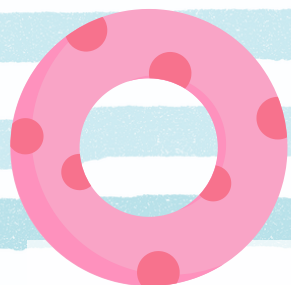




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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026/ VOLUME 35

Quarterly News & Updates

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FROM THE DESK OF JAMES PARAUDA, CEO: HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY CMOs!



Twenty-five years ago, New Jersey families came together with a simple but powerful vision: children with behavioral health challenges deserved more than a fragmented system—they deserved coordinated, community-based supports that would help them thrive at home, in school, and in their communities. What began as a grassroots movement led by parents determined to improve services for their children has grown into one of the nation's most comprehensive Children's Systems of Care (CSOC). Today, that vision continues to improve the lives of thousands of children and families each year. Through Care Management Organizations (CMOs), Mobile Response and Stabilization Services, Family Support Organizations, behavioral health providers, and countless community partners, New Jersey has built an integrated network that helps youth facing mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental challenges receive the right services at the right time. This coordinated approach has strengthened families, reduced unnecessary hospitalizations and out-of-home placements, and demonstrated that children achieve the best outcomes when services are delivered in their homes, schools, and communities. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of CSOC has been creating meaningful connections between families and their communities. While CMOs often work intensively with families for a limited period, our goal has always extended beyond crisis intervention. We help families build lasting relationships with schools, healthcare providers, recreational programs, peer supports, and other community resources that become their long-term support system. Just as importantly, we work alongside caregivers to overcome the fear, stigma, and uncertainty that too often prevent families from seeking help. By empowering families and strengthening community connections, we help create resilience that lasts long after care management services have ended.

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As we celebrate this milestone, we also recognize that the work continues to evolve. Governor Mikie Sherrill has identified youth mental health as a priority of her administration, with initiatives focused on expanding school-based behavioral health supports and protecting children from the growing mental health risks associated with the online environment. These priorities reflect many of the challenges families face today and reinforce the importance of a coordinated system of care. New Jersey's Care Management Organizations are uniquely positioned to support these initiatives. For more than two decades, CMOs have successfully coordinated services across schools, healthcare providers, child-serving agencies, and community organizations, ensuring that youth with complex needs receive seamless, family-driven care. As school-based services expand, CMOs can help ensure that these new resources complement—not duplicate—the broader network of behavioral health and community supports already serving children across New Jersey. Likewise, as concerns about social media, cyberbullying, and online safety continue to grow, CMOs remain valuable partners in connecting families with education, prevention, and treatment resources. NJCMO has appreciated the opportunity to meet with members of Governor Sherrill's staff to discuss the contributions Care Management Organizations have made throughout the history of CSOC and the important role they continue to play in strengthening New Jersey's children's behavioral health system. Those conversations reflected a shared commitment to collaboration and a recognition that the state's continued success depends upon building on the strong foundation established over the past 25 years. Looking back, the parents who first envisioned a better system for their children would undoubtedly be proud of what has been accomplished. Their dream has become a statewide network that changes lives every day. As we celebrate 25 years of CSOC, we also look ahead with confidence that, through continued partnership, innovation, and investment, New Jersey will remain a national leader in ensuring that every child and family has the opportunity to thrive.



Youth Success Story



This edition's Youth Success Story is about Maddox T. Upon CMO referral, Maddox was straying toward a dangerous path involving substance use, difficulty with decision-making, and broken trust within various peer and family relationships.

After several close calls that nearly cost his health and well-being, he dedicated himself to utilizing the support put in place. With support from his family and Child Family Team, he began to rebuild his life. Maddox was able to advocate for himself in Child Study Team meetings, noting that returning to his in-district school placement would lead him back down the wrong path. He eventually returned to school in person at a new placement and dedicated himself to improving his academics. The road for Maddox was not easy, but every challenge continued to make him stronger. Today, he is thriving and plans to pursue a career in auto mechanics specializing in European cars. He has developed a strong sense of confidence and hopes to share his story in an effort to help others make more positive choices, proving that no matter how far someone falls, it is always possible to rise again and create a more positive way of living the one life we are given.

Growing Greatness



Do you ever feel like it is hard to find the positives? That is because our brains are not designed to make us happy; their primary function is to keep us alive. As a result, we often notice negatives more quickly. However, constantly being in survival mode can be exhausting. It is possible to retrain our brains, but just like training for a sport, it takes time and effort. When we take a step back and recognize the small things going right in our lives, it becomes easier to notice them again in the future. Over time, this positive thinking can become more natural. Focusing on the positive can also help us feel happier and more balanced. So, why not give it a try this month? What do you have to lose besides negativity?

