




2022
Annual
Report

The SPIRIT

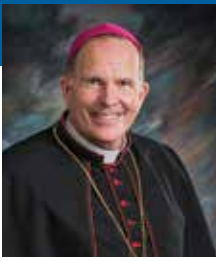
SUMMER 2023

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Starting Fresh



from the BISHOP OF TRENTON

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton,

It is my privilege and pleasure, as Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, to write once again to express my gratitude to and support for Catholic Charities here in our Diocese. I never cease to be amazed and edified by the great work that is accomplished each year by so many dedicated professionals. Over the last 110 years, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton has made an incredible difference in the lives of our sisters and brothers in need.

Please enjoy this newsletter which tells the story of what is possible when an organization such as ours follows the Lord's example of love of neighbor.

May God bless you!

Respectfully yours in the Lord,

David M. O'Connell, C.M.

Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D.



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The Spirit is published quarterly by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton's Development and Marketing Department.



from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When I need reassurance, I look to Lamentations 3:22-24 – it says the Lord's faith in us is so great that his mercies are never exhausted; they are renewed each morning.

If you need help believing we wake every day to a restored sense of grace, consider the work being done by Catholic Charities. Our counselors and clinicians help victims of violence heal. The work they do helps ensure the traumas endured don't return as nightmares.

Our Community Services team finds housing for individuals returning from incarceration – because having a safe place to sleep is the cornerstone of a healthy, fulfilling life. They also provide food and clothing if necessary.

Our Behavioral Health Services team assists people with mental health and substance use issues, facilitating recovery for those who need a second chance, or even a third... No one is counting. We understand there is no room for judgment in treatment.

Our Children and Family Services team helps individuals or families fleeing abuse receive the tools and support needed to begin again. It's all there, from safe lodging and food to counseling and legal advocacy; it is all offered at no cost.

This year, Catholic Charities and its supporters celebrate 110 years of providing a fresh start to anyone who needs one. We are glad you are with us.

God bless you.

Marlene Laó-Collins

Marlene Laó-Collins

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STARTING FRESH

For My Baby and Me Facilitates a New Beginning



Growing up, Deserae described her life as “pretty normal.” In high school, she played softball and volleyball and was a cheerleader. After graduation, she and her high school sweetheart moved in together and had a son. She worked as a bartender and was going to school to become a court reporter.

Things took a turn when her boyfriend began selling prescription drugs on the side. “He had a connection,” said Deserae. “He’d buy pills for \$5 and sell them for \$20, \$25 or \$30 a piece.” Pretty soon, Deserae said she was taking drugs like Percocet and OxyContin daily. “They gave me energy. Woke me up

so I could take care of my son, do all the laundry, exercise, work and go to school.”

She said it all went sideways about two years later when her boyfriend’s connection was arrested. Deserae realized she had an addiction. Because pills on the street were expensive, she started using heroin. “It was cheaper. I could pay my bills and still get high.” Deserae was 25 when she began using heroin.

“Everything just starts to revolve around the drugs,” she said. Deserae and her boyfriend broke up. She lost custody of her son Dominick. For a time, she was homeless. For the next 10 years, Deserae struggled. Twice she completed rehab programs and then relapsed. “The drugs rule your life. I was not happy without it. Your body just wants it.”

HELP WAS A PHONE CALL AWAY

In February of 2022, Deserae was seven months pregnant, and living in a shelter in Newark. She was using drugs again but was desperate to stop. That’s when her sister heard about the For My Baby and Me program and gave Deserae the

number. “I have been in rehab and mental health programs before,” said Deserae, “but this has been the greatest opportunity I have ever had in my life,” she said.

For My Baby and Me is a collaboration among Capital Health, Catholic Charities, HomeFront, Henry J. Austin Health Center, Rescue Mission of Trenton and Trenton Health Team that helps pregnant and postpartum women recover from their addiction by providing medication-assisted treatment and counseling, in addition to wraparound services.

“One of the incredible aspects of For My Baby and Me is how accessible getting help is – a woman places a call to the hotline, a specialist explains the program, pick up service is offered, and the mom is transported to Catholic Charities in Trenton to begin her journey to wellness,” said Stacey Negron, the Care Manager and Project Evaluator for the program.

