

Strength in Numbers

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



VISION

Harmonia Collaborative Care empowers individuals to be healthy and fulfilled.

MISSION

Harmonia Collaborative Care delivers best practice Health Home, behavioral health and senior services to foster individuals' independence and improve their quality of life.

CORE VALUES

We value integrity in the way we serve and empower individuals and are committed to:

Quality Care » We prioritize the quality of care we deliver, drawing from best practice standards, superior quality reviews, continuous improvement and personal commitment.

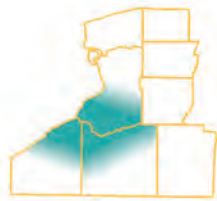
Compassion » We bring kindness, humanity, empathy and sensitivity to our work to ensure boundaries, maximizing client growth and allowing for provider self-care.

Collaboration » We are active and open to thoughtful collaborations supporting internal relationships, programs and community partners.

Culture of Dedication, Passion and Joy » We outwardly express dedication, passion and joy about our work to our clients, team and community.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

*Southern Erie,
Northern Chautauqua
and Cattaraugus
Counties*



We can serve anyone in WNY. Our service area is expanding with telehealth capabilities.

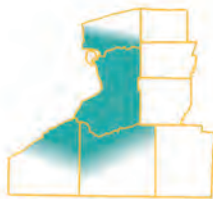
SENIOR SERVICES

*Brant, Collins,
Eden, Evans,
Gowanda, Hamburg,
North Collins
and Springville*



HEALTH HOME

*All of Erie, Southern
Niagara, Northern
Chautauqua and
Cattaraugus Counties*



CAREPANION

*Southern Erie County
expanding to meet the
needs of Erie County and
its surrounding areas*



Strength in Numbers

Far too often, we're led to believe that to be strong, we must stand alone. Be independent. Don't ask for help.

Yet, that's not how humans work.

Throughout history, people have gathered. They lived as tribes. Built communities and civilizations. Shared resources and defenses. Evolved as societies.

Instinctively, we're a communal species. We work in unison. To survive. To thrive!

Harmonia emanates that culture.

We help clients improve and enhance their mental health, personal growth and independence.

But independence doesn't mean being alone – it means being able to choose the groups to which we belong.

Families. Neighborhoods. Organizations. Teams.

We counsel and support our clients – and connect them to others, too.

We continuously seek partners to help better deliver our services. We build teams which help us serve more people than we can alone – and do so with greater effectiveness and efficiency. We collaborate within and outside our agency to find solutions and recommendations that give our clients the best chances for relief and success.



**Because we're all
stronger when
we work together.**



Our Why

We all strive to find harmony in our lives – the synchronicity between our family, passions, work and home. There are many challenges to a harmonious existence: sickness, addiction, the realities of aging and the burdens of life. Harmonia helps to harmonize our clients' lives, so they can move to a melody that supports healthy balance. Harmonia is the Latin word for harmony. It can also mean melody, consonance and concordance. It speaks to disparate pieces working together to create something whole.

What We Do

Harmonia Collaborative Care offers behavioral health and senior care services, along with Health Home case management from our two beautiful facilities in Derby and Hamburg, and via telehealth services to clients all across Western New York. Our counselors and staff pride themselves in providing empathic care to bring balance to the lives of those who entrust us with their care. We help people attain their highest level of well-being and maintain their independence through our integrated Mental Health, Senior and Health Home services, while reducing the cost of care for clients and funders.



Harmonia at a Glance: Services Offered

Harmonia services are designed to improve and enhance mental health, personal growth and independence.

Counseling Services » Professionally trained and licensed clinicians provide treatment for mental health conditions. Our holistic, empathic approach enables clients to take advantage of quality therapeutic services which include:

- Individual therapy
- Marital/Couples therapy
- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- In-school Counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Medication treatment
- Case management
- Links to vocational and social programs

Health Home » Our specialists help Medicaid recipients with mental health concerns and chronic conditions to stay healthy and out of the hospital/emergency room. Harmonia Health Home Case Managers coordinate and provide access to care available in the community.

Senior Services » Harmonia's specialists offer compassionate care to seniors facing the challenges of lifestyle change. Our Senior Service Case Managers provide a free assessment to link clients with:

- Health and pharmaceutical insurance
- Referrals to home care options
- Assistance with housing options
- Assistance with benefits and entitlements (HEAP, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.)
- Links to caregiver support groups
- Unbiased service provider information and referrals
- Unbiased nursing home information
- Transportation options

CarePanion » non-medical in-home care providers who assist seniors and other house-bound clients with tasks such as housekeeping, errands, and safety reviews, while providing much-needed companionship to help them battle loneliness, remain independent and age in place with dignity.

