members, community members, funders – all have cause to celebrate this very special occasion – Families First’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



Naomi Tannen –  
Families First founder

**Families First Values:**  
*Family-Focused: the family participates as a full partner in all stages of decision-making and service planning.*



Families First awarded a Capital Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant - \$66,470  
Parking lot expanded and paved; covered walkway constructed over front entrance; New Septic System installed; Electrical system upgraded



ICM Program ended, Health Home (HH) Care Management Program started. - Expect to grow to meet the need. Working through three Health Homes (CHHUNY, AHI, Encompass)



Established contracts will multiple Managed Care Organizations - Fidelis, United, Empire, CDPHP, MVP . A whole new way of doing business!

2017

**Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS):**  
Other Licensed Practitioner (OLP); Community Psychiatric Supports & Treatment (CPST); Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR); Family Peer Support Services (FPSS); Youth Peer Support Services (YPSS)

**Home and Community Based Services (HCBS):**  
Caregiver/Family Advocacy & Support Services; Respite (Planned & Crisis); Prevocational Services; Supported Employment

HCBS Waiver Program ends, 4.2019

Families First is designated through the NYS OMH to provide CFTSS (1/2019) and HCBS (4/2019) Services, in Clinton, Essex, Franklin and Warren and Washington Counties

The name of the Families First Building was changed to: The Jamie P. Clark Center

2019



# A Perspective on the Families First Mission, Vision, Motto and Values:

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**  
*Margaret Meade*

Thirty years ago our Founding Director, Naomi Tannen, hung this quote in a prominent place in our small two room office. It expressed a lofty ideal, and helped to infuse a tiny, grass roots agency with a sense of mission that has never disappeared. From the earliest days of the Parent Planning Committee, to the change and growth of recent years, Families First has aspired to keep our founding values vibrantly alive and enduring. Hiring peers, viewing families from a strengths-based perspective, building individualized, flexible, and creative family plans, working in partnership with families, and helping parents find alternatives to the heart-wrenching decision to place their child - these values have all been woven into our work.

During those early years, we were challenged to explore, re-think, and expand our awareness of what it meant to live our values. When support groups didn't take off, but large group events did, we committed to more celebrations and parties where parents could connect. We thoughtfully chose our language, and referred to our families as “participants” rather than clients. Early on, a decision was made that because we were committed to mental health, staff members could use sick time for mental health reasons, not just physical health. We decided that parental experience should be valued and compensated for, just as education credentials were. Staff peers partnered with case managers to create a bridge of understanding in our work with families. We had a sense that from the springboard of parent planning committee recommendations, we were creating an agency that was evolving as we strove to more fully express our values.

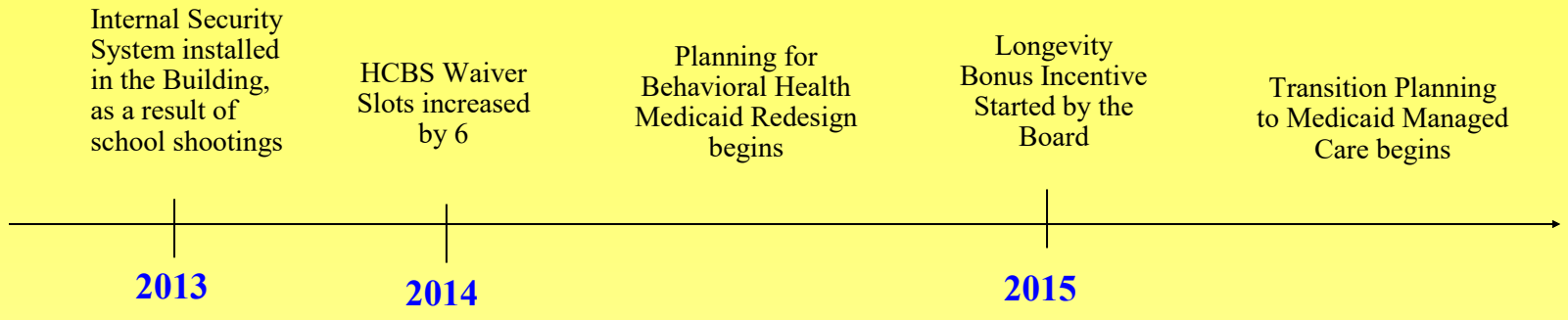
Our expressed value of ensuring that staff members could utilize services was put to the test when I became a pilot project for service delivery to staff members. It was an experiment that required a great deal of patience, tolerance for complexity and not having ready answers, and an openness to sharing and working through the inherent challenges. We forged through it, learning a great deal about shared trust and not faltering in the face of difficulty. Now, with a staff of 38, we remain committed to providing support to those of us who need it.

