



# Pinebrook Family Answers

SOLUTIONS FOR GENERATIONS



## 2020-2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**



# A MESSAGE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

“OK, enough already COVID. Time to move on and get back to normal. It’s been a real slice of heaven, and don’t let the door hit you on your way out.”

If only it were that easy.

A year ago, we looked forward to 2021, if only because it meant an end to 2020. And the year did bring us some hope – access to a vaccine, a return to schools, and reunifications with friends, family members, and loved ones as quarantines were lifted. But 2021 also reminded us that the effects of this pandemic are long term, and possibly permanent. Like countless other social crises, COVID-19 has changed who we are, and how we relate to each other in some very tangible ways.

Some of these changes affect our wellness and mental health. A study by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that in December of 2020 41% of adults reported symptoms of depression and anxiety. This was up from only 11% in previous years. This is also true for children. The 2022 report on “The State of Mental Health in America” finds that 15.08% of youth experienced a major depressive episode in the prior year, and that this is increasing.

These statistics are not just numbers on a page. Our staff see and hear it every day in schools, homes and in our offices. We see increasingly complex, interrelated client problems and are often handcuffed by social distancing, closures, and virtual appointments. We ourselves are not immune to the growing stress and trauma that the ongoing pandemic presents.

But there is hope despite these sobering realities. Our agency has prioritized client and employee safety. Pinebrook Family Answers is proudly 100% compliant with mandates regarding vaccination and testing. In spite of these challenges, as you will read inside, our outcomes continue to show remarkable success and improvements for clients. And as infection rates decline, we look toward even more on-site face to face work with the people who rely on us for help.

We can only achieve these remarkable results when we work as a team – within our agency, and within the community by collaborating with partners like schools, food banks, shelters, and other treatment programs. But the cornerstone of our teamwork is really the support we receive from our friends, donors, funders, and the community. Without all of you we simply could not exist. Thank you for your ongoing support, and partnership.

For all Lehigh Valley Families,



William B. Vogler, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

## MISSION STATEMENT

**TO TRANSFORM LIVES ACROSS GENERATIONS BY NURTURING HEALTHY CHILDREN AND STRONG FAMILIES, SUPPORTING SENIORS, EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, AND STRENGTHENING THE GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY.**

# MARIA & MIKE BERMUDEZ – FOSTERING THE FUTURE

In February 2022, Maria and Mike Bermudez will be celebrating ten years as foster parents, caring for 82 children since 2012. Their commitment to the safety of children who are placed in their home is outstanding. They cared for 13 children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, a testament to their dedication to the well-being of foster children in need of a home.

Maria and Mike have a large nuclear family of their own, with two daughters, two sons, and seven grandchildren. This expression of a big and close-knit family is a major reason why this couple is so motivated to provide a nurturing home for foster children. Maria runs a daycare out of their home and Mike works in security at the Allentown School District. Maria is also a volunteer with The Kindness Project, a local foster closet in Emmaus, PA. She reaches beyond the walls of her home to support other foster families to provide essential items for children in need. Their professional expertise with youth translates well to a healthy and loving home for incoming children.

Their house is constantly bustling with toddlers; there are usually about five children aged newborn to five years old. They specialize in caring for children who have been affected by drug and alcohol use, or who have developmental needs. They also prioritize strengthening their foster children's connection to their birth families. Some families have continued to use Maria's daycare program, and still others enjoy an ongoing connection with Mike and Maria after adoption or reunification.

As long as they have a space in their home, Mike and Maria will accept a referral from the Agency. They are incredible ambassadors for Pinebrook. They work closely with county workers and professional staff who are assigned to work with the children in their home. For more support, they connect with SafeStart, a program that provides early intervention for infants and toddlers who have experienced abuse or neglect. They are also instrumental to the recruitment process for new families to Pinebrook's foster care program.

On why she fosters, Maria explains, "I want to make their lives better." She says that fostering is the best feeling in the world, and that from the moment a child enters her home, they "create such a strong bond." Mike is so grateful for the experiences he has had fostering children. He loves being a part of important milestones, from a baby's first time crawling or their first steps, he says that the work is challenging but incredibly rewarding.



Thank you to Brown & Brown for their support and for underwriting the 2020-2021 Annual Report.



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INSURANCE®

# STORIES OF HOPE AND GROWTH

Pinebrook's Outpatient Counseling collaborates with our clients to help them become more self-sufficient and lead fulfilling, productive lives. All our counseling is trauma-informed and is meant for every individual of any age, from children to seniors. Pinebrook has four different locations across the Greater Lehigh Valley: Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, and Wind Gap.

The need for mental health services has increased due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the innovation of telehealth, more individuals now have access to outpatient counseling. Here are just two stories from the past year from people who have received help from Pinebrook's services.