Dear Clients, Colleagues, Donors & Supporters

The last year-plus has been eventful. We've led exciting initiatives, adjusted to emerging trends, and earned new funding from several sources. We've welcomed new colleagues, partners and clients. We created a signature annual event to raise our visibility and improve our finances. And we've planned for the future, with investments and other strategic decisions designed to make Harmonia and the communities we serve more adaptable, durable and healthy – because we know there is strength in numbers.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

We've fostered change across our Behavioral Health team, as we look to broaden our scope of services and geographic footprint. Our service area now spans 95 zip codes, with a blend of office, onsite and telehealth counseling and programming, all designed to treat the entire person – not just their symptoms. We also meet clients where they're at, delivering services according to their preference and circumstances.

Part of this growth has come from adjusting our approach. Historically, we limited our capacity to the physical space we had available. Now, we're looking to build capacity for what we want to become – strengthening Harmonia's resilience in the process. This means adding counselors and support staff to build a team which can handle that growth, allowing us to do even more for our neighbors in need.

A significant addition is Dr. Laura Spencer, LMHC, our new Director of Mental Health Clinics. Laura's experience outside our market exposed her to services which have not been available or well known in Western New York. With a skill set that includes acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), narcissistic abuse counseling, solution-focused therapy (SFT), parent training, and mood and anxiety disorder treatment, Laura is helping us envision a team with a broader set of specializations such as

meditation, mindfulness, massage and other world-class offerings.

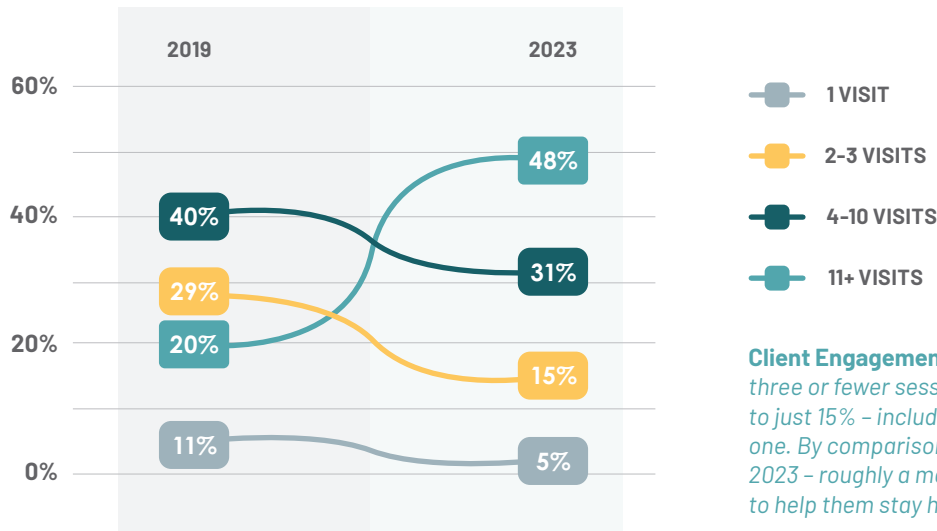
For example, we recently welcomed a Level-II Reiki therapist. Reiki is an energy-healing practice many describe as deeply calming and therapeutic. Its roots are found in ancient Japanese healing practices, named after the Japanese words "rei," meaning universal, and "ki," meaning vital energy.

We're also exploring new, preventative services with evidence-based components. However, these often require consistent use to be fully effective, and many insurers won't cover them yet, so we're advocating for this change.

Insurers are a vital audience for us, as a whole. We work steadily to add health plans and strengthen those relationships, so that they recognize us as a quality provider. That hard work is paying off, as our insurance partners increased from 66 in 2021 to 75 in 2023, allowing us to help many more people as a result. This does increase Harmonia's administrative hurdles, because regulatory and operational requirements differ from insurer to insurer, so we've added billing and administrative staff to support this growth.



Dr. Laura Spencer, LMHC, joined us as our new Director of Mental Health Clinics.



Client Engagement In 2019, 29% of clients had three or fewer sessions. In 2023, that improved to just 15% - including only 5% who came to just one. By comparison, 48% attended 11 or more in 2023 - roughly a monthly cadence - allowing us to help them stay healthier and happier.

Another example is our longstanding Lake Shore Central Schools partnership. By being onsite, we're able to serve more teens and develop a stronger understanding and bond with staff and students alike. Now, we're ready to expand that model, thanks to a \$150,000 Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grant, and are actively developing relationships with other districts to expand our services and reach.

We're also being creative in how we recruit and retain quality professionals. For example, we earned a loan forgiveness grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health. It awarded three of our clinicians up to \$30,000 each in education debt reduction, providing they remain with Harmonia for three years. We have also invested in an applicant-tracking system and digital marketing to reach area professionals, building our team to treat our community best.

To be clear, we know this growth can't be achieved all at once. It must be done over time, in concert with the organization as a whole. However, we're making strategic investments with a slightly higher risk tolerance, knowing we have the track record and resilience to support them.

