



NORTH
STAR
LEARNING CENTERS, INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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A Message from the Executive Director



Maria A. Rosario
Executive Director

Children, youth, and families are at the heart of everything we do at NorthStar Learning Centers. They centered us as we lived through the outbreak of the coronavirus, economic disruptions, and calls for racial justice as well as the uncertainty of what might come next.

Though we cannot be confident of what the future holds, we can be clear and resolved in our commitment: to lead positive systemic change that strengthens our South Coast communities. The pandemic revealed pre-existing inequities in housing, education, health care, food security, criminal justice, and employment. Yet we remain rooted in our commitment to recover and aid in the renewal of our communities.

We are at a turning point. Two roads in the forest: one merely leads to a recovery, the other leads us to a renewal. Today, more of us than ever before understand the chasm of disparities and the need for systems change. We offer these stories to highlight the need to renew our communities instead of simply recovering our broken systems.

The trees in a forest tell their story via rings. The first ring announces a beginning, and each subsequent ring celebrates growth. It is the space between the rings that explains how the growth happened. By leveraging the talents and resources of all sectors—public, private, and philanthropic — we did what none of us could achieve on our own. By uniting the passion and commitment of our donors, ambassadors, community leaders, and nonprofits, we are creating sustainable solutions through our early education, family stabilization, youth mentoring, gun intervention and prevention programs, and mental health services that will continue to affect lives for years to come.

Pushing the envelope on accountability. When it comes to accountability, we go above and beyond what is required by law or even expected by the Council on Accreditation. Over the last decade, we have carried an on-and-off-again discussion about what it means to be accountable to the people in our programs and the communities we serve — which comes down to their full inclusion in their own process of recovery, healing, and growth. An outgrowth of those discussions is our adoption of the term “program participant” to replace “client,” “service recipient,” “consumer,” and the like.

We identified three ways in which we chose to hold ourselves accountable to the people in our programs and their families and communities:

- Our accountability to how we talk about people. What does the language “at-risk” or “disadvantaged” convey to our audience about children? Are we contributing to the inequality and stereotyping of children, youth, and families of color in our funding pitches? Is the way we are framing a problem blaming the victim or, not much better, patronizing the people we propose to help?
- Our accountability to bring attention to the issue, not divert it to ourselves. In planning and public forums, too many organizations seem more focused on self-promotion than advancing the interests of the “victimized” groups they are supposed to be uplifting. Grandstanding about how one’s organization can “do it all” is off-subject as we need to continue discussing how we can better work together to create less fragmented, more culturally responsive supports for children, youth, and families.
- Our accountability to increase diversity and inclusion in policy-making. Not fully appreciated by most mainstream

A Message from the Executive Director

organizations are the added responsibilities shouldered by “ethnic minority” service providers like us to represent and bring to the policy tables those who are usually not there and yet are often most impacted by the decisions made—communities of color. So, it’s more often than not left to us to raise the uncomfortable question, “Who’s not here? Where’s the diversity?” This is to say that our mission includes not just directly providing quality programming but also doing the outreach, recruitment, and other “boundary-spanning” activities necessary to advance diversity and inclusion in our community and society

The accountability we are concerned about is really a call for cultural competency among service organizations and a framework that acknowledges the power differential inherent in our service work—the nature of which tends to divide us from the people in our programs and poses institutional barriers to their recovery and well-being. What makes NorthStar singular is our persistent focus on personal and organizational accountability in recognizing and challenging the power imbalances for respectful partnership with the people who participate in our programs—that is, our determined efforts to establish and maintain respect, openness, and genuine caring that are necessary conditions in all authentic, positive, transformative relationships.

This year’s annual report highlights how we work towards renewal through long-term solutions to pressing social problems while also providing relief

to the current needs of our families. As we work, we grow, we learn, and we adapt. Our partners featured in this year’s report made NorthStar’s tree ring grow deeper and wider. Together, we strived to advance the pillars of justice to build a more equitable society where everyone can provide for their basic human needs, live safe and healthy lives, and where justice is attainable regardless of income.

In the final year of our five-year strategic plan, we achieved seven of the eight goals we established. Unlike building a new facility, however, these seven goals have no end date and require ongoing commitment and, in turn, organizational accountability. Regarding the one remaining goal toward which we have made “significant progress,” we continue to devote time and resources toward meeting this goal – building our new HOME by spring 2023!

Today, our work extends beyond our service delivery to include systemic advocacy, policy work, and extensive community outreach and engagement. We are a larger and more mature organization that has continued to evolve and progress in directions that result in the provision of the most impactful and quality service delivery to those in need.

We recognize that the pursuit of a more just society is a collective effort, and we would not be where we are today without your support. Thank you to all of our funders, donors, staff, volunteers, and community partners for supporting our critical efforts to provide comprehensive wraparound services that meet the needs of our children, youth, and families through learning essential competencies and hopefulness with which they can transform their lives and communities.

With appreciation and respect,



Maria A. Rosario
Executive Director

Our Mission

NorthStar Learning Centers is a people-of-color and women-led organization working with and for the people.

Born from community action during the civil rights movement, NorthStar maintains a bold vision to provide individualized, strength-based, culturally responsive, family-focused programs that help children, youth, and families realize their strengths and dreams. Founded in 1974, we have grown from one neighborhood-based preschool center to a constellation of programs that serve New Bedford area children from birth to adulthood.

NorthStar Learning Centers Mission Statement:

To help young people overcome poverty, discrimination, educational disadvantage, violence, and other adversity through learning essential competencies and hopefulness with which they can transform their lives and communities. In advocacy and public policy, we as a minority-led nonprofit organization advance diversity as a strength and resource to open pathways to create a better life.



