

the POWER of RESILIENCE



2019-2020 Annual Report



Thanks to all of you, we have faced each challenge, expanded our programs and are confident about our future.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

2020 has been quite a year for CHS, our families, and the entire world

Children's Home Society celebrated its 120th Anniversary this year, and what a year it was. From a global pandemic to unprecedented economic challenges and a country newly focused on racial equity, CHS has resiliently faced each challenge—just as our wonderful clients do every day of every year. We could not be more proud of our creative staff, steadfast Board, loyal donors and mostly the amazing families, children and youth we serve. As we look toward the future we know we will have to continue to adapt to challenges that likely are still unforeseen. But adapt we will, as we are certain that our mission of providing permanency for Virginia's at-risk children and youth is now more important than ever.

As you read through this year's annual report, we hope that you are touched by the stories of our families, children and youth who have faced adversity with resiliency and who, without support of friends and donors like you, may have experienced very different outcomes. It is because of your steadfast commitment to our mission that we are able to serve the amazing people we serve, and it is because of that commitment that we feel confident about their future.

We are very pleased to announce that we have rebranded our program for youth who have aged out of foster care. That program will now be called My Path Forward. We heard from our youth that our program provided so much more than possibilities – that it provided the kind of individualized support that allowed them to find their path forward in life. Even more exciting is that because of a generous grant from the Fulton Family Foundation, we are expanding our program so that we can serve even more youth with housing and full wrap-around supports, helping them achieve the independence they both seek and deserve.

Thanks to all of you we are adapting and changing lives every day.
Gratefully,

Mel

Mel Tull
CHS Board Chair

Nadine

Nadine Marsh-Carter
CHS President, CEO, & Adoptive Parent

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Providing leadership that is transforming lives

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-2020

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BY THE NUMBERS IMPACT REPORT 2019- 2020

662

clients served across all programs



= 96%

client satisfaction score



= 91%

families in Post Adoption report improved family dynamics



292

parents and children received trauma-informed post adoption services



74

youth participated in the Post Adoption Club ("the PAC") respite services



= 67

foster youth placed with a family



= 42

youth who have aged out of foster care were provided housing and/or critical supports

50 state legislators were educated while we successfully advocated for foster care policy improvements



Financial information will be available this fall at www.connectva.org

FOSTER CARE ADOPTION PROGRAM

HELPING CHILDREN RECOVER FROM DIFFICULT STARTS THROUGH ADOPTION



Frances entered foster care as an 8-year-old because of neglect, instability and unsafe conditions in her birth home. After spending 9 years in foster and group homes, CHS facilitated Frances being adopted at the age of 17. She is now a smart, beautiful, and talented young lady who is doing well in school and working part-time. Frances' adoptive mom, Anna, shares some of her experiences in hopes that others

will gain insight on both the adoption process and how providing youth with a life-long family and stability transforms their lives.

I'd thought about adopting for years, but my main hesitation was fear of a lack of transparency into children's backgrounds. I had a good sense of what, as a single mom, I might be able to manage. CHS and my case worker, Laura, helped with the process each step of the way. She ensured transparency as we waded through various adoption listings and followed up with Social Service agencies so that I could review all the information available on waiting kids. Laura was an amazing help in guiding me towards the best possible match. Together, we found Frances. And now I have an amazing daughter!

I got so much support and guidance from CHS! Laura organized all my visits with Frances and even took me to the very first one! CHS's case coordination took the logistical strain away so that I could focus on getting to know my daughter. Once Frances was home, my CHS parent coach provided critical supports. She coached me weekly, always positive and identifying helpful resources during our transition into a family. Plus Frances received CHS supports to help her again trust being part of a family. Frances was also able to connect with other adopted teens so she didn't feel isolated by her difficult childhood experiences. Today, my kid is amazing and happy—what else could a parent ask for?!

5 POST ADOPTION PROGRAM

SUPPORTING ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Caylin was born 17 years ago to parents too young to care for her. At 13, after years of abusive care, she began a three-year struggle with the antidepressant Zoloft. Thoughts of suicide, hallucinations and seizures haunted her as she was transferred between multiple foster homes. While struggling with frequent psychiatric and medical emergencies, Caylin lost hope of being adopted.

Then CHS introduced Caylin to Margaret and Bill, who adored and wanted to adopt her. Margaret is a behavioral health professional who, soon after Caylin's placement with their family, recognized that Caylin's medications were the cause of many of her unstable behaviors. With training, guidance and supports from CHS's Post Adoption Services team, Caylin's new family is helping her work through her history of emotional distress. Since becoming a family- with her adoptive parents as her advocates - Caylin's medical emergencies have disappeared. Caylin has excelled in her first-ever year of public school and is already admitted to college where she is interested in forensics and law because she "wants to help people." In January 2020, word of Caylin's adoption being finalized arrived while she was vacationing with her new younger sister and brothers, whom she hugged and joyfully exclaimed "I'm really your sister now!"



"We choose CHS because of its fantastic reputation for matching and supporting families. We are thankful for the entire Post Adoption Team for maintaining contact and checking in on us...CHS is exceptionally supportive...We would not have done it without you!"

