Justice Resource Institute works in partnership with individuals, families, communities, and government to pursue the social justice inherent in opening doors to opportunity and independence.

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Homeless at seventeen, Dianna was justified in thinking she was all alone. Her mother had repeatedly kicked her out of the house over the past two years, and her extended family was facing their own struggles and was unable to help. Diana is a brilliant, resilient young woman, with an unquenchable desire to learn, but she was facing a series of questions that no one should have to answer: “Where am I going to sleep tonight? Will I eat today? Do I have to drop out of school to support myself? How am I going to survive?”

Many of the social justice issues addressed by our agency, including the issue of youth homelessness, are presented as statistics—which can distance us from individual experience. At Justice Resource Institute (JRI), we are committed to responding to the individual needs of each person we serve by partnering with them to develop pathways to independence. These pathways may differ, but are all built on the strengths, skills, and passions of the people we serve. This year we celebrated the successes of many of these individuals.

We measure the results of our work, including tracking the successes of individuals for many years after they “graduate” from JRI services. We do this to help us improve our own performance, and to share important lessons learned with the larger community. Our unmatched array of individualized supports are combined with sophisticated outcomes measures, making JRI a highly specialized and essential provider of transformative human services. Highlights this year include:

- Homeless youth, such as Dianna, were supported as they stabilized their housing, developed independent living skills, graduated high school, and pursued their post-graduate dreams.
- LGBTQ+ youth were able to find a safe haven and develop a supportive community of peers and caregivers.
- Teen victims of sex trafficking were empowered to share their stories, rebuild their lives, and become leaders affecting the change they want to see in the world.
- Families were supported as they explored strategies to mend relationships, build parenting skills, promote strength, and foster independence.
- Youth who experienced significant trauma discovered their strengths and developed skills to navigate the world.
- Individuals living in poverty, many of whom are people of color living in communities impacted by violence and a discriminatory system of justice, received training and support empowering them to find employment and pursue careers that allow them to achieve economic self-sufficiency, dignity, and a promising future.

Our twin goals of excellence in service and advancing the field are integrated into everything we do. We hope that this report helps you to learn more about JRI and support our work as we seek to continue to be a leader in social justice. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues at JRI, our sister nonprofits, state agency partners, donors, and our highly committed board of Trustees for the support and collective wisdom you provide.

Thank you.

Andy Pond, JRI President
JRI continues to be committed to standards of excellence in training and the overall professional development of our staff. Over the past year, our centralized training department has been committed to establishing systems that share our expertise in trauma-informed care among our agency’s programs and our community partners. The training department offers monthly orientations for new employees to come together and reflect upon the agency’s mission and core values, as well as gain access to resources for working with vulnerable populations while maintaining their own resiliency. The team continues to explore ways to increase access for all through electronic learning platforms, on site workshops and open enrollment trainings for the larger community.

Providing professional development opportunities beyond traditional monthly trainings is an additional priority. JRI offers several yearlong professional development groups for staff within the agency who have been identified as future leaders or who are currently in leadership positions. Groups meet monthly to learn about topics that will best support their future career development. Self-assessment and goal setting are significant components of the model, as well as networking and building connections with other staff across the agency. A mentor program that partners staff and senior leaders who share similar goals and interests has also been added and is thriving.

An additional area of focus has been establishing and maintaining educational partnerships with colleges and universities that share similar values and passion for advancing social justice initiatives. These partnerships have worked to strategically address the barriers that exist for our staff in pursuing their education. This has resulted in new programming that provides course credits for life experience, various scholarship opportunities and increased flexibility for online learning, practicum and internship placements and agency level group supervision supports. We are proud to be opening doors to opportunity for our staff through these offerings and are committed to finding new and innovative ways to do so in the coming year.

“I found it empowering to be surrounded by such a great group of trainers and staff members committed to the pursuit of social justice. I feel better prepared to serve my community and take care of myself while doing so. Happy to be a part of JRI.” - JRI Participant

Today, health care providers are using electronic data tracking systems and clinical analytics to assess treatment and implement changes to care. JRI has been building an increasingly robust electronic database that ensures we provide the highest quality and most clinically appropriate services to clients. With increasing consecutive cycles of data we are now able to examine patterns of change in clinical symptoms and functional skills.

The Client Assessment Tracking System (CATS) is our very own electronic data collection system that uses a web-based interface to gather clinical and functional outcome data. A battery of valid psychological measures of trauma-related symptoms are administered periodically, scored and graphically charted to show change of symptoms over time in areas such as depression, self-regulation, parenting-related stress, executive functioning, and PTSD symptoms.

