



Town of Greenwich
Department of Social Services – 3rd Floor
Town Hall – 101 Field Point Road - Greenwich, CT 06836-2540
Phone: (203) 622-3800 - Fax: (203) 622-7762

SOCIAL SERVICES – A Brief Annual Report 2001-2002

Administration

Department Service Level: The Department served 2,053 unduplicated cases in '01-02. Unduplicated Adult and Family Division cases were 1,112. Senior Services Division cases were 941. The Dept. increase of 553 cases and 38% from last year is due to new software that counts all households receiving Dept. services as Cases. For statistical clarity, and conservatism and accuracy in identifying the number of residents in need in our community, cases served in both Divisions were counted only once, despite being assisted by both Divisions. This practice was also followed for cases seen by multiple Service Units within each Division.

Unduplicated caseload totals in the Adult and Family Division were: Group Work Unit: 298 cases; Parent Aide Program: 139; Mental Health Program: 195; and Adult and Family Casework Unit: 480, including the Community Gifts program and youth service group programs. In the Senior Services Division: Seniors' Casework: 181 cases; Community-Based Care: 77; Homemaker Service: 255; Nathaniel Witherell: 377; and Parsonage Cottage: 51. 851 instances of Information and Referral were also provided to Senior residents.

Department Structural Reorganization: Staff and service reorganizations around five early professional retirements dominated operations in '01-02. These changes responded to changing Dept. needs and opportunities. On 8/1/01, the Office of Volunteers and Public Information was abolished and its programs and staff integrated into our two main divisions. The position of Deputy Commissioner was re-established from funds formerly allocated to the Volunteer Director post, and another position added to the Senior Services Division via reassignment from the Volunteer Office's Friend to Friend program. The fiscal impact was zero.

Department Study Follow-up: The Board of Social Services initiated setting departmental priorities to determine if certain programs should be among Department functions. Four more programs were evaluated, and decisions made about their effectiveness, and appropriateness and priority for public-sector operation.

The Department discontinued its Friend to Friend youth mentor program on 7/31/01, transferring the existing 23 matches to Big Brother Big Sister of Southwestern CT (BBBS). Under BBBS, Greenwich youth mentor matches increased to 37 by June '02 (61%). After extensive research into other possible providers, in March '02, the Board of Social Services voted to continue operation of an activity program after school at the Byram Archibald Neighborhood Center (BANC). The Board's evaluation of the Work, Education, Beginnings employability program during Spring '02 found it both effective and appropriate for public sector operation. Due to few school referrals, management proposed that the new "Directions" program for special education and other special needs high school students be discontinued. After Board evaluation, in 5/02 the Board directed that the Program be continued and strengthened, and pledged its support with the Bd. of Education.

Negotiations for a fee increase for providing Home Health Aide service to residents served in Greenwich Hospital's Home Care program were assisted by a Board Steering Committee. When no rate increase was forthcoming, the '02-03 budget was modified to phase the Department out of Health Aide service next year, return some funds to the Town, and reallocate some funds to the increased Homemaker-Only service. Work continued this year on a Dept. Study recommendation to change the Town Charter to permit The Nathaniel Witherell to employ its own social service staff, similar to other nursing homes.

Department Technology: Development work continued on the new 'Evolv' social service database software that went 'live' on 5/1/01. Several on-site trainings were held for our many non-technical staff. Each time the software developed further, staff received time to input additional case data. At 6/30/02, basic caseload reports were accurate, but much more development and refinement is required.

Division of Adult and Family Services

Populations Served: Residents under 65 receive an array of services for children, teens, parents, and single adults struggling with parenting challenges, physical and mental illness, and financial, employment, housing, and school problems. 1,112 unduplicated cases were served in '01-02, 455 or 69% more from last year, due to former Non-Case services and programs now being counted as Cases by our new MIS software.

Casework and Groupwork Services: These essential and basic services include assistance with applying for federal, State, and non-profit benefit programs, food bank referrals, budgeting assistance, housing search, eviction prevention and response, language and job training, mentor and caller matches, and activity/discussion groups for troubled or isolated residents. Most Division clients receive 'case management' service, and some receive ongoing counseling. Caseloads grew this year, especially with Hispanics. Growth was also seen in medically uninsured or uninsurable cases, and housing cost and illegal dwelling problems.

Direct Financial Aid: 108 unduplicated cases received \$67,800, 10 or 9% more cases and 4% more funds than last year. The *Temporary Financial Assistance* program helps employable single adults and parents who meet poverty income and asset criteria. 15 residents received \$14,327, 3 or 25% more cases than last year. *Emergency Financial Aid:* Emergency Aid funds pay for rent arrearages, security deposits, medical insurance premiums, and other essential expenses. 81 residents received \$45,673, 7 or 8% fewer cases than last year. *Rent Supplement:* \$7,800 was expended for 23 residents, 5 or 27% more cases than last year.

Community Gifts Program: A cumulative total of 3,822 families and individuals were served via private donations. The Campership program served 223 children and Seniors. The Boots and Shoes program issued footwear vouchers to 328 children. Holiday Aid served 3,201 families.

