

GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2021–2022


George Junior Republic

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Nate O'Lay
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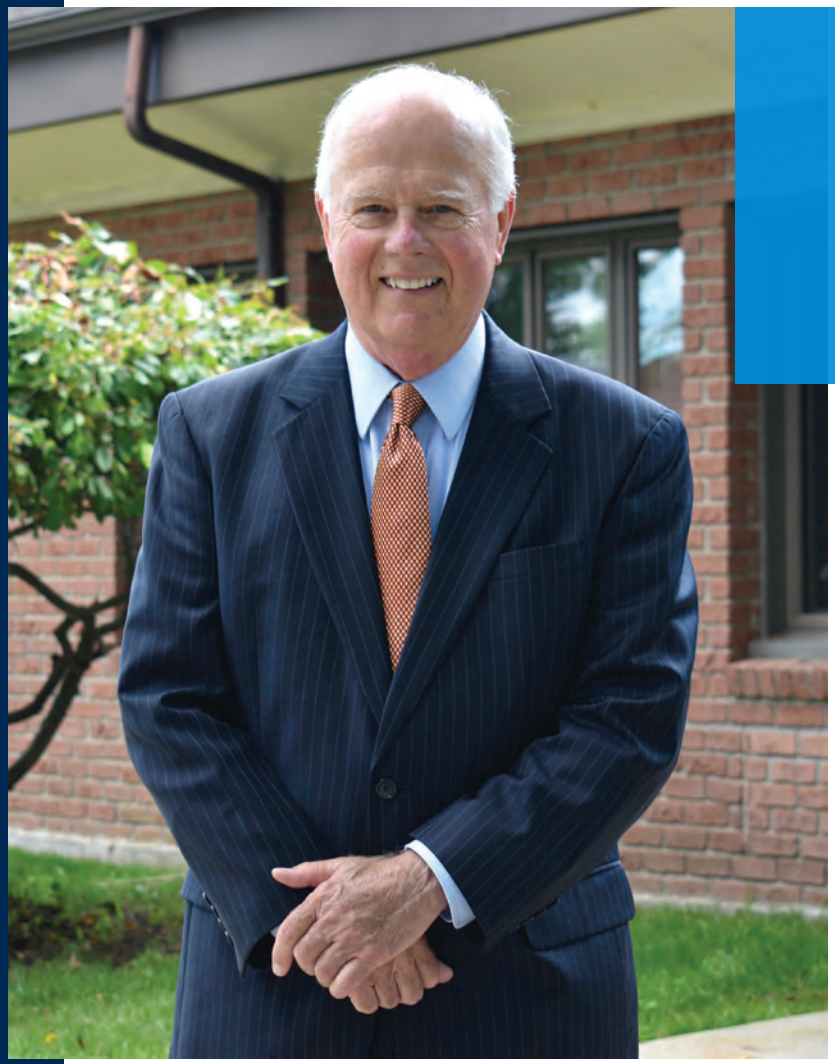
A LETTER FROM OUR GJR PARENT BOARD CHAIR



"Our excellent staff and administration are committed to preparing for the future and providing the highest quality and most comprehensive treatment for the youth and adults in our care."

As I've written in this space over the past several years, George Junior Republic and Affiliates (GJR) is in a period of transition resulting from many factors. Some of the factors are internal - a new CEO, CARF accreditation and changes in administrative staff. These have all brought with them new methods and increased levels of accountability.

The pandemic has changed the environment in which we operate in several critical ways. However, more important than the internal factors have been the external forces that continue to affect the changing landscape of adolescent residential treatment for George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania (GJR in PA). The prevailing attitude within our client base has changed about who should be in residential

treatment, finding and hiring quality staff has become more difficult, and mental health issues among youth have expanded during COVID-19. Further, the Counselor Parent Model is transitioning to a clinically focused trauma informed model of care. They exhibit more serious mental health issues at increasingly younger ages and require more individualized and intensive treatment. Our certification last year as a Specialized Setting under the Family First Prevention Act of 2018 has prepared us for these more complex cases.

In a recent series of articles in the *New York Times*, David Leonhardt and Matt Richtel focus on the increasing crisis in adolescent mental health. The articles note the alarming increase in destructive teen behavior, often leading to self-harm or attempted suicide. The causes are generally attributed to changes in family structure, isolation due to the use of electronic devices, COVID-19 isolation, and the lack of social interaction. The physicians interviewed in the articles lament the lack of residential treatment facilities that can provide the structure and treatment required. They also indicate this is a relatively new mental health crisis that has grown over the past decade. This example is one of many in the type of youth we may be able to help as we transition in residential treatment.

While residential treatment at GJR in PA is moving into new areas, including working with adults, GJR's programs in community-based treatment continue to expand. A recent article in the *Open Minds Newsletter* by Monica E. Oss discusses the impact the pandemic has had on the child welfare system and the growing need for such programs. After outlining the causes of these mental health problems and their substantial growth during COVID-19, she summarizes by saying, "payer preferences and increased funding are focused on delivery service in the community and in the home." We have seen the impact of the increased demand for family oriented, community-based services in the growth of programs and the expanded outreach of Preventative Aftercare (PAC) and George Junior Republic in Indiana (GJR in IN).

As the world around us changes, at GJR, our excellent staff and administration are committed to preparing for the future and providing the highest quality and most comprehensive treatment for the youth and adults in our care.

Best regards,



Richard R. Stevenson
GJR Parent Board Chair

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



> ***"George Junior Republic and Affiliates are and will continue to be industry leaders and dependable providers of high-quality behavioral health services."***

I am often told "change is hard" or "people do not like change." *Psychology Today* states, "Change requires resisting well-established behavioral patterns, which means that you will work against unconscious automatic processes in the brain that are designed to make life easier." Noteworthy changes in the behavioral health sector, whether community-based or residential, have occurred over the past few years. Unfortunately, many of these required changes were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Residential care has experienced a dramatic shift in its referral and placement base. As a result, the youth and adults entering residential placement are presenting with pronounced complex needs. From significant behavioral concerns and the severity of past or current traumas to physical health conditions, the acuity of the referral base in residential care has swung in a new direction. This swing has required residential providers to be agile and creative with current and new programming, increase the scope of staff training, and shift into a more collaborative model of care using various evidence-based models. Funding streams are continually examined, and staff recruitment and training provide additional challenges.

On a positive note, the pandemic has created conditions for change at an accelerated pace. For GJR in PA, change has meant CARF accreditation, receiving certification as a Specialized Setting, establishing adult residential programming, and implementing a new comprehensive electronic health record. The organization has met these challenges head-on by providing new models and levels of care within its continuum. These changes allow the organization to meet the emerging needs of the behavioral health sector, which would not be possible without the dedicated and caring staff and board of directors of GJR.

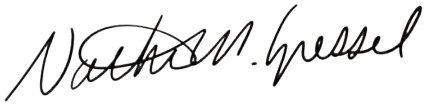
Shifts in residential placement have created new challenges in community-based programming as well. The expectation to utilize evidence-based practices and support individuals (who previously would have been recommended for residential placement) in the home has brought another change in the service delivery system. PAC and GJR in IN provide essential evidence-based community-based services across Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. This shift, coupled with community safety issues, has increased the organization's focus on successful outcomes for clients and staff safety while working in various communities across three states.



