



Annual Report 2024

Strengthening
Communities



**Access
Services**
strengthening communities

To the Access Services Community,

From our inception, we have focused on providing care that serves the whole person, and recognizes and responds to the unique needs of every individual. We have done this with passion and commitment to the belief that strong people create strong communities.

As we continue the multi-year restructuring and strengthening of our technological infrastructure, we have noticed the need for data literacy to better analyze what our new and updated systems offer. Value-based reimbursement has been a crucial catalyst in proving the value of our service through data. We have also added new roles across our agency to help meet industry standards and increase our ability to serve the community today and into the future.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the uncertainty in our service systems that comes from policy changes and the threat of mass funding cuts. While we are unsure where these decisions and potential funding cuts will lead, we know that Access Services has the financial stability to sustain through change considering we have continued financial support and resource sharing from our partners and the community.

We will keep on doing what we do best, serving people and communities towards wellness and wholeness. We are paying attention to federal policy decisions being made, pursuing diverse funding opportunities, and evaluating our service portfolio to ensure relevance and impact, and to optimize our resource allocation. I am grateful for the advocacy of our provider associations and organization's leaders for the ongoing support of essential programs. Our wise leadership and dedicated workforce have enabled us to navigate through this uncertain time.

Each one of our employees shows up authentically, ready to serve and ask curious questions, which brings about much needed changes in our communities. We ask that you do the same as you read this report. Read the stories and ask yourself, "How can I be a part of building strong communities?" We look forward to hearing your answer.



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Collaborating Across Divisions

When the temperature drops to 32 degrees or below, a Code Blue is called. Winter weather can be very dangerous and deadly for those who do not have adequate shelter. During the winter season from November through March, Montgomery County implements a winter weather, or “Code Blue,” emergency plan. A Code Blue requires all efforts to ensure unhoused individuals have a place inside for the night. With approximately 520 unhoused individuals in Montgomery County and only 127 Code Blue shelter beds available per night, this task is daunting. The 2024 Code Blue season was marked by unprecedented challenges, with a total of 104 Code Blue declaration nights and 54 of those nights being back-to-back nights.

The extraordinary dedication and collaboration between our Montgomery County Mobile Crisis and Street Outreach teams showed our core value of “collaboration” playing out in real time. Their tireless efforts to manage the Code Blue season made a significant impact on the homeless community, providing essential support and life-saving services. Mobile Crisis played a pivotal role through their night-to-night efforts, which included fielding over 1,000 calls regarding the urgent need for emergency shelter and transportation. These services were crucial in helping individuals avoid the perilous cold temperatures by getting them indoors swiftly. The success of this effort hinged on effective communication and coordination between the two teams.

Daily calls between the two teams were vital to ensure that plans were in place for each evening. Additionally, frequent follow-ups and check-ins amongst leadership were implemented to address any emerging challenges and to adapt strategies as necessary as the season progressed.

Despite the daunting challenge, Mobile Crisis and Street Outreach, two programs from different divisions in our organization, rose to the occasion, booking over 575 hotel rooms to provide safe havens for those in need. This effort required substantial financial commitment, with funding totaling \$205,000 for the season. The teamwork between Mobile Crisis and Street Outreach exemplifies the power of collaboration and dedication in the face of adversity. Their unwavering commitment to the well-being of our most vulnerable community members is truly commendable, and we deeply appreciate their passion for serving.



Be a part of the solution and learn more about your neighbor’s needs by attending an upcoming town hall session. Each session features a specific topic where the group discusses and strategizes solutions to helping our unhoused neighbors plan for the future.



Housing & Homelessness

2024 Highlights

2,308 individuals served by Street Outreach’s team of six.

321 homeless individuals served by Street Medicine.

Within 60 days of intake, our Community-Based Care Management Program housed all their clients.

Our division grew when we added the Bucks Master Leasing program and a 15-unit Montgomery County Supportive Housing program.

The Nancy Wieman Award was bestowed to our Street Medicine program for our innovative services in Montgomery County.

Behavioral Health

2024 Highlights

Netsmart’s Healthcare Frontier Award was bestowed to our programs.

244 young adults served by the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) program.

Highest Fidelity Scores in Pennsylvania for the TIP program, which placed 1st in Bucks County and 2nd in Lehigh County.

9,022 calls received by our Montgomery County Mobile Crisis team.

4,024 mobile engagements completed by our Montgomery County Mobile Crisis team.

368 people served in our pretrial program.

117 people served by our JRS team.

331 warmline communications engaged by our Peer Support Talk Line and Teen Talk Line programs.

330 children served by our Behavioral Support and Assessments program.

3,708 people trained in suicide prevention in Montgomery County by the Hope 4 Tomorrow program.

483 people served by Starting Point Bucks and Montgomery programs.

