



Honorary Directors

Eric Daniels, Esq.
Brad Davis
Joe Furey
William McGurk
Brewster Perkins

2019 Board of Directors

Dawn Andresen
Chair
Manon Champagne
Vice Chair
Mary Bergamo
Treasurer
Faith Palmer
Secretary
Charles Coursey
Sylvia de Haas-Phillips
Alaine Doolan, Esq.
Cynthia Enos
Nilda Fernandez
Morgan Ferrarotti
Martha Finkel
Monica Guinn
Stephanie Kasson
Robert Montecalvo
Barbie Nadal-Cristofaro
Lauren Sigg, Esq.
Kate Sims
Breana Vessichio, Esq.

Mary-Jane Foster, Esq.
President and CEO

Testimony Regarding

HB 5005, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

Department of Social Services

**Appropriations Committee
February 19, 2020**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Flexer, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Committee. Hartford Interval House is Connecticut's largest domestic violence agency providing life-saving services to residents in Hartford and the surrounding 23 towns and cities. For example, our towns include Bolton, Ellington and Granby and our cities include Hartford and Manchester. Rural, urban, suburban, wealthy and challenged. Services include safe shelter, counseling, support groups, safety planning, court-based advocacy, children's services, transportation, assistance with securing basic needs and job training, and coordination with local law enforcement.

I am writing to urge your support of our request for funding under the Department of Social Services (DSS) to fully fund one full-time Child & Family Advocate in each of Connecticut's 18 domestic violence organizations, including Hartford Interval House.

Last year, in our safe house, we provided services to 108 children and 114 women. Because our Child & Family Advocate is not a fully funded position, we must fundraise year-round to support this critical position. Studies show that children who experience family violence are likely to repeat it as adults unless the cycle is broken with trauma-informed services.

It is important that children who experience family violence in their home are provided a comprehensive and holistic approach that is tailored specifically to their different needs. Families benefit from services that incorporate a multi-faceted approach. Working with the family unit, service providers gain greater insight into the level of violence experienced by all members of the family and can assist in the continuous development of age appropriate safety planning.

Currently our Child & Family Advocate utilizes a number of trauma-informed, evidence-based and resiliency-driven approaches to their work including the

Interval House • P.O. Box 340207 • Hartford, CT 06134-0207 • Business Phone 860-246-9149 • Hotline 888-774-2900
www.intervalhousect.org

Andover • Avon • Bloomfield • Bolton • Canton • East Granby • East Hartford • Ellington • Farmington • Glastonbury • Granby • Hartford • Hebron • Manchester • Marlborough • Newington • Rocky Hill • Simsbury • South Windsor • Tolland • Vernon • West Hartford • Wethersfield • Windsor

Devereux Early Child Assessment (DECA); Mom's Empowerment and Kid's Club curricula; play, music and art therapy, and child-specific responses to trauma and violence. The Child & Family Advocate will support the non-offending parent in identifying protective factors that will enhance the relationship with child(ren). Building protective factors are about helping to ensure the basic needs of the family are met, such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as connecting parents and children to various services they request. It is extraordinarily labor-intensive work.

Providing supportive evidence- and strengths-based resiliency services for children and the non-offending parent/survivor is critical to the overall safety and stability of the family but is not sustainable under the current funding structure. The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, of which we are a member, is requesting \$954,000 in state funding under DSS to support one full-time Child & Family Advocate at each of the state's 18 domestic violence organizations. We urge your support of this request as it will have a substantially positive impact on our ability to meet the needs of the children and survivors who come through our doors each year.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Sincerely,



Mary-Jane Foster
President and CEO
Hartford Interval House
mj.foster@intervalhousect.org
860-838-8450