GJR in PA VP John Horgan *(left) and* CEO Nathan Gressel *(right)* review CARE materials.

George Junior Republic and Affiliates are and will continue to be industry leaders and dependable providers of high-quality behavioral health services. I am thankful to be a part of a system that has risen to these new challenges. The best years of GJR are to come as we continue to reflect and learn from our history.

Respectfully,



Nathan M. Gressel
Chief Executive Officer



A LETTER FROM OUR CFO

Over the past two years, rapid change (primarily driven by the coronavirus pandemic), continued program expansion, and infrastructure building have been our organization's focus. At the heart of this is the need to navigate supply chain shortages, elevate our creativity, and wade through the 'great resignation' with much patience and resolve.

Our board of directors and administration recognize that strategic projects and new programming do not meet deadlines, impact services, or carry out our mission every day – our people do! Our ability to problem solve, communicate, and educate with our wide array of technical expertise meets goals and enhances our greater community. Seventy-one cents of every dollar spent is invested in human capital and total over $28 million this fiscal year. This past fiscal year, over $700,000 in experience/service adjustments were made to direct and support staff beyond annual budgeted wage increases. Staff education is important as over $268,000 has been invested in those pursuing formal higher education at the bachelor's or master's level and enabled staff to participate in conferences across all disciplines.

Our stakeholders and those we contract with recognize these talents and daily efforts. GJR in IN community-based staff worked tirelessly to channel over $707 thousand from Chafee Pandemic funds to older youth served this fiscal year and was then awarded an additional $904 thousand for distribution because of their initial success. PAC and GJR in PA secured over $359 thousand in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and stabilization funds to invest in the recruitment and retention of staff specific to family-based, long-term structured residence, and residential treatment facility services.

All of the above actions support and reinforce our organization's commitment to our most valuable resource – our people. Because of these investments, we can diligently advocate for the well-being of each client and family we serve while solidifying our position as a prominent provider and industry leader of human and behavioral health services.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gerwick

Michelle Gerwick
Chief Financial Officer

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

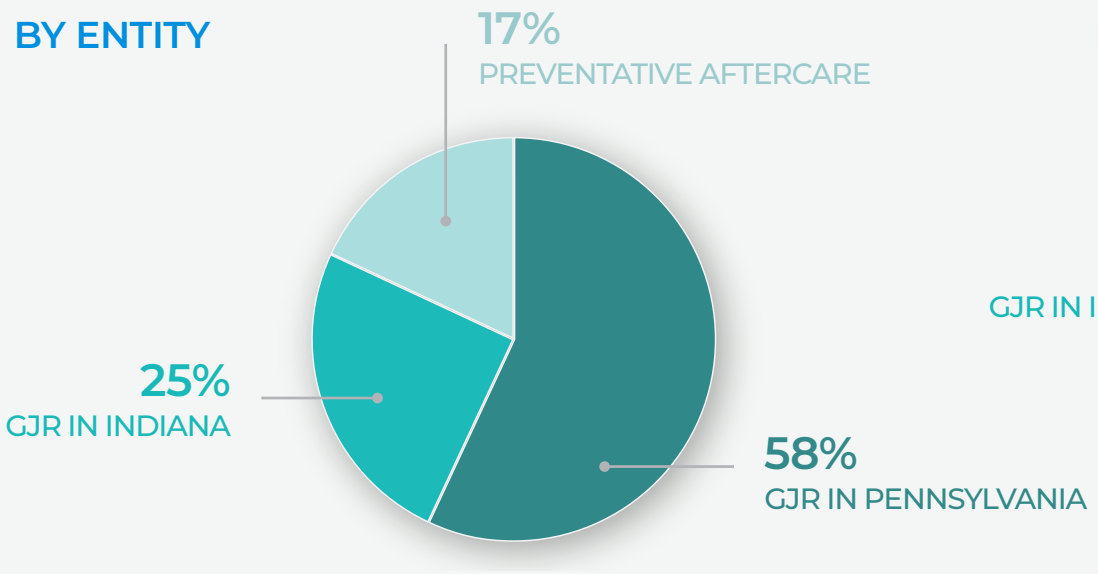
REVENUE

SPECIALIZED RESIDENTIAL	41%
IN-HOME SERVICES	25%
OLDER YOUTH SERVICES	11%
REGULAR - DRUG & ALCOHOL - RESIDENTIAL	7%
LONG-TERM STRUCTURED RESIDENCE - ADULT	4%
OUTPATIENT SERVICES	2%
PANDEMIC/STABILIZATION/GRANT FUNDS/OTHER	10%
TOTAL	100%