In 2018, we began tracking functional progress in CATS with the Risk and Change Indicator List (RCIL) assessment tool. The JRI Quality Management Team developed the RCIL to look at changes in skill function in areas such as community involvement, employment, sobriety/drug use, housing stability, health care practices, positive peer involvement, education, and arrests. Understanding our impact on these functional areas will allow us to develop treatment plans to help clients integrate into family, social, and community systems before and after discharge.

Understanding the sustainability of positive change is key to the long-term success of our clients. An important piece to this outcome picture is our ability to track clinical and functional outcome during treatment and after discharge. As a response to this need we have implemented our longitudinal tracking program. We conduct both clinical and functional assessments at regular intervals for up to five years post-treatment.

To make all of this data meaningful and coordinate our efforts to put it to good use we have initiated a multidisciplinary team that conducts a regular review of the data for purposes of monitoring outcomes, identifying best practices and treatment models, and identifying outcome disparities. The Clinical Management Team has several objectives: helping programs understand and utilize data for program evaluation and performance; reporting critical performance information to agency leadership groups such as the Governing Body and the Safe Programs Committee; and considering uses of data for research, scholarly articles, and grants.
“Monalisa has a deep commitment to the pursuit of social justice and a breadth of experience as a community leader and capacity builder, and these align so well with JRI’s focus,” said Andy Pond, President of JRI. “She has a history of bringing together individuals who have suffered through life’s most challenging experiences and has all the qualities of a leader. She will bring these important qualities to our Board.”

After the loss of her nephew due to violence in 2010, Smith founded MJE, a non-profit agency aiming to eradicate local violence in Boston neighborhoods by educating and engaging individuals and families within those communities. She and other mothers, many of whom suffered through the loss of their own child, joined together to make it their mission to end neighborhood violence by empowering mothers and youth to become effective catalysts for change.

For seven years now, Smith has been passionately engaged in every facet of the organization including administration, finance, fundraising, communications and human resources management. During this time, she has received the City of Boston award for Community Leadership as well as the Madison Park Development Corporation “Catalyst for Change” YMCA Black Achievers award.

“A few years ago I was introduced to the amazing team at JRI and immediately saw the positive impact they have on the communities they serve and work with,” said Smith. “It is a true honor to be a member of this board. I am really looking forward to being a part of JRI’s trauma resiliency efforts as well as its community engagement programs, as my passion for bringing individuals together and giving them purpose aligns with JRI’s vision.”

Prior to founding MJE, Smith served as State Director of Community Investment for Citizens Bank, Massachusetts. Her responsibilities included directing the development and implementation of a community investment program, creating and managing a faith-based lending portfolio and managing over $32 million in deposit balances. During her time there she received the Citizens Bank Area of Excellence Award for Outstanding Community Leadership and Involvement.

Smith holds a B.A. in Business Management from Simmons College and has received Executive Leadership Training from Babson College. She is also author of the book, Reflections to My Sisters, which details stories of mothers and their daughters overcoming some of life’s greatest challenges. She currently resides in Dorchester, Massachusetts with her husband and three children.
The Children’s Advocacy Center of Bristol County (CAC) merger allowed CAC to leverage JRI’s training and administrative support while addressing the agency’s unmet needs to further its support for children who have suffered or been witness to abuse.

CAC, a non-profit organization that has helped 4,600 children and their families who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse or have witnessed violence, has seen a 123 percent increase in the number of families served since its inception. It has taken a joint effort of elected officials, partner agencies and donors throughout the county to grow and sustain these important services.

According to a CDC report, as many as one in four girls and one in six boys will experience some form of abuse before the age of 18. The mission of the CAC is to facilitate a best practice response to child abuse and provide support to victims within Bristol County. The CAC is one of 800 Children’s Advocacy Centers in the United States, and its coordinated response to child abuse is based on a national best practice model.

The staff at the CAC work closely with a multi-disciplinary team comprised of Bristol County law enforcement, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn, the Massachusetts Pedi-SANE program, and other community-based providers.

