



# Kids & Communities Newsletter

February 2020 Issue 46



## A Message from Jeanne Warnock



On behalf of the board, staff, and families of Family Intervention Services, I would like to thank you for your commitment to support children and families in our community. We are grateful to have you as a partner in our work.

I am excited to announce that FIS has joined forces with Center for Family Services (CFS), a highly established, comprehensive and innovative family-serving organization in New Jersey. On January 1st, FIS became a division of CFS, with Richard Stagliano serving as the President/CEO of the combined organization. This partnership strengthens our ability to continue to deliver high-quality programs, expand existing services, and put effective practices into place to best serve the people in our communities. I will continue to support our longstanding work as President/CEO Emeritus, in partnership with Richard.

FIS made the decision to come together with Center For Family Services because of our mutual commitment to offering children and families their greatest chance for a good life. Together we can bring our values, outcomes, work ethic and commitment to family success to the entire state. Joining forces puts our newly combined organization in an even stronger position to deliver high-quality programs, expand existing services, and put effective practices into place to best serve the children and families in communities across the state. This partnership will strengthen our effectiveness, build our capacity, spread best practices, and expand our reach.

The combined agency will serve individuals, children and families throughout the state, including the counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Morris, Passaic, Ocean, Salem and Sussex. With Center For Family Services currently

serving nearly 70,000 children and family members in southern New Jersey and FIS serving nearly 15,000 children and family members in the northern part of the state, their combined capacity and expertise will be of great benefit to New Jersey families and communities.

We look forward to continued opportunities to partner with you to support children and families to achieve success throughout Passaic, Morris, Essex, and Sussex counties and now in additional counties throughout the state. Your continued involvement helps to break down barriers that stand in the way of a safe and healthy life. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Richard Stagliano with any questions during this transition.



### **Thanksgiving and Holiday Drive**

During the holiday seasons our families receive turkey dinners and presents. FIS is so grateful to have such wonderful community partners. We could never do what we do without your support.

Thank you to all our donors, corporations, schools, churches and individual donors to make this holiday season so magical and special for our families.





## Gissell Reyes is Focused on Family

Gissell Reyes knows the importance of empowering the families that she works with, not just enabling them.



Gissell alongside her fiance.

As a bilingual domestic violence trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy clinician at the Morris County office, Gissell helps children and families in trauma situations with everything from coping skills to treatment planning.

"The families that I work with come from homes where they are often disempowered," she said.

"It's important to encourage them and let them know that they have the power to succeed on their own," Gissell said. "No one can take away that power."

She provides struggling families with emotional support, as well as a road map to acquire resources.

"I always let them know that they can accomplish so much by themselves," Gissell said. "Often, people don't hear that kind of encouragement and it really, truly goes a long way," she said.

Gissell is normally with a family for 16-18 two-hour sessions. In that time, she is able to create vital connections and help families through transitional times.

Working on the FIS team has made Gissell realize that she doesn't need to do everything on her own; she's grown both personally and professionally since assuming the position in March.

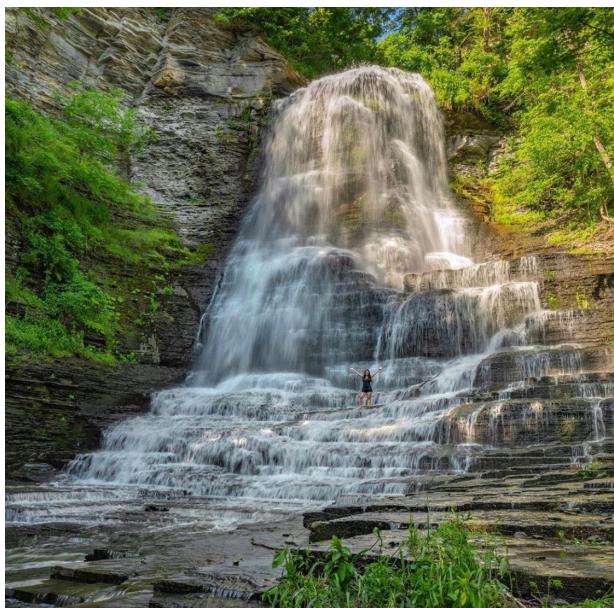
"The culture at FIS is simply different than other typical workplaces," Gissell said. "Everyone is so supportive and even offer to help with issues that have absolutely nothing to do with work."

When she's not working with a family, Gissell is busy planning her wedding. As we all know (or remember,) there is a laundry list of things to do before the big day!



Gissell pictured with her family.

