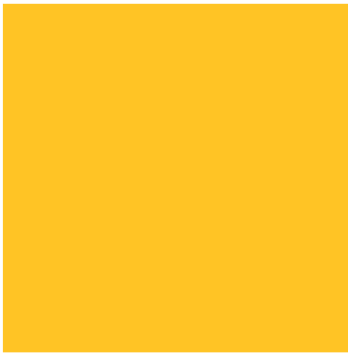
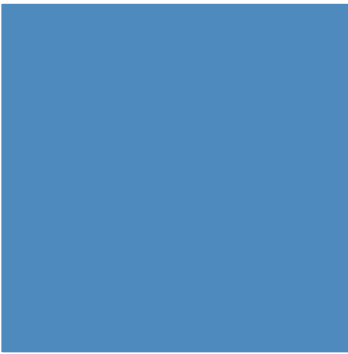




Family  
Resources  
Community  
Action



# ANNUAL REPORT 2010





## Family Resources Community Action Annual Report 2010

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share with you the 2010 Annual Report for Family Resources Community Action. This report reflects the innovation, flexibility and a comprehensive approach for addressing human needs that FRCA staff and its collaborative partners strive to accomplish. Owing to decreased funding and the growing realization that the Rhode Island human service system must be less fragmented and possess greater capacity to customize services for families and individuals, FRCA and its partners believe that the more integrated, coordinated and trans-disciplinary approaches we are implementing to strengthen the people we serve is the future of human services.

More than in previous years, our work is tempered by realities beyond the control of our clients. This context includes a crippling financial crisis resulting in more foreclosures, soaring unemployment exceeding 10%, a continuing lack of affordable housing and unchecked utility rates. For persons with disabilities or parents struggling to care for and keep their children safe while attending to health care and other needs, this situation is overwhelming. Our vantage point in the community reveals the new normal is a rising wave of previously employed emerging low income persons struggling to address their basic needs (i.e., housing, food, transportation, utilities, etc.) and seeking the same jobs and shrinking social service resources as those families and individuals struggling with poverty over multiple generations. The consequences produce a spiraling effect that includes greater levels of stress, depression and anxiety, decreased capacity to care for children and meet their needs, and escalating substance abuse.

In the midst of this crisis, I deeply appreciate the creativity and commitment of our staff at Family Resources and collaborative partners to strengthen vulnerable families and individuals. In the face of the challenges they confront, the positive outcomes they produce and ability to preserve the dignity of the people they serve is nothing less than heroic. As a community based agency, we are greatly indebted to the families and individuals participating on our Board of Directors and various advisory committees that guide and nurture our vision. Going forward, our hope is that the new Chafee Administration seizes the opportunity to truly create a new human service-focused public-private partnership to strengthen and support vulnerable populations in a comprehensive manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benedict F. Lessing, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Benedict F. Lessing, Jr. MSW  
Executive Director





## Supporting & Empowering Families

"At some point in everyone's lives, they fall on hard times as we did. You patiently and attentively helped us every step of the way and for that we are eternally grateful."

– Family Support Center Client

*A single mother with three children sought assistance from FRCA's Family Support Center with a back utility bill after her service was turned off. She temporarily moved into a relative's home in Providence, driving her children to school in Woonsocket before going to work. The staff helped her secure assistance with her bill, negotiate a payment plan, and apply for a low-income utility rate. The family was able to move back to their apartment and, with the budget plan, will be better able to manage their utility payments in the future.*

FRCA's **Family Support Center** staff works with individuals and families to provide resources and information within the agency and in the community to help people get the support they need to become or remain self-sufficient. The Family Support Center served 4,805 households representing 9,502 individuals addressing a range of needs, including housing, utilities, food, and other crisis concerns.

*Other Family Support program activity during the past year:*

### • **Holiday Programs**

FRCA continued to assist low-income families around the holidays, completing Adopt-a-Family Applications for 1,118 families that led to donors providing gifts for 2,311 needy children, and coordinating the distribution of 604 holiday gift baskets with local churches and other community service groups. We also served as the toy distribution site for the Children's Holiday Hope Fund which delivered toys and hat & mitten sets to 1,259 children.

### • **The Milk Fund**

FRCA has been assisting with the application process for The Milk Fund since 1932. Last year 332 families per month were assisted with vouchers to obtain milk. The funds raised by Milk Fund activities allow seniors, recently unemployed families and others in need to receive milk for their nutritional needs. A total of 25,063 half gallons were accessed through this unique charity.

