

A note from Alice

Dear Friends,

What a year 2020 has been. It has been tough to say the least, with Spring ushering in a massive pivot into our “new normal” and Summer feeling much different than years before. I am looking forward to the Fall; the air feels like it is changing and you can feel the cooler weather under the still, strong sun. This time during the pandemic has been difficult for us, and our community; but if you know us at Clifford Beers, you know we always rise to a challenge.

A full range of telehealth services have been available to our clients since late March, a mere 72 hours after we closed our offices to the general public. We have launched our emotional support helpline Reach Out Connecticut and have created a Community Response Team aimed at reaching New Haven residents who have been victims of violence, so they know they are not alone; and last month New Haven’s Mayor Justin Elicker announced the planning for a mental health crisis team model to respond to 911 calls. We hope to participate in the planning for this response to help make New Haven a safe and just city for all.

This year has seen a tremendous amount of environmental stressors from COVID-19 to an increase in gun violence, domestic violence, and drug use. As the year begins to come to a close, we remain fiercely committed to tackling all of these issues head on, and we are always tremendously grateful for your support.

Warmly,

*Alice*



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Fall 2020



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MOVING FORWARD

"Clifford Beers has always been at the forefront of  
bringing care coordination to the families who need it."

- Robert Wechsler, Clifford Beers Board Member



# Finding Success In Telehealth

Within 72 hours of shutting our offices to the public on March 18th we had full telehealth services available to our clients to continue appointments virtually. Throughout quarantine we have had up to 215 virtual appointments daily. Our praxis has always revolved around connecting us with the whole family, which telehealth has allowed us to do. This story about the Lopez family is a great example:

**"A success I've had since beginning telehealth is with one of my clients, Mateo. I usually meet with Mateo solo and check in with his dad and him later, but through our telehealth sessions I got to see more of their home and learned that his older sister plays a big role in his life, like a mother. Using telehealth is what helped me realize this, by seeing a snapshot into their home that I wouldn't have seen meeting face to face in clinic. We started doing full family sessions with Mateo, his father and sister. It's allowed me to get the family's perspective, provide education to them and hold mini planning sessions on how to help them learn how to better assist Mateo. We've made tremendous progress using telehealth, and it feels like the truest form of family therapy getting to work with them in their own home."** - Clifford Beers Care Coordinator



Providing telehealth services has made care more accessible to families without transportation or can't leave their homes. We have also worked with school districts to provide laptops to our families where needed. These obstacles have existed before COVID-19, and we are proud to have taken the steps necessary to expand accessibility of services. We have fully incorporated telehealth into our programs and we hope to continue this practice indefinitely.

# Get To Know Our New Board Member Rob Wechsler



**What made you get involved with Clifford Beers so long ago?**  
My wife is a clinical social worker, so Clifford Beers has always been in our orbit. It's nearly impossible to be involved in children's health without knowing about Clifford Beers! We care deeply about early childhood education and care.

**What has appealed to you about CB?**  
I admire Clifford Beers' leadership - you are fortunate to have so many great people working for the organization. CB is always trying to help as many people/organizations as possible. CB has always been at the forefront of bringing care coordination to the families who need it.

## What other organizations are you involved in?

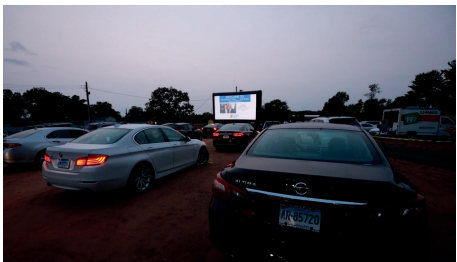
I am a Partner with Social Venture Partners, focused on early childhood. Until recently, I was a board member of Connecticut Appleseed, a nonprofit that did such things as provide legal services to the homeless. I am a former lawyer who went on to work as Director of Research at the nonprofit City Ethics (local government conflicts of interest), and I was the first administrator for the New Haven Democracy Fund.

## You and your wife were generous to give us two donations - why give twice?

We knew it was going to be tough - with a situation like the pandemic there are so many extra expenses to keep things safe and extra expenses for telehealth. We have given to as many local organizations as possible. We care a lot about helping to keep local organizations afloat.

## What's one quote or saying that you live by?

I would have to say "There is no saying." Humor gets me through everything.



# Builders of Hope . . . The Movie!

Our first ever Drive-In style event for this year's Builders of Hope was the perfect way to enjoy an end-of-summer evening! Although we were not able to provide a live and in-person event, we were still able to bring everyone together in a healthy and safe manner and provide the same wonderful event.

Alice talked about the rising rates of overdoses and substance related deaths in Connecticut during COVID-19. Our guests learned more about our SAFE Family Recovery program for individuals dealing with substance issues, our support group for family members and/or loved ones of people struggling with addiction.

Best-selling author and motivational speaker Nic Sheff detailed his earlier life, having been a teenager struggling with substance use and mental illness. He generously gave us an honest look at how complicated living with addiction can be. With support (and tough love) from his family, accessible resources and his own determination, Nic was able to overcome his addictions and get a mental health diagnosis. "Getting diagnosed as Bipolar helped me understand that my drug use was so much more than just wanting to get high," he said. Nic emphasized the importance of understanding mental health as an essential component for treating--and curing--substance abuse.

Thank you to all who joined us on this special night. The generosity shown helps CB continue to provide services to the people who need it most. We hope to see you next year!

# Clifford Beers Reaches Out

Launched as a response to people's emotional needs during COVID-19, Reach Out Connecticut is a non-clinical helpline that provides a compassionate listener to folks who need it and connections to basic need resources.

**"A mother called looking for books for her child and food resources. She had called almost ten to fifteen food banks and they could only put her on the waitlist due to high demands of food. I comforted her, reassuring her that we were there to help and that I would look into this immediately and call her back as soon as possible with a plan. I contacted my supervisor and explained the situation to which she suggested I call the family back and offer them a gift card to a store where the family could purchase both food and childrens books. When I called, the mother was overjoyed that I cared enough to locate some resources for her family and she was able to pick the gift card up from our Marne Street Clinic a couple days later."** - Reach Out CT Call Specialist



[reachoutconnecticut.org](https://reachoutconnecticut.org)

The number is 1-844-TALK-4CT and it is open to callers seven days a week. Our initial funding is for a one year term starting July 1st, 2020 with plans to continue after June 30, 2021.

Reach Out CT is available:  
Monday -Thursday from 8:30am to 7:00pm  
Friday from 8:30am to 6:00pm  
Saturday-Sunday 11:00am to 7:00pm

Callers have contacted this emotional support line for anything from connections to free food, infant/child supplies, questions about how to access mental health care or just to talk and vent to an empathetic ear about whatever they are dealing with. Our repeat caller rate is at just under 24% and people continue to utilize the helpline as a means of seeking out access to resources and care.