



# The Family Recovery Program Inc.

Restoring families.  
Building futures.

June 2023

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## The First Karen Conn Community Day

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, we honored our former coworker, Mrs. Karen Conn, with the first Karen Conn Community Day at Sage Center. Karen had an engaging personality and served as a parent mentor at FRP and Sage. She was highly involved with engaging the community in positive events. You could often find her singing and dancing and if you weren't careful, you could find yourself soon joining her. She had what is described as a "motherly spirit" that reminded others that they were indeed loved and full of potential, despite their circumstances not being the greatest at the time.



(Karen Conn Community Day sign in front of Sage Center)



In addition to serving as a parent mentor, each Wednesday, Sage Center would host Community Day during the warmer months. We found that many in the Berea community around N. Rose and E. Biddle Streets would be drawn in by Karen.



(No One Goes Hungry Food Truck at Community Day)

While at Community Day events, folks would be able to grab some clothes, healthy food, and reach possible health resources they may be in need of.



This was also an opportunity for FRP and Sage staff to share their memories of Karen. Also invited was Karen's wife and partner, Mrs. Marie Conn, who was presented with a plaque dedicated to her service at FRP and within the community. She will definitely be missed!



(Clothes, shoes, purses for those parents and children in need)



(Mrs. Marie Conn, friend, and staff speaking about Karen)



## FRP Graduation March 2023

Quarterly, we celebrate culmination of 9-24 months of hard work and accomplishments of our FRP and Horizon Program participants. During their time in FRP, they have completed at least one treatment episode, provided numerous satisfactory tests, some have participated in mental health therapy, been to court multiple times, and completed the requirements placed before them by FRP and BDCSS.



Most importantly, all of this groups mothers have been reunified with their children or receiving unsupervised visitation, a step away from being reunified!



The keynote speaker was Ms. Jessica Maranto, a former FRP graduate who now works as a parent advocate with the Office of the Public Defender.



She spoke on her days at FRP and how she battled through adversity and turned things around when situations were less than ideal for her and her children. She was an inspiration to our March 2023 graduates!





## BGE and Earth Day 2023

To commemorate Earth Day, FRP partnered with BGE to beautify the grounds of our transitional

housing program, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building at Sage Center.



Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was born out of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara California. The goal is to bring awareness and support for environmental protection around the world.

The sun was out early as BGE volunteers began to arrive ready for work. The goal was to add layers of mulch on our two playgrounds and to plant new plants in our flowerpots.



We also partnered with Baltimore Community Tool Bank, who serves nonprofits and community-based organizations by lending tools at much lower rates. They provided rakes, wheelbarrows, and other gardening tools we needed. The team of 25 volunteers worked diligently and renewed our space so that our families now find more enjoyment as they look at their homes.



We appreciate the support, and we love our new backyard. This kindness warms the heart!