Deserae has been meeting with Negron regularly since starting the program. “Stacey is very relatable and very understanding,” she said.

continued on page 4 ►



3,897

People served through counseling
and mental health programs

679

Individuals received addiction treatment

5,345

Employment related services provided

340

People served through residential services

15,825

Transportation services provided

39,607

Individuals received services
through the Certified Community
Behavioral Health Clinic

Starting Fresh

(continued)

“I can be completely myself with Stacey. I can be real and not worry about what she is going to think. There’s none of that judgmental vibe.”

“Deserae is doing so well,” said Negron. “I met her at the height of her addiction and I have seen her go through changes, working to find balance and let go of the people around her who aren’t really there for her. When Deserae realized she needed to be her first priority, things started to change. She was able to focus on what she wanted for herself and for her baby.”

Deserae gave birth to her son Giovanni in March of 2022 while she was living at HomeFront. Shortly after he was born, she started going to school to become a patient care technician (PCT). She said the support she has received from the FMBM program has been incredible. “I have had a place to live, and they helped me with childcare so I could go to school.” She also found support from the other women in the program. “We inspire each other to be strong.”

READY FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Deserae admitted she never was much of a student when she was in school but said her grades in the program to become a PCT have been excellent. “I am so interested in what I’m learning. It makes it easy.” She began a phlebotomy internship with Robert Wood Johnson in Hamilton in April. Deserae plans to continue with her schooling and become a nurse. “You need to be working toward something that makes you happy,” she said.

Deserae and Giovanni recently moved into an apartment of their own. She has a relationship with her son Dominick again. And she has a plan for the future. “Catholic Charities gives you this opportunity to get your self-esteem back,” said Deserae. “When you start working on yourself, you remember who you were as a person.”

FOR INFORMATION about the For My Baby and Me Program, call (609) 256-7801.

PARTNERS IN RECOVERY

Offering a New Way Forward and Friends for Life

A retired cardiac nurse, Sarah says she is in a good place. She has two amazing grandchildren, and volunteers regularly with her local Veterans Affairs office. She admits, her journey has not always been easy and said she is particularly grateful for the support she found in the Partners in Recovery (PIR) program when she was in a bad place.

Before her experience with PIR, Sarah said things in her life had gotten really unstable. “I was taking care of everybody else and putting myself on a back burner.” Then, a series of losses set Sarah down a dark path. “I lost my dad. I lost my mom. Three months later, I lost my brother.” Sarah said she was struggling and then “all the depression came crashing down.”

A TIPPING POINT

“I come from a long line of women drinkers,” she said. “So how much I was drinking seemed kind of normal.” However, during a frank discussion with her primary care physician about how much she drank, he suggested she needed to



▲ Sarah and Wilson met when they attended the Partners in Recovery program. Several years later, they are still friends, lifting each other up and providing encouragement and support.



1,313

Families received crisis intervention and stabilization services

14,638

Children and adults received counseling and support services for trauma

1,748

Individuals received immigration support, counseling and ESL classes

7,315

Individuals received domestic violence counseling, education and legal assistance

55,049

Nights of shelter provided

go to a crisis center. “I told him, ‘No, that’s for crazy people. I’m not going there.’”

For Sarah, depression and anxiety, mixed with a tendency to drink, proved to be a dangerous combination. “I could go from zero to complete rage with no in between.” Not long after meeting with her doctor, Sarah said she was involved in a serious altercation, and it was the wake-up call she needed. Sarah went voluntarily to a crisis center. When she came out, she started attending individual and group therapy sessions at Partners in Recovery. “Dealing with my illness, I became aware of my triggers, the symptoms and the behaviors.”

LEARNING WHY SHE WAS ANGRY

Parts of the recovery process were difficult for Sarah, especially revisiting her childhood — recalling instances of abuse, maternal abandonment and trauma. “I had to dig down into me, and bring it all out. A lot of it was what had happened to me when I was a child,” she said. “It all came out. I knew I had anger issues, but until then,

I didn’t understand why it was so deep and intense.”

She said PIR was effective because the counselors and others in group held her accountable. “They called me on my stuff. And it was like being set free,” she said. “When I got with the program, I got my life back. They showed me a lot of things I’d missed and they showed me what was out there.”