“We celebrate the next chapter for our organization, where we will be strengthened through the guidance and support of our new parent organization.”
- Michelle Loranger, Executive Director of CAC

“From the moment our daughter entered the program at Walden, we knew we made the right choice. The compassion and understanding of the staff is astounding.”
- Parent

THE CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY CENTER of BRISTOL COUNTY MERGES WITH JRI
The Family Advisory Council acts as a supportive space where caregivers have a guiding voice and work side by side with agency leaders to set goals to improve care for individuals we serve and their families. This group meets bi-monthly to collaboratively brainstorm and formulate recommendations and strategies to strengthen JRI’s approach to family partnership.

Over the past year the Council have engaged in several activities that have aided in strengthening JRI’s commitment to family partnership. Examples include creation of Top 15 Tips for partnering with families for JRI employees, revising program handbooks to include language that shows the partnership between JRI and families, providing feedback around communication practices, and incorporating family voice into agency-wide policies.

Over the next year the Family Advisory Council will be launching a diversity campaign to reach more families from a variety of programs while representing diverse family backgrounds. The Family Advisory Council will also be working on ways the council members can be more active in bringing the family perspective directly to programs and staff.

“I am proud to be a part of this group. I feel like what I say and how I feel as a parent matters.” – Stephanie (Parent)

Mental health professionals and elected officials gathered to discuss youth services in honor of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day and National Mental Health Awareness Month in May. The meeting was facilitated by Children’s Friend & Family Services, a division of JRI that provides mental health services to youth and families north of Boston.

Lynn Mayor Thomas M. McGee read a proclamation from the city recognizing the importance of mental health and marking Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week. The mayoral proclamation reads that one in five children has a diagnosable mental health disorder and half of all lifetime instances of mental illness begin before age 14, and that even children with the most intense needs and some who are not insured may not receive services.

The proclamation states that “children with mental health needs in elementary, middle and high school are more likely to be bullied, absent, suspended, expelled or fail to graduate.” The proclamation continues that, “learning to recognize the early signs of mental health needs and where to obtain the necessary support, assistance and treatment gives children and youth better opportunities to lead full and productive lives.”

Also in attendance was state Rep. Daniel Cahill (D-Lynn), as well as representatives from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Parent/Professional Advocacy League, Express Yourself, Youth Move and the NAN Project.

“I am proud to be a part of this group. I feel like what I say and how I feel as a parent matters.” – Stephanie (Parent)
1 YOUTHHARBORS PROGRAM NAMES THE ARTHUR D. LEARY JR. SCHOLARSHIP

“The development of a scholarship fund in the name of my brother Arthur means the world to me. Arthur taught me an invaluable lesson in taking charge of your own future no matter the obstacles.” – Brian Leary

The Arthur D. Leary, Jr. Scholarship Fund was established by JRI’s YouthHarbors Program in the name of the late Arthur Dennis Leary, Jr., who believed in working hard in the pursuit of education. While in high school, Arthur demonstrated grit, industry and responsibility for his own future. He ran his own scuba diving salvaging business, worked at a local pharmacy and then overnight for the United States Post Office to put himself through college. Sadly, he passed away at the age of 19 before he could fulfill his dream. This scholarship honors the memory of Arthur D. Leary, Jr. by giving students a chance at advancing their educational pursuits despite the adversity of housing instability and all the challenges that come with it.

Brian Leary, Arthur’s brother, said: “The development of a scholarship fund in the name of my brother Arthur means the world to me. Arthur taught me an invaluable lesson in taking charge of your own future no matter the obstacles. That’s why it’s so gratifying to be able to help young students persevere through the daunting challenges of homelessness. I am thrilled that Maria is the first recipient of this scholarship as she reflects many of the wonderful characteristics of my brother: she held multiple jobs while enduring housing instability, and attended high school full time, while taking an online college course. Maria will be attending Bunker Hill Community College and aspires to study Criminal Justice and become a Social Worker. I have no doubt she will achieve great success!”

2 FAMILY GUIDEPOSTS TO SUCCESS

Family Guideposts to Success (GPS) is a grant-funded program that utilizes strengths-based therapeutic interventions and community partnerships to address unmet behavioral health needs creatively and collaboratively for individuals and families in the communities of Lynn and Salem, Massachusetts. Since January, 2017, Family GPS’s team of clinicians and Family Support Specialists have provided access, support, and navigation services to over 850 families. Family GPS has built strong, collaborative relationships with a wide range of community partners including mental health, child protection, legal advocacy, education, social services, and immigrant rights organizations.