Board of Directors & Leadership Team

Board of Directors



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and After-School Programs*

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Megan Bartel

Director of Clinical Services

AJ DaLomba

*Director of Prevention
and Intervention Services*

Tommy Pace

Director of Finance

Early Education and School Age Programs

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE AND SCHOOLER CHILDREN SERVED

IN FY 2022

Center-Based Programs:

9

infants &
toddlers

48

preschool-aged
children

45

elementary school
students

Emergency Services - You Belong:

0

infants &
toddlers

2

preschoolers

2

school-age child

**Total of direct and
indirect youth and
families served:**

106

The quote, "Who dares to teach must never cease to learn," by John Cotton Dana is truer than ever for our early education and care staff in a post-COVID world. From wearing masks to social distancing, our staff have continued to work hard switching back between pre- and post-pandemic regulations while also continuing to provide a safe learning environment for NorthStar's students.

We are pleased that 98% of our children exceeded as evidenced by their kindergarten readiness scores in the 2022 fiscal year, and have transitioned into area private and public schools with a strong foundation of developmental skills needed to succeed in kindergarten.



Early Education and Care Family Engagement

We believe that our families are our partners in education, and we work collaboratively with them to ensure that they feel their children are safe and learning. As such, we have planned family engagement opportunities and strategies to strengthen parent/teacher relationships to help families support their child's learning at home. At NorthStar meaningful engagement is a vital part of our relationships. We ensure that parents have an

Early Education and School Age Programs

open line of communication with staff with updates and progress through assessments, phone calls, and through technology.

Shawmut Program EEC Site

We are delighted that our Shawmut center received a 5-year Children's Literacy Initiative grant from the Department of Early Childhood and Care. The initiative accelerates excellence in Early Childhood Programs by demonstrating that children are the focus of our work. It advocates for child-focused, developmentally appropriate practice by implementing a curriculum to meet the needs of the children we serve. This effort is a key strategy of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's continuum of support for program leaders to ensure the highest quality of services.

Business Park EEC Site

The Business Park Early Education and Care site has served children and their families for over 21 years. This coming year, we will be moving our preschool class from the Business Park to 80 Rivet Street in the South End of New Bedford. With this move, families will have an easier time accessing our high-quality early education and care program.



Our preschool classroom at the Business Park continues to be a part of the Community Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI), which works closely with the New Bedford Public School Department along with three other community early education and care programs. Through the Community Preschool Partnership Initiative, our teachers have access to a teaching coach and additional professional development. The children have access to a special education teacher who provides services at the site versus the school department.

This past year was the third and final year of the Department of Early Education and Care funding the Community Preschool Partnership Initiative program. We were fortunate to have built a strong relationship with the New Bedford School Department which now funds most of the program.

The commitment from the New Bedford School Department and the community partners has allowed us to continue to demonstrate the value of high-quality early education and care among our communities. The goal is to eventually provide access to high-quality early education and care for all young children in the city of New Bedford.



Early Education and School Age Programs

The SCHOONER Program

We continued to partner with community organizations that have expertise in the areas of art, civic engagement, nutrition, and other life skills to support our participants in all aspects of their development. These partnerships help enrich all their developmental domains- academically, emotionally, and physically.

This summer our participants fully enjoyed their weekly visits from the New Bedford Art Mobile. The art educators provide weekly art activities for seven weeks for the children; during this amazing experience, the children were exposed to several different art mediums. The Art Mobile program is highly valued as a community outreach program that serves to engage families in creative educational experiences and access to the arts.



Professional Development

We know that it is imperative for children to succeed that our workforce must be trained and remain current with best practices and up-to-date professional development. We focus our professional development days on continuing to support our educators with the opportunity to share experiences and creative ideas. Trainings over the year focused on the following: reviewing our health, safety, and nutrition practices, and embedding STEAM (science, technology,

engineering, art, and mathematics) into our creative curriculum. Integrating STEAM into early childhood education is a highly effective way for young children to learn and for early childhood educators to teach. All educators have completed their required professional development training hours for FY 2021-2022.

Coastline Elderly Services – Foster Grandparent Program

Each of our programs have foster grandparents assigned to their classrooms. The foster grandparents provide 1:1 nurturance and small-group literacy support along with creative activities with our participants through leading hands-on learning projects.

New Bedford Birth–Grade 3 Partnership

We are committed to partnering with The New Bedford Public Schools and other community agencies to address the low literacy rate for the children in our community. We continue to participate in the Smooth Sailing into Kindergarten event at the zoo which is the first opportunity for the children and families to meet the principals and teachers of the school they will attend. This event is very rewarding to see the children’s excitement and pride to be going into kindergarten.



Early Education and School Age Programs



Summer Youth Employment Program

During the summer of 2022, the MassHire of Greater New Bedford Career Center assigned 12 youth to work in our Early Childhood and School-aged programs as child development apprentices. This established a relationship with our programs in an effort to foster proper work habits and provide valuable work experiences to youth residing in New Bedford. The youth excelled in their dedication and enthusiastic attitudes toward the children and staff they worked with.



Early Education and Afterschool Programs Goals for FY 2022-2023

1. Continue to provide educators with professional development opportunities to become more knowledgeable and support the changing needs of the children we serve.
2. To strengthen social-emotional growth and development supports for curriculum for children and staff.
3. Continue to increase family engagement by providing meaningful ways and opportunities that families can engage.

Prevention & Intervention Services

INTERVENTION & PREVENTION PROGRAM

in FY 2022

Youth Indirectly Served:

51

youth in the
HEAL Center

Others Indirectly Served:

86

parent/Guardian/Other
family members served

Total of direct and indirect youth and families served:

137

A Message from the Director of Prevention & Intervention Services:

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this year's annual report presentation for Northstar Learning Centers. This year's 2022 annual report will include data and stories about the impact our gun violence prevention initiatives have had on the community. On July 1st, 2022, NorthStar Learning Centers newly acquired the Safe & Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) of New Bedford along with the New Bedford Shannon (NBS) Program. This recent acquisition officially makes NorthStar Learning Centers the home to three violence prevention and intervention initiatives, SSYI, NBS, and the HEAL Center.

