



**NUMBER** 374 unduplicated parents/caregivers

331 unduplicated youth/teens

**INCOME** Most are low income; qualify for free and reduced school meal programs.

**ETHNICITY:** 70% BIPOC

**OTHER:** Most parents self-report high ACE scores/ trauma histories or mental illness. Most families are involved in multiple systems.

*"...it becomes a lot harder when there's things like this (COVID), and all your support systems and networks have fallen apart."*  
-Parent

*"I learned a lot about myself and how to have patience for my son. I learned about different signs and symptoms, and how to listen without passing judgement."*  
-Parent

*"You are my strength when I need it most. The Collaborative provides a non-judgmental space for us to be vulnerable and feel safe."*  
-Parent

## 2020 Family & Community Engagement

- 145% increase in number of trainings and events
- 1,000 tangible tools delivered to families
- 350% increase in use of our 1-800 Resource Line
- 1,000+ people utilized the online bulletin boards more than one time
- Hosted 5 virtual Family Wellbeing Resource Fairs

# Christopher



### PROBLEM/CHALLENGE

Christopher has multiple physical and mental health diagnoses including autism, ADHD, and anxiety. His mom, Yasmin, is unable to keep a job because of Christopher's high needs. Yasmin reached out to RCCMHC because Christopher was having increased behavior outbursts. He was struggling with isolation and distance learning due to COVID. Yasmin was also concerned that his IEP was not being modified to meet her son's needs.

### INTERVENTION

RCCMHC provided free resource navigation, resilience coaching "check-ins", mental health trainings, wellness activities, peer supports, a CALM care package and coping tools.

### IMPACT

RCCMHC helped to schedule weekly therapy sessions for Christopher. During weekly check-ins, we partnered with Yasmin to design daily activity charts and re-establish rules, rituals and routines. Yasmin attended mental health trainings where she practiced new coping and behavior intervention strategies. We delivered coping tools, fidgets, and family activities which Yasmin and Christopher used together. Yasmin signed Christopher up for Moodie Monday events. So far, he has joined other youth for art therapy, music therapy, youth yoga and watching the movie Inside Out. Yasmin also regularly participates in our Family Services Committee where she co-designs our policies and programs.

*"Thank you so much for the charts! They are wonderful and have solved quite a few issues! I appreciate all your help and support with this!" -Yasmin*

## Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative

### 2020 FUNDING AREA: Family & Community Engagement

**TOTAL FUNDING:** \$            **TOTAL USED:** \$

**TOTAL SERVED:** 374 unduplicated parents/caregivers; 331 unduplicated youth/teens; TOTAL = 705

**FUNDING AREA DESCRIPTION:** RCCMHC's Governing Board sets an annual budget to support youth, family, and community engagement in the following areas: 1) Caregiver and Youth Leadership, 2) Family Education & Whole Family Support, 3) Community Outreach and Trainings, and 4) Family Wellbeing & Respite Events. Funding includes the salary for a Director of Family and Community Engagement who coordinates the direct services as well as our intern/volunteer program. All services and supports are free. Youth (up to age 24) must live in Ramsey County or be affiliated with a school district in Ramsey County. Qualifying youth must have a mental health diagnosis or must be struggling with emotions/behaviors that may put them at risk for a mental health diagnosis in the future. Providers can refer or Parents/caregivers can self-refer.

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** RCCMHC served families that have at least one child struggling with emotional or behavioral challenges up to the age of 24 years old living and/or attending school in Ramsey County. Most parents/caregivers self-report high ACE scores, trauma histories, or adult mental illness. Most families are involved in multiple systems.

**ETHNICITY:** Approximately 70% of the families participating in RCCMHC's Family Engagement program are people of color, including youth and parents/caregivers identifying as black/African American, bi/multi-racial, Native American, Hmong, and Latinx.

**COLLABORATION & PROGRESS:** RCCMHC's Family and Community Engagement Director regularly participates in the Local System of Care Partnership team, Crisis Response Task Force, Cultural Outreach and Advisory Council committee meetings and trainings, School Linked Mental Health meetings, and Heading Home Suburban Ramsey Basic Needs Practitioner meetings. Additionally, the FCE Director co-facilitates the Expanded Community Resource Navigator meetings with the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative. The FCE Director checks-in with the Director and/or Assistant Director of Support Services, social workers/counselors, and/or mental health specialists for each school district on a monthly basis to discuss emergent mental health needs and referrals.

**REFERRALS:** Our referrals primarily were from word of mouth from our current families. We also received referrals from the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative, Children's Crisis Response team, Merrick Community Services, and CLUES. We also welcomed a large number of new families through direct referrals from Mounds View deans and mental health specialists and from White Bear Lake School District. We also received a small number (less than 20) of self-referrals from outreach from our virtual resource fairs we hosted in 2020.

