

# CONNECTIONS

Healthy Individuals, Strong Families, Thriving Communities

Winter 2020



**Youth & Family  
Counseling**

***Opening doors to  
mental healthcare,  
so people can cope,  
heal, and thrive.***

## **Celebrating a Milestone!**

**YFC delivered more than 10,000 counseling sessions in 2019**

Just before Thanksgiving last year, Youth & Family Counseling (YFC) hit an important milestone: For the first time in our 57-year history, we delivered more than 10,000 counseling sessions! Since 2015, we have grown by 67% in our capacity to serve the children, teens, adults, couples and families of Lake County.

This accomplishment didn't happen by accident. In 2015, our Board of Directors and staff came together to plan for YFC's future. Our planning was guided by key questions: How could we serve more people in need of counseling? Where were the service gaps in our community? How could we stretch and grow to meet the mental health needs of Lake County? The answers to these questions provided a roadmap for our strategic growth

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## Talking to Your Kids About Marijuana

Now that recreational marijuana is legal in Illinois, how should parents talk to their children about pot use? Just because it's legal for adults doesn't mean it's safe or healthy, especially for young people with still-developing brains.

We know that many of the risks of marijuana use are greater for people under the age of 25, because the brain is still developing until the mid-twenties. The risk of addiction is significantly greater when marijuana use starts during the teen or early adult years, as is the risk of mental illness such as depression, anxiety, and even psychosis.

So how do you broach the topic of marijuana use with your kids?

Having conversations with teenagers about substance use can be awkward, whether you're talking about alcohol, tobacco/vaping, or marijuana. Some kids are open and conversational about these topics but some are not. "My advice to parents is to make their expectations clear to their child and explain the reasons behind the expectations," says Gina Tober, YFC's Director of Clinical Services. "Ask a few questions to get the conversation started: Do they know anyone who uses marijuana? Have they seen someone use?

What do they know about the impact? What is their opinion of marijuana use? Listen thoughtfully, and model how to have a non-reactive, open conversation about a sensitive topic. Chances are this isn't the first awkward conversation you've had with your child, and it probably won't be the last."

As marijuana use becomes more normalized in our culture, communication between parents and children about cannabis use is more important than ever. Parents should educate themselves from reliable information sources and encourage their children to do the same. If your child says they have heard or read about benefits of marijuana use, ask them to share their source so you can review the information and discuss it with them.

Be sure your child understands your expectations around marijuana use and discuss strategies for coping with peer pressure. Empower your child by giving them a "way out" of difficult social situations. For example, let them know that they can reach out to you to be picked up from a party early, or equip them with a prepared reply like "I can't smoke because my mom always wants to talk with me when I come home and she'll know something is up."

## MARIJUANA (CANNABIS) FACTS

### Today's marijuana is stronger.

Today's marijuana has more than three times the concentration of THC compared to cannabis from 25 years ago. (THC is the chemical that produces marijuana's mind-altering effects.)

### Lowers brain power.

Marijuana affects brain development. Use by adolescents has been linked to a decline in IQ scores—up to eight points! These are points you don't get back, even if you stop using.

### Damages your lungs.

Marijuana smoke deposits four times more tar in the lungs and contains 50–70% more cancer-causing substances than tobacco.

### Risk of addiction.

About one in ten people who use marijuana may become addicted. When cannabis use begins before age 18, the addiction rate is one in six.

### Driving danger.

People who drive under the influence of marijuana can experience dangerous effects—slower reactions, lane weaving, and decreased coordination—which increase the risk of a car accident.

### Serious mental health issues.

Marijuana can trigger psychotic episodes (e.g. paranoia, disorganized thoughts, not knowing what is real, hallucinations). Using cannabis regularly over time makes you more likely to experience anxiety, depression, psychosis, and schizophrenia. Studies show that stopping or reducing cannabis use can improve these symptoms.

Sources: SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health /Services Administration); Government of Canada

from 2016-2020. Our efforts to better serve our community have included sending our therapists to Waukegan, Round Lake, and Mundelein through co-location agreements with organizations located in those communities; adding four Spanish-speaking therapists to our staff; and becoming in-network providers with Medicaid managed care plans to better serve lower-income clients.