3 SUSAN WAYNE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Susan Wayne Center of Excellence in Connecticut celebrated our 10 year anniversary this past fiscal year. Stacey Forrest, Assistant Executive Director of JRI CT, said at the event, “above all else, we put the kids first, and we truly care about them. Thinking about all of the good work we do, I started wondering about how you quantify that. So I decided to find out, and here it is! In the past ten years, we have employed about 300 staff members. We have expanded from six beds to 27. We went from one furry creature to a couple dozen! And most importantly, SWCE has served approximately one hundred kids and families, plus, another 30 in day school. Many people go their whole careers not sure if they’ve been able to have a positive impact on others at all. There are over a hundred kids in this world who have had better lives because of you.”

4 SURVIVOR-LED PROGRAMMING AT MY LIFE MY CHOICE

The heartbeat of My Life My Choice is its survivor-led programming. It not only makes what we do authentic for victims of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, but informs best practices for replication locally and nationally. Last year, My Life My Choice provided intensive mentoring and survivor empowerment services to 158 adolescents in Eastern Massachusetts; provided exploitation prevention groups to 164 girls in Greater Boston; and trained 4,957 service providers, law enforcement, and youth-serving professionals in Massachusetts and across the country.

“One thing I’ve always learned from [my mentor] is no matter what I’ve gone through in life ... there’s always a goal to work towards and you could always become something. No matter what your past says, it doesn’t define the future for you.” – Melissa*, Mentee, Age 17

*Name has been changed to protect mentee’s anonymity
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

5 DEVELOPING ABILITIES PROGRAM OFFERS SHARED LIVING

Shared Living is a model of long-term, 24-hour residential support for adults with developmental disabilities. Individuals become members of a caring household, receive the supports they need to be independent, and become a valued member of their community. Caregivers share their homes, assist with daily routines and personal care, manage medications and medical appointments, and encourage individuals to have active social lives. Caregivers receive a tax free stipend, ongoing training and support, and the benefit of welcoming an individual with developmental disabilities into their lives.

6 FIRST PUBLIC COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER CORE COMPETENCY TRAINING

"I loved this training...the best part was the interaction between the participants. We learned so much from each other." - JRI Participant

This spring, JRI offered an 80 hour Core Competency Training for Community Health Workers (CHW). The training was held at the Greater New Bedford Health Center with the partnership of several local agencies including the Southcoast CHW Collaborative and the Greater New Bedford Allies. The Core Competency training topics include outreach skills, effective communication, navigating the health care system, professional boundaries, cultural responsiveness, and more. We are proud of our inaugural class of graduating CHWs and excited to contribute to the field of community health work.

7 WHAT’S NEW AT THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

This fiscal year the Foster Care program was able to bring additional opportunities to open new, safe, and loving foster homes and provided additional resources that aid in the placement of children who might otherwise be waiting in shelters. In addition, the Foster Care team focuses on driving a permanency culture within our program and with staff members to help strengthen the reunification process of children in foster care with their family of origin.

8 FAMILY INTERVENTION AND CLINICAL SUPPORT

As part of JRI’s organization-wide initiative to increase availability of substance use prevention and services, all eight of our outpatient clinics will be licensed through the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services of the Department of Public Health. Becoming licensed will allow us to be more responsive to the needs of individuals and families with substance use disorders and will further align us with statewide initiatives.

9 RIVER RUN ACADEMY

JRI hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of JRI’s Connecticut program River Run Academy at the Susan Wayne Center of Excellence in August of 2018. The academy is a day school that offers intensive educational, vocational, and clinical services for mild to moderately cognitively impaired students. The new building housing the academy features state-of-the-art classrooms, gymnasium and a vocational training site.

10 BUTLER CENTER RECEIVES AN EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Butler Center has continued to provide outstanding treatment to males in Department of Youth Services (DYS) custody who have some of the greatest mental health challenges and have serious delinquent offenses. In February, 2018, the entire staff of the Butler Center received the DYS Central Region’s “Excellence in Service” annual award in a ceremony attended by Commissioner Peter Forbes and JRI CEO, Andy Pond. Additionally, the Butler Center received an “A” rating from the Department of Early Education and Care during their 2018 licensing review.
In the last year we created and trained a cohort of 24 on-call individuals to provide immediate on scene crisis support in response to incidents of homicide.

The Boston Trauma Response (BTR) program at JRI was established in 2015 to provide trauma services to individuals 13-24 years old impacted by community violence and homicide. Following an act of violence, families are often left feeling a range of emotions including uncertainty, fear, anger and hopelessness. BTR works with families to normalize their experiences, identify natural supports, connect to resources, provide clinical services and, when tragedy strikes, stay by their side.

