

## REPORT to our COMMUNITY







# A MESSAGE FROM VILLA LEADERSHIP



You may have seen our current "We believe in you" campaign online and in print in recent months, as we have brought news of the Villa to our community. It has been quite a year; and as the Sanctuary® Model reminds us, Growth and Change are part of life. And while all Change is loss, the opportunities for Growth are boundless.

The great, breathtakingly transformative, and life-changing work of the

Villa goes on. We have forged new pathways in our community in Workforce Development, Care Coordination, Education, and Behavioral Health, bringing hope to thousands. 2023 marked the grand opening of The Steven Center for Behavioral Health on our Dewey Avenue Campus, and the beginning of assistance to our neighbors desperately in need of mental health services (see page 11 for details). Workforce Development and Community Restoration have seen new innovations, new programs, and inspiring success stories; and along with our Community Programs, and Villa of Hope School, have continued to serve those in need despite marked staff shortages, and recruitment challenges.

Successes are everywhere at the Villa; just ask Cloey. She generously shared her story during her internship with the Villa's Marketing team this year, and you will find it also in these pages.

"We believe in you" has always been a Villa mantra. We believe in our clients to succeed, to achieve stability and sobriety, and to attain their goals. We believe in our staff to be tomorrow's leaders.

And we believe in you, our community of friends, to continue to support our work. You have helped community members, old and young, through your gifts. You have helped Cloey break a life-long cycle, and to step freely into a life of sobriety. Cloey thanks you, and so do we. Thank you!



Christopher Bell, MS, MBA Board Chair



Carrie Carl & CBW-R

Carrie Carl, LCSW-R President/CEO





It might seem like an easy choice to some of us: to choose between addiction or sobriety, or between incarceration or freedom; but for Cloey, it was a personal journey fraught with twists and turns she had never anticipated.

Cloey is 20 years old, and until very recently, lived on the Villa's Dewey Avenue campus at LIFE House. Her stay at LIFE was a pivotal point in her journey.

"For as long as I could remember, drugs were a part of my life," she says. "Both my parents were drug addicts. I went to live first with my grandparents, but then I ended up in foster care for 7 years. When I was 17, I decided I wanted to live on my own. It got very complicated. I was living with my boyfriend, but we fought a lot, and I would go live with friends here and there, and I lived on the streets." It was during one of these times she went to stay with a friend that she first tried Meth. Powerfully addicting, it became her drug of choice. From that point, her life went out of control, and as she puts it, "it was really no longer my own

life."

What ensued were a blur of years, trouble with the law, experiences with abusive relationships, and homelessness. Cloey recounted that she did things during those years she had never pictured herself doing - ever. For part of that time, she was on the run, and she says if she could have imagined her life getting bad, the reality was that it got even worse than that.

"Eventually I was sent to rehab, but I walked out, and bounced for awhile between courts and rehab," she says. "Sometimes I'd get clean, but then I'd find a

Cloey walks with Kelly Wilmot, who is Cloey's therapist and also the Villa's Chief Program Officer.





way again to get high. They say that the future for someone who doesn't get clean has three choices: jails, institutions, or death.

"I didn't want that. So now comes the part where I ended up at LIFE House." LIFE let Cloey stay for an entire year, beyond the typical stay; she had no family to stay with, so her counselor, Kelly Wilmot (also the Villa's Chief Program Officer) and the staff at LIFE became her family. She stayed while living arrangements were made for her transition, and during the entire year, she stayed sober.

"Kelly helped me the most," she recalls. "The atmosphere at LIFE was different, not like a regular rehab; and what really set it apart was that we could go out and do things, be active, stay busy, and keep our minds occupied."



recovery.

Cloey speaking at the Tournament of Hope, with President and CEO Carrie Carl looking on.

At LIFE, she developed a plan to continue to be sober. She became involved with community resources, and the Villa's Steven Center for Behavioral Health for continued therapy specifically designed for her

In September, she was encouraged to share her story, and she did so in a big way. She was the guest speaker at the Villa's 42nd Tournament of Hope Golf Tournament, where she spoke to a packed room at dinner, and reported being nervous - but so proud. "I really, really want to live my life to the fullest," says Cloey, "and I realized drugs were keeping me from living my life to













Photos by Cloey, including some that documented Villa of Hope events during her Villa Marketing Department internship.







the fullest. I am focused on my future now. I want to become a photographer. I've been doing pictures since I was in middle school." Following her graduation from her program at LIFE House, she worked as an intern in the Villa's Marketing Department.

