Safety
Empowerment
Hope

Serving Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, and Trumbull

centerforfamilyjustice.org
During the last year we have experienced one of the most unprecedented and challenging periods in our 126-year history. In the midst of a global pandemic, we were called on to meet the needs of our clients in crisis after experiencing domestic and sexual violence under the most extraordinary of circumstances.

Together, we were able to meet the urgent need of victims and survivors in some truly inspiring ways. Throughout the year, The Center for Family Justice responded to staggering increases in demand for our services yet managed to keep our clients safe, sheltered and supported, regardless of the obstacles.

The unwavering commitment and enterprising spirit of CFJ’s staff was deeply moving: We met with clients over Zoom, kept our safe house fully operational, and moved overflow clients into hotels. Our Court Advocacy and Pro Bono Legal teams helped victims obtain restraining orders and proceed with urgent legal claims against their abusers. We launched a new Rapid Rehousing program to get our clients safely into new apartments. We also held some of the most successful fundraising and awareness events in our history, albeit virtually!

For these reasons, we would like to dedicate this Annual Report to the 52 CFJ employees who tirelessly and selflessly demonstrated they are essential first responders. To every member of CFJ’s team we say THANK YOU for all you have done to help victims and survivors get the services they need.

Despite the inherent challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have achieved some noteworthy successes. They include:

- Celebrating our 125th Jubilee Virtual Gala;
- Receiving a historic $1.5 million grant from the Elizabeth M. Pfriem Foundation to expand our Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport program and the related Pathways to HOPE mentorship program;
- Launching the Empower House Project, to create a new domestic violence safe house;
- Expanding our Latinx Domestic Violence Advocacy Program for our Spanish-speaking clients.

We know you join us in cheering these achievements along with the distinguished 2021 CFJ award winners we recognize in this report.

While we welcome a return to normal in the coming months, we will look back on this time with a profound sense of gratitude for everyone who has helped us help our clients.

With gratitude and appreciation,
**THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

**HOPE BY THE NUMBERS**

**Hotel Bed Nights**

1,400% Increase

**Domestic Violence Advocacy Clients**

18% Increase

**Sexual Violence Advocacy Clients**

441

**Total Clients Served**

4,385

**Domestic Violence Hotline Calls**

692

**Overall Service**

25% Increase

(*After CFJ Reopened to Walk-In Client Services in July 2020*)

**Multidisciplinary Team Clients:** 209

**Outreach Event Attendance:** 16,392

**Criminal Court Clients:** 2,474

**Legal Services Clients:** 263

**Training Institute Participants:** 4,501

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**JULY:** CFJ reopens its Fairfield Avenue headquarters after a four-month closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic and resumes client walk-in service.

**AUGUST:** CFJ holds its annual Golf Classic at Mill River Country Club in Stratford.

**MARCH:** The Elizabeth M. Pfriem Foundation announces a $1.5 million 5-year grant to Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport and the Pathways to HOPE mentoring program.

- CFJ Celebrates its 125th Jubilee Virtual Gala.
- CFJ officially launches the Empower House Project, an ambitious plan to open a new domestic violence safe house.

**SEPTEMBER:** Activist, author, and GEMS founder Rachel Lloyd keynotes CFJ’s annual Speaking of Women luncheon as a virtual event.

**OCTOBER:** CFJ observes Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a virtual vigil.

**DECEMBER:** More than 70 families and community organizations participate in the 2020 Adopt-a-Family Program, in support of over 200 client families and their children.

**APRIL:** Ninth Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® held as a virtual event with live Watch Party at Sacred Heart University.

**MAY:** Angela Schlingheyde, J.D., CFJ’s Director of Civil Legal & Court Advocacy Services, named a Game Changer by the Connecticut Law Tribune.

- Multitalented actress, activist, and survivor Dawnn Lewis named 2021 Speaking of Women keynote.
- Students at Fairfield’s Warde and Ludlowe high schools held Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® events.