Sarah began her career in the Army just after she graduated from high school. When she got married, she left the service and took a job in a federal correctional facility. It was a difficult environment for a woman to work in and Sarah said she found herself drinking regularly to cope. At PIR, she received the encouragement she needed to go back to school. “I went back to school, got my degree and became a cardiac nurse.”

THE HEALING CONTINUES

“Not once did I feel hopeless, sitting in those seats,” said Sarah about her time at PIR. “Our group was awesome.” Her peers in the program really helped her grow. “Sometimes they challenged me; sometimes

they took me by the hand and led the way.” Sarah said many of the friendships she made at PIR have endured. One of the friends she made and kept was Wilson Bagley.

Today, Bagley is a Medication Assisted Treatment Coordinator at Catholic Charities. Recently he invited Sarah to address the men and women currently in the program. “Sarah was an inspiration to us all,” said Bagley. “She cared so much. There is not a more loving, caring person out there. With her big spirit and generous heart, Sarah is second to none.”

Sarah said it felt awesome being back at PIR and sharing with the group. “I realized how far I had come,” she said. “I have to give thanks to Catholic Charities for being there for me,” she said. “You definitely helped me back from the brink.”

FOR INFORMATION on the Partners in Recovery Program, call (609) 396-4557.

PARTNERSHIP WITH MERCER COUNTY

Ensures Returning Citizens Have Housing Options

It is fair to say that Alex felt adrift after being released from Northern State Prison in Newark, New Jersey, following his release after a long prison sentence. “It was good to be out,” he said, “But I felt a little discombobulated at the same time. I was released to the streets with no place to go and it was frustrating.”

Alex, who grew up in Camden and Trenton, returned to the Trenton area after his release where he stayed with friends. Fortunately for him, he found a job with the local housing authority, preparing apartments for new tenants and doing maintenance work. Unfortunately, the housing authority had such a long waiting list for housing that all the units he worked on went to others. When his friends’ couches were no longer available, Alex moved into a shelter.

Working full time and adhering to the shelter’s rules and schedule proved difficult. Alex ended up homeless, living in his car – but he still showed up for work each day. Then he heard about the Returning

Citizens to the Community Program (RCCP), a program offered by Catholic Charities with funding from the Mercer County Department of Human Services. “I was searching for a place to live, but no one was getting back to me. Then someone at work said they thought I would qualify for this program, and I called. It was a blessing when I heard back from Mr. Mosudi,” said Alex.

Housing Program Director Mosudi Idowu assigned Alex to Case Manager Terri Wilson for a screening. “Alex’s mind was set to take himself to another level,” said Wilson. “He wanted more for himself. He was ready to make better choices. And we were here to guide him.” In addition to working for the local housing authority, and working with Catholic Charities to obtain housing, Alex expressed a happiness in starting his own trash removal business. “Life is all about opportunities,” he said. “I feel like things are just getting greater and greater. The sky’s the limit.”



“Life is all about opportunities... I feel like things are just getting greater and greater. The sky’s the limit.”

WILLIAM’S STORY

After serving a 17-month sentence at a New Jersey correctional facility, William was released in December of 2021. “I got out with nothing and nobody to help me.” William was raised in Mississippi and had no family in the area to assist him upon his release. He found a job

at a grocery store and worked steadily, but finding a place to live was difficult. “I couldn’t afford the security deposit and my first month’s rent,” said William. One potential landlord examined his pay stubs and told him his income just wasn’t high enough.

COMMUNITY SERVICES
2022 HIGHLIGHTS



58,753

Visits to our food pantries

328

Families received Supplemental Nutrition Program Assistance (SNAP)

659

Elderly residents received help with home repairs

281

People assisted in obtaining permanent housing

3,868

Rent and utility assistance payments made



“This program helped me out so much... I never had my own spot, I am learning as I go.”

Thankfully, a friend told William about RCCP and gave him Idowu’s number. “William is very persistent. He wants a better life for himself and he doesn’t give up,” said Idowu. “When he wasn’t making enough at his first job, William got another.” Today, he works as a package handler in a FedEx warehouse. He’s on the overnight shift so he can pick up another part-time position during the day. “This program helped me out so much,” said William. RCCP helped him with his security deposit and found him several studio apartments to select from. “I never had my own spot,” said William. “I am learning as I go.”