The common mission for all three initiatives is to reduce youth violence and minimize recidivism at the community level. In doing so, each program serves as a pillar to the City of New Bedford by implementing outreach activities and services coordination to drive enrichment and personal growth for the youth we serve. Such services, available to eligible participants, range from workforce development, educational support, behavioral health counseling, court advocacy, family support services, and community engagement and mobilization.

NorthStar Learning Centers, along with its continuum of care, offers opportunity and support to marginalized communities so they're better equipped to overcome adversities related to violence, poverty, and discrimination. In doing this, participants of NorthStar Learning Centers can continue to seek empowerment and improve overall well-being, while feeling valued during their engagement in program services.

Best Regards,
A.J. DaLomba

Prevention & Intervention Services



The HEAL Center

The HEAL Center serves as NorthStar's flagship Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) program for NorthStar Learning Centers. An initiative funded by the Department of Public Health's Gun Violence

Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, and Recovery Services, focuses on individual and community level interventions for 17-24 years old who live in areas of New Bedford that are most affected by gun violence. Serving primarily young people of color, the program applies core principles centered on racial equity and trauma-informed care approaches, while providing comprehensive services to youth and addressing the root causes of gun violence in their community.



Wraparound Care Facilitation

Building genuine relationships and developing attainable Individual Success Plans are the focal points of the HEAL Center's wraparound care facilitation. There were currently 24 participants engaged in one-on-one care with a Wraparound Care Facilitator meeting once per week to develop, update and monitor progress around personal development goals. Areas of focus include: Health & Safety, Social & Emotional, Learning & Education, Employment & Income, Mental

& Behavioral, Engagement and Family & Personal Relationships. We plan to have 30 youth participants engaged in wraparound care by the end of June 2023. Additionally, 60% of youth participants completed workforce development trainings.

Mental & Behavioral Health

With the goal to break down systemic barriers that traditionally keep young adults from accessing mental health care, the HEAL Center has imbedded a full-time lead clinician into the service delivery, who is available to provide individual, group, and family counseling to participants of the HEAL Center regardless of time, location, insurance, or modality. We have developed a comprehensive assessment process that helps identify mental and behavioral health factors that guide our clinical, wraparound, and day program plans. The clinician's presence and involvement in the day program have also allowed for participants to build relationships and have supported their behavioral changes in eating, sleeping, physical activity, and daily attendance while observing each participant's level of engagement and holistic well-being. The clinician has participated in several community meetings with the goal of adapting the information to meet the needs of the HEAL Center's 72-Hour-Trauma Response Team.



Prevention & Intervention Services

Community Engagement & Mobilization

The HEAL Center's public health framework sees gun violence on a community level that includes children, youth, families, educational institutions, criminal justice entities, public safety officials, local businesses, clubs, hospitals, parks and recreational facilities. Gun violence has a profound impact on the neighborhoods most inflicted as well as the overall city. Our team has incorporated local health, education and crime data to design our approach that embeds racial equity and systemic change. We have been attending neighborhood meetings, discussing protocols with our partners and shifting the dialogue around violence that advocates for cultures of care on various institutional levels.



Summer Nights Program

Since 2015, the annual Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Summer Nights program has provided free, safe youth-based programs for thousands of at-risk teens and young adults in urban areas across the Commonwealth. The program demonstrates a commitment to urban youth development, builds community, fosters activities that promote healthy lifestyles, and promotes shared stewardship of our parks.



Since last year, the HEAL Center has been participating in this program along with 74 experienced youth organizations across the state, offering a variety of recreational, educational, and skill-building activities. Through this grant, we provided a safe space and environment for youth through the months of July and August that engaged, educated, and empowered them to lead and serve their community.

All programming was supervised by staff and supported by youth leaders. These youth leaders were HEAL Center graduates who served as positive "real" models to lead younger participants aged 8-16 in recreational and social activities at our center. We provided services to 12 to 15 youth consistently.

In our commitment to ensuring that our youth had a "safe-haven," we provided programming rain-or-shine. Our enclosed backyard offered a space where participants felt safe from community violence and other environmental triggers. Our indoor space provided adequate areas both within our community room and small group classroom. We worked with local artists who provided lessons in musical instruments, graphic design, written word, dance, physical sport, and other art mediums.

Prevention & Intervention Services

Prevention and Intervention Program Goals for FY 2022-2023:

HEAL Center Upcoming Goals:

- Maintain engagement of a minimum of 30 youth by the end of Fiscal Year 2023. In doing so, this projected yearly caseload of 30 participants will receive individualized wraparound services and community support
- Target of 75% of projected enrolled participants will complete individual success plans. Moreover, the HEAL Center plans to reach a target of 75% enrolled youth who will engage in behavioral health services by the Fiscal Year end.
- Target 60% of youth participants to complete workforce development goals, and successfully form a coalition led by community residents, participants' mothers, youth, and community leaders to address systemic barriers to gun violence prevention.

On July 1, 2022, NorthStar became the provider of the SSYI and Shannon programs. These two programs effectively deter gang and youth violence through targeted enforcement and prevention strategies.

The Shannon Program is dedicated to building a safer community by providing prevention and intervention services and supports to at-risk youth and young adults' ages 10 – 24 years in the City of New Bedford. The program is supported by the Commonwealth's Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative and administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPPS).

