

IGNITING HOPE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES – ENCOURAGING HOPE-CENTERED APPROACHES FOR CHILDREN, TEENS, FAMILIES

Communication on all things
hope for our school
communities and beyond

JOININGFORCESFORCHILDREN



Joining Forces for Children began in 2020 to support children and teens impacted by a loved one's substance use. Serving over 300 families, the work continues to expand to every school district in Lancaster County. The addition of hope science training has begun to root our community in a framework for action that will serve each one of us...young and old. We invite you to grow with us.

Check out page 3 for how our Q1/Q2 unfolded.

IgniteHOPE



Here is how we have ignited hope
across our community in 2025:

- **Nutritional Support** – Understanding that trauma impacts eating habits, our team dietician supports families impacted by SUD to make healthier choices accessible.
- **Mental Health First Aid Training** – Helping the community recognize signs and symptoms of mental health concerns or crisis of those around them normalizes conversations and connection to care when needed. Want more information? heather.rotella@pennmedicine.upenn.edu
- **Book Groups of Hope** – *Hope Rising*, by Drs. Chan Hellman and Casey Gwinn, is being used by BHDS Wellness Committee with facilitation by Community Health team members.
- **Medication Safety** – Lockboxes/bags for storage and/or Doterra for safe disposal are readily available at no cost and potentially saves lives.

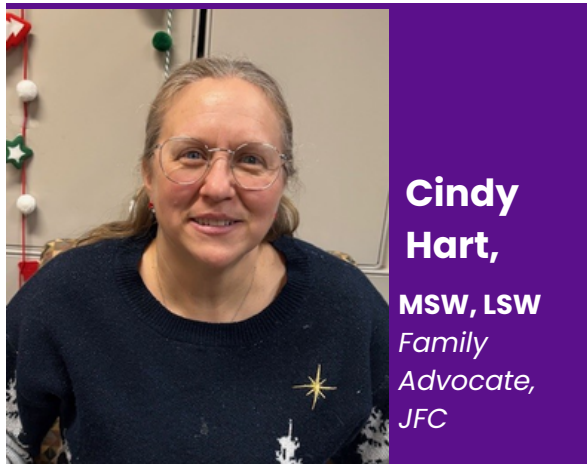
How is your organization/classroom igniting HOPE? Send us a blurb and/or image and we will include in our next newsletter.



anne.carroll@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

Meet the Family Advocate of Joining Forces for Children

In July 2025, we welcomed Cindy Hart to the position of Family Advocate within the PM-LGHealth Community Health team. She hit the ground running connecting to school districts and following up with previously referred participants. Since she came aboard, the pace of referrals has been steady with a current roster of 32 individuals.



What was your work experience prior to Joining Forces for Children?

Previous to working at Joining Forces for Children, I was working as a Social Worker at Healthy Beginnings Steps program providing supports to women with a history of substance use during their pregnancy and in their baby's first year. Prior to that, I worked at Lancaster County Children and Youth as a caseworker.

I provided direct assistance to individuals and families facing a range of challenges. I have collaborated with families to assess needs, develop care plans, and connect them with vital resources. I have also worked as a therapeutic support staff for children on the autism spectrum.

Share three adjectives to describe yourself: Compassionate, devoted, on-the-go.

What is the greatest reward working with the families connected to JFC?

Getting to know the kids and helping them to understand the things that have happened in their lives.

What is one thing you wish others knew/remembered when working with families impacted by SUD?

It takes time. Time to heal, time to learn, and time to recover.

Favorite quote or song lyric:

"That's the funny thing about hope. Nobody else gets to decide if you feel it. That choice belongs to you." -Rumi
KPop Demon Hunters

**Request JFC
services and/or
hope resources:**



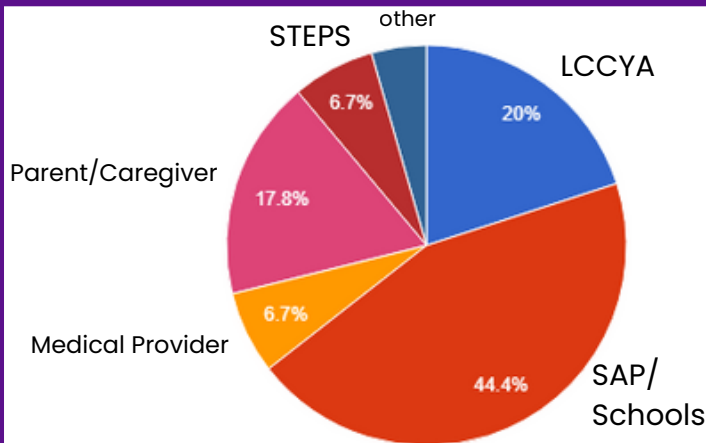
WE ARE...building hope

In addition to numerous hope trainings at area school districts and community agencies, LGHealth Community Health employees, Anne Kinderwater Carroll and Heather Rotella traveled to Happy Valley to share hope science and wellbeing at the Special Education Administrators' Conference in November. Understanding the science of hope and how it can be strengthened impacts overall wellbeing.



JOINING
FORCES
FOR CHILDREN

Thank you for referring a child/teen to Joining Forces for Children so that we can partner to support families impacted by substance use and mental health concerns. Here is a recap of Q1/Q2 July 2025-Dec 2025.



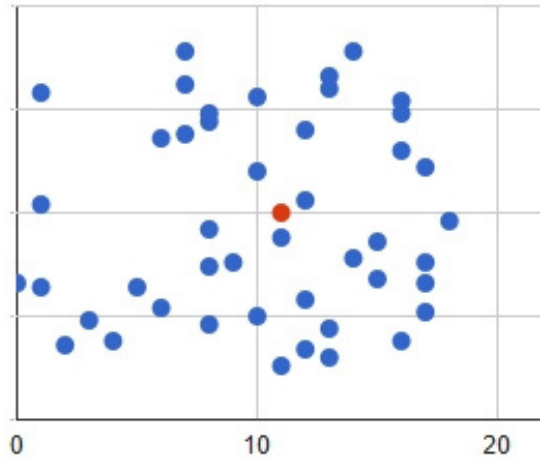
Referral Source:

The greatest area of referral growth is seen with caregiver referral. This is data to celebrate as Community Health intentionally works to reduce the stigma surrounding SUD. We are grateful for our partners who keep us at the forefront of their support efforts, especially Lancaster County Children & Youth Agency.

179

services provided to 45 unique individuals between July 2025-December 2025

Request JFC services and/or hope resources, by connecting through the QR code or reach out to Anne Kinderwater Carroll at anne.carroll@pennmedicine.upenn.edu



Ages served:

Joining Forces for Children works with the *family approach* as set in practice by our local Community Action Program; however, we also serve individuals age 1 through those 18 years old or enrolled in grade 12. Always reach out if you are working with a young adult to determine if we may work with them to connect with services.

17

Hope Awareness Trainings provided to unique organizations and school districts since July 2025,

HERE'S A REMINDER

Maintaining boundaries with friends prevents feelings of resentment or overwhelm, promoting harmonious relationships.

Harmony thrives where boundaries are respected. Maintaining boundaries with friends promotes healthy, fulfilling relationships devoid of resentment.