TCCMO offers small group Nurtured Heart Approach trainings twice a month.

[Click here for more info on the Nurtured Heart Approach](#)

Getting to Know TCCMO: Staff Appreciation



On Friday, May 15, staff from Tri County Care Management Organization came together for a spirited and energetic Staff Appreciation Day filled with laughter, teamwork, and friendly competition. This year's event embraced the excitement of the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup, with staff proudly wearing jerseys, spirit wear, and colors representing countries from around the world, as well as their favorite sports teams. The day featured a variety of traditional field games and races that brought out everyone's competitive side while encouraging camaraderie and collaboration among coworkers. Staff members cheered each other on during relay races, challenged one another in lively rounds of musical chairs, and tested their knowledge in an entertaining game of Jeopardy. The enthusiasm and positive energy throughout the day reflected the strong sense of teamwork and connection that defines Tri County CMO. In addition to the games and activities, staff enjoyed a delicious lunch from a food truck, giving everyone an opportunity to relax, connect, and celebrate together outside of the usual work environment. There were also plenty of prizes awarded throughout the event, adding even more excitement and friendly rivalry to the festivities. Most importantly, the event served as a meaningful reminder of the dedication, compassion, and hard work that Tri County CMO staff bring to youth and families every day. Staff Appreciation Day was truly a memorable celebration of teamwork, appreciation, and community spirit. The event highlighted the organization's commitment to supporting employees while strengthening relationships that help create a positive workplace culture daily.



Events held by Tri County CMO

Every year, TCCMO and the Family Support Organization (FSO) host the Annual Family & Community Picnic. This year, about 565 youth, families, providers, and staff attended. The picnic welcomes currently enrolled TCCMO youth, youth who have transitioned out of TCCMO, and families receiving mental health services within our three counties. For the past 13 years, the event has provided a safe, supportive space for families to relax, connect, and enjoy time together. This year's activities included food, desserts, music, swimming, a sensory area, bumper cars, a photo booth, and more. Everyone received a TCCMO beach bag, towel, and other goodies. Families left feeling connected, supported, and excited to create more positive memories throughout the summer.

Community Corner: Sounds of Tomorrow

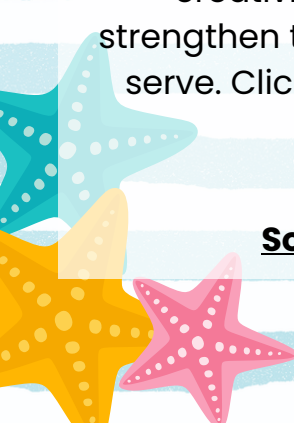


Pride in Partnership: Dreamweaver Camp

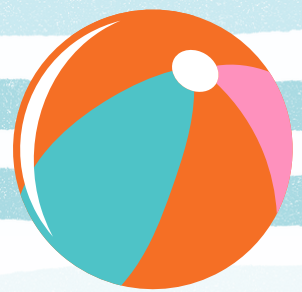
Tri County CMO is proud to partner with Sounds of Tomorrow Academy in Somerset, New Jersey, a creative development organization dedicated to equipping youth and adults with vocational, educational, and life-enriching skills. Through hands-on training in music, media, and the arts, participants build confidence, creativity, and career readiness while learning from experienced industry professionals. The Academy's Mentorship Division connects at-risk youth with experienced mentors who provide guidance, encouragement, and support to foster personal growth and success. On June 20, 2026, Sounds of Tomorrow Academy welcomed Tri County CMO youth and their families for an Immersive Creative Experience Expo at its Somerset studio. Participants explored podcasting, music recording, and film production through interactive workshops before showcasing the creative projects they created throughout the day. Tri County CMO is grateful for its partnership with Sounds of Tomorrow Academy and looks forward to providing more opportunities that inspire creativity, empower youth, and strengthen the communities we proudly serve. Click below to learn more or to refer a child

Sounds of Tomorrow

Dreamweaver Equine Center is a premier equestrian facility in Hunterdon County that offers equine-assisted activities for individuals of all ages and abilities. This summer, Dreamweaver will once again partner with Tri County CMO to provide two unique equine therapy camp experiences, including a day camp and a week-long camp. Horses communicate and respond through body language, requiring participants to recognize and adjust their emotions and behaviors in order to work successfully with them. Through these interactions, youth develop positive communication skills, emotional regulation, and healthy coping strategies that can be applied to everyday life. Dreamweaver's mission is to provide a safe and culturally competent environment where kindness is at the heart of supporting the social and mental well-being of the community and surrounding areas. Tri County is proud to partner with and support Dreamweaver in offering these meaningful experiences.