Shannon Upcoming Goals:

- Identify and engage a minimum of 75 youth, ages 10 to 24, to participate in Shannon services and supports, which will be supported by the NBS Caseworkers: Fifty of these youth will be between the ages of 10 to 16; Twenty-five of these youth will be ages 17 to 24.
- Target 20 high-risk youth, ages 10 to 16, to participate in one afternoon or evening per week for four weeks in a group called Power Source: "Taking Charge of Your Life" (a curriculum designed to help at-risk youth identify their strengths and take control over their lives while increasing their understanding of the emotions and beliefs driving their at-risk behavior). In addition to Power Source, during this 4-week period, these same twenty youth will take part in at least one community service project.
- Identify 10 high-risk youth, ages 17 to 24, to participate in Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life" once a week for 4 weeks.
- Target 10 high-risk youth, ages 17-24, to provide educational services, job readiness, and employment services and support through its WIOA Grant.

The Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) Program, funded by the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services and operating in 14 cities throughout the Commonwealth, is an evidence-based program that combines public health and public safety approaches to reduce crime and violence in communities with high rates of youth crime. In 2020, SSYI was named a Promising Practice by the US Department of Juvenile Justice; a recognition that

Prevention & Intervention Services

Prevention and Intervention Program Goals for FY 2022-2023 (continued):

SSYI has been statistically proven to lead to effective public health outcomes for young adults involved in the criminal justice system. SSYI serves proven-risk young adults ages 17-24, identified by local law enforcement to be gang-involved, perpetrators of weapons offenses, or engaged in frequent illegal activity. Once youths are referred to the program by local law enforcement, SSYI reaches out to the young adults, including those who are reintegrating back into the community after incarceration, and offers them a chance to redirect their lives through education, employment, and behavioral health services.

SSYI Upcoming Goals:

- Targeting 108 young adults for program engagement out of the projected total of 152 young adults who meet the SSYI eligibility criteria by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.
- Enroll 54 young adults in case management by means of completing intake assessments and Individual Success Plans (ISPs) by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.
- Target 54 young adults to engage in job readiness support services,
- Target 20 young adults to engage in instructional support and adult basic education services by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.
- Target 47 young adults to engage in individual and group clinical and therapeutic services by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.

Youth and Family Support

YOUTH AND FAMILIES SERVED

in FY 2022

Youth Directly Served:

150

youth in the Family Actualization, Support, and Empowerment Program (FASE)

15

students in the Leading Senoritas Program at Roosevelt Middle School

15

students in the Tying on Success Program at Roosevelt Middle School

70

students in the Summer Accelerated English Language Learners Program at New Bedford High School

Youth Indirectly Served

In the past year, our youth services programs reached an additional 298 children and youth through indirect services, including:

144

youth through our Tying on Success and Leading Senoritas Programs

154

siblings in our Family Support programs

Family Support and Stabilization Programs:

228 visits, and out of the **228** visits, **276** hours of visitation in the Supervised Family Visitation Program =

156

families served

120

families in the Kinship Support & Empowerment Program

Total of direct and indirect youth and families served:

824



Department of Children and Families-contracted youth service programs

During the 2022 Fiscal year, NorthStar's Youth Service programs operating under contract with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) continued to evolve to offer the greatest flexibility possible to our funder. DCF has requested unique services provision, and NorthStar Learning Centers has risen to the task of meeting a flexible service delivery model—one that is often time-limited and distinctly defined from the date of intake. This past year we maintained our service delivery in serving DCF cases in a host of different catchment areas, including the entire South Coast Region. COVID restrictions fluctuated throughout the fiscal year, but we were able to see all of our participants in their homes, and all of our visitations took place at our Supervised Visitation Center unless a participant was sick.

Professional Development

Professional development helps to bolster staff's confidence in their work. Greater confidence can, in turn, translate into higher overall job satisfaction, employee performance, productivity, and overall morale. Our staff attended several professional

Youth and Family Support

trainings via zoom throughout the fiscal year. Two of the most impactful trainings were “Understanding Trauma and the Impact on Children” and “When Your Worst Nightmare happens at a Visitation,” facilitated by The Children’s Advocacy Center of Fall River. Many staff from other parts of our agency joined us for this informative session. Our staff sees professional development as a process that aims to improve and increase their capabilities through access to education and training opportunities.



Family Actualization Support and Empowerment

The DCF-contracted Family Actualization Support and Empowerment (FASE) program served 150 youth over the course of this year. The program was created to reduce the need to remove at-risk youth from the homes of their biological or adoptive families and place them in foster care or residential settings. The FASE program is youth-centered, family-focused, and strength-based; we look at the whole youth, in the context of the family and its strengths, and the family within the framework of the community and its assets.

FASE works to enhance the existing strengths of the family and help them find resources for those they do not possess. Also, through encouraging connections to the community through spirituality, civic interest,

activism, continued education, and other community-based outlets, we encourage and equip families to take charge of their own destiny through self-advocacy, resource identification, and proactive, informed decision-making.

Back in 2018, we identified an opportunity to grow this program due to a new initiative started by the New Bedford DCF area office. The goals of the Youth Support Initiative were to reduce the length of stay in Short Term Assessment Raid Reunification (STARR), to have a more timely return to the community, to stabilize youth in their program and school, and to assist youth and family in identifying potential resources in the community. The initiative went hand in hand with our wraparound scope of services in our FASE Program. In past year, we were able to keep 95% of the youth in their intact-biological families or in their foster care placement rather than residential care.



Kinship Care/Reunification Support Program

NorthStar Learning Centers’ Kinship Support Program is an additional resource and service that can be utilized to assist families to reach their DCF-determined goals. This fiscal year has been an extremely busy one as we were back on track post-COVID.. Families felt comfortable having providers in their home. The Kinship Support staff has done a tremendous job in

Youth and Family Support

working closely with DCF social workers to identify and support kinship caregivers, and if appropriate, to facilitate early reunification that leads to long-term stability for the identified child/youth. Kinship Support staff do so by using a wraparound service model. Kinship Support Program service delivery was offered to a total of 120 participants this past year. Some participants continue to receive supportive services for well over this year, while others were specific goal-driven, stabilization-type cases.