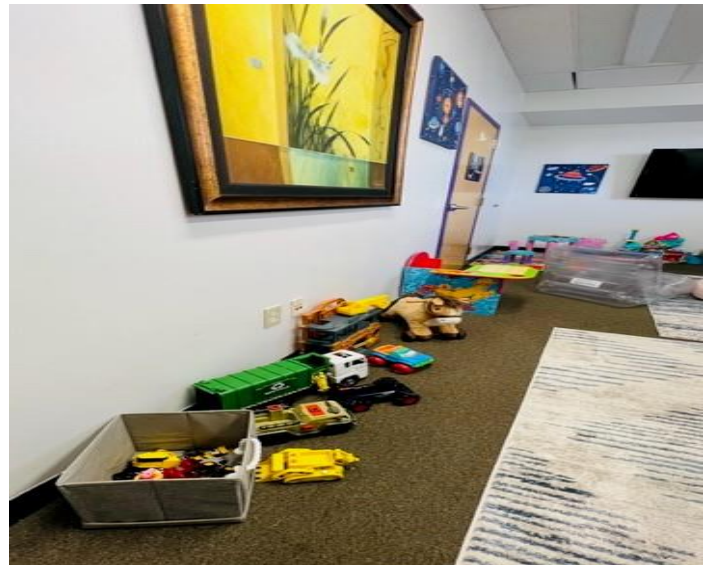


## FRP's Expanded Parenting Time Room

We are excited to announce that FRP's new Expanded Parenting Time Room is now open. A few families have expressed interest in having their parenting time at FRP and we are just awaiting a visit from their social workers. The room is located at FRP's main office on the third floor at 301 N. Gay. FRP's Parent Navigator, Ms. Tiajuana Jones, has been selected to monitor visits as requested by DSS.



The room is beautiful and has a tv, small refrigerator with kid friendly snacks, microwave, changing table, highchair, bookshelf with fun books, rocking chair, fun chairs for the kids, and carpet for lounging on the floor while interacting with kids. The room is open during business hours (8a-5p) Monday through Friday. Interested families/workers will need to reach out to their clients' case manager who will work with Ms. Jones to set up a schedule for visits. We are excited about the possibility that this holds for our families.



## Back to In-Person FRP Court

Finally, on March 31, after three years of virtual hearings, FRP returned to the in-person hearings which had become a huge component of our program. In March 2020, the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) was closed due to fears of spreading Covid 19. To adapt to the new policies, FRP and many other courts began having virtual hearings where all parties could be present via video or phone call.

A vital component of FRP and drug courts is the court oversight we provide. Every Friday, parents appear to be congratulated on their successes by receiving awards for sobriety time, vouchers for the FRP incentive store, or just encouragement by the judge or by their peers in attendance.



In addition, the BCDSS representative, Mr. Alvin Winn is present to assist with issues ranging from parenting time to connections with BCDSS workers. The virtual hearings helped, but we all can agree that in person hearings are invaluable!

## Reproductive Health

Safe motherhood begins before conception with proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. It continues with appropriate prenatal care and the prevention and treatment of complications when possible.



The mission of the Family Planning and Reproductive Health is to reduce unintended pregnancies and to improve pregnancy outcomes by providing health services to women and men ages 25-50.



Services covered were contraception (birth control), pregnancy testing, HIV testing, substance use and mental health screenings, and how trying to get pregnant, being pregnant, or the birth of a baby can increase the risk for depression.

These services are offered to all FRP parents with Nurse Practitioner, Margaret Mills. Classes will be on-site at Sage Center every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

## CPR Certification Classes

70 percent of Americans may feel helpless to act during a cardiac emergency because they either do not know how to administer CPR or their training has significantly lapsed. This statistic could hit close to home, because home is exactly where 88 percent of cardiac arrests occur. Nearly 383,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests occur annually, and 88 percent of cardiac arrests occur at home. Many victims appear healthy with no known heart disease or other risk factors.

Effective bystander CPR provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest can double or triple a victim’s chance of survival, but only 32 percent of cardiac arrest victims get CPR from a bystander. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, the employees at FRP and Sage began their CPR certification classes and for many the renewal of past certifications. This June, in honor of National CPR Week, the American Heart Association is calling on all Americans to learn how to give Hands-Only® CPR by watching a simple one-minute video at [heart.org/handsonlycpr](http://heart.org/handsonlycpr).



## A Trip to the Baltimore Zoo

Studies have found that families that recreate together tend to be closer and that time creates a strong bond. This recreation time together helps to enhance the well-being and healthy development of all the family members. Going on family trips, watching movies together, playing different games, or even exercising together can help relieve stress and improve your relationship with your family members. Recreational activities will not only strengthen family bonding but also help create amazing memories. Family trips are a way to improve your physical health, enhance different skills, and may boost self-confidence and self-esteem.



**(Parents and staff at the Baltimore Zoo)**

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the families and staff at Sage got together for a trip to the Baltimore Zoo. It was an opportunity to see chimpanzees, flamingos and other exotic birds, elephants and some big cats.