In 2017, Cohannet became the foundation for a young woman’s dream to challenge a damaging media portrayal of mental illness and glorification of suicide. While engaged in her own recovery, and with the support of Cohannet, Belle started 13 Reasons to Fly. She believed that the popular teen novel and Netflix series, 13 Reasons Why, inappropriately glamorized suicide as a reasonable response to mental anguish. She sought to highlight the potential of meaningful recovery in a positive and youth-oriented way. Belle started a blog, a curriculum guide, group activities, and with the help of DMH, produced an inspiring video on the subject. She has since presented at a national conference, hospitals and community settings. She returned to Cohannet this summer as an instructor, running a 6-week group program for the current students on 13 Reasons to Fly.

Family Housing Services assists families with temporary emergency shelter including casework and additional resources. The program has supported over 200 families with follow up services, diverted 152 families from shelter and successfully placed 61 families into housing.

STRIVE is committed to leading collaborations that reduce chronic unemployment and foster the success of Boston’s low-income populations. It costs STRIVE just $6,000 to support a client and to help them find a path which builds on their strengths, helps them support their family and community and avoids unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration. It would cost $50,000 annually to house that same client in a prison. Each client who we work with successfully saves the Commonwealth and taxpayers a significant amount of money.

Employment is the primary predictor of recidivism as the recidivism rate among the unemployed returning citizens of 42-4% fell to 26.2% for those who found employment.1

1 Indianapolis-Monroe County City-County Council Re-Entry Policy Study Commission, August, 2013.
JRI has partnered with other leading agencies in the state to develop the Massachusetts Permanency Practice Alliance (MPPA), a group committed to improving permanency practice within our respective agencies. MPPA members are working together and with other key partners to steer the human services system in the Commonwealth toward better permanency outcomes for children. The goals of the alliance are to fully integrate permanency principles into the work of our programs, track and report data and outcomes, implement and disseminate best practices, and advocate for public policy.

JRI continues to increase its expertise in providing services to latency age youth at Littleton Academy, an all-gender residential school for latency age youth in Littleton, Massachusetts and the Little Heroes Home, an all-gender intensive group home for latency age youth in Dracut, Massachusetts.

PrEP!

“PrEP, short for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, is a pill taken every day that is a promising new tool to prevent HIV. This is similar to the way birth control pills are taken every day to prevent pregnancy. PrEP is highly effective at preventing HIV when used the right way.”

Clients can access PrEP on site in both Boston and MetroWest, where we will offer same-day PrEP prescriptions and insurance assistance when needed. This service is a crucial component of HIV prevention and an important addition to another newer program, GLASS at RISE. We can also connect clients to case management services focusing on housing programs or management of HIV disease. These new services will help us get closer to eliminating new HIV infections, by helping clients living with HIV maintain viral suppression and helping others remain HIV-negative by providing same-day PrEP.

What else is new? We will be implementing a needle exchange program for clients who use injection drugs. This program will allow people who inject drugs to obtain clean hypodermic needles and other safe injection supplies, thus decreasing their risk of contracting HIV and viral Hepatitis C. Clients will also be able to learn harm-reduction, get referrals to substance use treatment, receive naloxone and education on how to use it, receive new needles and biohazard containers for disposal of syringes, and other resources to reduce other infections. We have worked collaboratively with police and health departments of Framingham, Ashland, Natick, and Hudson to establish this program.

JRI’s newest Department of Youth Services (DYS) contract awarded in 2017 Western DYS Health Services, provides primary health and psychiatric care to youth in DYS facilities. The team started off with a banner year! By the end of July 2017, we recruited a highly dedicated, fully staffed team that collectively has over 80 years of experience in pediatric health care. Additionally, Physician Assistant Christopher Bonci was awarded the 2018 MIAP (Massachusetts Immunization Action Partnership) Conference Award for his “outstanding contribution to pediatric immunization in Massachusetts.”
"JRI strives to continue in an active and innovative mode every year. The organization saw tremendous growth in the last year as we opened new programs, expanded our capacity to serve individuals and families in need and dedicated new facilities that will fulfill and extend our mission. Even more important than program growth and buildings are the people, and that is truly where we excel. Our team is dedicated, caring and committed to helping those working to overcome barriers of all types."

- Andrea Nix, JRI Board Chairperson
“I get to live the values that I believe in. I have amazing colleagues who both challenge and support me. I know we are making a difference at the individual, family and community levels.”

- JRI Employee