Our Youth Services staff continued to attend numerous service provider meetings ranging from the Plymouth, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Hyannis DCF area offices this year to further strengthen our relationships with social workers, supervisors, and lead contacts. DCF area offices have restarted their provider meetings, which allows a place for providers to share resources and to hear directly from the Director of Area Offices, who updates us on current events and developments from the DCF Central office in Boston.

The COVID pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many of our families mental health and created new barriers for those already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders. Therefore, a major part of our approach this year with families was to “actively listen” and provide a space for our participants to have an “active voice” in the decisions that impact their lives, reducing the sense of isolation that COVID created.

Supervised Family Visitation Program

NorthStar’s Supervised Family Visitation Program is designed to provide neutrality, safety, structure, and consistency for parents seeking to establish or rebuild relationships with their children - our mission is to bring families together. This past year we assisted 19 families that actively engaged in the program. The demand for our center has increased, with inquiries from the probate courts to use our facility and services.

In 2022, this program expanded to serve more families in our Private Supervised Family Visitation Program. Third-party and private pay services allowed families not involved with DCF to access our services. For example, a court order often requires a non-custodial parent to begin rebuilding the relationship with their children before overnights or reunification is a possibility. Our family visitation center offers that platform for services to occur. We had 228 visits throughout the year; out of those 228 visits, we had 276 hours of visitation. We foresee this program continuing to increase the number of families it serves next year.



Youth Violence Prevention through Positive Youth Development

In this school-community collaboration, NorthStar Learning Centers has provided a broad-based afterschool primary prevention program at Roosevelt Middle School, located in a high-violence, high-

Youth and Family Support

poverty neighborhood, that annually serves a core group of 30 low-achieving male and female students aged 10-14, who have suffered trauma from violence, face accumulated risk factors for youth violence, and who would otherwise be expected to fail in school and become caught up in violence. This grant is made possible through multi-year funding by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Youth Violence Prevention Through Positive Youth Development initiative.



Program youth received academic support and personal competency-building and leadership training within the safety and structure of single-gender settings, complemented by whole-group activities such as college visits and other field trips that expand participants' worlds of experience and sense of possibility and opportunity—where program youth began to proactively view their future and their ability to change it. Promoting new ways of thinking and acting, the “sister” programs Tying on Success and Leading Senioritas empowered program youth to become leaders in their own lives as well as for the common good in their school and their community. Programming started on October 1, 2021, and ended on June 13, 2022, with outstanding participation from our participants.

Tying On Success (TOS): This program promotes a respectful and healthy sense of “manhood” among middle-school boys. TOS enabled participants to discuss core personal and social issues such as respect for one another and themselves, what does manhood mean to them, as well as what does gang life entail. This year, the program focused on topics such as substance abuse education, leadership, and public speaking. TOS also collaborated with the Mayor's Youth Council in engaging our program participants in promoting public awareness regarding substance abuse and increasing their leadership skills through interactive activities. TOS additionally went on field trips to Harvard University, the Red Sox Hall of Fame, Funz, and a group trip to the Boston Aquarium with Leading Senioritas.

Leading Senioritas: A sister program to Tying on Success, Leading Senioritas, similarly places a strong focus on violence prevention by providing middle-school girls with information and skill development necessary to improve their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-understanding. The students participated in numerous community activities and social-emotional workshops that helped to strengthen coping and anger management skills and increased self-esteem.



Mental Health Clinic

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

in FY 2022

Mental Health Clinic:

80

participants

Percent (%) of Service Delivery:

3%

Diagnostic Evaluations

4%

Family Therapy

3%

Group Therapy

90%

Individual Psychotherapy

School-Based Therapy:

380

participants

Schools Serviced:

New Bedford Public Schools: New Bedford High School, Keith Middle School, Roosevelt Middle School, Parker Elementary School, Alma del Mar, Our Sisters' School, Nativity Preparatory School

36

Diversion & Assistance Program

17

Direct Interventions

6

Follow-Interventions

3

Care Coordination w/ NBPD

7

Outpatient Referrals

9

St. Luke's Hospital Referrals

Total of Mental Health participants served

496

It is great to be reporting out on the first year of my directorship of NorthStar Learning Center's Mental Health Outreach Program (MHOP). This year has had a lot of learning curves as well as great successes. I can honestly say MHOP would not be where it is today without all the support, wisdom, and collaboration of my NorthStar colleagues, and for that, I have so much appreciation. Below is a brief overview of our programs service delivery over the 2022 fiscal year.



School-Based Services

Our school-based clinical services kicked back up in September 2021 at Nativity Preparatory School. MHOP provided the school with two masters-level clinical interns to conduct 15 hours weekly of clinical observation, support, and recommendations for the academic year. Our masters-level clinical interns immersed themselves into the school culture in an effort to better support their students. They were present at parent-teacher conferences, field days, and even graduation. Between the two clinicians, they were able to provide direct clinical services to 10 scholars on a regular basis throughout the academic year. This is in addition to the time they spent observing classroom instruction and making clinical recommendations to teachers and school administrators. At the end of

Mental Health Clinic

the school year, Nativity administrators reported high levels of satisfaction related to a decrease in behavioral disturbances during the school-day and an increase of scholar and teacher support. By the end of the academic year, Nativity Preparatory School asked us to continue our partnership with an increase in hours for the 2022-23 academic year.

The Mental Health Outreach Program also provided school-based clinical services to Gomes Elementary School, specifically targeting Spanish-speaking students who do not have health insurance. Our masters-level clinical intern conducted these services throughout the spring semester and worked closely with three scholars to provide stabilization and clinical support within the school environment. Gomes school administrators and staff reported high levels of satisfaction as it relates to our service delivery.