Work, Education, Beginnings Program (WEB): WEB provides intensive case management, education, job readiness training, job development, assistance with job search, and job support to clients with multiple employment barriers. 127 unduplicated residents were served. 61 of the 72 job-seekers (85%) secured full or part-time work, vs. 48 of 62 last year (77%). 63 of the 127 residents (50%) also registered in education, training, or other services. A new location for WEB computer skill classes was being sought at year-end.

2002 Greenwich Youth Conservation Project: Van space limitations reduced the 2002 session capacity from 21 to 19. 74 unduplicated youth were served for this year, a decrease of 7 or -9% from last year. More funds are needed to offset the cost of the expanded program. A year-end mailing to former donors, press releases, financial institution contribution requests, and applications for grant support are being considered. **Teen Outreach Program (TOP):** TOP is a small group after-school activity/discussion program for students ages 11-15 referred by school staff for emotional/social adjustment problems. Five groups operated after school each week. 33 children participated this year, a decrease of 9 or -21% from last year.

BANC Program: 64 children ages 5-13 registered in '01-02, an increase of 5 or 8% from last year, for this 8-hour recreation and arts program held four days per week at the Byram Archibald Neighborhood Center (BANC). Average daily attendance was 30, an increase of 3 or 11%. We tried hard to interest the BANC children in attending the Boys and Girls Club, but parental resistance to the much-larger facility and bus transportation out of the neighborhood made it infeasible. We also explored using the nearby YMCA after school program located at the elementary school, for our children. This too proved infeasible. They are fully-subscribed, and have a self-imposed limit of 40 children due to funding and school space constraints.

Parent Aide: This program serves families with children at risk of abuse, neglect, lack of resources, or the effects of insufficient parenting. Services increased 78% this year, reaching 139 unduplicated families. After accessing benefits to help families meet financial obligations, subsequent work relies heavily upon home visits to observe some of the family interactions and to demonstrate and teach parenting skills and coping strategies.

Division of Senior Services

Population Served: The Division provides an integrated array of social services to people 65 years of age and older. The goal of most of the Division's work is to help Seniors remain independent and safe in the community. If this goal becomes untenable, we assist them in transitioning to an assisted living facility or nursing home. This year 941 unduplicated cases were served, compared to 732 cases last year, 209 cases or 29% more. Cases served in more than one Program or Service Unit were counted only once for statistical clarity and conservatism and accuracy in identifying the number of residents in need in our community.

Casework and Protective Services: The Seniors' Casework Unit provides protective services, financial aid, education, case management, and counseling to the elderly and their families. Many clients reside independently in the community. Others reside at Parsonage Cottage, a 40-bed congregate living facility, or the 202-bed Nathaniel Witherell nursing home. The Community-Based Residential Care Program (CBRC) provides concrete services and on-going, intensive case management so elderly residents can remain independent and avoid a nursing home.

Casework services were provided to 181 unduplicated clients, including 72 Friendly Visitor cases and 44 protective service cases. 377 Nathaniel Witherell and 51 unduplicated Parsonage Cottage residents were served. CBRC served an annual unduplicated total of 77.

Direct Financial Aid: 35 unduplicated Seniors received \$11,224 for in-home services like Lifeline, Meals on Wheels, rent, and other purposes. 80 payments were processed by our Business Office. **Energy Assistance and Rent Relief Programs:** The Seniors' Casework Unit administers the Department's Energy Assistance program, including Operation Fuel. This year \$71,258 was awarded. \$23,201 or 25% less than last year's \$94,459. 285 unduplicated residents were helped, an increase of 26 or 10% from last year. Operation Fuel assisted 3 Seniors, 57 adults, and 70 children. Aging Casework also processed 275 Renters' Tax Relief application this year, a decrease of 15 or -5% from last year.

Friendly Visitor Program: There were 79 matches this year, an increase of 9 or 13%. Unduplicated clients were 72. The Friendly Visitor program became part of the Senior Services Division. Participation in the various functions was high, and the attendees were overwhelmingly pleased with the festivities.

Brief Services and Information and Referral Service (I&R): This year Brief Services were opened as Cases in our new software. 134 Brief Service contacts were recorded, versus 1,497 last year. Two-thirds of the decline (800 contacts) is due to our new software counting most former Brief Services as Case Program Enrollments or Applications Taken for Cases. The remainder of the decline in Brief Service activity is probably due to downstaffing. 851 Information and Referral service activities were recorded, versus 1,554 last year, also due to downstaffing. Next year I&R will also be tracked through the new software.

Home Health Aide and Homemaker-Only Service: Home Health Aide service is non-medically-related personal care rendered under a contract and the nursing supervision of Greenwich Hospital. Homemaker-Only service provides home management tasks, companion, and transportation/escort service, based on a sliding fee scale. Residents can be referred from any source. 205 unduplicated households received Homemaker-Only services, 12 or 6% fewer than last year's 217. We attribute the decline to less referrals from the Hospital, and the growth in adult day care, which now cares for clients we previously would have seen in the home.

Home Health Care assisted 50 unduplicated households, compared with 111 last year, 61 or 55% fewer. Greenwich Hospital continues to expand its own service, and referred far fewer cases to us. This trend has allowed us to meet unmet demand for more Homemaker-Only service. We regret that next year will be our final year of rendering Home Health Aide service to the community.