And make no mistake, we're equally dedicated to our existing clients - and especially pleased to see them attending sessions more regularly. In 2019, 35% of clients had three or fewer sessions. In 2023, however, that figure dropped to just 20% - including only 5% who came to just one. By comparison, 46% attended 11 or more in 2023 - roughly a monthly cadence - allowing us to help them stay healthier and happier.

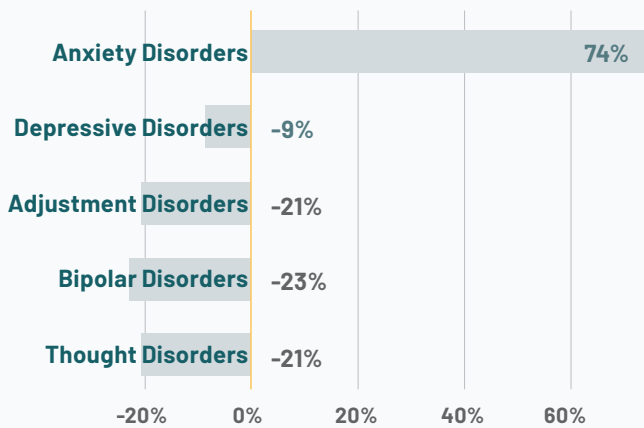
SENIOR CARE

Our Senior Care team had a very strong year, highlighted by a growing number of partnerships. They provided a total of 2,090 case management hours and served 424 unique clients - annual increases of 20% and 9.6%, respectively - throughout Erie County. We also provided information and assistance to 355 individuals, a 34% increase.

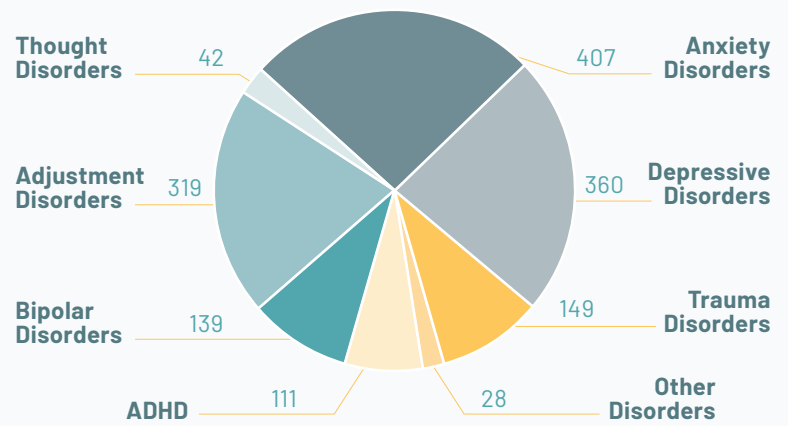
One of our strongest partners is the Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), with whom we deliver several programs focused primarily on seniors. One is our Falls Prevention program, which evaluates people's risk of falling at home by conducting assessments, reducing risks, and offering information and resources to make client homes safer. There's also our Community Health Coaching program, designed to empower people with chronic conditions to better manage their care and improve their quality of life with the support of a Health Coach. Lastly, our Healthy IDEAS program integrates depression awareness and management with health coaching. As an active member of WNYICC, we're connected to more people in need and able to provide a broader spectrum of services. WNYICC also streamlines our ability to serve them effectively and efficiently, and we're very pleased to see our relationship with this community care hub growing and expanding.

Another major focus for our Senior Care team has been caregiver support. For instance, our Pathways for Caregivers program, produced in partnership with Cradle Beach in Angola, N.Y., offers an important case management link to caregivers - who span the gamut from spouses

Four-year Change In People Served By Diagnostic Category (pandemic effect)



Diagnostic Trend: Clients served By Diagnosis 2023



Diagnostics Trends Anxiety disorders have risen sharply since the pandemic, leading us to adjust our focus and increase our capacity to meet these changing needs.

to adult children to neighbors. We provide the mental health and senior service components for this program, which was made possible due to an “Exhale Grant” from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation (RCWF), the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. It has resulted in two of our service areas working together, which our staff has found quite fulfilling. It’s also heartwarming to recognize the caregivers, who so often are forgotten heroes across our communities. We help keep them grounded, giving them a sounding board and a release, which re-energizes them.

Our caregiver team works with Erie County, too. Here, we focus on caregiver assessments, to help better address seniors’ needs. For example, if a caregiver is a working spouse or adult child, their loved one may have no way of getting to adult day care programs, rehabilitation sessions or doctor appointments. It’s also encouraging to see the state recognizing caregivers’ needs and showing a willingness to help with funding and legislation.