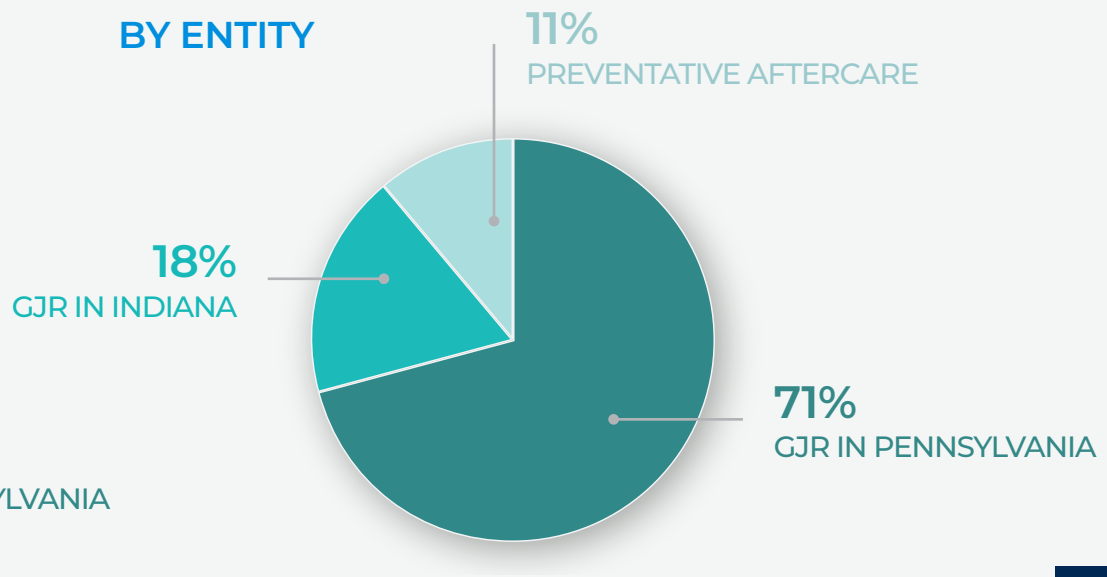
EXPENSES

PERSONNEL	71%
FACILITIES/OPERATION	12%
CLOTHING/FOOD/SUPPLIES	8%
OCCUPANCY	6%
TRANSPORTATION	3%
TOTAL	100%

BY ENTITY



BY ENTITY





GJR IN PA:
RESHAPING OUR FUTURE

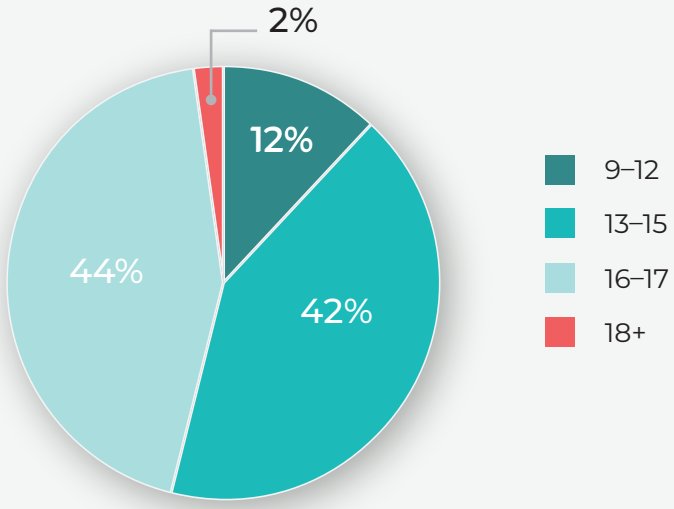
GJR in PA continues to adapt to the ever-changing residential placement and child welfare landscape. Throughout the last year, our most significant endeavor has been the implementation of the CARE trauma-informed model (Children and Residential Experiences). Successful CARE implementation is a multi-year process that will require a change to individual and agency-wide philosophies and our practices in working with our persons served.

In July 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services certified the organization as a Specialized Setting. Having three options available for certification, the organization became certified as a setting designed to provide high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been or are found to be at risk of becoming sex trafficking victims. Specialized settings have enhanced program requirements beyond current congregate care regulatory requirements including demonstration of a trauma-informed approach, enhanced levels of staffing ratios, training and skill development for the youth served, enhanced levels of youth supervision, physical site safety considerations, enhanced emphasis of meaningful family and child engagement, reality-based discharge and transition planning and specialized training for staff and youth on sex trafficking awareness, assessment and screening practices, reporting requirements, and social media/cyber security cautions.

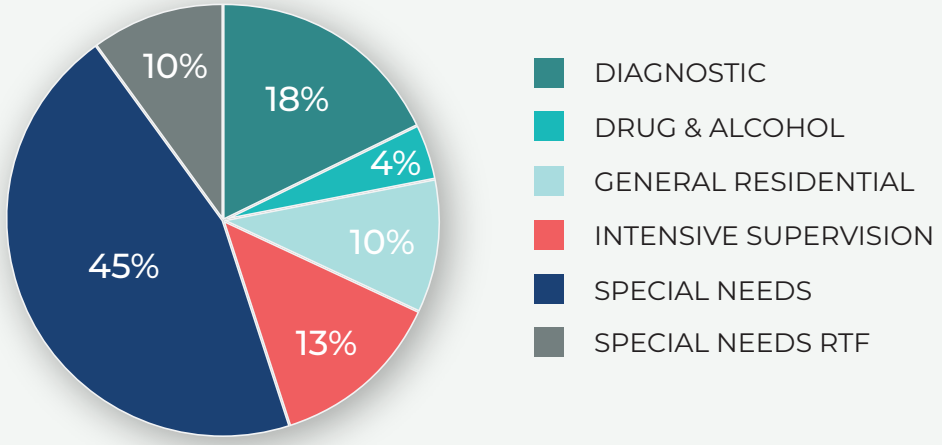
GJR in PA adjusted several direct care positions to assist each treatment unit with enhanced case management services and supervision/management at the unit level. Residential Managers, located in each treatment unit, provide direct supervision and leadership to direct care staff. Case Managers are assigned to each treatment unit and serve as a liaison between the treatment team and the youth's placing agency and family.

YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

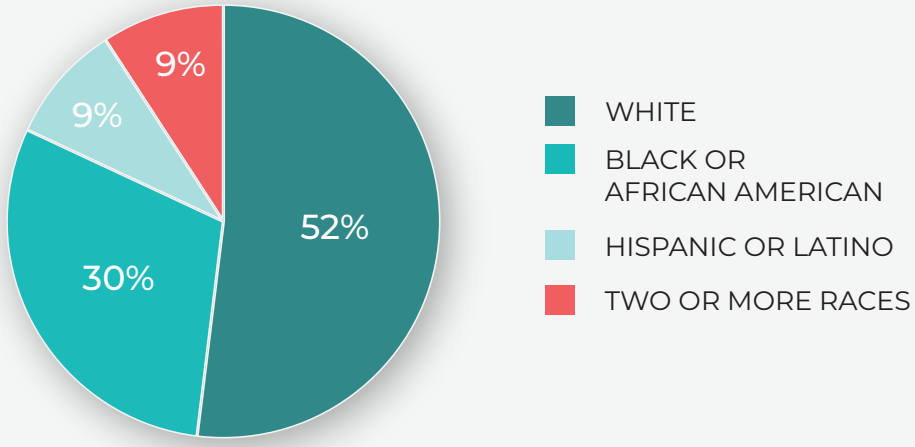
AGE



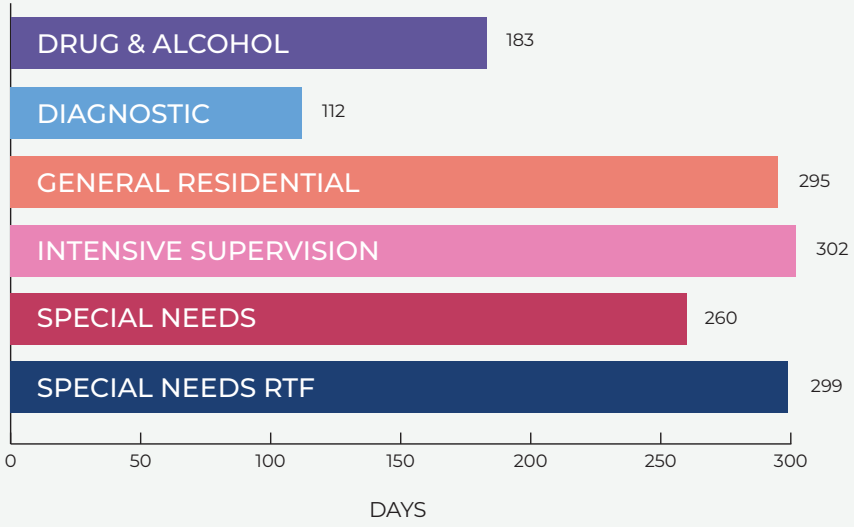
PROGRAM ASSIGNMENT



RACIAL COMPOSITION



AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY BY PROGRAM



BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) is a Pennsylvania state mandate requiring victim restoration, offender accountability, and community protection to be afforded equal representation in all encounters occurring within the juvenile justice system. Juvenile offenders may be court-ordered to complete community service hours, attend victim awareness classes, or repay a monetary obligation of restitution or fines due to their delinquent behaviors.

