

# HOPE FOR YOUTH

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Facilitating positive changes in the lives of children, adolescents and families





# A Message From CEO and Executive Director Irma Edington



## Dear Hope for Youth Supporter,

Reflecting on my first year as the Executive Director/CEO of this esteemed organization, I'm reminded of the driving force behind my journey into social work: the profound desire to positively impact lives, contribute to a larger purpose, and serve as a catalyst for change. These core motivations continue to guide both my personal aspirations and our collective mission at Hope For Youth.

Addressing the current landscape of the child welfare system, we find ourselves navigating uncharted territory in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of what is now termed the 'new normal'. The challenges before us are unprecedented, encompassing the recruitment and retention of a dedicated workforce, navigating economic inflation, addressing data security concerns, and contending with limited bed availability. These pressing issues further strain our already overstretched system, demanding innovative solutions and steadfast commitment.

Throughout these trials, our remarkable staff have remained steadfast in their dedication and resilience. I am immensely grateful to each and every member of our team, whose tireless efforts have consistently delivered exceptional care and support to our youth and families. Their unwavering commitment and passion have been instrumental in driving positive change in the lives of children, adolescents, and families, even in the face of adversity.

2023 was a year of change with my appointment to CEO and bidding farewell to my predecessor who had been with the agency for 40 years. Hope For Youth experienced continued growth with the addition of our Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-housing program. This program works collaboratively with the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless to provide housing permanency to vulnerable youth and their dependents. Hope For Youth continued to serve the youth and families of Long Island as it has for the last 55 years in a variety of programs ranging from primary prevention, juvenile and intensive case management, mental and behavioral health, residential and foster care.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to our esteemed board for their unwavering support and guidance over the years. Together, we have embarked on remarkable projects that not only fulfill our mission but also enhance our ability to serve our youth with excellence and compassion.

As we continue our journey forward, I am inspired by the collective strength of our organization and confident in our ability to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth and impact. Together, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to empowering youth, fostering resilience, and building a brighter future for all.

## Our Mission

*Hope for Youth is dedicated to facilitating positive change in the lives of children, adolescents, and families.*

*We provide stable, nurturing, residential care, foster care, preventive and outpatient programs which educate, motivate, and empower individuals to become self-sufficient and achieve their full potential.*

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# A Message From Board President Peter Breckling



## Dear Hope for Youth Supporter,

As we reflect on 2023, I hope you are filled with the same sense of hope and optimism that permeates Hope for Youth. As the President of the Board of Directors, it is my privilege to share with you the profound impact your generosity continues to have on the lives of countless young people across Long Island.

I want to take a moment to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you for your ongoing commitment to our cause. Your contributions, whether big or small, serve our mission to empower youth and their families to reach their full potential.

In the spirit of gratitude, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the invaluable leadership of our former Executive Director/CEO David Hegarty. His vision, dedication, and tireless efforts were instrumental in shaping the trajectory of Hope for Youth, leaving an indelible mark on our organization and the lives we touch. We are profoundly grateful for his years of service. When Irma Edington stepped into David's role in 2023, we knew that she brought a wealth of knowledge, experience, and passion for Hope for Youth's mission. Her leadership style is inspiring, and we have seen the agency continue to flourish and expand under her guidance.

Together, with Irma alongside our dedicated board members, staff, volunteers, and of course, with your continued support, I am filled with optimism for the future of Hope for Youth. Our collective efforts will continue to transform the lives of the youth and families we serve.

Once again thank you for standing with us in our mission to make a difference. Your generosity is a beacon of hope that illuminates the path toward a bright tomorrow for our youth.

Sincerely,

Peter Breckling



## Our Programs and Services:

- Therapeutic Foster Care
- Nassau PINS Diversion
- Suffolk County Youth ACT
- HEART Program
- Health Homes
- Kinship Foster Care
- Prevention Program
- OASIS Clinic
- Diagnostic Center
- Non-Secure Detention
- Adjustment Services Program
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Services
- Transitional Housing Program
- Boys Group Home Seaford

## About Hope For Youth and Our Services

*For more than 50 years, Hope For Youth has provided services for children, youth and families, spanning a continuum of care from out-patient, clinical and preventive services, to foster care, diagnostic and emergency residential services.*

The organization works with children as young as birth through 21 across the Long Island region. With locations in Amityville, Bellmore, Farmingdale, Bay Shore and Seaford. Hope For Youth continues to grow to meet the needs of Long Island communities. With six residential facilities, 35 foster homes and 165 staff members, Hope For Youth has grown into one of Long Island's preeminent providers of services for children and families.