FYI



July is Disability Pride Month, to celebrate disability identity and community, mark the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and push for full inclusion in everyday life. The 2026 theme is “The World Works Better With Us.” Many people with disabilities still face barriers to being fully included and valued. Disability is part of human diversity, and people experience disability in different ways. July has been an important month in the history of disability rights ever since President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law in 1990. This landmark law prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities, and in July of that same year, the first Disability Pride Day was celebrated in Boston.

Resources at ADA.gov

August is National Wellness Month, which encourages us to reflect and focus on our mental, physical, and emotional health. Building healthy habits, even in minor ways, can have a lasting impact on one’s well-being. It usually starts with simple choices that are part of a person’s daily routine. Exercising, staying hydrated, and taking time to reset daily can significantly impact how we feel and function as human beings. Some ideas to get started: move your body regularly, stay hydrated, prioritize rest, take mental breaks, and practice gratitude. National Wellness Month is a perfect opportunity to stop, reflect, and reset.



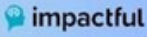
September is National Suicide Prevention Month., Suicide is a major public health issue that affects individuals regardless of their economic status, race, gender, or ethnicity. This month is dedicated to recognizing the warning signs for suicide, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and connecting people to proven treatment and resources. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. 9-8-8 is available via call or text, and online chat.

SAMHSA

NAMI NJ

988 Lifeline

Whats happening?

**Tri County CMO
Training Department**

Is offering the following IMPACTFUL film screenings to our school and community partners. Choose one or all of the social impact films in the Mental Health Trilogy to view as a community. Film Screenings will be followed by post-film community panel discussion and Q&A.

Please contact the **TCCMO Training Department** @ trainingdepartment@tricitycmo.org if interested in learning more about this series and how to schedule a screening.



Angst

[Learn more at AngstMovie.com](http://LearnmoreatAngstMovie.com)

Angst is a film-based program that aims to raise mental health awareness and remove the stigma surrounding anxiety. The program helps young people and their families recognize when anxiety goes beyond a healthy level by providing interviews, tips, and expert advice.



RACE TO BE HUMAN

[Learn more at RaceToBeHumanMovie.com](http://LearnmoreatRaceToBeHumanMovie.com)

RACE to Be Human is a program that offers actionable strategies for self-reflection and awareness. It combines insights from diverse experts to empower individuals and communities to respect and honor family, dignity, and diversity. The program fosters a sense of belonging and unity across all ethnicities.



THE UPSTANDERS

[Learn more at TheUpstanders.com](http://LearnmoreatTheUpstanders.com)

"The Upstanders" is a film-based program that explores bullying and cyber-bullying, shares proven strategies, and promotes character building. It inspires qualities such as kindness, honesty, respect, empathy, trust, and connection, and highlights the importance of modeling empathy and resilience to transform attitudes and actions.



LIKE

[Learn more at TheLikeMovie.com](http://LearnmoreatTheLikeMovie.com)

The LIKE is a film-based program explores the impact of social media on our lives and the effects of technology on the brain and on learning. Understanding that virtual connection is a huge part of our socialization and can have many benefits, how do we use it to best inform, educate and inspire us to self-regulate, so we can enjoy a more balanced and fulfilled life?



WANT A BETTER CONNECTION WITH YOUR KID?

THEN CHECK THIS OUT

Nurtured Heart Approach®

THE NURTURED HEART APPROACH IS AN ESSENTIAL SET OF STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING THE MOST INTENSE CHILDREN:

- TRANSFORMING THE WAY CHILDREN PERCEIVE THEMSELVES, THEIR CAREGIVERS, AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM
- TEACHING CHILDREN THEY WILL RECEIVE RECOGNITION THROUGH POSITIVE BEHAVIORS
- SEEING INTENSITY TO BE A POWERFUL QUALITY THAT, IF DEVELOPED CORRECTLY, CAN DRIVE CHILDREN TO AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

THIS WILL BE CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY TWICE A MONTH

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 6PM-830PM
AND EVERY 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 1030AM-1PM

CONTACT **JANET HREHOWESIK** TO SIGN UP
(908)255-5697 OR JHREHOWESIK@TRICOUNTYCMO.ORG
OR SCAN HERE TO SIGN UP



Ready to make a big impact?

Partner with us to fundraise for **Tri County CMO families!**

Email **Deja Amos** today → damos@tricitycmo.org

Or click the button below to **DONATE** directly from our Website!

DONATE 

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HOW TO GET REFERRED TO TRI COUNTY CMO

PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to Children's System of Care services.

PerformCare staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide assessment and guidance to families facing challenges to their functioning and well-being.

PerformCare / Contracted Systems Administrator (CSA)
1-877-652-7624

→ **Performcare website** ←

→ **Performcare Welcome Video** ←

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