The **Early Intervention (EI)** program served 401 children, an 11% increase from last fiscal year.

The **Counseling** program served 206 individuals; 23 clients received recovery coaching, counseling and other support services through the Access to Recovery program. FRCA also began a partnership with NRI Community Services, with FRCA staff receiving weekly consultation from NRICS clinicians.

The **Family Preservation** program served families through its parenting education and support programs including Great Beginnings (14 expectant mothers), Family Life Education (22 individuals), Long-term Parent Aide (13 families), United Family Support (19 families) and Family Court Diversion (46 families.)

**First Connections**, a new home-based program provided family assessment, infant/toddler screening and referral to 557 families.

During the past fiscal year, 502 families were reviewed for services through the **Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP)** network. Over 70 families were successfully diverted from becoming further involved with the Department of Children, Youth & Families, keeping children with their families in the community.

### **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)**

In 2009, FRCA filed over 1,200 tax returns at no cost to low income individuals and families. Without this help, many low income people would have to pay hundreds of dollars for tax preparation services, and would not have the information they need to receive critical tax credits for which they are eligible. Over \$2 million in refunds went back to the local economy, \$839,000 of which was from Earned Income Tax Credits.

Over 400 families were able to maintain or obtain stable housing through rental and/or utility assistance.



## Paving the Road to Employment & Financial Success

"I came in not knowing what to expect. This is one of the best decisions I have ever made. I would recommend these classes to anyone I know, in fact, I already have."

– *Computer & Customer Service graduate*

*Doris P. had been unemployed for nearly two years when she learned about FRCA's Medical Billing & Coding program while receiving services from netWORKri. After graduating from the program, she began a new career at a local company, using the skills she received from the training. "This program gave me back my confidence. I feel prepared for my new job," she said.*

### Adult Training Programs

FRCA offers occupational skills training as well as training in areas such as computer skills, work readiness and life skills to help individuals find success in the world of work. A total of 188 adults graduated from FRCA **Employment & Training** programs, including 88 adults from the *Medical Billing & Coding* training, 60% of whom were placed in jobs during the fiscal year, and 32 adults from the *Computer & Customer Service* training, 56% of whom were placed in jobs during this reporting period. It is noteworthy that the average unemployment rate in Woonsocket in 2009 was 13.3%, tied for the third highest unemployment rate in the state.

FRCA continued its partnership with St. Antoine Residence in North Smithfield in support of *TEAMhealth2*, a CNA training and career laddering program funded by United Way's SkillUp RI initiative. Of the 46 individuals that completed the training, 46 (100%) became employed at St. Antoine or other area nursing centers. In addition, 12 individuals completed the new pre-CNA class covering fundamentals of healthcare advancement, 9 of whom continued on to the *TEAMhealth2* class. FRCA provided case management and job-readiness skills training to participants with additional education and support provided through partners Project LEARN and Quality Partners of Rhode Island.

The **YouthWORKS411 Career Center** provides work readiness, GED services, academic tutoring and career support to youth ages 14-24 to help them succeed in school and the work world. A total of 463 youth were served in FRCA youth programs in the reporting year. Highlights of youth programs:

- **Work Readiness** – A total of 140 youth completed FRCA's work readiness training program, a series of workshops aimed at teaching youth about the world of work.
- **Project Impact** – This GED and Career Preparation program in collaboration with Project RIRAL provides support for pregnant and parenting teens and other young men and women who have dropped out of high school. The program served 23 youth, eight of whom earned their GEDs.
- **Youth Success** – This collaboration between RI Community Action Programs to provide case management and oversight of pregnant and parenting teens served 47 local teens.
- **YouthPlus** – This collaboration with the Woonsocket Education Department helps youth recover credits to graduate from high school served 17 youth.
- **Sure Track to College** – This collaboration with NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley provided 10 youth with college-readiness assistance, eight of whom moved on to higher education.
- **Summer Programs** – A total of 136 youth were employed in summer jobs projects including We Can Too summer career exploration, the GrowUp Community Garden, the Construction Project, the Hospitality/Tourism Project and the Heritage Corridor Project. The programs involved nearly a dozen local business and community agency partners.

## Way to Work Transportation Center

FRCA's **Way to Work Center** provides employment transportation education and resources to help people get to and from work, job training and college. During the reporting period, 169 individuals received an assessment of their employment transportation needs, and 798 individuals received workshop training on topics such as RIPTA services, carpooling, bicycle commuting and low-income car ownership programs. A pilot transportation service was initiated in April, 2010 to provide evening hour transportation when public service is not available.