Community Services Director Arnold Valentin, Jr. said RCCP provides individuals returning to the community following incarceration 45 days of temporary housing in a motel, while the team assists in finding permanent housing opportunities. We also assist with covering the security deposit and subsequent rental payments and even new furniture, when they move in. “These are

people looking for a fresh start. We need to establish systematic programs to support, advocate and empower them to sustainability,” said Valentin.

The individuals in the program also receive case management services and referrals to the other kinds of assistance they may need, including to Catholic Charities’ food pantry and behavioral health services, as well as to support offered by other organizations in the area. “It is important that we give these individuals a real chance to succeed,” Valentin said.

Deputy Director of the Mercer County Department of Human

Services DuEwa Edwards-Dickson noted that when the county received funding earmarked to help make the reentry process smoother, it looked first to its community partners. “We got this funding and we looked at who we were working with, and asked how we could enhance the services already being provided,” she said. “We wanted to do everything possible to make this transition as smooth as possible. Everyone deserves a second chance.”

FOR INFORMATION about the Returning Citizens to the Community Program, please call (609) 599-1246, ext. 2513.

SUPPORT GROUP

Introduces Trauma Survivors to the Benefits of Therapy

It's really not the kind of an anniversary to celebrate, but April 27 marks two years since Monnae was shot while sitting in the passenger seat of her friend's car. She described how, in an instant, the driver's side window shattered and a single bullet passed through her friend's hand, struck Monnae in the wrist and then grazed her chest.

"My friend panicked and drove off," said Monnae. "But when we got to the corner, she was bleeding too much and she started yelling that she couldn't do it. So I had to jump in the driver's seat." Monnae drove to the hospital. She remembers a lot of blood in the car and being afraid to swallow because there was glass from the window in her mouth.

Monnae, who is from Trenton, said she is no stranger to gun violence. "I've seen a lot. I have seen friends get shot. I have had to run from gunshots." During one incident, she said she hid under a car, and saw someone get shot in the foot. "I saw the bullet go into his foot, and I watched him hop to the porch."

WHEN BULLETS ARE A PART OF THE LANDSCAPE

For Monnae, and so many young people living in Trenton, gun violence "feels normal." Actor, filmmaker and Trenton native Joseph Halsey received a grant from the New Jersey Attorney General's Office to produce a video about violence affecting youth. Halsey is also the founder of the James R. Halsey Foundation for the Arts, a non-profit delivering arts education and lessons in filmmaking to youth in Trenton. Because many of the kids involved in his programs have experienced gun violence, he decided to interview young men and women who had been shot.

As he was working on what would become a three-part documentary "I've been shot!", Halsey enlisted the help of Children and Family Services Clinical Director Caryn Hirsch to provide support as an on-set clinician. Hirsch said the subjects in the video insisted they wouldn't be needing her help. "The kids were all saying, 'I'm fine,' but while they



▲ (from left) Joseph Halsey, Harmony, Caryn Hirsch and Sully Soto review the plans for the next meeting of Healing and Harmonizing, an informal group that provides survivors of violence with therapeutic art-based activities.

were being interviewed, you could see them start to break down. They were in tears," she said. "They all knew about PTSD. And they all knew they had it. But none of them had ever been offered or sought treatment for it." She also said they sincerely doubted she would be able to help them, because she had

never lived through what they had experienced.

After the filming, Halsey and Hirsch knew they had to do something. "We started talking and trying to figure out how we could link these kids to therapy. How could we get them to realize the benefits of therapy?" said Hirsch.



“We wanted to let them know, yes, there are tools we can show you to help make the nightmares go away.” Soon after that conversation, the Foundation and Catholic Charities joined forces and created Healing and Harmonizing, a drop-in group for trauma survivors in their teens and early twenties. Once a month, Family Access Center Program Director Sully Soto leads sessions built around fun, arts-based activities; participants share only what they’re comfortable sharing. The program is free.

BUILDING A BRIDGE

Children and Family Services Service Area Director Mary Pettrow said the Healing and Harmonizing program offers participants an introduction to what a therapeutic support group might feel like. “It gives the women an idea of what therapy is, what it can and cannot help with. I feel like this program is a bridge that may help these survivors seek therapy when they are ready,” said Pettrow. “And when they are ready, we will be here for them.”