**WHERE SERVED:** Prior to COVID, Mental Health 101 trainings were offered twice per month at the Boys and Girls Club in East St. Paul. Due to COVID, RCCMHC shifted to virtual services utilizing Zoom's platform.

## Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative

**OUTREACH TO TRADITIONALLY MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS & UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES:** The Cultural Broker Program is an initiative of the East Side Health and Wellbeing Collaborative. M Health Fairview employs five Cultural Brokers, representing the African American community, Indigenous/Native American community, Hmong community, Karen community, and Latinx community. RCCMHC's Family Engagement Director connects with the cultural brokers regularly to aid families in need of mental health services and supports.

**AT RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS:** In August 2020, RCCMHC conducted a youth survey where 74 out of 124 youth (61%) indicated they were struggling with mental health or stress. ("My mental health has been badly affected (by COVID) and my stress levels have been extremely high.")

**DATA COLLECTION:** The Family and Community Engagement Department utilized surveys to collect data on demographics, ethnicity, household income and feedback on trainings and events.

### IMPACT:

- 145% increase in number of trainings and events
- 1,000 tangible tools delivered to families (yoga mats/towels, sleep masks/headphones, healthy cookbooks, coloring books/colored pencils)
- 350% increase in use of our 1-800 Resource Text Line
- 1,000+ people utilized the online bulletin boards more than one time
- Hosted 5 virtual Family Wellbeing Resource Fairs
- Resilience coaching with 400+ youth and parents/caregivers

### LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES:

- The success of our families and their wellbeing largely depends on having staff/interns that are dedicated to mental health and confident in their abilities. Launching the first year of our Internship and Volunteer Program takes time and energy.
  - Interns are highly encouraged to attend the Cultural Outreach and Advisory Council committee meetings and trainings
  - Interns are encouraged to attend outside trainings of their interest, for example in the fields of mental health, social services, education
  - Current Interns recommended future interns are provided a resource binder at the start of their internships
- Parents/caregivers are more likely to register for trainings and wellness events if they are receiving weekly resilience coaching
- Parents/caregivers are more likely to ATTEND trainings and wellness events if they receive a reminder text the morning of the event
- Parents/caregivers are more likely to register their child(ren) for Moodie Monday activities if a personal text message is sent to them
  - For example: The FCE Director sent Sofia a text message regarding our Intro to Polymer Clay event, knowing that her son's therapist recently recommended art therapy for him.

## Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative

### CHALLENGES, OBSTACLES, NEEDS & GAPS

- The Family Engagement Department needs translators for non-English speaking families. We have received a high number of referrals for families speaking Hmong, Spanish, and American Sign Language. In order to access translators, we need to pay out of pocket since we cannot bill insurance companies since we are not a direct service provider and do not bill insurance for trainings/events.
- Although we welcomed MANY new families into the Collaborative in 2020, we also lost families due to resistance of utilizing an online platform for trainings/events because of COVID-19 and exhaustion from distance learning.
- Parents/caregivers work different shifts at work, and we cannot meet the schedules of all families to ensure they can participate in Mental Health trainings, Wellness events, FSC meetings, etc.

### HEALING, BELONGING & HOPE

- The Family Engagement Director and social work interns attended trainings on cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion. RCCMHC is devoted to providing a safe space for families that is culturally sensitive to their needs. Families report that RCCMHC meets them where they are at in their journey of experiencing racial trauma and mental health challenges.
- Dr. Aja King facilitated a training on racial trauma. Using funds from RCCMHC, we purchased parents/caregivers the book Finding My Cool, which follows the journey of a 7 year old boy and his family as they navigate his emotions in the world around him.
- It is often said among our families that once you join the Collaborative, you are never alone.

### QUOTES:

- "In this time of a pandemic, you kind people stepped up to the plate to help give back to the families and community." -RCCMHC Parent
- "Trauma is hard. I appreciate the training on Trauma and Suicide. I learned a lot about myself and how to have patience for my son. I learned about different signs and symptoms, and HOW to listen without passing judgement. The role playing helped." -RCCMHC Parent
- "Thank you for your support and compassion... and understanding for the families during this very difficult time. My family appreciates you to the fullest." -Parent
- "Thank you for helping us through tough times." -Parent
- "Thank you for giving me my life back." -Parent
- "My daughter LOVES Moodie Mondays!" -Parent
- "My son stole my sleep headphones you guys bought me but I'm not even mad because now he sleeps through the night!" -Parent