### Our Licensing:

- New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Office of Mental Health
- New York State Department of Health
- New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports
- Hope for Youth Residential Services Accreditation
- Council of the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities

### Our Contracts:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- New York State Office of Mental Health
- New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports
- New York State Office of Court Administration
- New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- Nassau County Department of Social Services
- Suffolk County Department of Social Services
- Suffolk County Department of Probation
- Suffolk County Youth Bureau
- Suffolk County Department of Health, Division of Mental Hygiene
- Leading Health Insurance and Managed Care Organizations

## Transitional Housing/Rapid Re-Housing



Working alongside the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, Hope For Youth is dedicated to providing youth, and their dependents, with low-barrier, self-determined housing options that meet their needs and support housing permanency.

Hope For Youth's Transitional Housing—Rapid Re-housing Program is a state-licensed, federal, Suffolk County, and Mother Cabrini Health Foundation funded program available to homeless youth in Nassau and Suffolk County between the ages of 18-24.

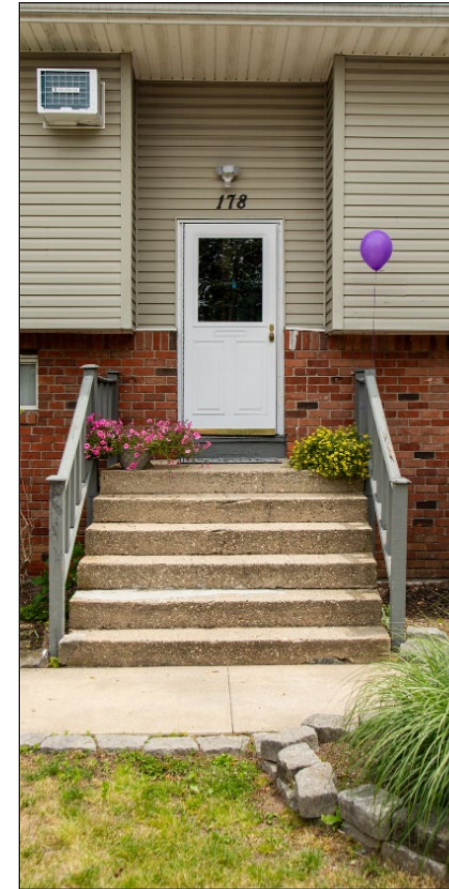
All youth will be offered individualized case management services, counseling, independent living skill groups, and care coordination to support their successful move to permanent

housing. Youth residing in our Transitional Housing program will be supported by trauma-informed therapeutically trained staff 24/7 and youth residing in Rapid Re-Housing sites will have the support of our case manager.

Each youth accessing services will be supported for up to 90 days after discharge from the program to assist them in navigating housing obstacles and overall well-being.

### The Program So Far...

- 3 families have been served through the Transitional Housing Program Pathway.
- One family has successfully transitioned into rapid rehousing.
- The staff have been working with 4 families to search for apartments and connecting them with support services as clients in the Rapid Re-housing Program pathway



**Current housing locations are in Suffolk County.**



# Nassau PINS Diversion Program



## What is PINS?

PINS or a person in need of supervision under the age of 18. PINS works with youth experiencing issues with:

- School truancy
- Gang involvement
- Substance abuse
- Mental health and behavioral issues

The Nassau County PINS Diversion program is designed to divert youth who are at risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.