A key factor in the collaboration has been Harmony, a community partner in the project and one of the young women featured in Halsey’s documentary. She dropped out of high school to care for her boyfriend after he was shot. Several years later during a party on Memorial Day, gun shots rang out and Harmony was struck six times. She watched a close friend die that night. “I used to be happy and free-spirited,” she said. “But this experience has been painful, both physically and mentally.”

Harmony said it took a long time for her to want to get professional help for herself. After seeing the benefits, she wanted to help others find the same relief. She actively recruits her friends, family and members of the community to attend the sessions. Harmony, who recently earned her GED, and started going to school to become a medical assistant, said “I never knew I was capable of doing things to help others in my community. It feels good.”

One of the women she encouraged to attend Healing and Harmonizing was her cousin,

Monnae. After joining the group, Monnae decided to try one-on-one therapy with Scott Minchello, a Licensed Professional counselor and the program coordinator for the Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program. Working with Minchello, she has been able to identify triggers that can set off bouts of post-traumatic stress. “Monnae is learning different ways to manage her triggers cognitively,” said Minchello.

Monnae said therapy with Minchello is also helping in other areas of her life. “I feel like a better person,” said Monnae. “Scott makes me look at the way I think about things. Now instead of just reacting, I think about the other person and realize they could have a different point of view.” After attending private therapy sessions, Monnae returned to the group and said, “Everyone needs a Scott.”

FOR INFORMATION on the Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program, call (609) 394-5157. For information about Healing and Harmonizing, call (609) 938-3673.

337

Number of people served under Behavioral Health Home program

2,520

People received specialty psychiatric and nursing services

7,855

Individuals received crisis services

2,863

Services provided to monitor, prevent and respond to infectious diseases and outbreaks

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

REVENUE + EXPENSES. Following is a pre-audit summary of revenues and expenses for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2022. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton continues to be fiscally responsible, fulfilling the stewardship expected by our funders and donors. Approximately 11% of our budget is spent on centralized administrative costs.

REVENUES BY MAJOR SOURCE

2022

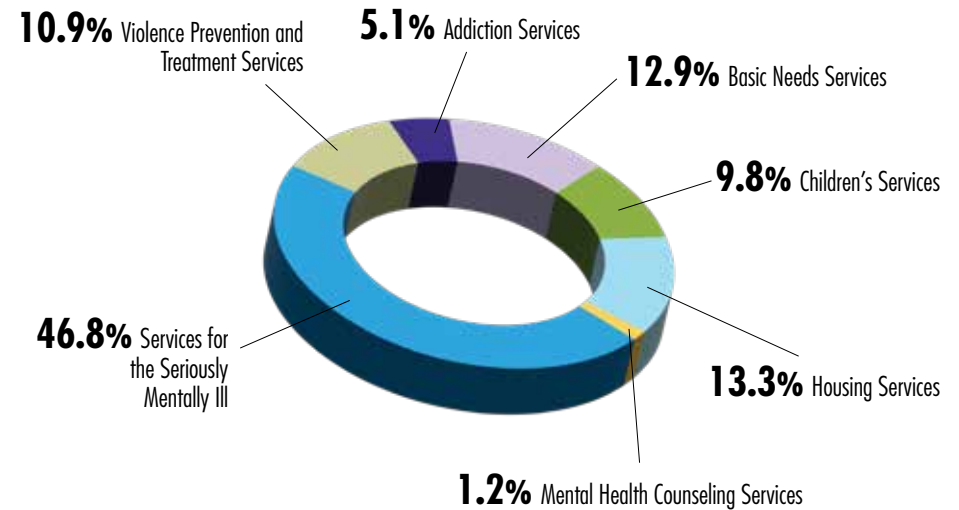
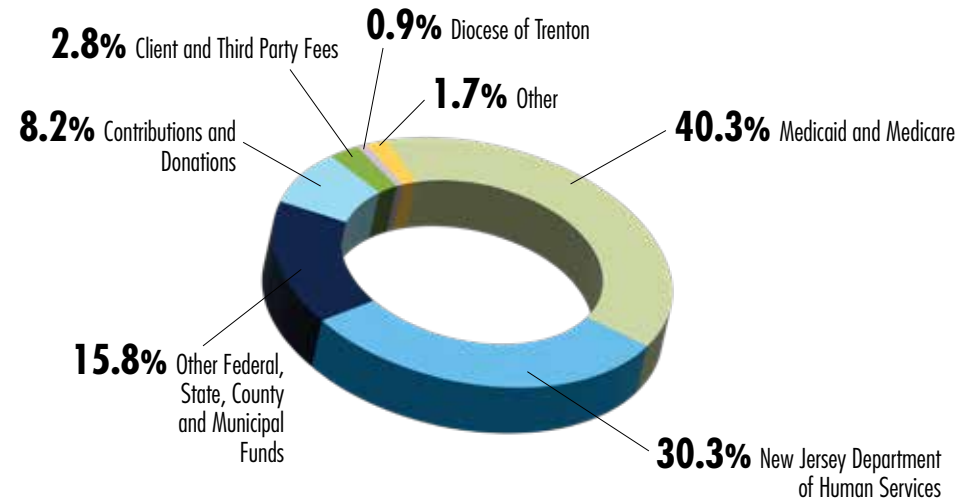
| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Medicaid and Medicare | \$23,089,517 |
| New Jersey Department of Human Services | \$17,371,350 |
| Other Federal, State, County and Municipal Funds | \$9,091,566 |
| Contributions and Donations* | \$4,712,330 |
| Client and Third Party Fees | \$1,593,585 |
| Other | \$956,318 |
| Diocese of Trenton | \$513,331 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE | \$57,327,997 |