We’re pursuing new funding sources for this segment, too. Recently, we were awarded another Caregivers Support Grant from the RCWF, which allowed us to create a five-session educational series delivered throughout the fall and winter. We’re thrilled to share that 100% of participants reported feeling better equipped to handle their tasks following this program. In addition, we were able to produce several video testimonies designed to help others recognize

their roles as caregivers, the signs of physical and mental burnout, and the availability of our respite programs. Those videos are available on our YouTube channel, which can be found at the footer of our home page.

HEALTH HOME

This team also continues to impress and inspire. They help people with tremendous roadblocks and struggles – those who battle addictions, lack housing and basic nutrition, and suffer from extreme and chronic mental and physical health challenges. Our staff works tirelessly to identify and build relationships with these individuals. They teach them good habits to keep them healthy and out of hospitals. And, they develop plans to secure housing, medications and social services so that clients can regain their health, independence and dignity.

Our Health Home team continues to increase its partnerships as well. For example, we began working with Kalos Health, a Niagara Falls-based, nonprofit health insurer which helps adults with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities who are on or eligible for Medicaid. Kalos’ nurses coordinate services with a vast network that cares for Western New Yorkers with extensive medical needs such as extreme diabetes, multiple sclerosis, frailties, and more. Their managed long-term care plans help clients to obtain meals, fall-prevention aides, medications and more.

The Office of Mental Health also awarded us a \$40,000 grant to develop “Connections to support Critical Transitions” for our Health Home-Plus (HH+) population. HH+ clients represent our highest-need and most at-risk populations. These individuals are especially difficult to find and engage, create a greater financial burden to the system, and require more frequent meetings and communications with providers. This grant is designed to develop “pathways” with other organizations to help engage these clients when they are available and ensure the greatest level of support by enrolling them into the Health Home program.

In an effort to create these “pathways” we have developed a partnership with Friends of Night People, a nonprofit food kitchen and respite for the homeless based in Buffalo’s Allentown District. We’ve become an important part of their delivery team, working to secure clothing and hygiene products for their clients, along with case management support for housing and linkages to physical and mental health services.

More recently, we established two new Buffalo-based partners. These include Saving Grace Ministries, an all-male homeless shelter which assists those coming out of incarceration, rehabilitation, or other scenarios, and the Kirsten Vincent Respite & Recovery Center, which cares for those trying to escape difficult scenarios at home.

It all adds up to more people served – as does the 34% year-over-year increase in Health Home clients in outreach at the close of 2023. It’s perhaps surprising, but once people have a stable home and place to take daily medications, their odds of getting better increase dramatically. These clients are a challenging population, but our team goes the extra mile to be that difference in someone’s life. It might be as simple as giving them basic hygiene products, a new shirt or pair of jeans, a bus card to see a doctor, or a hot plate to cook a warm meal. Sometimes, that’s all it takes to keep them from heading down the wrong road.



OUR STRENGTH IS OUR NUMBERS

We remain, at our core, community servants. As such, we can’t succeed without your continued support. You might be a donor hoping to ensure your neighbors are cared for with empathy. You may be a government official with the ability to open doors and improve our reach. Perhaps you’re a fellow human service agency looking to collaborate – or a business with space or land that can help us deliver an exciting new program. Maybe you’re a potential new staff member, looking to work with a team of people consistently recognized by *Buffalo Business First* as one of the best places to work in Western New York. Whoever you are, we’d welcome the chance to have you on our side in some capacity. Please, reach out to me at (716) 947-5025. I’m confident we’ll find a way to do more for our community – together.

Sincerely,

Valarie Nowak, LMHC, MPA
Chief Executive Officer

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

We often think of mental health counseling as something to do when there's a problem. But it's very effective in maintaining a good state of mind, too.

Harmonia's behavioral health team offers numerous specialties and certifications through a holistic approach to help during a wide array of scenarios. Whether someone is struggling with depression, PTSD or anxiety, our growing team of professionally trained and licensed clinicians are eager to serve our community's needs and guide clients along their journey to good mental health.

Because we all feel better when we know we're not alone.