186

Number of PA youth participating in the BARJ program

5,823

Total number of hours worked by PA BARJ youth

79

Total number of PA youth whose fines and restitution were paid in full.



198

Total number of youth participating in Victim Awareness Groups.

$45,544

Total amount paid in restitution by PA BARJ youth

LONG-TERM STRUCTURED RESIDENCE

The Long-Term Structured Residence (LTSR) program provides behavioral healthcare in a highly structured, recovery-oriented setting for judicially involved adults with serious mental illness. The care includes therapeutic individual and group interventions based on person-centered goals.

The team focuses on each person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, using the eight dimensions of wellness to address all areas of an individual's health. These areas are emotional, occupational, intellectual, environmental, financial, social, physical, and spiritual. The LTSR staff strive to address each resident's mental well-being while also attending to these interconnected dimensions to assist residents in embracing their path to recovery.



Despite the pandemic creating unprecedented challenges for the new program, the LTSR welcomed its first resident on March 1, 2021, and has grown in new and exciting ways. The program can accommodate up to 15 residents and has provided services to 10 residents through June 30, 2022.

The new program has been made possible through the ongoing dedication of the LTSR treatment team, the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission, Beacon Health Options, Southwest Behavioral Health Management, and the nine counties that the LTSR serves (Armstrong, Butler, Crawford, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Washington, and Westmoreland).



CARF ACCREDITATION

On February 26, 2021, GJR in PA achieved a milestone. The organization was awarded a three-year CARF accreditation for all child and adolescent residential programs. Accreditation is a voluntary process in which trained peer reviewers evaluate the organization's compliance with established performance standards and how the organization-wide commitment to quality, satisfaction, accountability, and safety is demonstrated.

The administrative team drove the two-year readiness process leading to CARF accreditation. The process included preparing and maintaining multiple plans and documents such as the cultural competency and inclusion plan, strategic plan, annual budget and external fiscal audit, risk management plan, infection control and infectious disease outbreak response plans, program descriptions, technology plan, restraint elimination plan, performance improvement summaries, emergency response and disaster recovery plans, and new and updated policies and procedures.

Once an organization attains accreditation, the expectations are to demonstrate continuous conformance with all applicable CARF standards and seek ongoing quality improvement. The employee-driven CARF workgroup has not missed a step in maintaining the established momentum. Comprised of 17 employees, this active committee represents admissions, campus security and safety, case management, compliance, finance, health services, human resources, information technology, maintenance, operations, purchasing, training, transportation, and treatment. Committee members interface with all levels of staff to ensure a shared understanding of how conformance is demonstrated daily throughout the organization.

All new staff receive a comprehensive overview of CARF standards during their onboarding process. These employees come to view CARF standards and conformance as part of the day-to-day fabric that lends to the organization's structure and all aspects of service delivery. While for veteran employees it's difficult to overstate the value of accreditation, it's simply how new employees do business.

CARE OVERVIEW

Reflecting on this past year, our organization began implementing the trauma informed CARE model and its six principles (developmentally focused, family involved, relationship based, competency centered, trauma informed, and ecologically oriented). The growing application of CARE by staff on campus and its positive results can only be attributed to those who have placed their trust in the process and faced the challenges of cultural change head on. Additionally, many staff have shared how the application of CARE principles has benefited the persons served and led to a positive work environment.

Some of these results have allowed for the development of "therapeutic alliances" where persons served are experiencing the support needed to realize successes never before seen. One example of this is when persons served in our Intense Supervision Unit (ISU) planned a "Career Day" where staff supported them in hosting an event where they learned about various careers. This event included the members of the Administration and ISU staff, as well as the persons served within the program. A year ago, such an event would have been inconceivable.

Moving into what is being referred to as the "mid-term," GJR in PA's staff will participate in another survey where they will answer questions based on what they learned, put into practice, and experienced as a result of CARE and its implementation. The CARE Implementation Committee looks forward to hearing from our staff and appreciates the efforts they put forth.



The CARE sign was designed and created by GJR in PA youth and staff and is displayed on the campus grounds.



GJR IN INDIANA:
PERSEVERING TOGETHER

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." – Andrew Carnegie

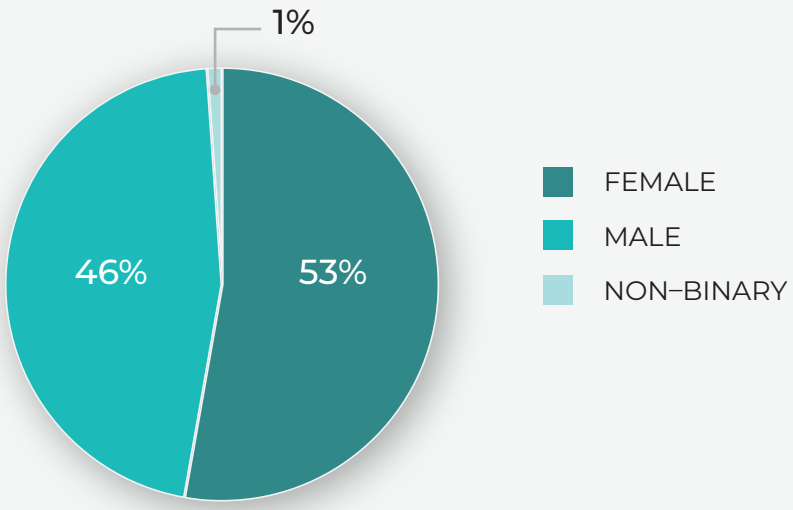
Uncommon results describe GJR in IN's culture, outcomes, and quality services. The staff are among the organization's unsung heroes. Through the provision of individualized services to youth and families, employees manage each individual's unique treatment needs with flexibility and (at times) creativity to move towards positive outcomes.

Serving 46 Indiana counties in 2021, we learned new ways to provide employees training on the most up-to-date evidence-based models of care. New initiatives were introduced, including enhanced training on the treatment of sexual behavior programs in youth, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and parenting training.

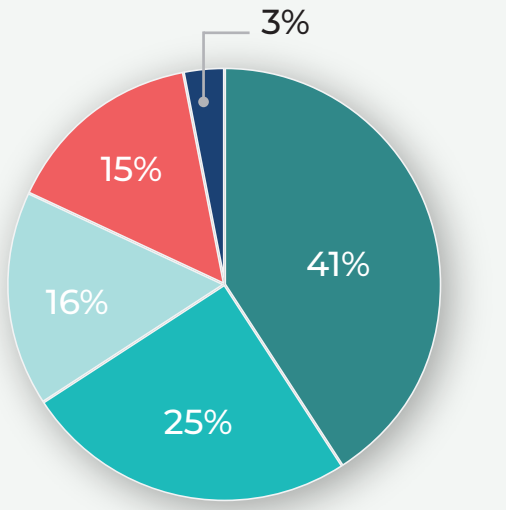
In addition to enhanced training, education is at the forefront of the organization's culture, with many employees participating in the organization's Tuition Reimbursement Program. Due to the increase in therapists in multiple counties, we added clinical home-based services, including Family Preservation and Comprehensive services, to 14 new counties in 2022.