– Margaret & Bill, CHS adoptive parents

6 CHS ADVOCACY IN 2020

ADVOCATING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGES TO IMPROVE THE OUTCOMES OF VIRGINIA'S FOSTER CHILDREN AND YOUTH



There are over 5,000 Virginia children in foster care, around 600 of whom are waiting to be adopted. That's 600 children living without a permanent, stable family—moving from foster home to foster home or living in a group setting. Virginia is currently ranked 50th of the 50 states—worst in the

nation—for the rate of youth who age out of foster care without being adopted.* CHS is committed to finding permanent families for children while also fixing issues within the system that affect all children in care.

This year we worked with our advocacy partners to:

- Release over 40 policy recommendations relating to improvements in foster care, adoption and the needs of youth aging out of foster care;
- Educate over 50 legislators on foster care and adoption in Virginia;
- Advocate for legislative changes including the establishment of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman and the codification of Fostering Futures.

We also successfully advocated for increased supports of Virginia's social service agencies in order to address high staff turnover rates at the local level, which we find can result in months-long delays in children being placed with an adoptive family, often increasing the trauma and instability that they experience. While our social work teams place and support children with adoptive families, our advocacy team has worked to fix this systemic barrier by stabilizing the social services workforce.



While we were successful in our efforts with the General Assembly, due to COVID-19, the Governor has temporarily unallotted that funding. We will advocate for the reinstatement of that funding, and continue to focus on the challenges facing youth in Virginia's foster care system.

*Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center

MY PATH FORWARD

EQUIPPING YOUTH TO OVERCOME AND SUCCEED



What were you like at age 20? Where you hopeful for your future because you had examples in front of you and people who were supportive? Or where you uncertain where you would get the help and guidance you needed to achieve your goals?

When Jared came to the CHS program My Path Forward (formerly known as The Possibilities Project) he was uncertain about his goals and how he could achieve them. Like so many youth who have aged out of foster care who don't have a supportive family, he didn't have the luxury of dreaming about the future. Jared lacked stable housing, was struggling to make

ends meet, and wasn't even sure what occupation to pursue - or how. At a time when his life of instability had him filled with self-doubt, Jared started to participate in My Path Forward.

MPF provided Jared housing and many supports, including life skills, health care access and work force training. Our staff introduced him to careers he did not know existed. When Jared choose the field of welding, we assisted him with enrolling and succeeding in community college. Jared began an 18 month journey of taking welding classes and working 20-30 hours a week.

The process wasn't always easy: there were times of frustrating classwork, unemployment, and self-doubt. But with the support of CHS staff, Jared persevered and completed his welding certification. He is now working with a major employer in Newport News, has his own apartment and is thriving! Like so many of the aged out foster youth participants in MPF, Jared is an example of how support of CHS's work is an investment in changing the lives of youth who once lacked hope, so they can reach their full potential!

SPECIAL REPORT: "AGED OUT" FILM PORTRAYS MY PATH FORWARD

Early in 2019, Pam Hervey of Fuel Creative approached CHS and Better Housing Coalition with an incredible opportunity to produce a documentary film about youth of promise who age out of foster care without the system finding them a permanent

home. Come January, we were overwhelmed with the response from our supporters and the community at the grand premiere for the film ***Aged Out: Finding Home***!

The hour-long locally produced documentary skillfully explores what happens to four Richmond-area young participants in our program *My Path Forward* (formerly *The Possibilities Project*) who aged out—and the challenges they face. ***Aged-Out: Finding Home*** first aired on VPM/PBS TV on Thursday, January 23. The film is available for you to watch



in its entirety from a link on our My Path Forward resources page.

Together with Better Housing Coalition and Fuel Creative, CHS hosted a premier screening of the documentary at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

The film—which features interviews with Virginia's Governor, several state legislators, MPF staff and youth participants—provides audiences with information about the program, needs of its participants and our advocacy work to improve the outcomes of all former foster youth in Virginia.

CHS is grateful to all of our partners, colleagues and supporters who participated in this unique opportunity to assist youth who have great potential and can thrive when given the supports MPF provides!



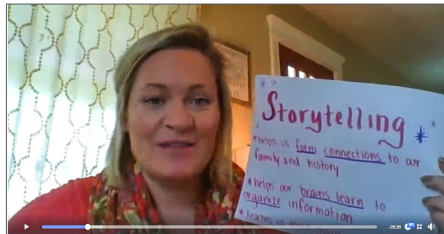
Supporters of our program for young adults enjoyed attending the special premiere of "Aged Out" in January.

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

CHS's Post Adoption Activities



This year our Post Adoption Club ("the PAC") enjoyed record attendance even as our outdoor bonding activities evolved into "Just Press Play" online!



We hope you enjoyed learning about our illustrious history of innovation as we celebrated our 120th Anniversary in this year's Red Stocking Fundraiser Calendar

CHS InThe News



Fundraisers 2019-2020



Special thanks to our Junior Board for hosting a fun and productive National Adoption Month fundraiser at Bingo Beer Co. in November!



Our annual fundraising gala "120th Anniversary Celebration" featuring Leigh Anne Tuohy of "The Blind Side" is rescheduled for April 15, 2021... Please "Save the Date!"

My Path Forward → Empowering Youth for Independence



We rebranded our successful program for young adults to become My Path Forward—"Empowering Youth for Independence"



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

As our programs and services continue to expand, we ask our supporters to consider increasing their contributions too. Make your gift today at www.chsva.org

OUR MISSION

is to build strong
permanent families
and lifelong relationships
for Virginia's at-risk
children and youth.

OUR VISION

is a thriving family
for every child.



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