## Financial Literacy Program

With funding from the United Way of Rhode Island, FRCA began the **More for Your Money** Financial Stability Program in March, 2010 in partnership with NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, offering workshops and 1:1 financial coaching to assist individuals with increasing their income and asset development. Over 130 individuals participated in financial stability group training in the first four months of the program.

## GrowUp! Community Garden

The Community Garden had its first growing season in the summer, 2009. Youth enrolled in a summer work project tended the garden, harvested produce, delivered donated produce to local food pantries, and learned about green jobs, nutrition, and environmental horticulture. Since that time, dozens of community volunteers of all ages have contributed to the preparation, care and harvest of the garden. Program partners include the YMCA of Greater Woonsocket, and the City of Woonsocket.



"Working here picking food for people who are hungry makes me feel good about myself, that I'm actually doing something good."

– Youth Services Participant about his work in the **GROWUP! Community Garden**



## Opening Doors to Housing

"Moving into this house has helped me to grow independent and allows me to start working on my career and get recertified as a physician's assistant. If I couldn't be here, I'd be out on the street. Being able to stay here has saved my life."

– Permanent Supportive Housing Women's Recovery House Resident

*A mother and her two children had been living in the Woonsocket Shelter for over a year. Her struggles with substance use, a prior conviction and unpaid utility bills had made it especially difficult to secure subsidized housing. She sought substance use services from NRI Community Services, and the FRCA Case Manager connected her to other support including utility assistance that helped pay a back bill. The support, resources and encouragement enabled the family to move out of the shelter into their own apartment. "The shelter was my first and best step I ever made. I'm so proud of what I've done," she said.*

## Woonsocket Shelter

For over 20 years, FRCA has provided emergency housing assistance for the homeless and support to help families transition to safe, permanent housing. Families are referred to the employment, early childhood, substance use and basic needs and other services they need to become self-sufficient. Last year, the **Woonsocket Shelter**, including six emergency apartments, provided 27,611 bed nights of shelter to 294 residents. This number reflects 75 families with 169 children and 32 single females. Thirty-eight families with 84 children obtained permanent housing. Nine families secured employment and 12 families completed GED or a job training program.

The **Transitional Housing** program enrolled 27 new families during the reporting year; 22 families in Transitional Housing obtained permanent housing. The **Permanent Supportive Housing** program for homeless persons with disabilities served 10 single females and three families during the reporting year. Of these, two participants secured employment, and four participants became self-sufficient, moving into the community.

## Finding Caring Families for Children

*“Many youth in care can benefit from having a caring adult in their lives. There are many ways to provide support—mentoring a child, becoming a foster parent, providing respite care, adopting a child.”*

– Patti Corbett,  
Child Welfare Director



Eagle Scout candidate and other volunteers help beautify the Visitation Center.

*The importance of the bond between biological and foster parents is seen in the story of an infant girl who, due to her mother’s substance use, was placed with a foster family. Throughout the nine month placement, the foster parents fully supported visits with the mother. So strong was the bond that the mother asked the foster parents to be godparents at her daughter’s dedication ceremony, even though she spoke only Spanish and the foster parents spoke only English. Due to the commitment of the bio mother with support from the foster parents, the Northern RI Visitation Center and other community programs, the child was able to be reunited with her bio mom.*

The goal of FRCA’s Child Welfare Programs is to assist the RI Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) in providing for the safety, well being and permanency of youth in care, and to support the agency mission of strengthening families and individuals. A total of 34 children/youth were served in **Treatment Foster Care**. Eleven youth were discharged, nine of which (or 82%) were positive discharges. Four youth were moved into pre-adoptive homes, one youth was moved into a kinship foster home with the intention of adopting in the future, two youth were reunified with biological parent(s), and two youth moved into independent living situations (one in the military and one living in a local apartment and attending college.) Two youth were moved to a higher level of care.

The **Foster Family Support** program provides home based support services to licensed DCYF foster homes and kinship placement resources to stabilize and maintain children in the families in which they are placed. Support includes linking families to economic resources, training, behavioral consultation, and mental health services. The program served 50 kinship families who in turn cared for 59 children.

The **Northern RI Visitation Center** was developed collaboratively between FRCA and DCYF as a result of the Department downsizing its emergency shelter capacity, subsequently closing the Woonsocket Boys’ Shelter that had been in operation for over 20 years. The Center serves families of children in the care of DCYF due to a persistent problem with substance use. The program provides a combination of recovery coaching and parent skill-building that is integrated with parent-child visits in the home-like environment. Since its opening in the spring, 2010 and through the end of this fiscal year, the center served a total of 31 parents including 19 single parent families and six two parent families.