Treatment Sessions

17,607

↑ 4% VS 2022

Referrals

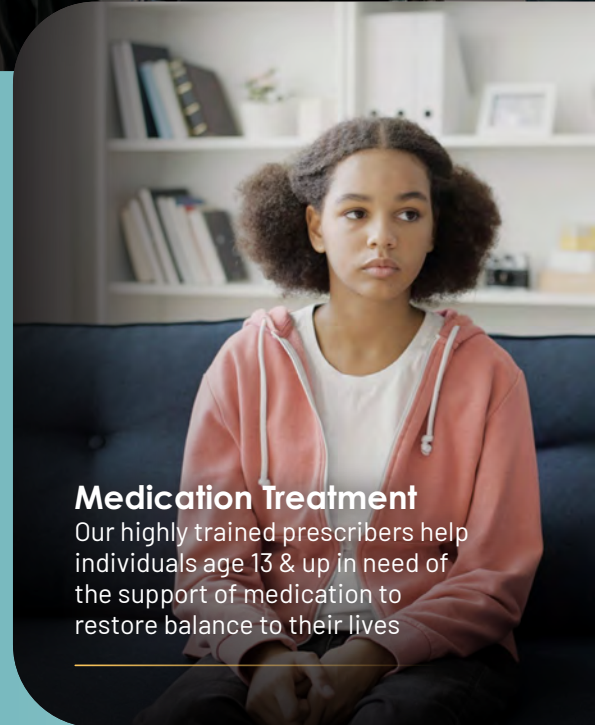
695

↑ 14% VS 2022



In-School Counseling

By being onsite, we develop stronger relationships & serve more teens




Medication Treatment

Our highly trained prescribers help individuals age 13 & up in need of the support of medication to restore balance to their lives




Couples & Family Therapy

We help heal wounds, teach better communication skills and improve the overall functioning of relationships with significant others & family systems



Managing Anxiety

Anxiety disorders have risen 74% since the pandemic



Expanding Mindsets

We're changing how we think about space & considering alternative treatment methods to offer more services at more locations

SENIOR CARE

Many seniors are reluctant to give up their homes. They want to remain independent. They want to age with dignity. Respect. Compassion.

We help them do just that.

We link seniors to the programs and services they need to stay in their homes as long as possible. We help prevent falls, enroll them in Meals on Wheels and Adult Day Care programs, and connect with medical and personal care providers. We provide much-needed companionship – and respites for caregivers. We even help them obtain funding for select services.

**In other words,
we treat them like family.**

SENIOR CARE ERIE COUNTY

2,090
Hrs Served
YEAR OVER YEAR ↑ **20%**

424 Unique Clients Served
YEAR OVER YEAR ↑ **9.6%**



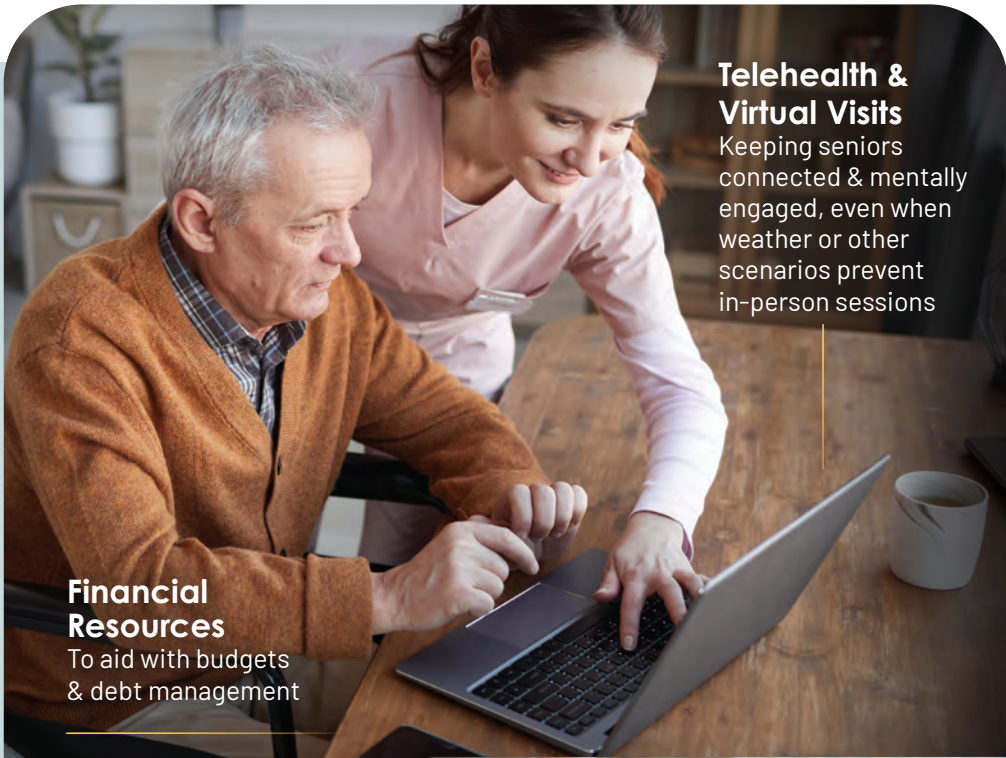
Mental Health Counseling

Our licensed clinical psychologist specializes in gerontology & can provide in-home therapy to home-bound seniors



