

West Bergen Mental Healthcare

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ANNIVERSARY HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



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Dear Friends

2023 will mark West Bergen's 60th Anniversary! We've come a long way since our doors first opened in 1963 as a Child Guidance Center. As community needs grew, so did we, evolving into a full range mental health center, serving thousands of children, adults and families every year.

Our physical imprint in the community now includes three locations with one focused on children and adolescents, and our reach has extended to school based therapeutic programs in 13+ school districts. Partnerships with community organizations have provided us with an outreach and education platform where we continue to breakdown the stigmas surrounding mental health issues. And our Trauma Support team's work with families impacted by suicide or other sudden traumatic events, provides critical (and free) support for as long as needed.

West Bergen's ability to transform lives and uplift communities has been made possible only through your support.

Because of you, we are able to provide quality, affordable and accessible mental health services to more than 3,000 annually.

Because of you, our sliding scale fee payment structure ensures that income limitations will never be a barrier to receiving help.

Because of you, our Center for Children & Youth in Ramsey is undergoing much needed repairs and renovations and will be ready to welcome back even more children and families in 2023.

As we enter our seventh decade, we remain committed to transforming lives and uplifting communities into the future, but your continued support is critical.

Our goal is to raise \$150,000 this holiday season. Please consider helping West Bergen ensure that everyone who needs it can receive the gift of mental health and wellness.

With gratitude,

Michael

Michael J. Tozzoli, MSW, LCSW, CEO

THE GIFT OF

Awakening

Andy, 25, was living in one of West Bergen's group homes.

A sweet client, who struggled with psychosis, Andy was lost in his own inner world. Before getting sick in his late teens, Andy had been a star athlete, lively and fun loving.

When his symptoms began, he was in and out of hospitals before coming to live in West Bergen's residential program. While

hospitalized, Andy had been tried on numerous medications, but nothing seemed to manage his psychosis. Upon arriving at West Bergen, our psychiatrist started him on a new generation medication, and case managers encouraged him to participate in the Adult Day Treatment program.

What came next was nothing short of a miracle. Within months, Andy started to simply get better.

His thoughts cleared, his mood stabilized. The happy bright man his parents remembered was back.

Andy's case manager, Lisa, recalls meeting with Andy's father late one fall afternoon. As they talked, he began to weep. He simply could not believe his boy had been returned to him.

Today, Andy is a ski instructor and avid hiker, living independently in New England. His parents report that he continues to do well, and takes his medication faithfully.



WEST BERGEN RESIDENTIAL AND ADULT DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM

YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS:

- Supervised residential settings for individuals whose lives have been disrupted by severe mental illness.

- Comprehensive treatment and support services that help residents

- Improve interpersonal communications

- Develop lifestyle and vocational skills

- Participate in social and recreational activities

- Understand and manage symptoms of illness

- Psychiatric evaluation and medication management

West Bergen's Children's Specialty Services is led by a team of Board Certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, Advanced Practice Nurses, and Licensed Clinicians. We are proud to be a partner agency with the Center for Advancement in Children's Mental Health at Columbia University.

WEST BERGEN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT SPECIALTY SERVICES

YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS:

Therapeutic treatment for children and adolescents experiencing depression, mood and other interpersonal and coping skills issues including:

- Anxiety and Depression Disorders

- Developmental and Social Skills Disorders

- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorders Program

- Medication Evaluation and Management (if needed)

Henry, 7, quiet and shy, could not stay focused in school.

Reading seemed to be his issue. He had always been good with puzzles, and did well with math and science projects, but simply couldn't concentrate or comprehend what he was reading.

After ruling out dyslexia, Henry's elementary school teachers thought tutoring would help, so his parents engaged a skilled reading tutor to help him. But as the years passed, his struggles continued, and his inability to keep up caused him emotional distress. He began to withdraw, had no friends and no social interactions.

When Henry was 18, she had made enough academic progress to be accepted into college. But within a few months, it became clear that emotionally she was simply not ready to be on her own and she returned home, sinking into a deep depression. Her

desperate parents brought her to West Bergen, where Cherie was finally diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, a relatively new diagnosis.

West Bergen was about to launch their first

Social Skills group and Cherie was enrolled (she was nervous). Cherie quickly came to love the group, feeling like she finally "fit in".

Twenty years later, Cherie's life has been transformed. She continues to be an active

participant in her social skills group and also has a

West Bergen therapist that she sees regularly. Her

dream of living on her own has finally been realized

and she now is a resident in one of West Bergen's supervised living apartments. An avid crafter, she

volunteers her time leading West Bergen Adult

Day Treatment clients in knitting, crocheting and

writing workshops. She is happy, thriving, and

dreams one day of owning her own home.

Henry graduated High School on time, and is now a Junior at a College in the Northeast. While computer and math still are his favorite subjects, he has become an avid reader of science fiction and loves the world and the friends it has opened up for him.

As often happens in therapy, acknowledging fears and sadness openly for the first time can be traumatic, and Michael's condition initially worsened. He became suicidal and was hospitalized and put on medication. Peter closely monitored him.

After several weeks, he improved and was discharged. Therapy continued at West Bergen, and at age 16, with Peter's support and help, he was able to come out to his parents, who

were accepting and supportive. Little by little, the courage and freedom that came with that decision helped Michael open up, make friends and join clubs. At 18, he left for college. He

continued to check in with Peter periodically.

After college, Michael secured a successful job, married and began pursuing his interest in

painting. 10 years later, Michael and Peter ran into each other at an art fundraiser. Michael gave

Peter a hug, and with tears in his eyes, thanked him for getting him through the most difficult t

in his life. His parting words to Peter were "I will never forget the work we did together".

THE GIFT OF

Independence

Cherie, 38, has struggled with

mental health issues since childhood.

A quiet girl who struggled

academically and socially, her

parents were told she was

developmentally "slow" and should

be placed in special education

classes.

Cherie's parents felt differently. They

knew she was intelligent, and that

her struggles were more emotional

versus developmental, yet finding the

right diagnosis proved elusive. Cherie

went from therapist to therapist.

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When Henry was 13, his worried

parents brought him to West

Bergen to address his growing

depression and isolation. He was

assigned to Jane, an experienced

child and adolescent therapist,

who consulted with West Bergen's

Child Psychiatrist to evaluate

Henry. What they discovered was

life changing for the boy and his

family. Henry was diagnosed

with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity

Disorder (ADD and ADHD), a disorder that often