BY THE NUMBERS

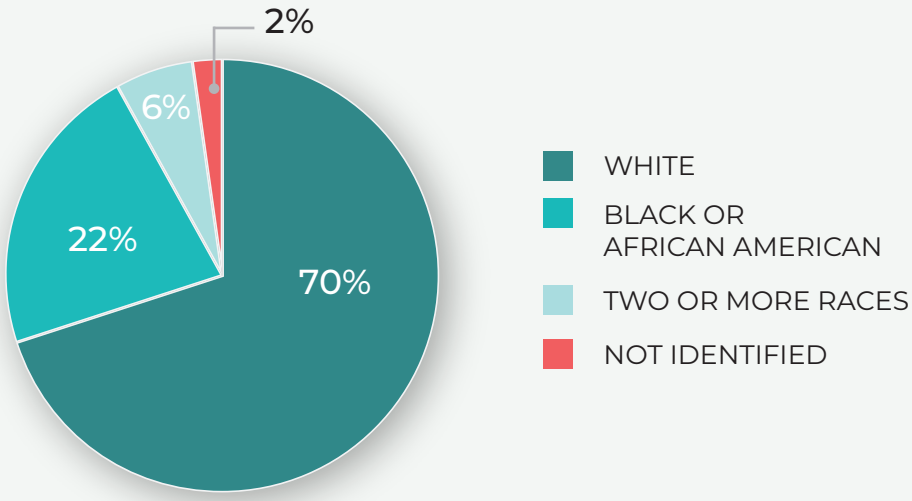
IDENTIFIED GENDER



REFERRALS BY PROGRAM



RACIAL COMPOSITION



SERVICE AREAS

1,200+
YOUTH & FAMILIES SERVED

91%
AVERAGE OYS YOUTH SATISFACTION SCORE

94%
AVERAGE CLINICAL SERVICES SATISFACTION SCORE

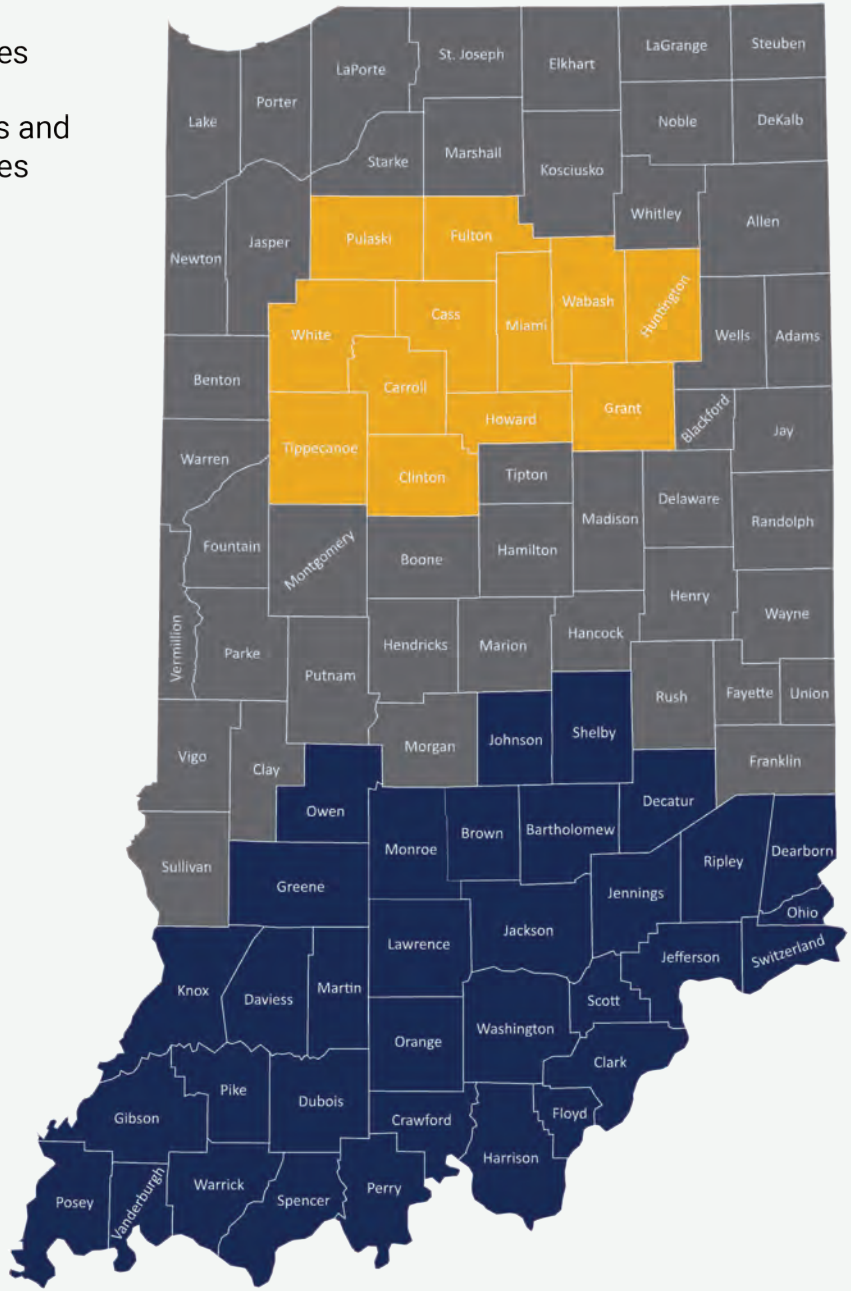
Home-Based Services

Older Youth Services and Home-Based Services

46
COUNTIES SERVED

950+
REFERRALS

95%
AVERAGE REFERRAL SATISFACTION SCORE



FOSTERING FUTURE SUCCESS

GJR in IN's Older Youth Services program hosted two sessions of the annual Moving Forward conference this summer. The yearly engagement event provides older youth in and those aged out of foster care resources to support their transition to adulthood.

Participating youth had a day of learning, music, food, and fun! Activities included a talent show, a resource fair, and hobby booths. The fair allowed the youth to engage with their peers in a fun and supportive environment while learning about financial health and developing healthy relationships.

The youth were full of smiles and laughter as they watched their case managers participate in a lip sync competition. They listened passionately as two youth who had graduated from the program shared their stories and experiences.





PREVENTATIVE AFTERCARE:
EXPANDING WITH THE TIMES

PAC is responding to the behavioral health needs and trends in communities across Pennsylvania and Ohio. Throughout this year, we have continued to offer counseling and therapeutic services to children, youth, and families in their homes, schools, and communities while collaborating closely with other members of their treatment team, e.g., Children, Youth, and Family Services, Juvenile Probation, schools, managed care organizations, etc. Recent trends in unforeseen school truancy have led to school districts and counties contracting with PAC for more Truancy programs. Our work with at-risk youth is also growing, as county stakeholders have turned to PAC to help with new initiatives to address rates of community violence, especially among youth.