Cloey will be the first to tell you that part of her story here is missing. And it shall remain so. After graduating from LIFE House, she was required to make a court appearance, which she did, backed by a letter of support from her therapist, Kelly, detailing her diligence with her program at the Villa, her good behavior, her pursuit of her GED, her commitment to sobriety, and her community involvement.

Taking all of that into consideration, the judge sealed her records as a juvenile, and she now walks into her future with a clean slate.

I left LIFE House with a strong support network and stepped into a new life that helps me stay away from my previous habits. People believed in me.

Today I live in the community; I have Cloey's video been clean and sober for over a year. I'm proud to say I'm a "Villa kid," a success story, and a person in recovery. I feel hopeful.

Yes, I did the work, and my therapist, Kelly helped me a lot – but you all who donate to the Villa – you had a role, too.

You all care, and I thank you for that.



Scan this QR code to watch Cloey's video

-Cloey





# WELCOME TO THE STEVEN CENTER

New for 2023 at the Villa: The Steven Center for Behavioral Health.

Our second Integrated Outpatient Clinic, now open on our Greece Campus, the Center provides treatment uniquely customized to the individual client by our licensed therapists, with evaluation and treatment for children, adolescents, adults, and families.

Newly expanded and constructed in what was formerly called the Miller Building, The Steven Center was made possible in part by a generous grant from the Messina family, in memory of Steven Messina. The commemorative plaque below hangs in the reception area of the Clinic.

For more information, scan the QR code here:

## Steven Messina

A shining light who faced challenges, including addiction and mental health issues. With the help of peers and professionals like those at The Steven Center for Behavioral Health, he and his family came to understand and manage the problems such challenges can cause. Steven's love for life blossomed through the music he performed, the adventures he enjoyed and the friendships he embraced. He taught that with courage and love, there is always hope.





Villa.Intake@villaofhope.org or Behavioral.Health@villaofhope.org 585-581-HOPE or 585-328-0834



Beloved son, brother, uncle and friend Nurse-anesthetist and musician Respected and admired



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\* = Champion of Hope Society Members You are invited to join the Champion of Hope Society, to change the very foundations of our community. Members make a commitment to a recurring pledge over three consecutive years. For more information, please contact Catherine Ámico Orlandini at catherine.orlandini@villaofhope.org

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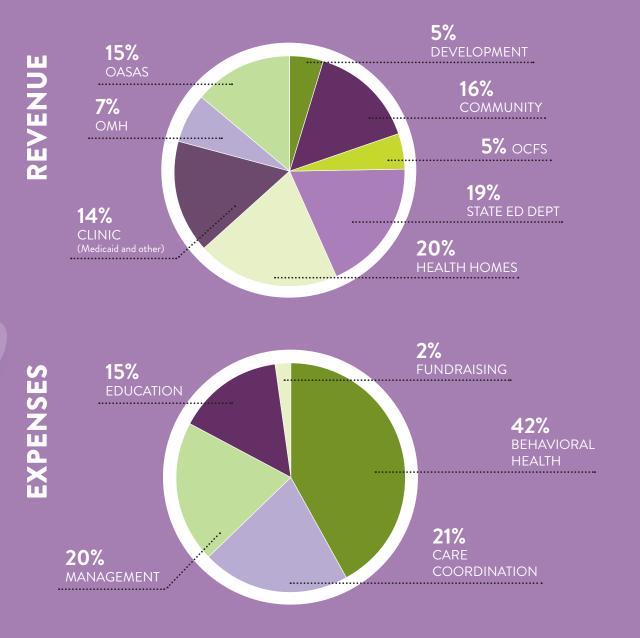
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# SHIP

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Villa of Hope School

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Workforce Development

Bridging Opportunity through Learning Development (BOLD)

Community Oriented Recovery and Empowerment (CORE)

Juvenile Reporting Center (JRC)

Work Based Learning

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Hope Place

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Children's Care Management Adult Care Management





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