*Amber experienced cultural rejection from family members who were not supportive of mental health counseling and did not believe in the benefits of these kinds of services.*

*This type of rejection left her with severe depression and social anxiety. Her symptoms worsened during the pandemic after losing her job and being forced to isolate. With support from counseling, Amber has been*

*able to secure full-time employment and her own apartment. She no longer struggles with suicidal thoughts, which had been a daily occurrence just a few months prior. Amber would not have been able to access counseling without a telehealth option, and without it, she has said that her daily functioning would be nowhere near where it is today.*

*Joe was severely depressed when he began therapy. He was self-medicating with alcohol after losing his job and experiencing a decline in his mental health due to the pandemic. His therapist worked alongside him to develop alternative coping skills rooted in mindfulness, such as deep breathing and gardening. He also worked with his therapist to develop stronger and healthier communication methods. As a result, Joe is now better able to express his feelings, and has improved his relationship with his wife. He also recently began working again and this has improved his self-esteem. Alongside bi-weekly therapy and medication management, Joe believes his time working with Pinebrook has been a great success.*

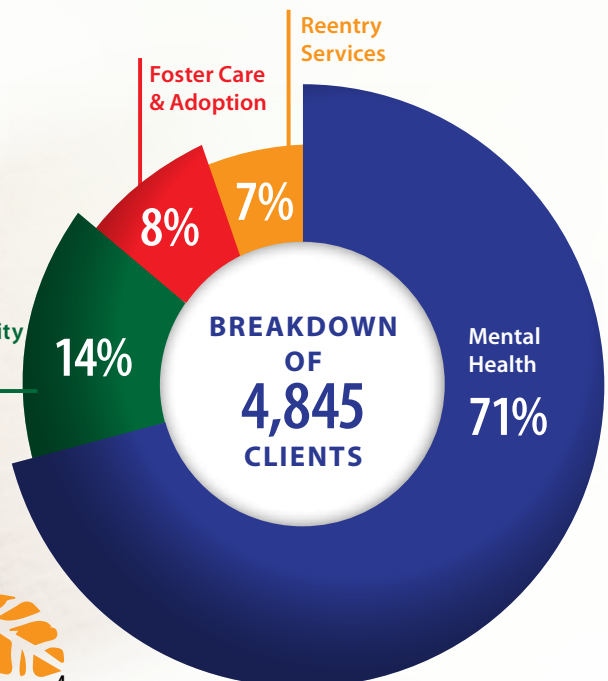
## 2020-2021 TOTAL IMPACT

# 17,865

## NUMBER OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS IMPACTED

## PINEBROOK FAMILY ANSWERS SERVES MORE THAN JUST INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS

In 2020-2021, Pinebrook Family Answers impacted an additional **13,020** family and household members, for a total number of **17,865** community members impacted.



# GIVING STUDENTS THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

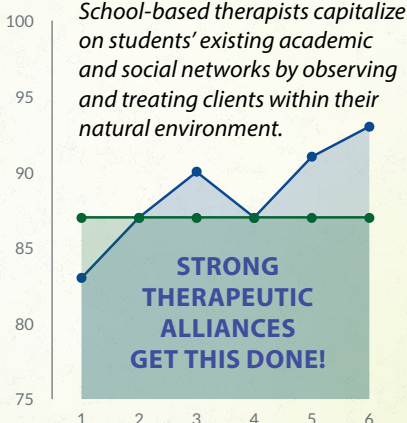
In this highly interconnected world where children are often exposed to disaster news, confidence-damaging social media activity, general stress, and even trauma, behavioral health programs in schools are an effective solution to provide support for children.

Pinebrook's School-Based Integrated Behavioral Health Program places full-time behavioral health clinicians in schools to meet the needs of students who are exhibiting signs of stress, mental illness or trauma. Students and families are more likely to engage with behavioral health services when they are provided in a school setting, a familiar and often comfortable and safe place. School-Based Behavioral Health Programs provide trauma screening, assessment and referral as well as therapeutic services.

Through generous support from the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley as well as the Bethlehem Area School District, the program operates in 12 schools, within 4 districts. The Program has been transformative. Students and staff report better grades, attendance and behavior, as well as an overall improvement of students' mental health symptoms.

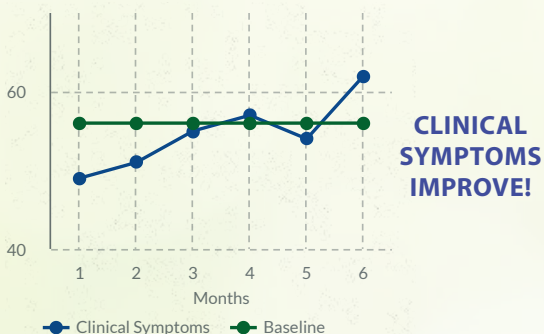
## THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE

*School-based therapists capitalize on students' existing academic and social networks by observing and treating clients within their natural environment.*



## CLINICAL SYMPTOMS

*Students receiving therapy within the school are much more likely to consistently participate in treatment than those who must travel to an outside facility during after-school hours.*



## PBFA Integrated Behavior Health in Schools Success Rate



■ Successful (76%) ■ Unsuccessful (24%)

“John, a high school football player, experienced severe anxiety symptoms after being found vaping at school. In addition to a detention, he was referred to in-school therapy, where I taught him meditation, mindfulness and other coping strategies for severe anxiety. Throughout the course of therapy, John learned how to better manage his anxiety. The school's decision to prioritize John's mental health needs over punishment resulted in an overwhelmingly healthy and safe outcome. John gifted his football jersey to me during a spirit week ceremony, which is a testament to the impact behavioral health programs in schools can have on students.”