Person-Centered Service

Truly creating person-centered services leads our teams to go above and beyond to meet the unique needs of those we serve. During the school year, one of our Rebound program team members, Amanda, was mentoring Jessica*, a young girl experiencing homelessness and moving from hotel to hotel for several months. As if this was not hard enough, other extenuating circumstances were also negatively impacting Jessica's sleep schedule, ability to socialize with peers, her school attendance, her hygiene, and most of all, her self-esteem. As time passed, Amanda noticed Jessica would increasingly come to sessions with a hoodie on and up over her head. When she asked Jessica to take off her hood, Amanda noticed her hair had matted across the back and could not be untangled without professional intervention.

With a week until the new school year started, Amanda asked Jessica and her parent if she could take her to a salon to have her hair detangled, washed, conditioned, and cut. Amanda spent many hours going from place to place to try to find a salon to help, however, salons were either closed or had appointments well beyond the start of school. Amanda encouraged Jessica that they would try again in a few days and spent the in-between time shopping for new clothes to wear for school.

A few days later, they were able to find a salon that was able to help! The salon staff gently talked Amanda and Jessica through the process and explained that she would need about six inches cut off but assured her that they would save as much of her hair as they could. Two staff worked together to get as much of the hair detangled as possible. Jessica was nervous, but Amanda continued to talk her through the process as she received a deep conditioning treatment, haircut, blow dry, and style. It took over two hours, but the end results looked amazing.

After the appointment, Jessica was looking in the mirror on the car ride home, playing with her hair, and smiling from ear to ear. Jessica gave Amanda a hug and thanked her for advocating to have her hair fixed. Amanda then took time to teach Jessica how to maintain her new look including to brush her hair daily, not to go to bed with her hair wet or in a ponytail for an excessive number of days, and how to keep it healthy and strong. Months later, Jessica continues to take care of her hair and hygiene. Amanda's person-centered care enabled significant strides in Jessica's goals within the Rebound program. It's amazing what a little care and compassion can do to create lasting change for the children we serve. **names have been changed for client security*



Learn more about the
Child and Family division.



Child & Family *2024 Highlights*

228 children served by
Rebound.

55 graduates from the
Rebound program.

295 contacts received
by Bucks County LIFE
from families looking for
resources.

107 children served by
our Foster Care program.

8 graduates from the
Access Learning Academy.





“Strengthening communities by empowering individuals towards wholeness and belonging.”

Access Services’ Vision Statement circa 2024



A Passion to Serve

Lifesharing is a beautiful experience for those that are willing to jump in! One family's passion to serve has become a legacy that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Joan

For over two decades, Joan dedicated herself to her job as a cook at a private club, where she prepared meals for hundreds each night. It was a role she cherished until change swept in and new management brought an end to her tenure. Amidst uncertainty, her friend, Sharon Melendez, offered her a new opportunity at Valley South Park Group Home. Initially hesitant at the prospect of a career change, Sharon's persuasive words and consistent support convinced Joan to take a leap of faith into the world of caregiving, despite her lack of experience.

With her husband supporting their four children at home, Joan worked night shifts at the group home. Her children adapted to the new routine, and she felt a schedule to both accommodate her job and her home life. Tragedy struck when Joan's daughter unexpectedly passed away. Amid grief and sorrow, Joan took some time off from work. Later, she and her husband were approached with an opportunity to become Lifesharing Providers, a role that would shape their lives for years to come.

With her son in the Air Force and the rest of their kids off to college, Joan and her husband opened their home to Jimmy. Jimmy was the first to be in their home for 23 years. After Jimmy, they opened their home to Kevin and Kyle. For the years spent in their home, the gentlemen settled into the home and became a part of their family.

Joan's home became a haven of love and acceptance, not just a place of care but family. Joan's journey in Lifesharing continues to this day, offering her a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and freedom to live life on her own terms because of the nature of this service. Joan reflects on her Lifesharing journey with gratitude. For her, Lifesharing wasn't a job; it was a calling to transform lives. Her legacy extends far beyond her own lifetime; it has been passed down from one generation to the next.

Melanie

Melanie's journey into Lifesharing is as deeply rooted in empathy and commitment as her mother, Joan. From a young age, she was exposed to the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, particularly through an autistic family member and seeing her mother provide Lifesharing. These early experiences instilled in her a desire to make a difference in the lives of others.



Melanie's path into Lifesharing began at the age of 18 when she started working in group homes. Her experiences there shaped her perspective and strengthened her resolve to create a more inclusive and nurturing environment for those she cared for. She didn't just want to provide care; she wanted to offer a true family setting where individuals with disabilities could thrive.