Additionally, MHOP provides school-based services within NorthStar’s EEC programs. We are proud to support NSLC programs by providing on-site mental health care to participants as well as regular classroom observations followed by clinical recommendations. We strive to provide push-in support as opposed to pull-out support in an attempt to encourage the students to build resilience and identify social strengths within the classroom setting. We also understand that the typical family unit does not have a lot of time after work and school hours to access additional resources

such as counseling; thus, by offering it onsite, we are alleviating unnecessary family stress. During FY22, we provided therapeutic services to 3 participants at NorthStar’s EEC programs.

Insurance Driven Services

Our insurance-driven services have continued to the best of our abilities, despite many challenges as it relates to hiring licensed clinicians. MHOP holds contracts with various insurance panels, the most frequently utilized being Blue Cross Blue Shield and Beacon Health Options. For FY22, MHOP was

operating with only 1 part-time licensed clinician along with myself and Jimmy Owens LICSW taking a very limited role in the direct service work. Over the course of the fiscal year, MHOP provided insurance-driven outpatient services to 22 individuals to support their mental and behavioral health goals. Collectively, the 3 clinicians provided 381 therapeutic interventions. Of these services, 3% were diagnostic evaluations, 1% were family therapy, 89% were individual therapy, and 7% were collateral consultations.

Referrals for outpatient mental health services continue to come through community connections and word-of-mouth. We found that of the 53 referrals we received during FY22, most came through the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Child & Family Services Emergency Services Program, and New Bedford Public Schools. We noticed that directly after going to various settings to speak with staff and administrators about our clinical services, there was an increase in referrals received. We are hopeful that we can hire a culturally competent, healing-centric clinician to join our clinic and assist us in meeting the mental health needs in the New Bedford community.

Diversion and Assistance Program

This was a great year of new additions to our Diversion and Assistance (DAP) program. We were thrilled to find out that the Island Foundation continued to

Mental Health Clinic

fiscally support another year of diversion services to the greater New Bedford community. Our part-time DAP clinician continued to provide clinical intervention to community members identified by the New Bedford Police Department (NBPD) as well as consultation services to officers at Station 2. This role was enhanced in May 2022 when MHOP was awarded funding from NBPD, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) grants to expand our Diversion and Assistance Program. We added a full-time licensed clinician to our team as a Diversion Clinician who engages in ride-alongs with hand-selected officers 16 hours a week. MHOP engaged in a 2-day ICAT training (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics) with these officers. This opportunity allowed for organic team building, critical thinking, and exposure to potential clinical situations. By the end of FY22, DAP Clinicians had 153 interactions with community members and police officers. Of those 153 interactions, 30% were direct services, 50% were follow-up services, and 20% were clinical consultations. From those interactions, 20% were referred to emergency services, 27% were referred to community resources, 25% were provided with follow-up stabilization from the diversion clinician, and 28% were resolved on site. We are happy to report that 100% of the diversion efforts resulted in non-punitive criminal measures.



Professional Development

NorthStar's Mental Health Outreach Program was pleased to offer a variety of professional development opportunities for staff and community partners alike. In November, we were asked to develop and present a Self Care For Educators training at Gomes Elementary School. The one-hour training was embedded with rich research and realistic opportunities for change. The anonymous feedback solicited from this training showed that this material was well received by the educators and sparked a lot of conversation in terms of how their school can support them in their relationships with self-care.

In April, MHOP collaborated with NorthStar's EEC programs to design a professional development opportunity that mirrored the strengths and challenges that our clinicians have seen in the programs. With all of this first-hand feedback and observations we conducted over several months, we decided to offer The Power of Positivity training. 83% of attendees reported that they found this training to be extremely helpful as evidenced by a 5 on a 1-5 rating scale.

In May, MHOP collaborated with NorthStar's Youth Services programs to design a professional development opportunity to further support our direct care workers. The training was Self Care for Youth Workers. This was a great opportunity to

Mental Health Clinic

build with colleagues of other departments, provide psychoeducation on the depths of compassion fatigue, and encourage tangible opportunities for staff to “refill their cups.”

Clinical Internships & Supervision

The Mental Health Outreach program recognizes that if we want to see more holistic and culturally competent mental health providers in our community, then we need to be the driving force behind students’ real-world field experience. With this mission as our driving force, we have developed and maintained relationships with Bridgewater State University, Simmons College, Regis College, Boston University, Boston College, The University of Southern California, and UMASS Global in regard to our clinical internship program. We conducted various meet-and-greet sessions via Zoom to explore potential relationships with other social work schools on the East Coast, including Rhode Island College. A variety of student resumes were sent to MHOP for consideration of our 2022-23 internship program. We selected 2 MSW students and 3 BSW students to be clinical interns and assist MHOP in service delivery. We look forward to welcoming them this upcoming school year.



Another area MHOP began exploring is clinical supervision with mental health providers in the New Bedford community. The Director of Clinical Services currently provides clinical supervision once a month to the YWCA clinicians. This service delivery has added an additional income stream to our clinic as well as allowed us the opportunity to build on the strengths and successes of our community partners. We look forward to expanding this service as we look towards onboarding more fully licensed clinicians.

Overall Program Functions

The Mental Health Outreach Program continues to think creatively about how we can expand and streamline our services. We have begun working towards a completely digital enterprise in which releases and all participant treatment notes are kept on a secure electronic health record, rather than in paper files. This transition has greatly increased organization and decreased staff burnout. We are also working on developing an electronic referral form, which we anticipate will assist in obtaining more referrals and allow for more self-referrals versus agency referrals. As always, we continue to strive to build our team and capacity to respond to the ongoing mental health challenges our community members face.

