COMMUNITY ACCESS

Changing the Landscape of Mental Health & Housing
OUR MISSION

Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services.

We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

WORK THAT MATTERS

Community Access has always been rooted in a set of values: human rights, self-determination, peer expertise, harm reduction, and healing and recovery. It is our commitment to these values, in every aspect of our work, that has helped us change the landscape of mental health services and supportive housing in New York.

Many people who come to us have cycled through institutions for decades – foster care, hospitals, shelters, and jails. They are testaments to human strength and resiliency, surviving trauma and abuse, poverty, stigma and isolation. For most, the world has not been a welcoming place. At Community Access, we seek to change that by opening our doors wide and nurturing communities built upon respect and a belief in human capacity.

OUR VALUES

Human Rights
We challenge and lead the mental health system towards greater rights-based policies and practices.

Peer Expertise
We are dedicated to a workforce where at least 51% of our employees identify as having a personal experience using mental health services. We ensure that the voices and wisdom of individuals who have used mental health services have a visible and active presence in all aspects of our work.

Self-Determination
We defend the right of all individuals to create lives of their own choosing.

Harm Reduction
We embrace policies and practices that promote dignity, wellbeing and access to health care.

Healing and Recovery
We seek out and promote culturally relevant, trauma-informed and research-based opportunities for individual and community wellness.
STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Over the course of 40+ years, Community Access has changed the landscape of mental health and housing in New York City and beyond. We think big. We’re experts in our field. And we have a track-record of delivering impressive results.

- Reached public-private financing deals: $400 million investments in real estate developments
- Pioneered the supportive housing model that has become the industry standard nationwide
- Launched a job training program that has been replicated internationally
- Named as an NYC Nonprofit Excellence Award Finalist
- Formed the NYC Supported Education network, leading the charge for equity in access to education
- Received prestigious national awards in housing, advocacy, and mental health
- Hosted the oldest and largest mental health film festival in the United States
- Opened New York City’s first Crisis Respite Center, a peer-driven and cost-effective alternative to emergency hospitalization
- Lead a coalition of 200 nonprofit agencies advocating to improve NYC crisis response protocols
- Recognized as a Guidestar Gold level charity
Since 1974, Community Access has supported New Yorkers in getting off the streets and out of the shelter system – as a provider of quality supportive housing for people living with mental health concerns, and as a tireless advocate for more housing.

Our founders came together to respond to an urgent public health crisis: the court-ordered release of people who had spent years of trauma and isolation in psychiatric hospitals and institutions. They pooled their resources and rented apartments for these most vulnerable citizens and established a commitment to housing as a basic human right that guides Community Access to this day.

Community Access grew, and eventually pioneered a new approach to housing that has become a national model: integrated housing, with onsite social services, where low-income families live alongside people with mental health concerns.

Each Community Access home represents a fresh opportunity for tenants to build lives of their own choosing. The simple joys of life are paramount: adopting and caring for pets, cooking meals with friends and family, growing vegetables, or simply enjoying quiet time in one of our beautiful gardens. The ripple effects of this work can be seen in rejuvenated neighborhoods, reunited families, new friendships, and connections for people to shape a brighter future.

“After suffering with depression for years, and being homeless, getting a place to call my own brought my life back to me.”

- Carmine Bassano, tenant
EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

Our award-winning education and job training programs empower people to reach their goals, find employment, and build lives of their own choosing.

Living with a mental health concern shouldn’t be a barrier to getting a good education. That’s why, through our Blueprint Supported Education program and other initiatives, we support participants in seeking high school equivalencies, post-secondary degrees, and vocational certifications.

The same is true of employment: Living with a mental health concern shouldn’t stand in the way. Our Howie the Harp Advocacy Center (HTH), which opened in 1995, has trained more than 1,000 graduates for careers within the mental health workforce, many of whom now work in hospitals, clinics, social service agencies, and a variety of mental health agencies throughout New York City and state. These graduates are changing the system from within and demonstrating that the best way to build an effective mental health system is to involve peers in designing that system. Today, HTH is the gold standard in job training for mental health peers.

At HTH, and in other Community Access job training and job-readiness programs, we work to overcome the barriers that stand between the people we serve and rewarding employment, including by providing support in developing resume and interview skills and by connecting people to volunteer and internship opportunities.

“I’ve had a lot of people who believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. That’s a true gift.”

- Gerald Jenkins, tenant and HTH graduate
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Our approach to health and wellness is person-centered and proactive, and emphasizes the importance of treating people with dignity and respect. And it informs everything we do.

Most people who connect with Community Access have experienced some combination of homelessness, institutionalization, trauma, and abuse. Often, they are just beginning the process of healing and recovery. Our job is to support them in building healthier lives of their choosing, and to provide services and resources that lead to informed decisions about health and wellness.