**JUNE:** CFJ Golf Classic held at Mill River Country Club in Stratford.
INVESTING IN HOPE: Elizabeth M. Pfriem Foundation Makes Transformative Camp HOPE Grant

In March, CFJ received a $1.5 million gift from the Elizabeth M. Pfriem Foundation to support the expansion of our award-winning Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport program. This five-year transformational grant will allow us to expand our services to adults, children, and youth who have witnessed or experienced abuse. The generous grant is in keeping with the late Bridgeport philanthropist Elizabeth M. Pfriem’s enduring commitment to our award-winning Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport program. “Elizabeth Pfriem had an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and children in the Greater Bridgeport area, and her generosity of spirit was reflected in her efforts to support anyone impacted by abuse,” said CFJ’s President & CEO Debra A. Greenwood. “Her foundation’s gift to our award-winning Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport program will now be formally known as Elizabeth M. Pfriem Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport. It is our honor to carry on her legacy.”

BUILDING A SAFER FUTURE: The Empower House Project

In March, CFJ announced ambitious plans to build a new, expanded safe house for adults and children impacted by domestic violence. Known as the Empower House Project, the new, 9,000-square-foot shelter will be located in an expansive private home purchased recently by CFJ to create a state-of-the-art residence for victims in need of safe, free housing where they can work to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of abuse. The Empower House Project is a comprehensive, community-based model that will provide survivors with personalized services to help them rebuild their lives. The new, 9,000-square-foot shelter will be located in an expansive private home purchased recently by CFJ to create a state-of-the-art residence for victims in need of safe, free housing where they can work to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of abuse.

In addition to the 24-bed residential program, the Empower House Project will expand the disaster relief program and our service area to Fairfield County and beyond. Many of our cases involve a women’s shelter in Fairfield County, which is often at capacity. In addition to creating more room for clients, our new facility will offer amenities including:

- Private suites for clients and their families;
- Indoor and outdoor play spaces for children;
- A computer room;
- Meditation room;
- Expanded rooms for self-sufficiency programs;
- A safe kennel to house clients’ pets.

To make the dream of making Empower House a reality, CFJ has embarked on a $3 million capital campaign to raise funds to complete this project by the end of this year. “Financial insecurity is so often what keeps clients trapped in abusive relationships,” explains Marisa. “With this program, we’re giving people a path forward by showing them how to do the work necessary to have more economic security in their lives.”

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the program expanded this year to include the intensive Money Wise program. This new series is for advanced Rise & Thrive students interested in taking their financial literacy to the next level. This Rise & Thrive program has been offered to CFJ clients this year with the support of Webster Bank.

HOME SAFE HOME: Rapid Rehousing Program Expands

The need for our domestic violence clients to find safe, alternative places to live has always been critical as they try to leave an abusive relationship. In the last year, CFJ has intensified its efforts to help our domestic violence clients secure new, safer homes as CFJ Direct Services Team member Adrienne Smith took on a new role as our first Rapid Rehousing Case Manager. In her new position, Adrienne helps clients navigate the often complicated and expensive housing market in Fairfield County and beyond. Many of her cases involve working with clients living in CFJ’s domestic violence safe house to find permanent, affordable living options elsewhere.

Moving clients from the safe house to apartments has been especially critical during the Covid-19 pandemic as our safe house was at capacity and the agency spent tens of thousands of dollars providing hotel shelter to overflow clients. Since taking on this new role, Adrienne has successfully placed seven CFJ families and one single domestic violence survivor in new apartments from New London to Stamford. Many more continue to work with her waiting for housing placements. The challenges our clients face as they seek housing for themselves and their families can often be daunting. They may lack the resources to pay market rate rents; have prior evictions because of the domestic violence in their homes and also have poor credit histories because of the financial abuse they experienced in prior relationships.

“It is hard to tell someone you need to leave your abuser if they have nowhere to go,” explains Adrienne. “Housing is one of the reasons people are likely to stay in cycles of abuse. They tend to be the repeat clients we see again and again.”

Through our Rapid Rehousing program, Adrienne is working to change that. She helps our clients secure housing through an innovative program which pays rent and security deposits, which are often a barrier in their attempts to secure new housing. The program also provides rent subsidies, based on a clients’ income, throughout their first year as renters. Success stories include a woman who came to CFJ homeless and living in a domestic violence relationship. “She was pregnant and living in her car with her abuser,” explains Adrienne. “She has come so far. Now she and her baby are in an apartment and doing really well. It’s gratifying to see that outcome.”