## LEARNING TO WALK IN THE SHOES OF OTHERS

With a law degree, years as a schoolteacher, and now as the Family Liaison for Baltimore's Family Recovery Program, David Sifford, J.D., has learned valuable life lessons that can teach us all. Although we all can benefit from these lessons, they primarily benefit the FRP program in its work to serve Baltimore City parents whose children have been removed from their care due to substance abuse.

As a founding staff member since 2005, David has tirelessly worked to build the organization, guide and sustain its mission, and oversee its interagency collaborative efforts to support and maintain healthy families. David does not take his achievements for granted and he pays tribute to his large, extended family. He didn't realize it when he was a young boy, but today he is keenly of the role a strong, supportive family plays in the direction of our lives. "I didn't understand it then, but it all makes sense to me now," he says. "I now understand how much of this works, the importance of structure provided by one's family and friends."

This awareness can be illustrated by David's early experience in the classroom, an experience that taught him a lesson and shaped the rest of his career. Just out of graduate school, he began teaching in the Baltimore City school system, in all-boys classes, and quickly noticed the uncontrollable and unruly behavior of many of the boys. He says at first, he didn't understand what was going on. "I began wondering what was wrong with them. Why aren't they listening? Why are they doing what the teacher says?" But after learning more about the boys and the lack of structure provided by their environment outside of school, he began to understand there were forces that impacted their behavior. As a result, he says, "I learned not to be so judgmental."

The story of a particularly disruptive and uncontrollable young boy in his classroom, whose mother was completely unable to care for her son due to substance abuse, helped David better understand the power of these forces. The boy, as David later learned, had watched his mother passed out while sitting on her lap. Young kids in these situations, he says, are traumatized and "are essentially raising themselves." David shares this story whenever appropriate, with the hope that it sheds light on lives negatively impacted by adverse social and familial forces. "You cannot judge people when you haven't walked in their shoes," he says with empathy. "You need to understand what they've gone through to get to where they are. We all haven't started from the same place."

His open mind and heart, his genuine understanding of the forces at play, and his steadfast commitment and energy explain why his colleagues say he's "perfect for the job."

"We might not be saving the world," he says, "but we are definitely putting our fingers into the mix to do what we can do to help one person at a time, one family at a time." If you ask David about his FRP colleagues, he talks passionately about just how hard they work, how much they care, and how well they work together. "It's like a family," he says. And he never gets tired of the work. "I truly enjoy it. It's like you wake up and you're going to do something you enjoy doing and with people you enjoy doing it with." With the extraordinary demands of his work, David takes time to refresh by spending quality time with his own family, including his wife, Lisa, and four children ages 13 to 24 years, and staying physically active for fitness and health.

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Interviewed and written by Sandy Nichols

Member of FRP Board of Director



## Upcoming Events

### **Circle of Security Parenting Program**

Held at Sage Center at 1209 N.Rose Street

Contact Ann Vachon at 410-605-0492 ext. 125

(E) [Avachon@frp-inc.org](mailto:Avachon@frp-inc.org)

### **Seeking Safety Group Sessions at FRP**

Held at Sage Center at 1209 N.Rose Street

Mondays at 10a or 11a

Contact Tiajuana Jones at

(P)-410-605-0492 ext.302

(F)-410-605-0496

(C)-401-907-5142

(E) [tjones@frp-inc.org](mailto:tjones@frp-inc.org)

### **Support Group meetings**

Held at Sage Center at 1209 N.Rose Street

Fridays 11:30a-12:30p

### **Parenting Time Room**

Held at Sage Center at 1209 N.Rose Street

To schedule, contact Tiajuana Jones at

(P)-410-605-0492 ext.302

(F)-410-605-0496

(C)-401-907-5142

(E) [tjones@frp-inc.org](mailto:tjones@frp-inc.org)

**Juneteenth**- FRP offices closed June 19<sup>th</sup>

**FRP Graduation**- September 8th

**Independence Day**- FRP offices closed on July 4<sup>th</sup>

**Labor Day**- FRP offices closed September 4th