Our health and wellness activities bring people together in all sorts of ways. With countless factors influencing our physical and mental wellbeing, we work to create opportunities for people to come together around growing food, meal preparation, movement, and stress reduction – anything with the potential to have a positive impact on quality of life.

Participants in our health and wellness initiatives are encouraged to identify their strengths and develop skills for pursuing their goals. Including: reconnecting with family; starting a new career; healing old wounds; and, finding new joy in everyday life. We also offer a bike share program and gym facilities in each of our housing sites; cooking demos and a thriving urban farming program; a pet adoption program; and, simply, the chance to connect with neighbors and friends.

“Getting housing was a life-and-death situation. I was homeless, and had dwindled to 72 pounds. Now I’m happy, healthy, and fulfilled.”

- Rochelle Rosa, tenant, with her dog Elvira
CRISIS SUPPORT

For too long, the default destination for New Yorkers in emotional distress has been either the emergency room or jail. But we’re working hard to replace those locked doors and places of isolation with warmth, empathy, and compassion.

In 2012, Community Access opened New York City’s first Crisis Respite Center, providing a safe, cost-effective alternative to hospitalization for adults in emotional distress.

The Crisis Respite Center is a place where people can take a deep breath and be treated with care and respect. From the moment someone arrives at the Respite Center, they are welcomed as a guest, not treated as a patient. Each guest has a private, beautifully furnished room, and the ability to connect with staff and fellow guests as they work through whatever struggles they face.

With 24-hour support provided by peer specialists (people with their own experiences in the mental health system, trained to help others), and with access to primary health care, guests get to focus on long-term recovery and wellness. They leave with greater peace of mind, and a plan for facing the days ahead with confidence.

“Some of the kindest, most compassionate people I’ve ever met work at the Respite Center. I left there feeling like I could do whatever I set my mind to.”

– Phyll Fisher, Respite Center guest
ADVOCACY

Throughout the mental health and criminal justice systems, and in how people think and talk about mental health issues, our advocacy efforts effect real, lasting change.

Our advocacy work is built upon a fundamental principle: People who access mental health services should be involved in shaping and delivering those services. How can we amplify the voices of the people we serve?

We model the broader changes we’d like to see. We have a core goal of hiring at least 51% peer staff (people with mental health concerns), and our advocacy agenda is set in a similarly aspirational way.

Through press conferences, voter-education forums, and other community events – including the NYC Mental Health Film Festival – we are always seeking opportunities to share our perspective in mainstream media outlets, and to change the way the wider public thinks and talks about mental health.

Our most visible advocacy campaign – we formed and lead a large coalition – has focused on police responses to people in emotional distress. The results are impressive: $130 million in city funding to strengthen ties between criminal justice and behavioral health in NYC, an additional $37 million in city funding for co-response teams and preventive mental health services, and 200,000+ NYPD training hours. We’re now pushing for more non-police interventions/services.

“When you empower someone to regain control of their lives and advocate for themselves – that’s a wonderful feeling.”

- Carla Rabinowitz,
  Advocacy Coordinator
ART

For decades, the creative arts have been a special part of Community Access. We work with people to express themselves, hone their talents, and build community through art.

Our tenants and participants have a variety of creative interests, including painting, writing, theater, photography, and much else. Through a variety of workshops and programs around town, we support them in developing their creativity and learning from their experiences, and we help them achieve that most fundamental human right: the right to personal expression.

Founded in 1988, our Art Collective is the beating heart of our art initiatives. The Art Collective is a community of artists that works together to create, share resources, exhibit, and develop professional skills as contemporary artists. Our artists receive free year-round instruction, shared studio spaces, and support to achieve their vision. Art Collective artists also volunteer in-studio and in the community through workshops and public projects.

“As an artist, I want to convey my daily experience. I don’t have all the answers, but I ask the questions.”

- John Smith,
Art Collective artist
### Revenue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract revenue</td>
<td>$24,969,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer’s fees</td>
<td>$17,278,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental income</td>
<td>$6,965,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid income</td>
<td>$6,846,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients’ fees</td>
<td>$1,449,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions – corporations and foundations</td>
<td>$1,170,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions – individuals</td>
<td>$1,007,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property management fees</td>
<td>$357,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>$98,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$60,141,943</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing programs</td>
<td>$22,433,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiaries operating expenses</td>
<td>$13,550,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other programs</td>
<td>$8,952,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/administration</td>
<td>$5,402,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$862,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$51,201,755</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY20 change in net assets</td>
<td>$9,838,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS (June 30, 2020):</strong></td>
<td><strong>$41,455,558</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Access’ finances are annually and independently audited. Audited financial statements, along with Community Access 990 forms, are published on our website at [www.communityaccess.org/financials](http://www.communityaccess.org/financials).