**SCHOOL-BASED INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COUNSELOR**

**77% of Family-based Mental Health** clients reported an improved caregiver – child relationship.

**Police Department Mental Health Liaison Program** served 316 unduplicated clients with a success rate of **99%** in avoiding arrest.

100% of the parents involved with **Unconditional Child Care** demonstrated an increase in knowledge about child development



**14 Adoption** clients were welcomed into their forever families.

**High Fidelity Wraparound** youth and families reported a significant decrease in utilization of mental health services after being enrolled in the team-based planning process.

*(46% decrease for mid-level and 90% decrease for high-level services such as residential)*

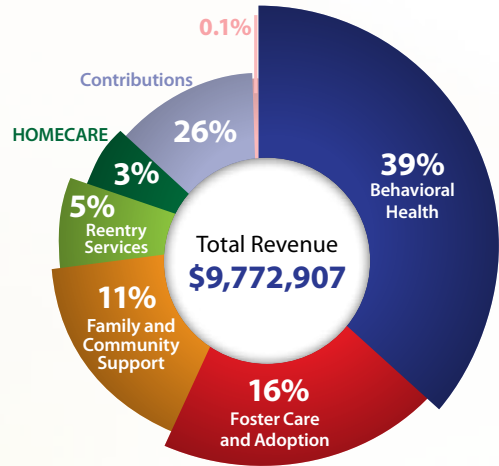
Students participating in **School-based Integrated Behavioral Health** improved Clinical Symptoms 21% in the first 6 months of program participation.

Families in the **SHAPE** program increased their parental capabilities 137% and Family Safety increased 116% as measured by pre and post service assessments.

100% of **HEMOCARE** clients reported that the “the care received was a benefit to the client’s family.”

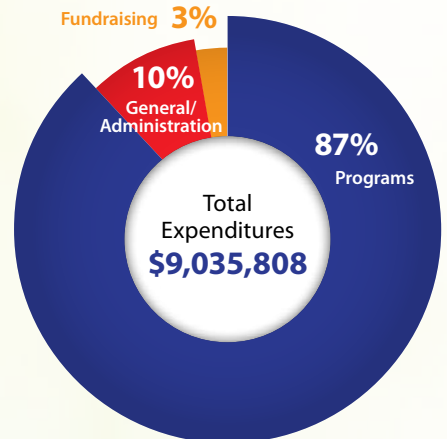
## FINANCIALS 2020-2021

### REVENUE



Behavioral Health .....	\$3,854,252	39%
Foster Care and Adoption .....	\$1,597,485	16%
Family and Community Support.....	\$1,071,513	11%
Reentry Services.....	\$446,556	5%
HOMECARE.....	\$262,163	3%
Contributions .....	\$2,528,641	26%
Miscellaneous .....	\$12,297	.1%
<b>Revenues Total .....</b>	<b>\$9,772,907</b>	

### EXPENDITURES



Programs.....	\$7,894,844	87%
General/Administration.....	\$888,282	10%
Fundraising.....	\$252,682	3%
<b>Expenditures Total.....</b>	<b>\$9,035,808</b>	
<i>Future Program Investments .....</i>	<i>\$737,099</i>	

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The Donald B. and Dorothy L.  
Stabler Foundation  
William and Patricia Straccia Charitable Trust  
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Two Rivers Health & Wellness Foundation  
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley



We are a partner agency  
of the United Way of the  
Greater Lehigh Valley.

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**Pinebrook Family Answers is licensed by the Commonwealth of PA, Department of Human Services.**

A copy of the official registration and financial information for Pinebrook Family Answers may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Pinebrook Family Answers is classified by the U.S. Internal Revenue Services (IRS) as a 501(c)(3) organization, TID: 23-2112204.



We are nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) through November 30, 2023.



#### MAIN OFFICE

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#### BETHLEHEM

502 East 4th Street  
Bethlehem PA 18015  
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## WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT PINEBROOK FAMILY ANSWERS.

"Since my daughter started Making the Grade, she shows more enthusiasm about going to school and her grades improved. Her teachers have noticed a big difference in her school work and attitude."

*Marlene, Mother of an 11-year-old*

"The program was amazing and the counselor that she worked with was amazing. She has not had any inpatient or outpatient stays and she is much better at controlling her PTSD since her sessions at Pinebrook."

*Lisa, Mother of 16-year-old High Fidelity Wraparound client*

"The treatment I received last year was extremely helpful. I hit a bump, so I am seeing my counselor again to get back on track."

*Ric, 55-year-old Outpatient Behavioral Health client*

[www.PbFALV.org](http://www.PbFALV.org)



All of Pinebrook Family Answers' programs rely on private support. Please consider making a donation to allow us to continue and expand our mission.

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