Community Health Programs

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

in FY 2022

The Basics Southcoast:

An estimated **300** families indirectly touched by NorthStar's Basics Southcoast Program, supporting caregivers in implementing the Five Basic Principles.

Manifest Love:

42 families served high-quality, organic, locally grown food from Round the Bend Farm.

Total served:

340



The Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education

The Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education was established in 2019, convened and led by NorthStar Learning Centers, and an eight-person steering committee comprised of public school, early education and care, business, health care, and philanthropic executives. For the past three years, the coalition adopted and focused on building capacity to implement The Basics Southcoast, a growing national learning network and movement.

The coalition is at an inflection point, and as the coalition's work evolves to include advocacy for public policy and leveraging funding for capacity building, we are actively seeking an Executive Director to take the helm and drive the Coalition to new heights. The coalition is a network of leaders representing multiple sectors, dedicated to the advancement of policy, programming and systemic change that supports every child on the South Coast to reach their full potential. This position is ideal for an ambitious leader willing to be a fast follower of best practice and a thoughtful trailblazer when necessary.



Community Health Programs



The Basics Southcoast

The Basics Southcoast is a community-wide strategy to support vibrant learning and brain development among infants and toddlers.

2022 Objectives for The Basics Southcoast

- Increase depth and expansion of implementation within partner organizations across the Southcoast
- Build operational funding capacity towards program sustainability
- Increase community awareness on The Five Basics Principles

Annual Highlights

- 25+ health care, WIC, and early educators trained on The Five Basics Principles
- Over 5,000 people reached through community events
- Featured in newspapers, radio, billboards, and posters across the South Coast

Increased our impact through partnerships & funding:

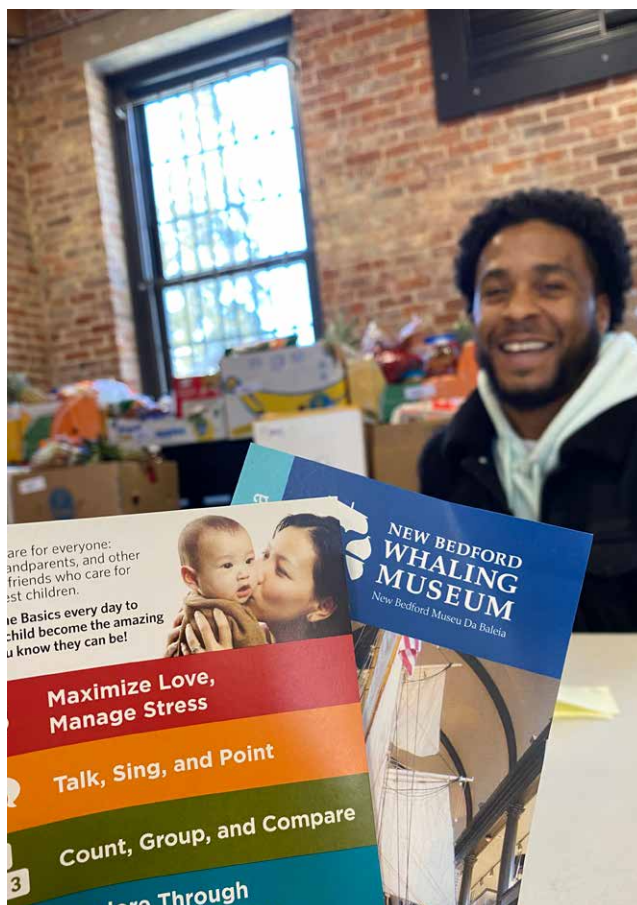
- Received a grant from Southeast Tobacco-Free Community Partnership at Seven Hills Behavioral Health to provide Basics Welcome Motherhood Bags to new mothers at Southcoast Health
- Secured a grant in partnership with The New Bedford Health Department, from the Massachusetts Department of Health, to explore using The Basics as a prevention strategy for substance use and abuse.



Community Health Programs

Manifest Love: 42 families served high-quality, organic, locally grown food from Round the Bend Farm

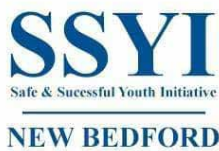
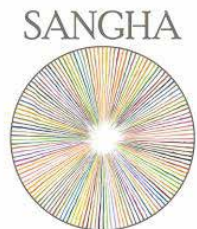
The Basics Southcoast: An estimated 300 families indirectly touched by NorthStar's Basics Southcoast Program, supporting caregivers in implementing the Five Basic Principles.



Community Partnerships



**GUN VIOLENCE
PREVENTION
PROGRAM**



Reaching for the Stars Capital Campaign

For a New Early Education and Community Center in the South End of New Bedford



NorthStar is building a state-of-the-art Early Education & Community Center in the south end of New Bedford.

The new Center will be a childcare facility by day, with a commercial kitchen, large gross motor/maker space and nature-inspired outdoor play and learning spaces – including edible gardens. The Center will be open to the community on evenings and weekends, supporting a range of activities, including professional development training for teachers, parent gatherings, health care education and delivery, art workshops and exhibitions, and simply play – indoors and out.

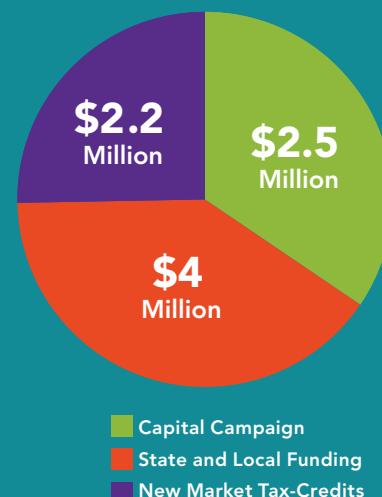
Our new Early Education & Community Center will:

- Expand full-time enrollment by 70%, serving an additional 40 children and families;
- Serve as a regional laboratory school for best practices and professional development for the entire SouthCoast;
- Consolidate our current two sites into one, improve operational and financial efficiencies; and,
- Provide the community with access to playspaces, community rooms, and our commercial kitchen, all while simultaneously addressing urban blight.