EXPENSES BY SERVICE GROUP

2022

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Services for the Seriously Mentally Ill | \$25,681,750 |
| Housing Services | \$7,262,189 |
| Basic Needs Services | \$7,054,167 |
| Violence Prevention and Treatment Services | \$5,980,732 |
| Children's Services | \$5,381,469 |
| Addiction Services | \$2,789,936 |
| Mental Health Counseling Services | \$675,327 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES | \$54,825,570 |

* Planned Gifts received \$1,800,000



A full financial statement may be obtained by writing to: Debra Elko, Associate Executive Director Fiscal Affairs
P.O. Box 1423, Trenton, NJ 08607-1423

THE POWER OF AN ENDOWED GIFT



An endowment gift to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton ensures a brighter future for those we serve. When you make a donation to our endowment, you give a gift with both immediate and long-term benefits.

Endowment donations are invested and a portion of the income is used to address immediate needs at Catholic Charities. The remaining funds are reinvested to ensure indefinite support.

TO DISCUSS leaving an endowment gift, contact Jennifer Leip, Director of Development and Marketing, jleip@cctrenton.org or (609) 394-5181, ext. 1137.

2022 DONORS

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton would like to thank the individuals, corporations and foundations that supported our mission in 2022. The following list contains donors who contributed \$500 or more to the mission of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton.

We extend our sincere gratitude to ALL who gave generously throughout the year. Please know that each contribution is valued and appreciated.

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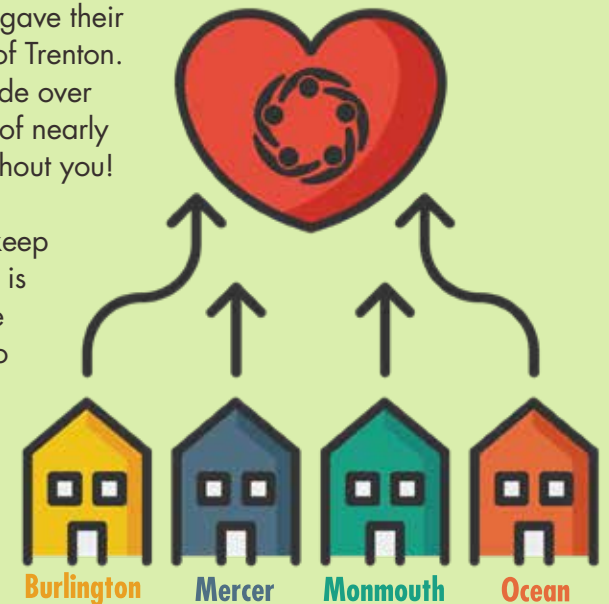
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This May, a team of 10 from Johnson & Johnson's Global Epidemiology Organization visited the Partners in Recovery on the North Clinton Campus in Trenton for a Day of Caring. The volunteers helped till soil and plant vegetables and flowers in three garden spaces. Program participants will enjoy fresh produce all summer!

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