INVESTING IN SECURE FUTURES: Rise & Thrive Self-Sufficiency Series Grows

As many as 99 percent of domestic violence victims experience some kind of financial abuse. Another 48 percent report they have suffered a job loss because of their victimization. Since 2016, CFJ’s Rise & Thrive Self-Sufficiency Series has been offering our domestic violence clients a pathway to rebuild their economic security through a comprehensive series of financial literacy workshops. These free training sessions focus on critical self-sufficiency issues including finding and securing housing, employment and establishing and repairing credit.

The program is coordinated by CFJ’s Coordinator of Domestic Violence & Empowerment Services, Marisa Garwacki, who also is a Certified Financial Social Worker. Her advanced training allows her to sensitively help her clients work towards financial wellness after experiencing significant trauma in their lives through a three-step process that includes planning, recovery and ultimately restoration of their financial security.

“The Center for Family Justice probably saved my life. It was in real danger and you helped me put my abusive relationship in my past.”

– J.L., DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

The Center For Family Justice / Annual Report 2021
**BEATRICE BOUCHER VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR: Casey and Deb Dies**

Deb and Casey Dies began volunteering for CFJ several years ago when they were members of the Fairfield chapter of the National Charity League, a nonprofit which engages mothers and teenage daughters in acts of philanthropy and service. Deb was the chapter’s liaison to CFJ, and Casey was a high school student.

Even though their relationship with NCL formally ended years ago with Casey’s graduation from the Hopkins School last year, they have continued to support CFJ’s clients in a variety of impactful and meaningful ways. Together, they have volunteered at our annual Golf Classic, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®, Boo Bash, our annual Halloween party for our client children.

Now a student at Cornell University, Casey was an exceptional volunteer for our Elizabeth M. Pfriem Camp HOPE America-Bridgeport program last summer. She plans to continue her Camp HOPE service this year.

Deb is a certified CFJ Direct Services Volunteer and was an original member of our Circle of HOPE volunteer task force, which helped CFJ successfully expand volunteer engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic. She supported our Training Institute with a remote online research project.

The entire CFJ team is thrilled to present its most prestigious volunteer honor for the first time to a mother/daughter volunteer duo and looks forward to working with Deb and Casey for years to come.

**CAROL ROBERTO EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: Melissa Martinez, M.A., LPC**

As CFJ’s first Child Clinician, Melissa works with our youngest clients impacted by the trauma of domestic and sexual abuse. She is an integral part of CFJ’s Multi-Disciplinary Team, which provides crisis and supportive services to children who have experienced extreme abuse. Her dedication to the young, vulnerable children and teens who receive the free clinical services CFJ offers—as well as to their families and caregivers—is unwavering and inspiring.

Melissa has created a warm, welcoming environment for her young clients, transforming her office into a cozy space where they can feel safe and comfortable sharing some of their traumatic experiences.

In nominating Melissa for CFJ’s most prestigious employee honor, several of her colleagues lauded the exceptional compassion and dedication she provides to her clients, as well as her constant willingness to go above and beyond for them. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Melissa worked diligently to stay connected to her clients in person and via virtual counseling sessions.

In addition to her transformative work with our youngest clients and their families, Melissa is a caring and exceptional colleague. She is appreciated for her empathetic ear and constant eagerness to collaborate. She has facilitated self-care sessions for CFJ’s staff.

Our entire team extends its congratulations to Melissa on this honor.

**PARTNER OF THE YEAR: Fairfield Police Detective Kerry Dalling**

When CFJ became the state’s first Family Justice Center in 2016, Fairfield Police Detective Kerry Dalling was the first law enforcement officer from the six communities we serve to join our team on site. Since then, Detective Dalling has supported our clients and staff with her exceptional expertise in the crimes of domestic and sexual violence.

Detective Dalling offers the clients who seek her help a deep understanding of the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence and the many ways that trauma can impact a victim’s interactions with the criminal justice system. Their safety and connection to supportive services is paramount in her approach to her work.