Historically, PAC programming has been with children and families. Recently, PAC was awarded a contract for a Mobile Medication Program in Montgomery County working in the community with adults with serious psychiatric illness, which we anticipate will start early in fall 2022. PAC's community-based focus remains and is in line with behavioral and mental health service delivery projections.

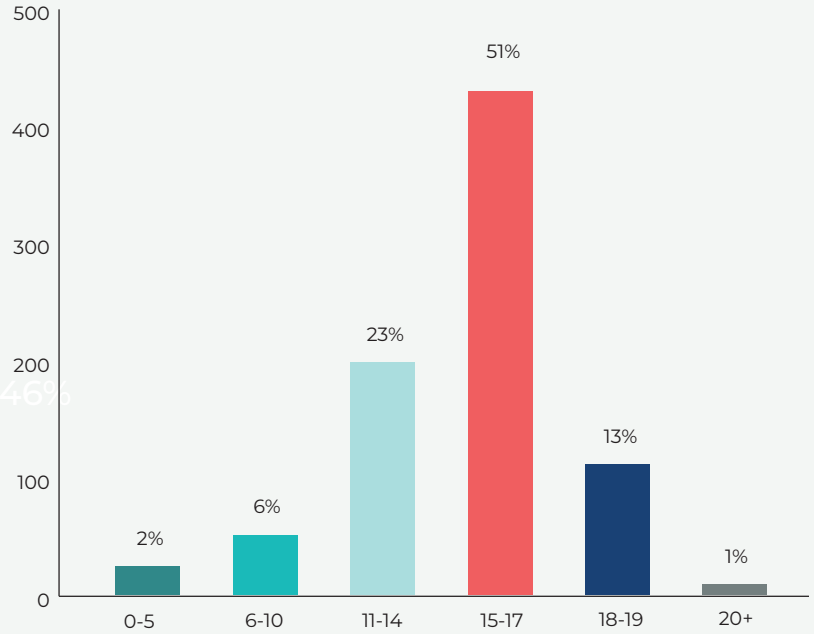
With growth comes staffing needs. While the national staffing crisis has impacted PAC, we focused on staff retention via salary increases for education and experience, increased in-person support during new hire onboarding, and maintained in-person supervision and training. Staff began using Motivational Interviewing (MI) and continued using Ecosystemic Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) in our Family Based Services program. Both MI and ESFT are evidence-based models for enacting behavioral change.

PAC is prepared to be part of the solution for national issues of truancy and violence elimination in the communities where we live and work. PAC has the dedicated staff and stakeholders to support children, youth, families, and adults to lead happier, more positively connected lives.

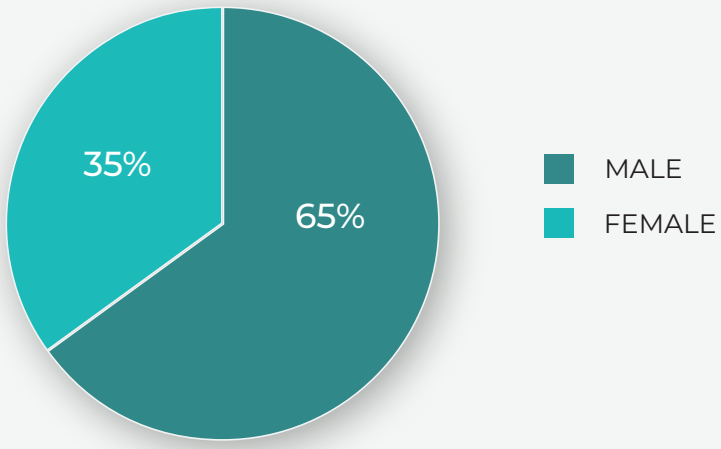
BY THE NUMBERS

PAC values the therapeutic alliance with clients and families, and collaborating with our county partners. In our county-funded programs (e.g., Intensive, Truancy, etc.), PAC provides weekly updates to these partners which allows them to follow treatment progress and be reassured that services are being offered per our county agreements. We are grateful to our county partners for being part of our clients' treatment team!