Year	Counseling Sessions Delivered	Increase vs. Previous Year
2015	6,557	
2016	7,272	+11%
2017	8,120	+12%
2018	9,417	+16%
2019	10,951	+16%

**2019 vs. 2015 increase = 67%**

### What comes next for YFC?

This year, YFC is once again in long-term planning mode. We're examining Lake County community needs assessments and considering trends in mental healthcare. We're talking to stakeholders – including community members, funders, healthcare experts, and more – to inform our 10-year vision. With the goal of doing more to meet the mental health needs of Lake County in the decade ahead, we're formulating a thoughtful response to the key question:

### What should YFC look like in 2020, and how do we get there?

It's an exciting time as we plan for our next chapter, and we welcome your input. If you would like to share your thoughts, please contact Executive Director Janelle Moravek at [jmoravek@counselingforall.org](mailto:jmoravek@counselingforall.org).

## LOOK WHO'S JOINED OUR TEAM



**Jack Borre** joined our Board of Directors in November 2019. Jack brings strategic planning experience gained during his 26-year career as an IT architect, most recently with Underwriters Laboratories. Jack has been married to Lisa for 25 years. Their son, Franklin, is a sophomore at the University of Richmond, studying leadership and political science. Their daughter, Vivian, is a Junior at Libertyville High School. Jack is a leader for St. Joseph's annual Appalachian mission trip. In his spare time he enjoys running, snowmobiling, playing guitar, and rooting for the Chicago Cubs.



**Brandon Ewing** joined YFC's Board in January. Brandon currently serves as President of the Waukegan Public School board. He is married to Monique, an early childhood education teacher, and they have three sons, Isaiah, Nehemiah, and Josiah. Brandon is the founder of Fathers Matter, an online Facebook page that promotes positive images of fathers and encourages fatherhood. Brandon is also the co-founder of Millennials Connected networking group, a committee member with the #JustDolt Vote Coalition, and co-host of a Facebook Live podcast, Off the Porch. Brandon works for BCU as an Assistant Branch Manager.



**Ladechia Friel** joined our Board in November 2019, bringing a diverse background in healthcare. Ladechia is a registered nurse currently working as a Neuroscience Medical Science Liaison for Novartis Pharmaceuticals, and is in the process of completing a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Ladechia has been married to Paul for 23 years.

They have three sons: Nick, a senior at University of Illinois studying Civil Engineering; Matt, a sophomore studying business at University of Illinois; and Grant, a junior at Libertyville High School. In her spare time, Ladechia enjoys her family, traveling, gardening, and skiing.



**Sue Best** joined YFC in October 2019 as our new Finance Assistant. She brings non-profit experience from her bookkeeping work at Love Inc., as well as finance experience from her earlier career. Although born in Wisconsin, Sue grew up in New Jersey where she met her husband, Steve. Before settling in Illinois, they lived in Georgia, Virginia and Michigan, and have 3 daughters: Madison, a junior at University of Minnesota; Megan, a freshman at University of South Carolina; and Lauren, a junior at Warren High School. Sue loves sports, and has spent many hours watching her kids play basketball, soccer, softball, lacrosse, and cross country. She also enjoys hiking, reading and cheering on the Green Bay Packers

## PARTNER WITH US FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE!

There are many ways to partner with Youth & Family Counseling to build awareness of, and support for, community mental health.

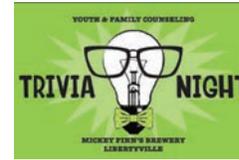
### Leadership Giving Circle

Leadership Giving Circle members are our most committed advocates who build awareness and inspire others through their dedication and generosity. Please contact Kristin Keramidas at [kkeramidas@counselingforall.org](mailto:kkeramidas@counselingforall.org) for more information.

### YFC Auxiliary

The YFC Auxiliary is a dynamic and fun group of women who help us plan our annual Gala. Please contact Bunny Weber at [bweber@counselingforall.org](mailto:bweber@counselingforall.org) for more information.

## SAVE THE DATE



3rd Annual Trivia Night  
Thursday, May 7, 2020  
Mickey Finn's  
Libertyville

**Youth & Family Counseling**  
1113 S. Milwaukee Ave., #104  
Libertyville, IL 60048

**Phone: (847) 367-5991**

**CounselingForAll.org**  
**[facebook.com/YFCLibertyville/](https://facebook.com/YFCLibertyville/)**

Youth & Family Counseling helps people of all ages and all walks of life cope with life's challenges and heal from traumatic events. We believe everyone should have access to mental health treatment when they need it—the well-being of our children, families and communities depends on it.

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### Leadership Team

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