Detective Dalling’s outstanding service to CFJ goes beyond providing her law enforcement expertise to our staff and clients. She is among the most popular and engaging faculty members in our Training Institute’s Certification Course, offered three times a year to our staff, volunteers and anyone interested in learning more about the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence. Her informative presentations help foster a greater understanding of the complexities of prosecuting domestic and sexual violence offenders and the challenges of police investigations.

In addition to her weekly on-site work, Detective Dalling is also a dedicated CFJ volunteer, who regularly supports our annual Golf Classic and Speaking of Women luncheon events.

We congratulate Detective Dalling on this well-deserved honor and look forward to working with her in continued partnership to provide safety, hope and empowerment to our clients.

**COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR: Band Central**

The talented, philanthropic musicians behind Band Central perform with the philosophy that when people “band together they are stronger than the sum of their parts.” That generosity of spirit has been reflected throughout the nonprofit’s long relationship with CFJ.

For the last several years, Band Central members and its founder, Rob Fried, have partnered with CFJ to support our mission of providing hope, safety and empowerment to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the six communities we serve. The relationship began when the band performed at the 2016 Gratitude Gala held to celebrate our launch as the state’s first Family Justice Center. It has continued with engaging performances at several of our Annual Meetings and this year’s 125th Jubilee Virtual Gala Celebration.

CFJ is honored to be a recipient of Band Central’s philanthropy and celebrates its multi-faceted approach to bringing musicians, nonprofits, audience members and donors together through the collective power of its performances. Its relationship with CFJ has helped us raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to advance our mission, part of the more than $4.3 million in funds it has helped generate for more than 60 nonprofits since its inception in 2005.

CFJ has been grateful to expand on this meaningful relationship as Rob Fried has become part of the committee behind the creation of our new Empower House safe house project.

We congratulate the Band Central team for receiving this honor, bestowed annually on a nonprofit which helps us advance our mission.
## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### Year Ended June 30

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<tr>
<th>Revenues and Other Support</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts (Federal &amp; State)</td>
<td>1,723,727</td>
<td>1,530,801</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>1,558,602</td>
<td>933,966</td>
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<td>Professional Services and Other Fees</td>
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<td>22,890</td>
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<td>Fundraising Events</td>
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<td>262,987</td>
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<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>10,343</td>
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<td>Rental Income</td>
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<td>73,319</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support</strong></td>
<td>3,627,810</td>
<td>2,847,103</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy and MDT Services</td>
<td>1,399,790</td>
<td>1,021,667</td>
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<td>Court Advocacy and Civil Legal Services</td>
<td>529,765</td>
<td>479,013</td>
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<td>Crisis &amp; Housing Services</td>
<td>563,679</td>
<td>566,436</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention Education &amp; Training Institute</td>
<td>220,855</td>
<td>115,526</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Program Services</strong></td>
<td>2,713,489</td>
<td>2,182,642</td>
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| Support Services and Rental Operations                          | 878,652 | 903,685 |
| **Total Expenses**                                              | 3,592,141 | 3,086,327 |

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<tr>
<th>Change in Net Assets</th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35,669</td>
<td>(239,224)</td>
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</tbody>
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| Net Assets June 30                                              | 2,403,974 | 2,368,305 |

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**SENIOR STAFF**

- **Debra A. Greenwood**, President & CEO
- **Mark Antonini**, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer
- **Kaye Cwikla-Masas**, Director of Youth & Adult Services
- **Lisa Labelia**, Director of Development & Community Outreach
- **Mary Ann Mencel**, Executive Project Coordinator

**CFJ LEADERSHIP**

- **Debra A. Greenwood**
- **Mark Antonini**
- **Kaye Cwikla-Masas**
- **Lisa Labelia**
- **Mary Ann Mencel**
- **Debra A. Greenwood**

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"I don’t know what I would have done without The Center for Family Justice. My family and I were out of options. I had nowhere to go to escape my abuser. You gave me a place to stay and helped me begin to get my life back."

— S.L., DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR
“Thank you for all the kindness you showed my family at the holidays. The gifts were amazing. My kids were jumping up and down. We would not have had a holiday without this.”

- M.P., DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFE HOUSE RESIDENT

“The staff at CFJ was with me every step of the way, providing me with a safe and protected place. I don’t know where I would be today if it were not for the support, services and guidance provided to us.”

- J.H., SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR