



Social Inclusion, Early Intervention, Recovery

Each year, the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) requires organizations that receive funding to conduct a standardized Consumer Satisfaction Survey (March through June), results of which are reviewed and summarized for each organization.

Laurel House has consistently done well on the survey of programs in Social Rehabilitation, Supported Education, Supported Employment and Supportive Housing Services. But this year, the write-in comments reached a new level of Gratitude. Listed below are some of those comments.

Program Participant Satisfaction

"The support I get from Laurel House is everything to me. I don't feel like a number at Laurel House. I feel like a person who is counted and able to participate."

"I am ten times better than when I first started coming to Laurel House."

"I am a different person now – in a better way."

"Among all the services I have been through, Laurel House has been the most consistent and the most helpful."

"Three weeks of no smoking, all because of the help of Laurel House." "Everything and everyone have been so good to me. I have benefitted greatly from Laurel House and someday I hope to do something if I can in return."

"I feel good about myself.
Thank you."

"This is my 3rd run at Laurel House Employment. It feels like the 3rd time is a charm and I really like my Employment Specialist." "The services are a blessing to all persons who are impaired in some way and have a disability, to help organize, teach skills, and prepare for being ready and independent."

"The staff are remarkable.
Whoever is on the hiring
committee over the years I
have been here, have done a
wonderful job. They are friendly,
caring and very supportive."

"Knowing Laurel House is there as a safety net is comforting.

The agency was able to help me get a job that I love."

"I appreciate the extra help I have been given. 5 Stars. Excellent staff – People are helped here. Hard working, understanding, encouraging! Kind!"

A Message from our CEO and our Chairman

Resilience and Gratitude: Lessons Learned from our Program Participants

In the course of our daily operations, we continue to face the backdrop of uncertain times caused by the toll of COVID - 19, by social unrest due to racial disparities in access to healthcare, educational, social and economic resources, and by widespread financial losses. This pandemic has magnified the effects of isolation on mental health. But few have experienced the isolation and associated anxiety more than the clients we serve, and particularly those who are black and people of color.

Laurel House program participants have displayed an amazing resilience, learned over time, not only by dealing with their disability of mental illness, but also by experiencing the poverty that is part of their daily lives. Nearly 100% of the clients we served this past year have household incomes that are at or below 50% of Area Median Income; 27% of our program participants are Black or African American and 17% are Hispanic.

Our clients' gratitude for Laurel House's services and outreach inspires our entire team. (Please see on the opposite page some of their prolific responses to a recent client satisfaction survey.) The services that we have provided in their local communities have been met with an exuberant **Thank You**. We have supported dire needs and the most basic of needs including: delivering food and medication; providing activity books for use at home and through our online workshops; assisting with the completion of forms to maintain subsidized housing and helping clients complete unemployment applications when they were furloughed.

We in turn are immensely grateful for the ability to continue our services without interruption, thanks to:

- The sustained generosity of our donors, foundation and grant funders, volunteers and supporters.
- Laurel House staff at every level who put themselves at risk to ensure clients (including tenants in our apartment buildings and in scattered site apartments in the community) remain safe, healthy and not isolated.
- Receiving a Cares Act Payroll Protection Program loan which facilitated our team's full employment.
- Foresight to ensure we had the technology to host our programs virtually and to enable our counselors to be quickly responsive to client calls and online requests.
- The continued growth and services offered through our online portal www.rtor.org in partnership with our Resource Specialists who have met the increased requests to Laurel House and rtor.org for mental health services. We've supported many new clients who are struggling with mental health issues for the first time, including front-line healthcare workers, and the families of those who lost a loved one due to the pandemic. We are honored to be a touchstone to mental health recovery.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us and who has encouraged our work. This has been an especially challenging year for us financially. The inability to hold our Annual Fundraiser resulted in our first deficit in many years. Your donations will make the difference in sustaining the continuity of our services and our clients' renewed hope and confidence to lead fulfilling lives in the community.

Linda M. Autore President and CEO

Linda M. autore

Kenneth A. DellaRocco, Esq. Chairman, Board of Directors



Removing Barriers to Success at Work, In School, and Living Independently

Supported Employment and Mobile Employment Services

Laurel House utilizes the evidence-based practice of Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) developed at the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center to help individuals with mental illness get and keep competitive employment focused on their strengths.

60 - 80% of people living with serious mental illness are unemployed but most identify employment as a primary life goal. Laurel House also provides Mobile Employment Services (MES) onsite and online to individuals in recovery from opioid and substance use disorders living in recovery housing. Laurel House is 1 of only 5 organizations in CT selected for the MES contract.





Thinking Well and Skill Building

Many of the adverse outcomes associated with mental illness, such as the inability to hold a job, homelessness, or social isolation, can be traced to cognitive impairment.

Thinking Well programs to improve executive function and cognitive skills are held online and in person at Laurel House's Resource Center and in the community. Pre and Post Assessments are also available online. The program's success is measured in the participants' increased confidence, improved thinking skills and in functional outcomes ranging from getting a job, or volunteering, to going back to school, taking on more hours at work, to engaging better socially or living independently.

Supported Education and Tele-Education Services (TEdS)

An evidence-based program, Supported Education assists participants in choosing a post-secondary school or vocational certification program, applying for admission and financial aid, selecting and enrolling in classes, and accessing on-campus disability support services. For Fairfield County students who go away to college and are living on campus, Laurel House offers TEdS, giving the student access to his/her counselor via video-calling, emails, texting, and phone calls. Counselors help students identify resources, create time schedules, develop coping skills to meet academic, social and emotional demands, and utilize on-campus offerings.



Supported Education Coordinator, Tyler Nolan, delivers a donated laptop to one of his clients

Thank You to **People with Disabilities Foundation** for funding toward Supported Employment and **Purdue Pharma, L.P.** for support of Mobile Employment Services and Thinking Well. Thank you for Thinking Well Mobile support from: **The Community Fund of Darien**; **Fairfield County's Community Foundation**; and **The Inner-City Foundation for Charity & Education.** Thank you to **Greenwich United Way** for support of both Thinking Well and Supported Education and to **The Pitney Bowes Foundation, Inc.** for support of TEdS and Supported Education. Thank you for Supported Education funding from: **The Dammann Fund, Inc.**; **Greenwich Dept. of Human Services**; **New Canaan Community Foundation** and the **Acushnet Fund**; **John H. & Ethel G. Noble Charitable Trust**; **Savings Bank of Danbury**; and **Stanley Family Foundation**.

Community Support Services and Supportive Housing

Laurel House provides safe, affordable housing and critical support services to sustain the mental health and substance use recovery of individuals in independent living settings. Services are provided in Laurel House's own apartments and in scattered site apartments in the community where Laurel House is not the landlord. Participants in **Supportive Housing and Community Services** programs receive case management, coaching in Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), goal planning and monitoring for recovery, and assistance in budgeting and accessing community services. They participate in social rehabilitation **Peer Support and Wellness** groups to develop coping skills, self-management alternatives, problem solving and stress reduction skills. Clients benefit from regular outreach by counselors to ensure their nutrition and physical health is monitored and addressed.

Safety protocol for COVID-19 response

has added a new set of considerations to delivery of services, but it has not changed the basic outbound model — meeting clients in the community as much as possible. Facetime, Zoom and phone calls supplement those community meetings. Delivery of meals (instead of lunch in the Resource Center café), masks, and activity books and materials for use in online workshops are part of the outreach to keep program participants engaged and prevent isolation.



Marian Caldera, Community Support Counselor, assists her client with paperwork needed for housing subsidy

The well-being and safety of clients and staff is paramount in Laurel House's operation. In addition to the use of masks, hand washing, personal protective equipment, safe distance signage and practice, and frequent cleaning of facilities and apartments, all employees are vigilant about modeling safe practices for clients.



Supported Employment Manager, Pat McGrath and Laurel House team prepare lunches for delivery



Karen Marin, Community Support Counselor, delivers boxed lunch to Laurel House client



Laurel House apartments are deep cleaned and frequently cleaned and disinfected as needed



John Wooten, VP Operations and Stamford Police Captain Diedrich Hohn, donating face masks to Laurel House



Safe distance signage and practice in use throughout Resource Center

Thank you to **First County Bank Foundation**, **Inc.** for Supportive Housing funding and to **The Oaklawn Foundation** for General Operating

rtor.org – Online Resources to Recover

www.rtor.org is a free online service that helps families and individuals affected by mental health concerns connect with expert treatment and services. Through the website, individuals and families can contact a Resource Specialist by phone or email for free personalized help with a problem, obtain information about best practices, or consult the Directory of Family-Endorsed Providers for recommendations on vetted programs and practitioners.

In FY20, utilization of the website increased by 83 percent, mainly due to the quality of the blog and information pages, which were viewed by **576,015 unique users** last fiscal year.

www.rtor.org offers more than **1,000 webpages** of mental health information, including two recent series of blog posts on the mental health impact of COVID - 19 and racial disparities in access and quality of care in mental health services.

In September 2019, www.rtor.org launched a new blog **Close to Home: The Fairfield County Mental Health Blog** to reach and help more local families and individuals. This new offering is part of an initiative to provide more assistance and have a greater impact in the communities where Laurel House and Resources to Recover are based and supported. As we drive more visibility to the use of the website in the Fairfield County towns served, local users who request personalized service get not only access to expert providers but local service in evidence-based programs such as Supported Education, Supported Employment, Cognitive Remediation, Social Rehabilitation skill building and Supportive Housing.

Since its launch in 2014, www.rtor.org has logged more than 2 million visits, while our two Resource Specialists have provided free personalized help to 6,376 families and individuals.



Denise Vestuti, LCSW, rtor.org Clinical Director



rtor.org FY20 Results

• Unique users of the site: 576,015

• Unique visits to the site: 670,830

Users who are female: 68%Users who are 18-35: 51%

 2,160 requests for free personalized service answered by two Resource Specialists

"When a family member struggles with mental health or substance abuse issues, recovery for the whole family is a journey – from heartbreak to healing." **Please watch****Recovery, the Whole Family's Journey*, to see more about how rtor.org and Laurel House services can connect your family with the best sources for help. Go to www.rtor.org and click on the video on the home page.

Laurel House and rtor.org Community Collaboration

Advocacy for mental health and substance use recovery and outreach to local communities are key components of Laurel House's and rtor.org's goals to **increase access to service** and to **expand the reach of programs to underserved communities**. The team spends significant time in the eight local towns served, meeting program participants and their families where they live, go to school, work and socialize. Rtor.org and Laurel House staff engage with local organizations, Houses of Worship, and collaborative agencies to give visibility to available services and connect individuals with treatment.





Recovery Evening Celebration 9/24/19 hosted at Mitchell's of Westport

3rd Annual **Community Addiction Awareness Vigil**, 9/05/19, New Canaan





11/21/19 Discussion with authors of *The Stressed Years of Their Lives*, at The Harvey School, Katonah, NY

Laurel House Volunteers Making a Difference in Program Participants' Lives



Holiday baskets for Supportive Housing tenants presented by Diddel & Diddel, LLC



Betsy Varian, **Power of One Award** winner, for second time (first in FY13). Betsy moved her Writers' Workshop online.



Capital One & Cosi, Inc. provided lunches for Laurel House clients in the community.



Michael Parker, Laurel House Board Director, receives award from actor/ director Charles Naughton, for **Outstanding Health Advocate** at Moffly Media's Light a Fire Celebration of Giving, Westport Country Playhouse (12/5/19)



Citizens Bank prepared and served meals during their Volunteer Day



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Recovery, The Whole Family's Tourney

Laurel House June 2020 Champions' Tribute



Champion for Recovery Anthony L. Rostain, MD, MA

Dr. Anthony L. Rostain is a nationally recognized speaker, educator, and expert in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry. He currently serves as Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at Cooper University Health Care; Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University; and Emeritus Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Rostain is also an attending psychiatrist at both the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn Medicine Behavioral Health. His clinical focus is "lifespan neurodevelopmental psychiatry," which includes caring for patients with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorders, Tourette Syndrome, learning disabilities, and related social-emotional learning disorders.

Dr. Rostain received his medical degree from New York University, and also holds degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University. He co-authored *The Stressed Years of Their Lives*, a book focused on encouraging students' social-emotional readiness so that they can thrive during their college years.

Laurel House Town Champions

DarienLily Genovese



GreenwichPenny Johnston-Foote



New Canaan Leo Karl III



WiltonGenevieve Easton



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Laurel House, Inc. & Friends of Laurel House, Inc. Summary Income & Expense For Years Ended June 30

	FY 2020	FY 2019	FY 2018
Revenues:			
Public Funding (State of CT; HUD)	\$1,559,360	\$1,537,046	\$1,615,161
Private & Other Revenue Sources:			
Rent, Thrift Shop, Services, Cafeteria	212,806	297,743	296,664
Private Funding	785,553	903,648	1,327,651 ¹
Total Revenues	2,557,719	2,738,437	3,239,476
Expenses:			
Salaries and Benefits	1,924,604	1,868,568	1,811,146
Operating Expenses	596,289	718,175	696,232
Development & Marketing	49,272	111,627	106,973
Interest	35,220	34,296	36,143
Total Expenses	2,605,385	2,732,666	2,650,494
Change in Net Assets	\$(47,666)	\$5,771	\$588,982
	% of Revenues	% of Revenues	% of Revenues
Public Funding	60.8%	56.1%	49.9%
Private & Other Revenue Sources	39.2%	43.9%	50.1%
Sources of Private Funding:			
Individuals	38%	57%	64% ¹
Corporations	10%	7%	7%
Foundations	52%	36%	29%
¹ Includes one-time memorial gift			

FY 2020 Services

Laurel House provided services to 875 individuals.

Social Rehabilitation: 615 individuals received services in: recovery planning, outreach, advocacy, peer support; participated in Writers', Artists', and skill building workshops; dined in the Resource Center Café and/or received meals delivered to their homes; and participated in Laurel House wellness programs and events

Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation): 91 participants; 89% had positive functional outcomes (e.g., job, school, independent living skills); 92% who completed sessions and took post assessment achieved improvement in 2 or more of 6 cognitive domains

Supported Education and Tele-Education Support (TEdS): 99 participants; 38% enrolled in Associates; 36% in Bachelors; 18% in Vocational Certification; and 8% in GED

Supported Employment: served 99 participants with 54% competitively employed, and **Mobile Employment Services at Recovery Houses:** served 60 participants

Community Support Services and Housing: 85 individuals received community support services and housing

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