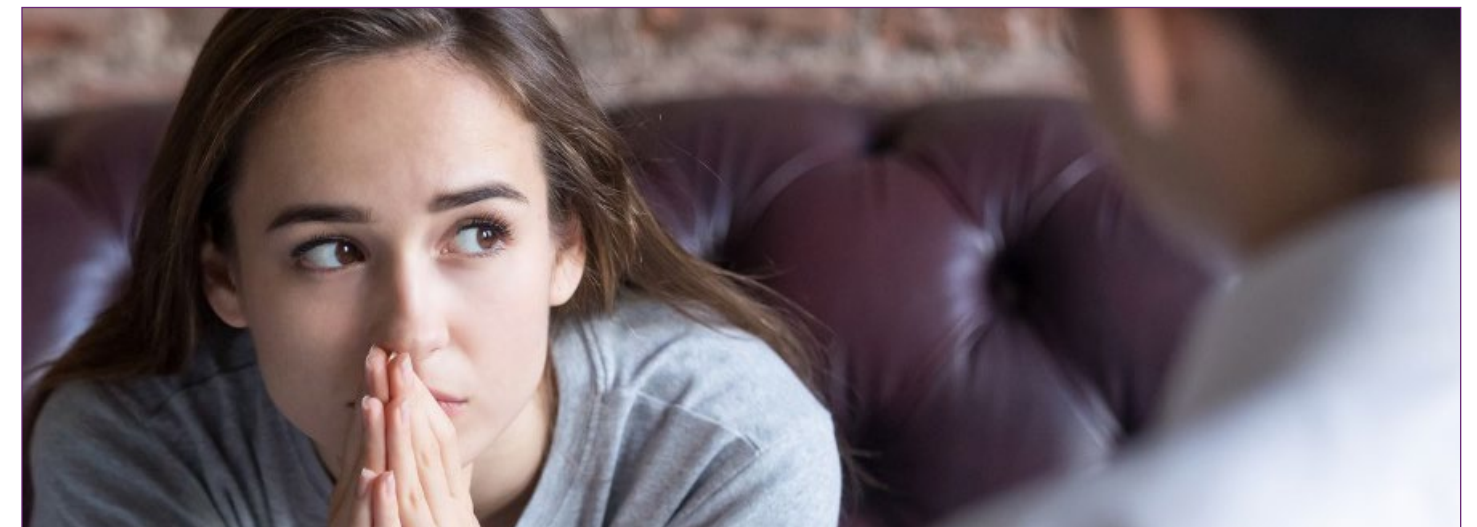


## Statistics from the PINS Program

- 323 youths served in 2023
- 316 youths completed the program

# 97%

of participants avoided a PINS placement and improved their situation





## Families Overcoming Crisis through Unified Services (FOCUS)

The Families Overcoming Crisis through Unified Services (FOCUS) project enhances access to services that address the trauma and developmental needs of young children as well as the complex needs of their parents (including mental health and substance use services, and therapy focused on the parent-child bond). This program is a collaboration between Suffolk County Family Court, Child Protective Services (DSS) and Hope For Youth.



- 140 individuals have participated in the FOCUS Program.
- 51 of those have successfully graduated and 6 more will graduate in May.
- 25 of the 140 total are currently actively participating .

## Maureen

Maureen, is a 43- year old woman, who became involved with the Family Treatment Court FOCUS program after she overdosed on Fentanyl. Her overdose was the culmination of what began with her driving to a friend's home under the influence of alcohol with her child in the car. Her initial attitude towards Family Treatment Court and the FOCUS program was to mistrust and cautiously interact with staff. She dismissed the idea of having a problem and denied that anything significant occurred even though there were multiple disruptions in the family as she and the child's father lost temporary custody of her youngest son. Her two older children were not residing with her. During her involvement in the FOCUS program Maureen's attitude towards recovery and the court process changed tremendously. She became more enthusiastic, cooperative and effectively managed all of her mandates and responsibilities. Part of the CPP treatment process was to help the parent reflect and better understand how her behaviors and decision making affected her and her children. Maureen acknowledged challenges within the family unit which included her son's father who was also in the FOCUS program. Both parents were given different therapy sessions since their recovery process was an individual one and they each had their own perspective on how

to proceed in the program and how to engage in the treatment process. Maureen and her son were seen as a separate dyad by the HFY therapist, which gave Maureen the opportunity to process and work through the disruptions associated with her own substance use. Early into the FOCUS program, Maureen then found out

**Maureen has improved close relationships and eliminated to the best of her control any negative influence within her life.**

the she was pregnant with her fourth child. Maureen's treatment progressed along with her pregnancy, she successfully completed her substance use treatment program and then voluntarily remained in their aftercare program to get additional support until she graduated from the FOCUS program.

While in the FOCUS program Maureen was able to deliver a healthy baby-girl and return home with her new baby since her successful participation in the program prevented Children's Services from filing a derivative neglect case, which would have led to the removal of her baby and an early life disruption for her infant. As Maureen's involvement in the program proved to facilitate positive changes she was also granted reunification with her son as the court approved the goal of "return to parent". After the birth of her baby and regaining custody of her son, the HFY Therapist provided Maureen with in-home Child Parent Psychotherapy services not only to continue the process they had begun but also to help with the transition of having a new baby in the home with her son while maintaining the progress that was already achieved. Maureen has since changed her outlook on what a healthy relationship looks like. She has positively changed close relationships and eliminated to the best of her control any negative influences within her life while also making safety for herself and her children a priority. Maureen's commitment to herself and her family led to her graduation from the Family Treatment Court FOCUS program and she was able to move out of the area to be closer to her family of origin and accept their support and love.

# Kinship Caregiver Program



## Overall Goals

- Reduce the number of home placements that children experience.
- Allow children to maintain connections to communities, schools and family members.
- Increase the likelihood of reunification with birth parents.



In 2023, Hope For Youth Kinship Caregive Program served 29 new Families with 42 Children. At the time of discharge, 57 children remained with kin or returned to their parents.

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child.

The Kinship Caregiver Program is available to grandparents, other relatives and non-relatives who have family connections and provide full-time care to children in their home. The program will serve families in Nassau and Suffolk County who have informal or legal custody of children between the ages of 0-18.

The Kinship Case Manager will conduct monthly home visits for the first 3 months and will continue for up to 6 months. Case Management services will focus on the long-term objective of increasing the caregiver's capacity to care for the children in their care and reduce stress. Needs of the family will be assessed and the Kinship Caregiver Case Manager will make appropriate referrals and connect families with local supports and resources, including Hope for Youth services, such as mental health, Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Children and Family Treatment Support Services, and Health Homes.

## Hope for Youth is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension, who provides

- Support Groups – separate for adults and children.
- Education – Parenting A Second Time Around workshops.
- Family Engagement – Monthly social activities for families in the program in each county.

# Kinship Foster Care & KinGap Programs

## What is Kinship Foster Care?

Kinship foster care is an out-of-home arrangement for full-time care by relatives such as grandparents or uncles and aunts, godparents, or others who are not a child's parent but have a relationship with the child, when a child is removed from home due to a safety concern such as child maltreatment, neglect, or abuse. Children may be placed in kinship foster care through the local Family Courts and Department of Social Services. Kin Caregivers can become certified foster parents through the licensing process and requirements (e.g., caregiver training, background checks, and household safety assessment). **Kinship foster care can lead to more stable placement, including a reduced likelihood of re-entry and placement disruption and fewer placements, than non-kinship foster care.** Families are better when kept together, and when that is not possible, kids do better when kept with people connected to their family in some way.



In 2023 our Therapeutic Foster Care Program had two youngsters have permanency with relatives through KinGap. We had one kinship placement end in an adoption.

## What is KinGAP?

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) is designed for a foster child to achieve a permanent placement with a committed adult who had been the child's foster parent for at least six months. This program provides financial support and in most cases medical coverage for the child, beginning with the child's discharge from foster care to the guardian. The level of financial support is similar to the maintenance payments received while the child was in foster care.



# Primary Prevention



The Hope For Youth OASAS Primary Prevention program successfully rebranded our program in 2023. In the past, preventions main populations was elementary schools providing the evidence-based model Too Good for Drugs an local coalitions. However, in 2023, we expanded our evidence-based practices and started working with pre-k and Kindergarteners providing Incredible Years. This puppet program promotes social emotional skills and classroom management. Prevention staff implanted another new program this year, Boys Counsel and Girl's Circle, a group-based curriculums focusing on socialization and respect. The team brought these programs to the our residential programs such as the RHYS and Seaford Group home. We have been providing an evidence-based parenting program Triple P, to parents in the community, local libraries, and foster

parents at HFY. This program focuses on building communication skills, establishing emotional regulation, and increasing self-esteem in our children. The program works with parents of children ages 0-12 and teens. Next year we will be continuing this expansion with our new WISE program working with older adults, educating them on substance use, talking to their doctor about medication, and building community.