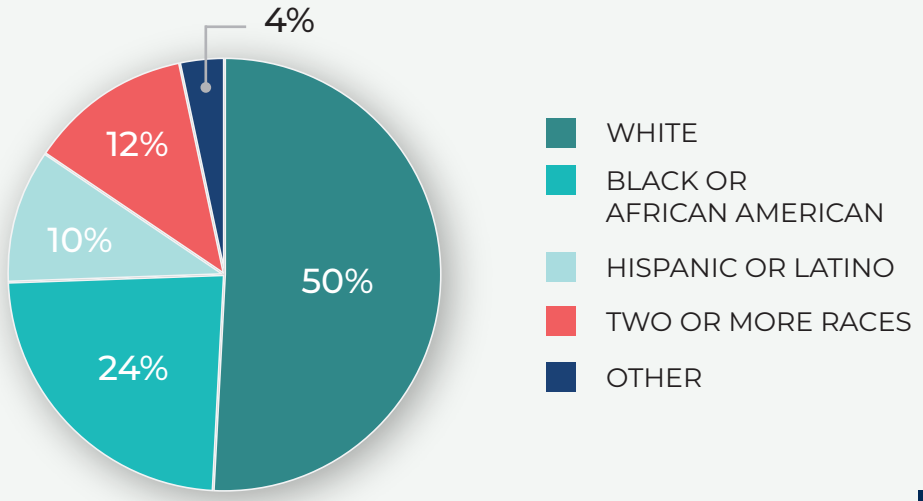
AGE BREAKDOWN



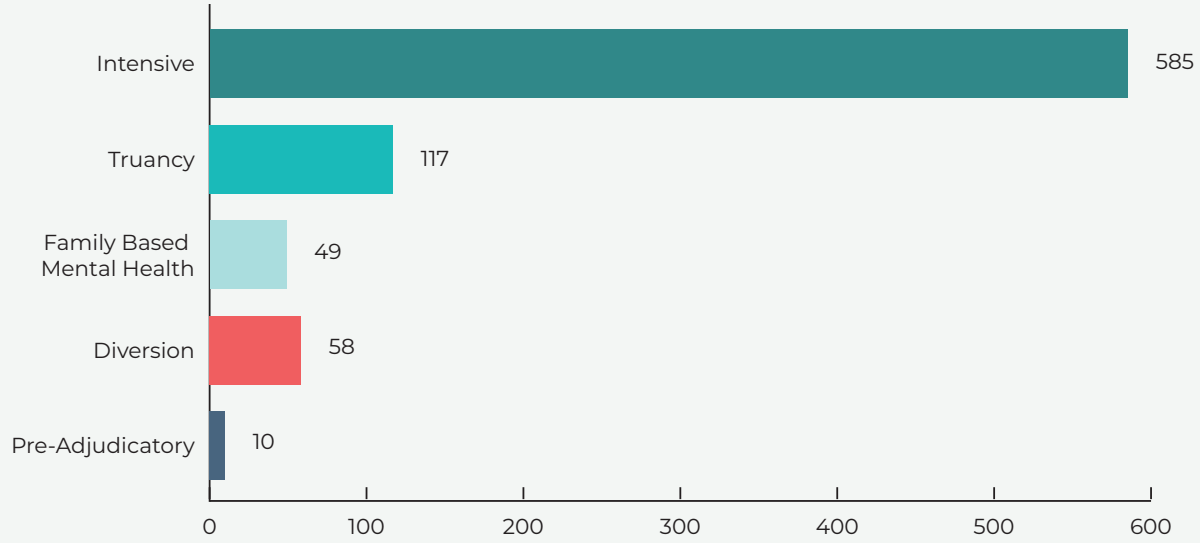
IDENTIFIED GENDER



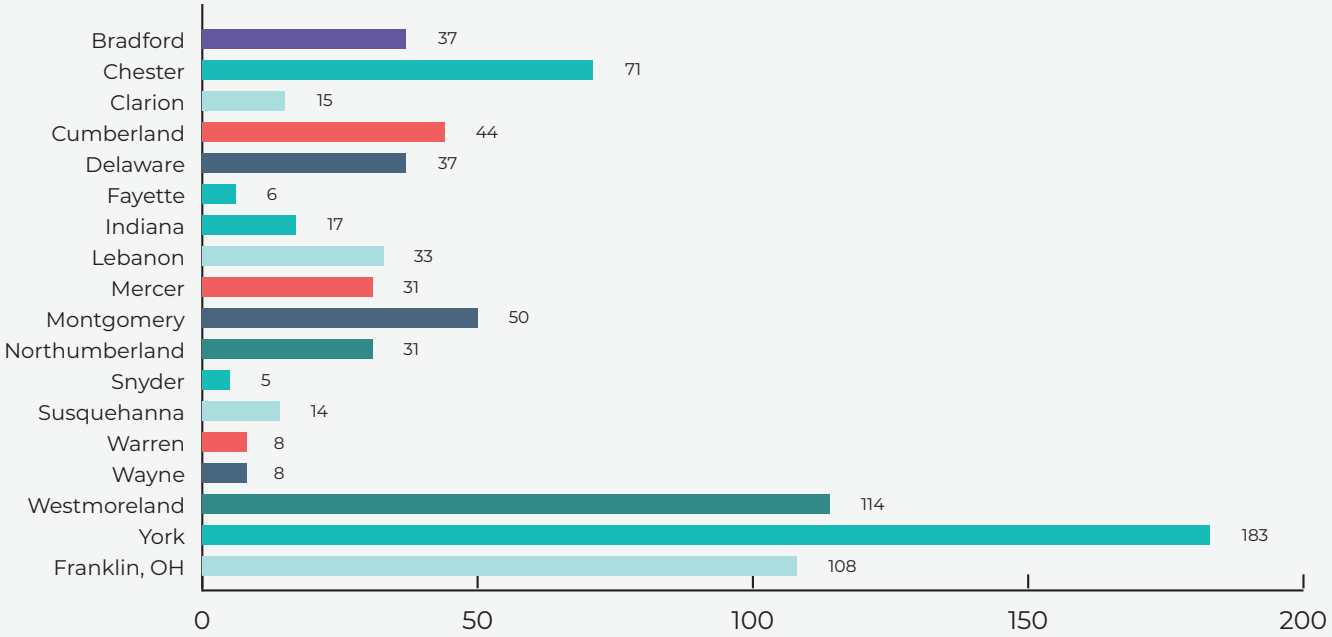
RACIAL COMPOSITION



FAMILIES SERVED BY PROGRAM



FAMILIES SERVED BY COUNTIES







PROGRAM EXPANSION

Mobile Medication Program

The Mobile Medication program serves residents of Washington County who participate in HealthChoices. The program is designed to create a continuum of care related to medication administration, medication monitoring, and medication education to persons with serious mental illness. Services will be available 24/7, including weekends and holidays. Staff members will be responsible for the provision of education regarding medication use, side effects, the importance of compliance, risks of non-compliance, and symptom management.

Elementary Truancy Program

PAC expanded its Truancy Program in York County to include working with elementary schools. Studies demonstrate that students who are at risk of dropping out of school can be identified as early as third grade on the basis of attendance patterns, academic performance, and behavior. PAC maintains a perspective that truancy is a symptom and/or indication of many factors occurring within a child's life and family environment. This program addresses truancy as a multi-layered, family, and community-based issue that requires an intensive, collaborative, and organized effort from all involved parties including the family, school, and community resources.

COMPLIANCE OVERVIEW

Health and human services providers must have compliance programs if they receive federal funds. The three GJR operating companies (GJR in PA, GJR in IN, and PAC) actively participate in a shared corporate compliance program. The program includes a compliance plan (policies, procedures, and standards for conduct), an identified Compliance Officer and Compliance Committee, training and education, communication including anonymous reporting options, internal monitoring and auditing to detect problems, and corrective actions, including the use of standardized employee disciplinary guidelines.

> ***"There have been minimal findings of significance during the past fiscal year, both internally and externally."***

The GJR compliance program includes both internal and external compliance activities. Internal activities support continuous readiness for the external reviews. The reviews have included multiple types of ongoing records audits, investigating and responding to concerns, training, data measurement and management, and process improvement. External processes involve program licensure, certification, accreditation, contract auditing, financial audits, and complaint investigation by various bodies. There have been over 20 such examinations this fiscal year; several have been completed virtually. There have been minimal findings of significance during the past fiscal year, both internally and externally.

This year, full-time Compliance Technician positions have been added to the GJR in IN and PAC programs. These positions demonstrate GJR's commitment to compliance and quality improvement. They manage and audit records for the respective programs, support corrective actions and training, and are active members of the Compliance Committee.

WE NEVER STOP BELIEVING SCHOLARSHIP

The George Junior Republic and Affiliates *We Never Stop Believing Scholarship* was established in 2022 to assist the natural, step, or adopted children of employees up to age 21 with post-secondary undergraduate educational expenses. This annual scholarship will be provided to full or part-time students accepted to an accredited college, university, community college, or career and technical school.

Congratulations to this year's recipients!



Jared Armagost *(left) with his father, John. Jared is a junior at Penn State majoring in Aerospace Engineering. He and fellow students are currently working on developing a virtual reality space experience.*



Rachel Cowan *(right) with her mother, Tasha. Rachel is attending IUPUC this fall and is pursuing a degree in Education. She will be one of their starting pitcher for the Crimson Tide Softball Team.*



Jaiman Holden *is attending Lock Haven University. He will be playing the offensive and defensive line for the football team. He and his brother, Trian, led the Farrell Steelers to the District 10 championship title.*



Trian Holden *is attending Allegheny College. He will continue playing quarterback for the football team. He and his brother, Jaiman, led the Farrell Steelers to the District 10 championship title.*