With a heart set on "saving the world", Melanie embarked on her Lifesharing journey, choosing to welcome individuals into her home and embracing them as her own family. Her commitment to providing a familial atmosphere, complete with allowing individuals to have their own rooms, hobbies, interests, pursuits, and routines, reflects her value of respect for autonomy and dignity.

Melanie's dedication to her "guys," as she affectionately calls them, is shown in her thoughtful approach to their individual needs. Whether it's Ted, who prefers solitude and routine, or David, who thrives on warmth and interaction, Melanie ensures that everyone is included and loves how Lifesharing has brought them closer together as a whole family.



Does Joan and Melanie's story resonate with you? Learn more about Lifesharing!

Intellectual Disability & Autism *2024 Highlights*

290 individuals attended our Day programs.

235 people supported by Employment Services.

602 years of combined work experience by individuals in our Employment Services program.

169 individuals served by our In-Home Support Services.

Over 135,000 hours spent in the community by those in our CPS program.



Innovation Creates New Opportunities

When Access Services' Intersect program was started in 2017, it created a unique and innovative service to support people at the much-neglected intersection of faith and mental health through consultation, training, and fostering collaboration between faith communities and human service providers. Over the years, Intersect has grown and formally became recognized as a full division at Access Services in 2024.

Another opportunity that arose for our Intersect division in 2024 was a collaborative project with the University of Pennsylvania, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, with the goals to research the effectiveness of Intersect, expand its reach and adoption, and replicate Intersect's work in new communities over the next three years. Over the past few months, an advisory board has been formed of twelve people representing those from the faith community, government agencies, mental health providers, and those with lived experience with mental health challenges.

David Eckert, Senior Director of Intersect, explained, *"Intersect began with an eye to fill gaps in care we witnessed within our own programs and local faith communities. However, through this project, opportunities are emerging to both partner with other organizations and systems of care as well as expand our work into Philadelphia and beyond."*

Kimberly T. Arnold, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor from the University of Pennsylvania and partner in this project shared, *"I am excited to partner with Intersect because I share their vision for every community to be strengthened through holistic support and cross-sector collaboration. One sector cannot tackle mental health disparities alone; Intersect is a shining example of how to effectively bridge faith communities and mental health service organizations to better serve individuals who may need mental health support and/or spiritual care."*

An individual served by Intersect shared, *"Intersect has been a real blessing to me. They have matched me up with a religious community that has helped me grow in many ways."*

"Giving me a safe, secure place that accepts me for who I am. A group of like-minded people who appreciate the God-given gifts that I possess. This has given me the confidence to develop close new friendships. A reliable support system."

Kimberly T. Arnold also shared, *"Being able to highlight the successes of Intersect and identify areas that can be strengthened to better serve faith communities in need of mental health support and mental health service organizations in need of spiritual care and resources is inspiring to me. The information that we will learn during this project will help inform Intersect's work moving forward and help increase their reach across Southeastern Pennsylvania and beyond."*

We are excited to see where this project leads Intersect over the next three years and beyond.

For more, visit the [John Templeton Foundation website](#) and search: *"Improving Mental Health through Partnerships between Faith Communities and Mental Health Service Organizations: Evaluation and Expansion of Intersect"*

Intersect 2024 Highlights

18 trainings were provided to **faith communities**.

4 trainings were provided to **mental health professionals**.

1,209 people were trained across the faith and mental health provider communities.

32 people received chaplaincy services.

16 people received spiritual support (e.g. prayer).

19 people were successfully connected to a faith community.

Meeting Practical Needs

For 5 years, the Intersect Care Portal has been providing an opportunity for ordinary people to meet the practical needs of their neighbors. Every need listed on the care portal is a specific request made by someone served by Access Services. Here are some of the items that were donated by our members that directly impacted and encouraged the people we serve.

A brand-new Bible for someone served by our JRS program.

A clothing rack, hangers, and chest of drawers to furnish a new apartment for a person served by our Housing & Homeless division.

An adjustable bedframe for a person served by our Starting Point program who had a specific health need.

A tablet for a person served by our Starting Point program who was not able to attend their therapy appointments in-person.

A dresser for a person served by our Housing & Homeless division.

A stuffed chair to furnish a new apartment for a person served by our Housing & Homeless division.

A person served by Starting Point had a kitchen table but no chairs; they also needed a wheelchair. Members were able to meet these specific needs!

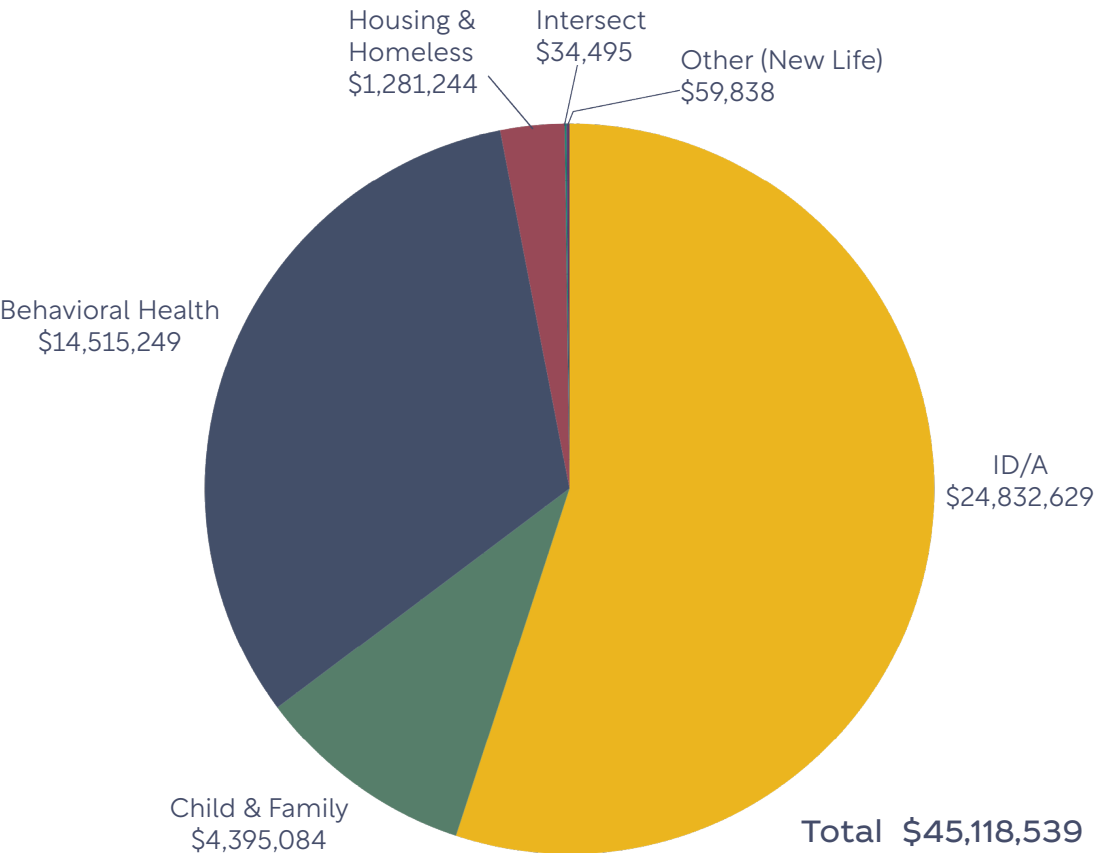


Support our work and help those we serve!

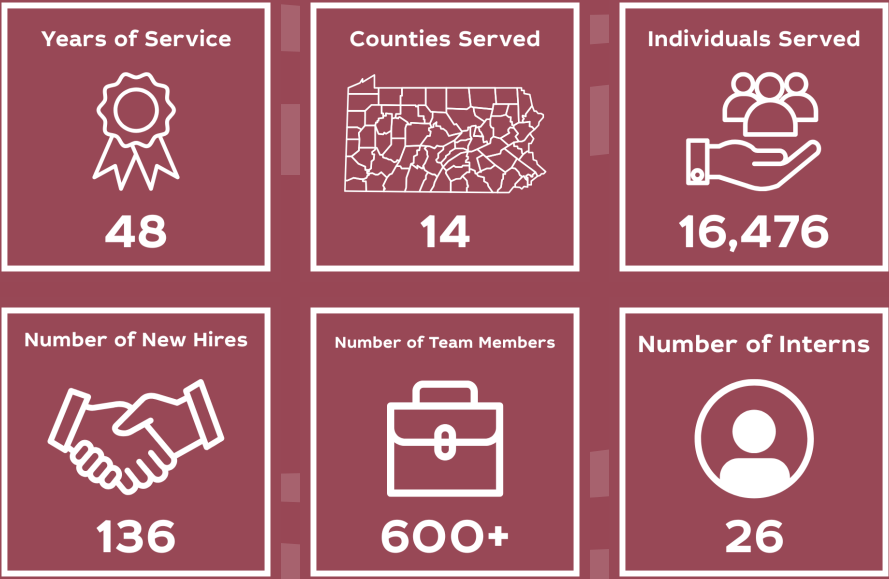


Have you been inspired by the stories you read in this report? Your support can make a difference to those we serve. Your monetary donation can help with a variety of things outside of anticipated program spending, such as emergency hoteling for Code Blue nights. We appreciate you choosing to see the needs of your neighbors and desiring to be part of the solution. Together, we are strengthening the community.

Fiscal Year 2024 Support and Revenue



Our 2024 Numbers





**Access
Services**
strengthening communities



Access Services, Inc.



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