From the beginning, our mission and values attracted not just talented and committed staff, but Board members who are passionate advocates for our work. Over the years, I have heard many Board members say that they joined our Board because they wished so fervently that there had been an agency like ours when they were bringing up their own children struggling with mental health issues. We lived our values when Board and staff worked jointly to create a mission statement that to this day remains an accurate reflection of why we do our work.

As we have continued to grow and learn through the life cycles of various programs, our values are and must be the foundation of our work. Programs have come and gone, our budget has continually increased, and the number of staff has grown exponentially. Change has been constant. But our values must endure. These are what make us who we are - first and foremost an agency dedicated to families, partnering with them on their journey, uncovering their strengths, encouraging hope, and sharing their triumphs. We remain a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens working to create lasting change in our corner of the world, in the lives of families and the systems that support them.

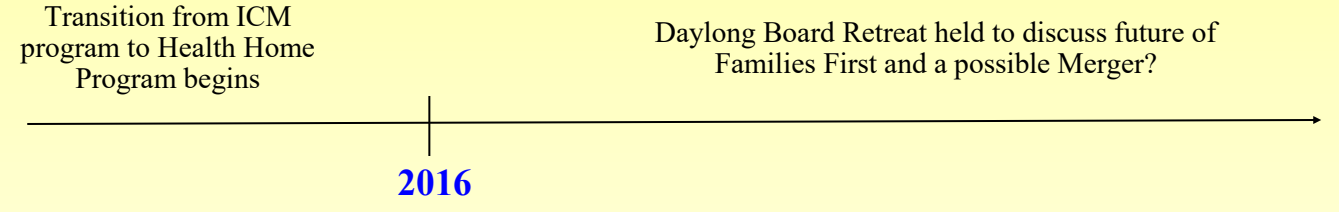
*Anne Giffin*

***Families First Values: Parents and professionals need to work together as partners***



**What is a Health Home?**  
 A Health Home is a care management service model whereby all of an individual's caregivers communicate with one another so that all of a patient's needs are addressed in a comprehensive manner. This is done primarily through a "care manager" who oversees and provides access to all of the services an individual needs to assure that they receive everything necessary to stay healthy, out of the emergency room and out of the hospital. Health records are shared among providers so that services are not duplicated or neglected.

*Discussion and planning for how Families First will look in the future based on assumptions that Managed Care Contracting and Value Based Payment Systems may affect our ability to function as a stand – alone entity. Discussions about which direction to move (Try to stay a distinct Agency, Affiliation, Merger, Partnerships, etc.). What must we keep: What are we willing to change?*

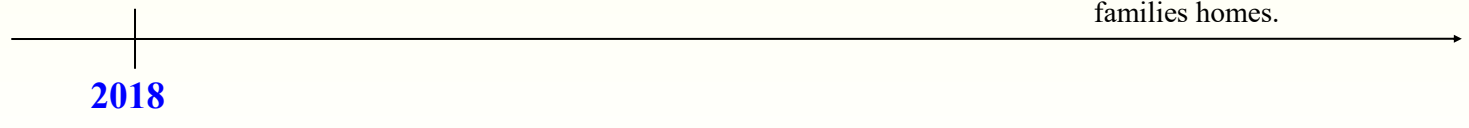


Health Home families growing fast - 12/2016 - 24 families with ICM, 12/2017 - 69 families with HH, 12/2018 - 102 families



Families First joins the Northwinds IPA, to position ourself for Value Based Payment in the future

Board approves decision to pursue a License through the NYS OMH. (Children's Mental Health Rehabilitation Services - CMHRS). License granted allowing evaluation and counselling to be delivered in families homes.





Families First (FF) opens its doors in November

1992

Logo created by Ben & Jerry's, one of our original funders



1.5 staff, Budget \$85,000

FF is incorporated

1993

FF becomes host to the Intensive Case Management Program for Essex County

\$76,125 comes to FF through Reinvestment & Family Support monies from NYS OMH

Family Support Program increases in size and number of families served

1995

Adirondack Nonprofit Network (ANN) - supports and connects nonprofits in their efforts to improve the Adirondack quality of life.



Supporter/Donor, Helen Paul passed away

Implementation of EMR continuing

FF joins ANN (Adirondack Non-profit Network)

Waiting lists for ICM & Waiver, more families than ever needing help

18th annual apple cider press held

2010

Change in Directors: Founder Naomi Tannen steps down and John Haverlick takes over

1996

FF Office on the corner of Water St. destroyed by fire, Sandy & Winky's home utilized as temporary offices

1997

FF becomes host to the Essex County AmeriCorps Program



1998



Staff members breaking ground for their new building.