This year we have worked with Copiague, Amityville, Deer Park, Lindenhurst, Wyandanch, West Babylon, and the North Babylon communities, providing resources and prevention education to 9,454 community members. The team partook in community drug take backs, Mental wellness fairs, color runs, World Refugee Day, and a number of other community events. The Prevention



staff collaborated with Diagnostic and Non Secure Detention to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) Services over the summer. They also helped with the Summer Youth Employment Program teaching work readiness skills to the boys at the Seaford Group home.

Prevention began working with OASAS on the Complete Youth Prevention Education Program (CYPEP) at Wyandanch Union Free School District. The first program on Long Island to deliver comprehensive Evidence based prevention education and support to parents and youth in a community from the time children enter Pre-K through high school. These programs include Incredible Years, Second Step, Positive Action, Teen Intervene, Safety First, and Triple P. Implementation for this program began in the fall of 2023.

# Outpatient Substance Abuse Clinic

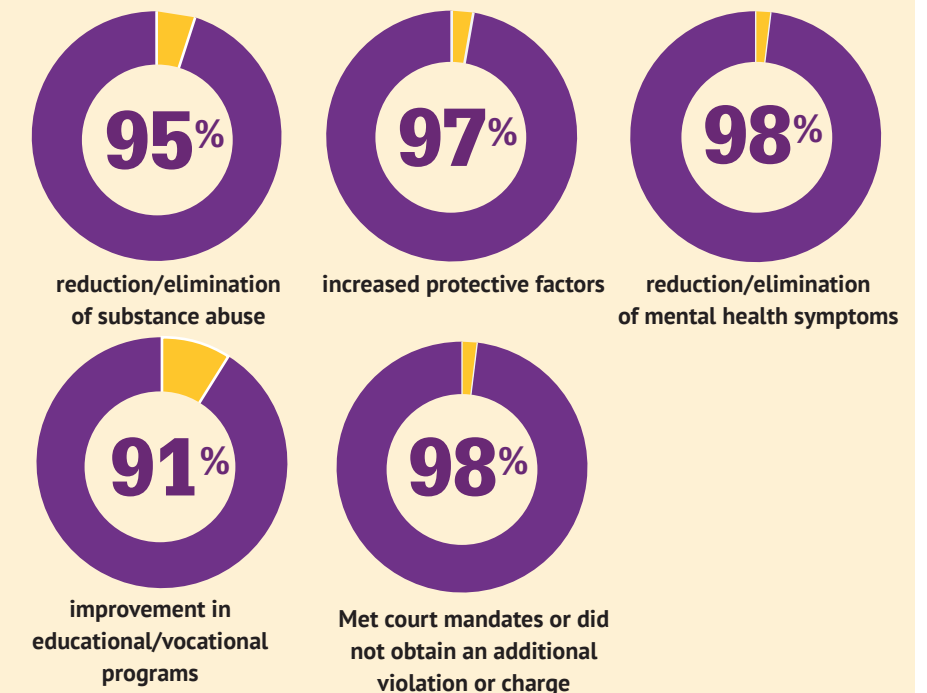
Hope For Youth's Outpatient Substance Use Clinic is licensed by the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports. We specialize in treating children and adolescents who have a primary substance use disorder and/or those who have been significantly impacted by a family member's use. Our expert team consists of child and adolescent psychiatrists, licensed social workers, licensed mental health counselors, certified alcohol and substance use counselors, and certified recovery peer advocates.

### The clinic offers the following services:

- Individual, Family, and Group Therapy
- Evidence Based Models Including:
  - MDFT
  - Seven challenges
  - CPP
  - TF-CBT
  - Psychiatric Evaluations
  - Medication Management



In 2023, HFY's Outpatient Substance Use Clinic served over 150 unique clients, and discharging 42 from their treatment by the end of the year. Below are an overview of the success of the services provided:





# 2023 Special Events

## Summerfest

Our second annual SummerFest at Ivy League School and Day Camp in Smithtown was a great success. We had 278 attendees who enjoyed activities including go-karting, rock climbing, and swimming. A few of our youth even participated in a talent show showing off their amazing talents in singing and DJ-ing.