Our new Center is a clear statement of NorthStar’s commitment to early childhood development and will be the hub of all of our early childhood programming. The Center will be a teaching lab and training site for pioneering best practices, as well as home base for the Basics Southcoast initiative. **With the support from corporations, foundations and genius individuals, NorthStar has raised \$1.8 million of our \$2.5 million goal through our Reaching for the Star Capital Campaign. Please join us in reaching for the stars by visiting [https://northstarlc.org/contribute/!](https://northstarlc.org/contribute/)**

Campaign Financial Breakdown

(\$8.5 million-dollar project)



Capital Campaign Contributions

\$100,000+

City of New Bedford
Eastern Bank Foundation
The Bromley Charitable Trust
Bristol County Savings
Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Amelia Peabody Foundation
Maureen & Ray Armstrong

\$50,000 – \$99,999

Acushnet Foundation Fund
BankFive
BayCoast Bank
Carney Family Foundation
Charlie's Children's Charities
Jonathan and Eve Rounds
Acushnet Foundation Fund
The Mabel Louise Riley
Foundation
Dr. Robert French

\$25,000 – \$49,999

Island Foundation
Joe Nauman
Priscilla & Allan Ditchfield
Santos & Santos P.C.
Sylvia Group

\$10,000 – \$24,999

Al Wainwright LLC
Cecelia Hicks
CHT Foundation
Coastal Financial Services
Crapo Foundation
First Citizens Federal Credit
Union
New Bedford Day Nursery Inc.
Susan & Cliff Boehmer
Theresa Street
William E. Schrafft & Bertha E.
Schrafft Charitable Trust

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Bettina Borders
Carole Ferguson
Christopher and Patricia Arnold
Hanumara Chowdri
Nanci & John Winterhalter
William & Mary Jane MacLean

\$1,000 – \$4,900

Frank Muller-Karger
Rachael Kolb
Massachusetts Bankers
Association
Michele Pratt

Under \$1,000

Amanda McMullen
Andreas Romero
Arnold Grace
Bernadette Souza
Christopher Hendricks
Cynthia Rose
Darlene Spencer
Damón Chaplin
Estella Rebeiro
Jacqueline Medeiros
Jeremy Waxler
John DeMello
Jennifer Ferland
Jim Robbins
Monica Dumas
Michelle Loranger
Nathaniel Rodriguez
Pamela J. Cruz
Paul Oliveira
Rhoda Purcell
Raechel Grady
Susan Costa
Susan Nielsen
Stephanie Taylor
Wayne Ramos
Vantage in Philanthropy

Financials

Income and Expenses Financials for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Audit Prepared by Clifton, Larson, Allen, LLP

2021 Breakdown

Income:
\$3,326,703

Expenses:
\$3,445,407

Assets:
\$2,209,314

Liabilities:
\$1,188,473

2022 Breakdown

Income:
\$4,711,747 *(Increased by 42%)*

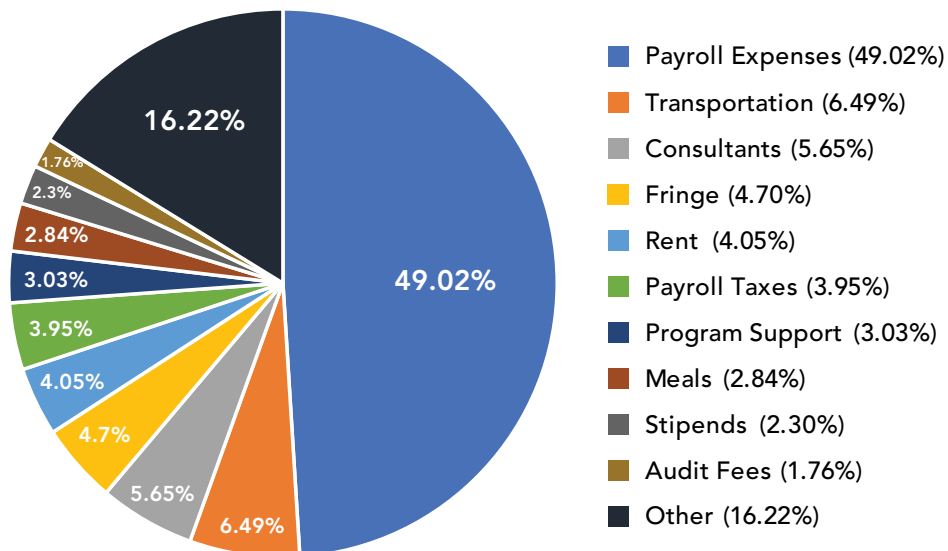
Expenses:
\$3,794,382 *(Increased by 10%)*

Assets:
\$2,793,053 *(Increased by 26%)*

Liabilities:
\$854,846 *(Decrease by 28%)*

2022 Expense Breakdown:

Total: \$3,762,588.50



Contributions and Contracts

June 30, 2021 – July 1, 2022

Contracts:

Department of Early Education and Care

Department of Children and Families

Department of Public Health

The Child and Adult Care Food Program
(CACFP)

PACE, Inc.

Program Support Contributors:

Acushnet Foundation

New Bedford Public Schools

The Island Foundation

Boston University Superfund Projects

Senator Montigny Child Equity and
Empowerment Fund

Southcoast Community Foundation

Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance
Cityspan Initiative, United Way of
Greater New Bedford





*Helping children, youth and families realize their strengths and dreams.
Enhancing the lives of children and adolescents,
strengthening our families, and enriching our Community.*

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