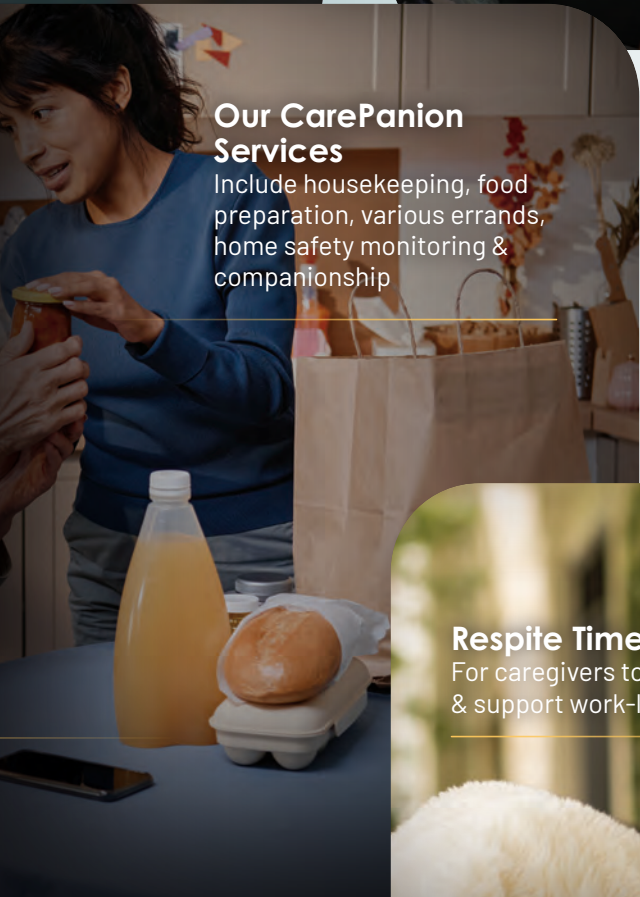
Meals on Wheels

Connecting seniors to providers of reliable, hot & healthy meals delivered year-round



Telehealth & Virtual Visits
Keeping seniors connected & mentally engaged, even when weather or other scenarios prevent in-person sessions

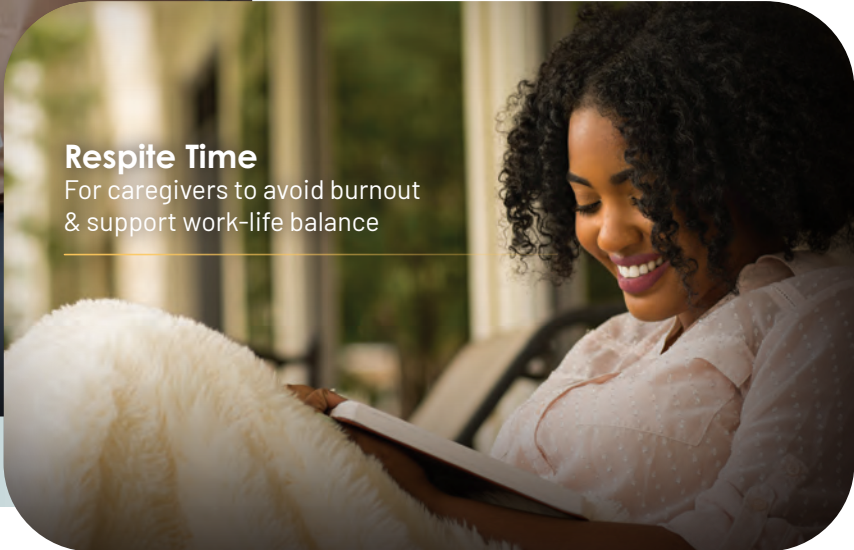
Financial Resources
To aid with budgets & debt management



Our CarePanion Services
Include housekeeping, food preparation, various errands, home safety monitoring & companionship



Adult Day Care
Gives seniors the chance to socialize & stay mentally sharp



Respite Time
For caregivers to avoid burnout & support work-life balance

HEALTH HOME SERVICES

It doesn't take much to fall on hard times. A sudden job loss. A new addiction. A loved one's death. Instability can happen within a matter of weeks. Suddenly, you spiral out of control – and don't know where to turn.

Many turn to us.

Harmonia's Health Home team has established numerous strategic partnerships to better serve members of our community experiencing instability. We work to find them housing, clothing and transportation. We secure crucial medicines and hygiene products which improve their physical, mental and social health. And, we help keep them out of costly emergency rooms and incarceration scenarios – so they can get back on their feet.

Because once people regain their confidence – tomorrow isn't so scary.