*"I never could have taken them somewhere like this, we are so grateful" — HFY Parent*  
*"I wish we could start the day all over again" — HFY Youth*  
*"Its been a long time since I've seen him smile like that." HFY Parent*

## Run For Hope 5K



Our annual Run for Hope had 100 registrants despite the rainy conditions all of our attendees had a great time thanks to our enthusiastic staff, DJ, and the support of our food and drink sponsor 7-11. All of the funds raised from this event went to support our runaway and homeless youth shelter.



## Youth Holiday Party

Our annual youth holiday party was a great success. We had 150 registrants for this event, and all of the families that attended enjoyed a night of food and fun. We even had a special visit from Santa! Thanks to our partnership with EJ's PJ'S all of our youth left this event with a new pair of pajamas.



# 2023 Special Events



## Hope for the Holidays Drive



Our 2023 Hope for the Holidays Drive collected more than 2,000 gifts that were distributed to over 250 youth. Our efforts were supported by 25 business, community and school groups as well as 18 individuals.



## . . . Three Years In The Making

**In 2019 our Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter Colleen first met a set of triplets 2 girls, and a boy.**

The children were the last three in a long line of children who ended up in the foster care system. The triplets were referred to the program while in a pre-adoptive home in Suffolk County. Their foster mother was losing her housing and wanted to leave New York, efforts were made to save this placement and maintain the household but ultimately they fell through. The county made every effort to keep the children together but they could not find a foster home that could accommodate all three children so they were ultimately separated. Two of the children went to a foster home, and the third who has profound special needs went to a residential treatment facility. At this point in their story, Colleen was asked to help find another pre-adoptive home for the siblings.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters use an evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model to find the right family for every child. Their mission is to drastically increase the number of adoptions of children waiting in North America's foster care systems and they do so utilizing methods that

can be seen as very out of the box when compared to those typically used in the foster care system. One of the ideas the Wendy's Wonderful Kids model encourages is to reach out to the children's birth families. Children in adoptive homes are already freed for adoption and contacting the birth family is not something done in standard practice. Colleen mailed letters to the children's siblings, aunts, and uncles but was told not to expect much to come of the letters. Within days of mailing the letters she heard from the children's older sister who was shocked that they were still in foster care, she had assumed that the previous foster mother had adopted them years earlier. Colleen asked the triplet's sister if she could help her identify any possible permanent resources for the youth. Colleen was pointed to a former neighbor of the siblings who is a foster parent. Colleen reached out to the neighbor a woman named Annette who lived next door to the children when they were small. Annette shared that their families would often get together when they were neighbors and that she and her brother would try to help the family, particularly the children in any way they could. When Colleen shared that she was looking for an adoptive home for the triplets Annette immediately said that she would help.

Colleen's conversation with Annette took place in November of 2019, and by February of 2020 Annette, her brother, and 3 of her adoptive daughters traveled up from Georgia to see the kids again. The family felt a strong bond with the youths and wanted nothing more than to see them in a stable loving home. The children were very excited to see them, remember their old neighbors, and were open to the idea of adoption and leaving New York if it meant having a permanent family. Things moved quickly with plans to have the youth visit in April during spring break, and then in March 2020, everything stopped. COVID-19 slowed the process down, but it did not stop. Colleen and Annette found ways for the kids to bond and use Facetime to get to know Annette and her family in Georgia. By the end of 2021, all of the children had moved in with Annette and her family. Annette had the right skills and experience to support all of the triplets. She had been fostering for many years and understood what it would take to care for youth with special needs. By the end of 2021 for the first time in 3 years, all of the siblings were finally living under one roof again. In July of 2023, their adoption was finalized. Today, they are happy and thriving.



Support Us  
You can make a difference in our community and in the lives of children, youth and families on Long Island. With your generous donation, Hope For Youth will continue to deliver the Hope For Youth mission in the communities where we live.

# HOPE FOR YOUTH

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