## Merve Yildiz Has a Strong Passion for Child Advocacy



Merve enjoying a beautiful hike.

Merve Yildiz feels strongly about being an advocate for children because she didn't have many advocates herself growing up.

Her position at FIS as a crisis intervention specialist in the Passaic office allows her the perfect opportunity to help children and their parents deal with critical situations that are often rife with stress.

"I've dealt with many different situations with

families varying in severity," Merve said. "My position at FIS gives me the opportunity to connect with children and families at all different stages of life."

After Merve is assigned to a family, she spends up to eight weeks with them, providing them with various resources and counseling. Often, it can just be a hug that makes all the difference, as people sometimes just want

to assure that others truly care.

Resources can vary from the street address of a local food pantry to connecting a family with legal services depending on the situation. Her main focus is always the children.

"The most important part of my job is to make sure that the child, or children, in the situation are safe," she said. "I see daily how much I can impact these families' lives and I've loved every minute of it so far."

Even though Merve has only been with FIS since August, she already feels like part of the family.

"FIS has one of the best work environments out there because everyone is so friendly and willing to help," she said. "There's always someone offering to help even though everyone at FIS is very busy."

Outside of her job at FIS, Merve is an avid hiker and camper. The fresh air and the beauty of nature revives her, providing the energy to fully immerse herself with families in crisis.



Merve and her sister.



### **FIS Staff Support Mental Health Day, Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month**



October was Breast Cancer Awareness month along with Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the staff at FIS sported their pink and purple to show their support.

Domestic violence affects millions, both women and men, of every race, religion, culture and status. FIS is dedicated to breaking the cycle of domestic violence.



FIS also acknowledged World Mental Health Day on Oct. 10, wearing green in support of this year's theme: suicide prevention. We also continually support and encourage discussion and activities to promote mental health in the workplace.



### Have you seen our new video?

If you want to see how FIS supports our families and communities and why we are so passionate about what we do, please take a moment and watch this video! You can help spread the word about the wonderful work we do by sharing the link below with your family and friends!

***Please watch and share our new video about how we promote Family Success the FIS Way! <http://bit.ly/FISvideo>***

## Become a Friend of FIS



Let 2020 be the year you lend your talents to the growing group of Friends of FIS!

Friends of FIS was created to engage the growing number of people who have expressed a desire to volunteer with FIS, and are interested in learning about various one-time volunteer opportunities. Let us know via email at [lhenry@fisnj.org](mailto:lhenry@fisnj.org).

### Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Professional services to a Family in Need**
- **Backpack Drive** at your school or with a group of your choosing
- **Toy Drive**
- **Emergency Food for Families** - one-time phone call to help a family in need
- **Phil's Fund** - Phil's Fund is our way of fulfilling the dreams of our kids. We've been able to provide children with opportunities such as a trip to the Liberty Science Center, a professional sporting event, and singing lessons.

Fundraising events and private donations make it possible for some families to make their kids' wishes come true.

- **Jenny's Hope Fund** - Jenny's Hope is specifically for families that struggle to meet the basic needs of their infant-preschooler aged children, with items such as diapers, baby furniture, car seats, etc. These items are provided with private donations like yours.
- **Birthday Club** - The Birthday Club was created because some families that struggle to meet their basic needs do not have the luxury of celebrating their child's birthday. Birthday Club donations go toward the purchase of party plates, cups, napkins, balloons, party favors, goody bags and a gift card to purchase a birthday cake. This is a great cause for Boy/Girl Scout clubs to take on as well!

Have other ideas of how you would like to become involved with us? Let us know! We are eager to hear from you and welcome any support and suggestions you may have!

### CONNECT WITH US

For latest updates on news and events, visit us at [www.fisnj.org](http://www.fisnj.org).

Like us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/FISNJ](https://www.facebook.com/FISNJ))



## Join the Amazon Wish List



FIS has created our newest Amazon Wish List containing items that are most requested by the families we serve. Some items include laundry hampers, cleaning supplies and canned goods.

Please consider purchasing an item on Amazon and making a difference in someone's life. Any contribution helps!

If you would prefer to purchase comparable items at the store rather than online, you can drop off or mail your donations to any of our offices. You can find our office locations on the FIS website: [www.fisnj.org](http://www.fisnj.org).

VISIT US ONLINE AT:  
[www.fisnj.org](http://www.fisnj.org)

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

MAKE A DONATION TODAY

Stay Connected:



973-324-7879 | [Ihenry@fisnj.org](mailto:Ihenry@fisnj.org)