Visits
1,161

Clients in Outreach **131**
↑ **34%** VS 2022

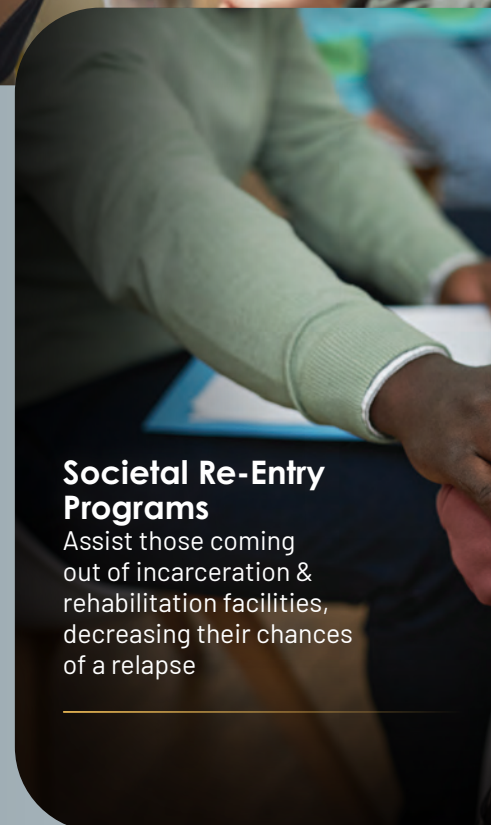
Food Pantries

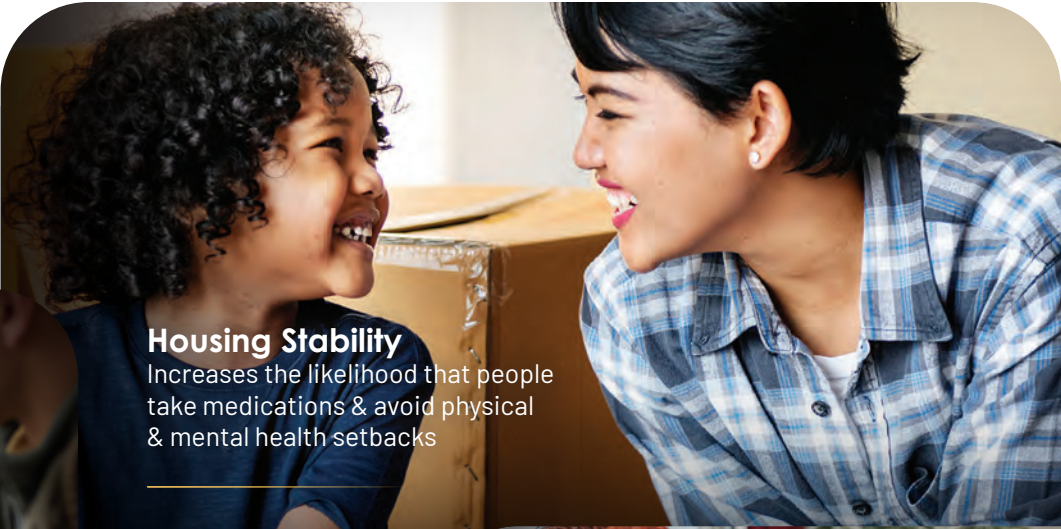
Help us build relationships and develop plans to secure housing, medications & social services for clients so they can regain their health, independence & dignity



Societal Re-Entry Programs

Assist those coming out of incarceration & rehabilitation facilities, decreasing their chances of a relapse





Housing Stability

Increases the likelihood that people take medications & avoid physical & mental health setbacks



Domestic Abuse Shelters

Allow us to work with their clients & help them escape difficult scenarios at home



Health Home-Plus (HH+)

Clients are difficult to find/engage & use emergency rooms often, creating a greater financial burden on our community

A Word From Our Directors



DR. LAURA SPENCER, LMHC, Director of Mental Health Clinics

Becoming Director of Mental Health Clinics has provided me the opportunity to work with our truly amazing clinicians and staff and learn about the many people we serve. When you work in the human services field, there is “never enough” – be it resources, services or staff. However, when you live in a rural area, this truism is multiplied, often exponentially. At Harmonia, we get the chance to do at least something to make a difference about that imbalance. Years ago, I worked in a much-different industry. I knew the only way I would be satisfied in a career was if I made a difference. I wasn’t sure what that would look like at the time. But today, I know we make a difference – and I know it is appreciated. My next goal is to expand our reach to continue our good work. Our team has already laid the groundwork for this in some ways...so stay tuned!



JENNIFER GUNIA, Director of Senior Services

For the last 20+ years, I’ve worked to improve senior citizens’ lives across our community. Recently, we added another important segment: caregivers. It’s been encouraging to see state and federal healthcare leaders recognize the need for caregiver funding, and the programs we’ve been able to develop with that support have become some of my life’s most rewarding work. We’re providing caregivers with much-needed respite options while assessing other areas we might be able to assist, such as mental health. Best of all, the camaraderie found among our participants has blossomed to the point where they see each other as friends and family – along with the assurance that they’re no longer alone. There’s no better way to illustrate the tremendous impact we’re having.