Groundbreaking for the new home of FF (spring)

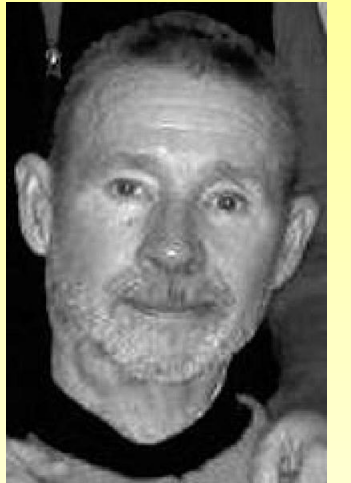
1999

Utilization of Consent Agenda and Mission moment started

2011

Matching endowment funds completed, endowment now at \$200,000

Supporter/Donor: Jamie Clark passed Away

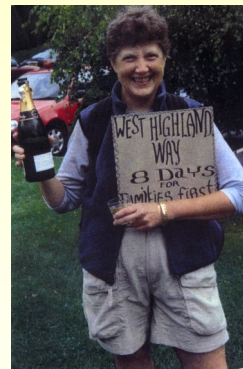


Assemblywoman Betty Little, cutting the ribbon to dedicate the new building

Dedication of new home of FF

2000

FF becomes host to the HCBS Waiver Program and the ICM Program doubles in size



Sandy Murphy finished the 100-mile West Highland Way walk in Scotland and raised \$12,000 for the newly established Families First Endowment Fund



Christmas Toy drive was once again a huge success and continues to meet tremendous need

2012

Federal Affordable Health Care Act may bring significant changes to how Case Management services are delivered



Maple syrup tapped from the trees behind our building, an annual event that the kids love



FF celebrates its 20th Anniversary, Ben & Jerry's (one of our original funders) helps sponsor the event





# The History of Families First



\$24,300 -  
In 3 months, FF trained 11 new Respite Providers  
and provided 58 children with 1374 hours of respite!

Senator Little, funds  
Respite Grant

New  
Strategic  
Plan

2009



2nd Annual  
Children's Mental  
Health Awareness  
Walk

Staff Wellness  
Day created  
by Board

FF moves into its new  
Building - The Edward  
T. Hall Center



Capital Campaign begins  
to pay for new building,  
goal is to raise  
\$350,000 in 3 yrs.



Supporter/Donor/Board  
Chair. Sandy Murphy  
passed away

2010



Summer Camp moved to  
Southwoods, Paradox, NY

Families First  
visited by  
"IRENE";  
basement flooded!



\$10,000 Raffle

Executive Director JoAnne Caswell  
handing 1st Annual \$10,000 raffle winner  
Lynn Edmunds her check

Completion of the first  
annual \$10,000  
fundraising raffle



Change in Directors: John Haverlick steps  
down and JoAnne Caswell takes over

2001





A Fundraising tool used early on was an Auction. Winky after a hard day of work!

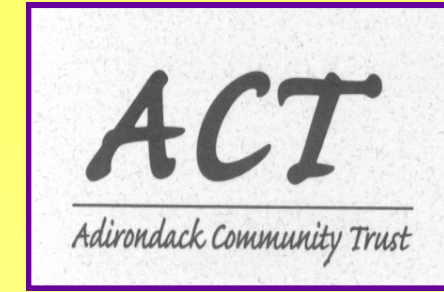
Capital Campaign completed. \$350,000 raised in 3 yrs., mortgage retired!

Agency's 10th Anniversary



FF holds its 1st annual Summer Camp (at Twin Valleys)

FF awarded one of five challenge endowment grants from ACT



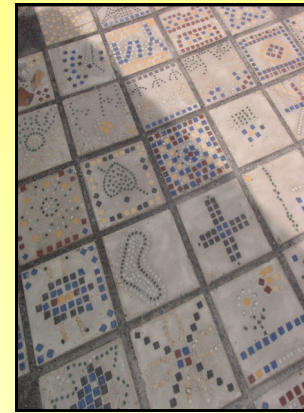
2002

2004

Keeping the Promise Endowment Fund started (\$67,000 in matching funds available)

Advisory Board Developed

AmeriCorps Program ends



Mosaic Stepping Stone project held at FF and Wadhams Library



Adirondack Regional Prints project, held with local youth

Case Statement Developed

1st Annual Cobble Hill Inn Holiday Toy Drive and benefit held for Families First

Youth Empowerment Group started

2005

2006



Link with Brantwood Camp in NH developed, thanks to donor, Jamie Clark

Endowment Appeal earns \$35,404

HCBS Waiver Program doubles from 6 to 12 slots



STAR Awards created

First EMR Software purchased through Claimtrak

Agency working on "Developing Roots in Our Community"

Relationship with Kelsey Trust developed



JoAnne, Naomi and Anne at the Apple Cider Press

2007

2008