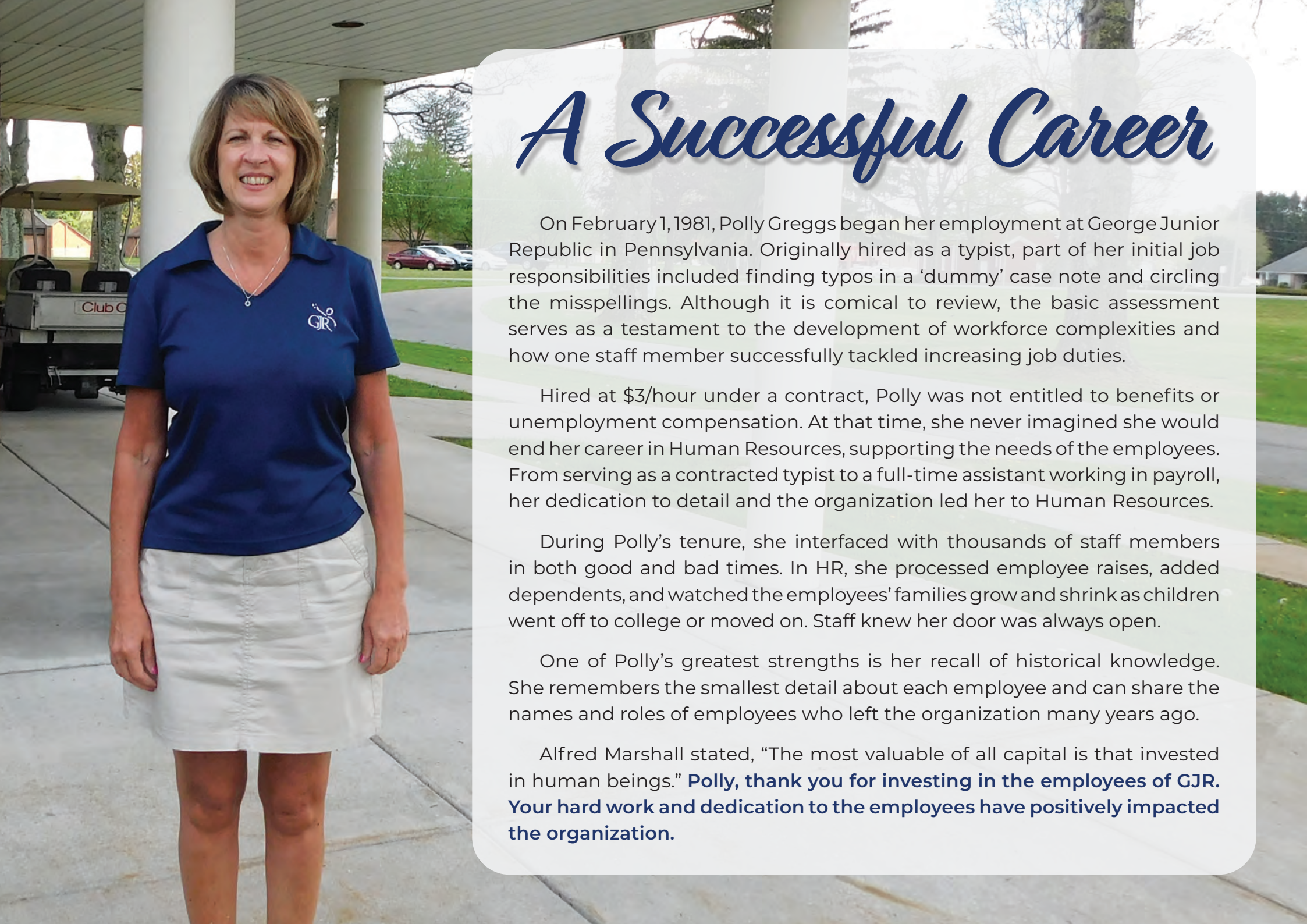


The Journey from Client to Employee

Sydney Brewster is a 22-year-old client who participated in several levels of GJR in IN's services beginning in May 2018. While receiving Independent Living services, she created her first resume, budget, and bank account. She also started college at Indiana University South East (IUS) and completed the Housing 101 Curriculum.

Sydney transitioned to Collaborative Care while moving into her first apartment, navigating living independently and exploring how to share space with others through assertive communication, chore sharing, budgeting, and boundary setting. She continued working, attending college, managing finances and home maintenance, and practicing self-care. With the support of her OYS worker, she purchased a reliable car and enrolled in financial learning through the Opportunity Passport Program through Foster Success. By year three of college, she realized she wanted to make the same affirmative impact on youth as she experienced along her journey. At 21, Sydney successfully transitioned out of DCS care and entered into the GJR's Voluntary Services program, receiving ongoing support knowing her worker was just a text or phone call away.

Volunteering and positively impacting her peers and community are important to Sydney. She has been a Peer Navigator with the National Youth Transition Database and was a Youth Commission Member of the State of Indiana Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana. She also is a youth leader in Better Together, a GJR in IN OYS youth engagement group. In May 2022, she graduated, making her the first college graduate in her family. She was on the Dean's list several semesters, majored in sociology, and completed three minors (human resources, communication, and psychology). Today her focus is purchasing her first home and completing the job responsibilities as a member of the GJR in IN Case Management team!



A Successful Career

On February 1, 1981, Polly Greggs began her employment at George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania. Originally hired as a typist, part of her initial job responsibilities included finding typos in a 'dummy' case note and circling the misspellings. Although it is comical to review, the basic assessment serves as a testament to the development of workforce complexities and how one staff member successfully tackled increasing job duties.

Hired at $3/hour under a contract, Polly was not entitled to benefits or unemployment compensation. At that time, she never imagined she would end her career in Human Resources, supporting the needs of the employees. From serving as a contracted typist to a full-time assistant working in payroll, her dedication to detail and the organization led her to Human Resources.

During Polly's tenure, she interfaced with thousands of staff members in both good and bad times. In HR, she processed employee raises, added dependents, and watched the employees' families grow and shrink as children went off to college or moved on. Staff knew her door was always open.

One of Polly's greatest strengths is her recall of historical knowledge. She remembers the smallest detail about each employee and can share the names and roles of employees who left the organization many years ago.

Alfred Marshall stated, "The most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings." **Polly, thank you for investing in the employees of GJR. Your hard work and dedication to the employees have positively impacted the organization.**

THANK YOU

While the non-profit sector continues to face unprecedented challenges and transformative changes, GJR remains committed to fostering an environment for personal growth and a promising future for the adults, youth, and families we serve.

We sincerely thank you and recognize those who have supported our mission with monetary and in-kind donations. Together, we are positively influencing numerous lives each year. Your partnership with GJR and your belief in our mission has assisted the organization in doing meaningful and impactful work. We are grateful for your unwavering commitment to helping those in need.

Thank you!

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With your support,
George Junior Republic and Affiliates
served ***2,374 youth and families.***



Jo'Von Kellan, a GJR in PA youth, feeds a giraffe during an off-campus activity.



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Designed by Kelly Ruder, design and marketing coordinator.

George Junior Republic is a private nonprofit childcare facility incorporated under Pennsylvania law. Gifts and bequests, therefore, are tax deductible. The official registration and financial information of George Junior Republic may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

A copy of the Drug & Alcohol Program Annual Report is available for review through the chief financial officer, whose office is located in the Administration Building on the George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania campus.

George Junior Republic is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the business and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. The same equal opportunities apply to the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of the persons and families served.



ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2021 / 2022

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#3035 6-2022