KRISTY GASIEWICZ, Health Home Program Director

I became a case manager because of my passion for solving problems and helping others. Case managers are the ultimate advocates. We’re often the most knowledgeable people on a client’s treatment team. We know what’s likely to work for them and what won’t – though we always keep an open mind and maintain a willingness to adapt and learn. We face many challenges and have limited resources to draw upon, but the partnerships we establish help us stretch those resources to their fullest. As a leader, I remind my team that every day is a new day to teach and to learn – something I still do after 21 years in the field. It’s an honor to collaborate with families, providers and agencies, and it’s humbling – and so rewarding – to help people regain their confidence and improve their lives.

Garden Party **ONE MAGICAL NIGHT**



We were thrilled with the success of our first annual Garden Party – a signature fundraising event designed to celebrate our clients, partners and team with an evening of fellowship and fun.

The June event was held at the breathtaking Legacy on 18 Mile Creek in Hamburg. A beautiful early-summer night featured guests greeted by fairies and entertained by a variety of games, musicians – even a tarot card reader!

Delicious selections from Frontier Catering and a wide variety of raffle and silent auction items rounded a magical evening, capped off by heart-moving testimonials from clients, staff and board members, each of whose lives have been forever enhanced by the friends and confidants present that evening.

We're forever grateful to the many people who helped bring this night to life, including our lead sponsors: Capstream Audio-Visual, Chef's Restaurant, Evans Bank, Incept Digital Marketing and The Magellan Group. In addition, we thank the dozens of individuals and businesses who donated items for our raffles and auctions, and our media partners at Buffalo Spree and WBBZ-TV. We hope you'll save the date for next year's event – June 18, 2025 – which we intend to make even more magical than the first!





In Memoriam

GAYLE HAYES, LCSW-R

In June 2024 we suffered the sudden loss of a cherished counselor and colleague. Gayle was a skilled clinician, with a long tenure in our field. A Dunkirk, N.Y., native and resident, her LCSW-R credentials are the highest a clinical social worker can receive – earned after years of practice, supervision and client care.

Although Gayle was with Harmonia for less than two years, she treated many who walked through our doors and supervised several clinicians working toward their licensure. She also steadily advanced her clinical knowledge and skills, having recently completed intensive training in Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) to help those clients with a history of trauma.

Gayle was a graduate of SUNY Fredonia, where she graduated summa cum laude, as well as the University of Louisville, where she earned a master’s in social work. She enjoyed reading, being a lifelong learner, and attending shows at She’s, where she was a season ticket holder. However, we’ll remember the warmth she displayed, her impish smile, and that playful wit which brightened the days of our clients and staff alike.

Circle of Life

KATHRYN BLANCHARD

As difficult as it is to lose a member of our Harmonia family for any reason, those pains can be partially offset by the joys of new additions. We experienced this just days after Gayle’s passing when one of our counselors, Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW, and her husband, Alex, welcomed their new daughter into this world. Alexandria was born on June 16 at 3:39 a.m., and this eight-pound, 21-inch-long cutie reminded us all how amazing life is, in all its remarkable facets and stages.



Board of Directors

Harmonia's Board provides leadership, consultation, experience and talent that helps our team grow and improve at a meaningful and manageable pace. The result is an agency that provides superior client attention, service and value for all of our clients, partners and supporters, in addition to being worthy stewards of our donor and public funding dollars.

Meet our full team at harmonia-care.org.

CHAIR

Howard Martin

VICE-CHAIR

Louis Atti, CPCU

TREASURER

Rajan Patel, CPA

SECRETARY

Christine Kluckhohn, PT, DPT, MSHSA

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Paul Cesana, MSW

Lisa Denton, Ph.D.

John Grennell, Esq.

Tristan Keelan, MBA

Kathy Murray

Francesca Tioleco, MA

Director Emeritus Suzanne Jasinski

Executive Team

Valerie Nowak, LMHC, MPA

Chief Executive Officer

Michelle Chiappetta, AA

Director of Finance and Administration

Laura Spencer, PhD, LMHC

Director of Mental Health Clinics

Beverly Eagan, BS

HR and Compliance Specialist

Kristy Gasiewicz, MS

Health Home Program Director

Jennifer Gunia, BS

Director of Senior Services

How Can You Make a Difference?

DONATE

Harmonia Collaborative Care is a not-for-profit organization that relies on donations and public funding to sustain the quality of services we provide, which directly or indirectly impact the lives of all of our neighbors. Please help us foster good mental health and independence in our community.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made at harmonia-care.org/donate, by calling 716.947.5025, or by mailing a check to:

Harmonia Collaborative Care
6722 Erie Road (Route 5)
Derby, NY 14047

JOIN US!

We want to be the first choice for behavioral health and senior care professionals — and we're growing. At Harmonia, "life with balance" is more than just a tagline or even a goal for our clients. It's a concept that's every bit as important to our staff, and it's engrained in our culture. Ask us about our approach to work-life balance and visit harmonia-care.org/careers to see what positions we're looking to fill. We regularly consider new board members as well.





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Derby, NY 14047

harmonia-care.org
716.947.5025