## Supporting People Living with HIV/AIDS

*“I would like to express my gratitude to the Agape Center for all they have given me over the years. When I first came to Rhode Island, I had no guidance. Since then, Agape has helped me with S.S.I., food, personal care products and providing a safe environment. Agape case managers go above and beyond their duties. They assure that a client is taken care of by helping to get their needs met. They could have let me slip through the cracks, but they didn’t.” – Agape Center Client*

The **Agape Center** provides a holistic approach to supporting individuals living with HIV/AIDS, treating its clients with dignity and respect while continuing to reinforce the importance of consistent medical care. Clients receive assistance with basic needs, education about the disease, peer support/socialization and case management. The Agape Center served 171 individuals in the past year, 133 of whom visited the center sometime during the year to receive one or more support services. The vast majority of active clients participated in and benefited from Agape services:

- 112 clients accessed the food pantry (30,199 lbs of food were distributed)
- 98 clients received on-site meals (2,455 meals were provided)
- 119 clients received personal care products
- 38 clients attended at least one educational luncheon (16 educational luncheons were conducted)

In addition, 102 clients received 2,222 hours of case management services; 93% of Agape clients receiving case management services visited their Infectious Disease Specialist in a six month period, and 85% of all out-of-agency referrals resulted in services being accessed.

The Agape Center relies on clients for much of its volunteer needs. Last year, Agape clients provided over 2,900 volunteer hours to support the program.

## Family Resources Community Action Statement of Financial Position

For the Year Ending June 30, 2010

Current Assets	1,159,701
Restricted Cash	45,055
Property and Equipment (net)	1,474,672
Investments Held in Perpetual Trusts	773,361

**Total Assets 3,452,789**

Current Liabilities	926,035
Long Term Debt	679,072

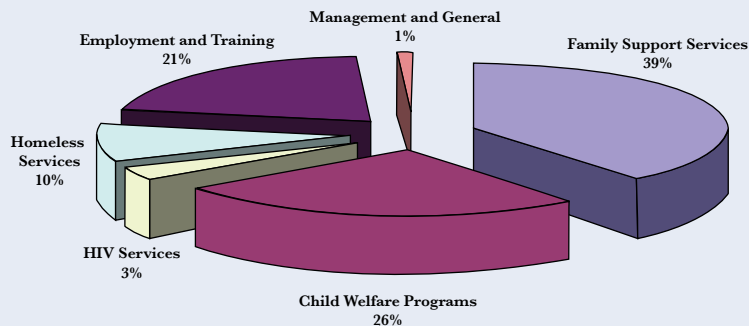
**Total Liabilities 1,605,107**

Unrestricted Net Assets	256,454
Invested in Facilities/Fixed Assets	772,812
Temporarily Restricted	45,055
Permanently Restricted	773,361

**Total Net Assets 1,847,682**

**Total Net Assets and Liabilities 3,452,789**

### Total Expenses \$7,740,787 by Services



**Administrative Offices, Family Support Center, Agape Center,  
Counseling Services**

245 Main Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895  
401.766.0900  
www.famresri.org

**Adult and Youth Employment & Training Center**

55 Main Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

**Child Welfare Services**

65 Main Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

**Early Intervention, Family Preservation, First Connections,  
Family Care Community Partnership**

8 Court Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

**The Northern Rhode Island Visitation Center**

31 Orchard Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895  
401.769.4558

**Emergency Shelter and Transitional/Permanent Supportive Housing**

Woonsocket, RI 02895  
401.767.0866



**Board of Directors:**

- |                                         |                    |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Nancy L. Benoit<br><b>Chair</b>         | Wesley Cruz        |
| Rev. Dorian Parker<br><b>Vice-Chair</b> | Dee Henry          |
| Julien Ayotte<br><b>Treasurer</b>       | Suzanne Joyal      |
| Gerard A. Noel, Jr.<br><b>Secretary</b> | Ron Miller         |
| Suzanne Blades                          | Bamby Mohamed      |
| Chris Carcifero                         | Charles Noel       |
| Christine Chiacu-Forsythe               | Vimala Phongsavanh |
|                                         | Jo Ann Rajabiun    |
|                                         | Candy J. Seldon    |
|                                         | Carol Wilson-Allen |



**Mission**

To strengthen families and individuals through social services, education, and economic opportunity while respecting the dignity of the people we serve.



Graphic Design by RiverzEdge Arts Project  
Chris Ledoux, 18

