



# NAVIGATING UNCHARTED WATERS





# NAVIGATING UNCHARTERED WATERS

It's natural to be nervous when facing something new. The uncertainty it presents can cause feelings of doubt, apprehension – even isolation.

We mistake the unfamiliar with the unpassable. We make assumptions and fill in blanks about dangers which may not exist. We envision failures before stopping to assess their probability – often because we fear the unknown and are afraid to ask for help.

*Harmonia is here  
to be your guide.*



We light the way, chart client courses and keep anxiety at bay. We accompany our clients, so they never feel alone, no matter the journey. And we build their confidence, so one day they'll be ready to take the wheel.

Whether they're managing the pressures of high school or raising a family; battling addiction or searching for housing; or augmenting their home to age in place safely and with dignity; Harmonia's counselors and case workers are ready to help clients traverse the unknown.

Because once you have the tools for safe passage, the horizon looks a lot more inviting.

## VISION

Empower individuals to be healthy and fulfilled.

## MISSION

We deliver 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.

# 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



# DEAR CLIENTS, COLLEAGUES, DONORS & SUPPORTERS

It's an especially important time to provide behavioral health, senior care and health home services to our community. Our world is rapidly changing and increasingly complex. Longstanding services and safety nets that many have relied on have been or are at risk of being reduced or eliminated. We are bombarded with negative and oftentimes divisive news, as daily pressures seemingly rise around us. Not surprisingly, our neighbors are reaching out – some more than ever – for help in managing these changing and challenging times.

We take pride in offering them some calm and stability – even though, like most nonprofits today, Harmonia is also operating in a new and uncertain environment. However, we're managing it by following the same advice we often give to clients: it's the small steps we take – those bite-sized daily decisions – that lead to large-scale improvements.

In our case, that means following our vision, mission and core values as seen on the previous pages. It means simplifying and shifting our energies to the things we can control. It means focusing on those areas where we can do the most good for the greatest numbers of community members.

This is most evident by our substantial expansion within youth mental health counseling in 2024. After years of successfully operating our in-school services at Lake Shore High School – and in response to the increasing demand for mental health counseling among tweens and teens – we lowered our minimum patient age to 10 and added three more schools/districts to our footprint. We now provide in-school counseling to the North Collins Middle and High School, the Silver Creek Middle and High School, and added Lake Shore's Middle School as well.

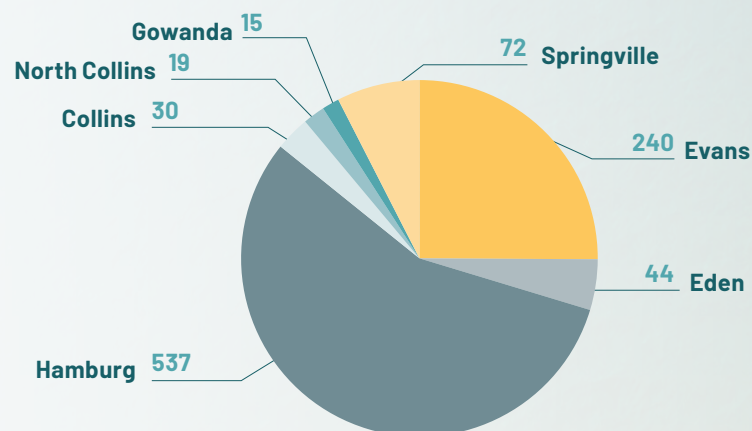
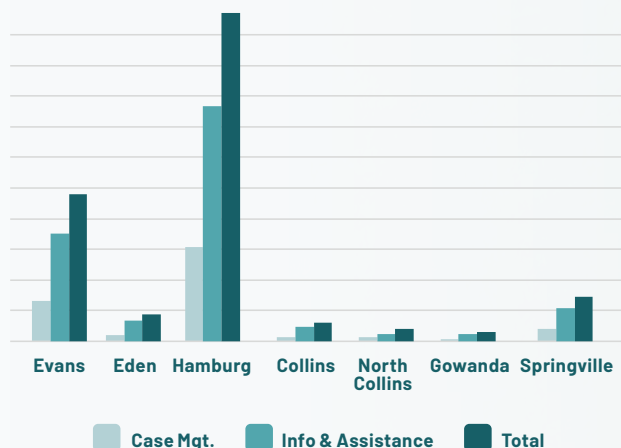
This expansion immediately increased the number of individuals and families we support, while addressing the widely documented regional and national rise in the need and desire for onsite mental health counseling in schools. It also provides more predictability and reduces the number of missed or cancelled appointments, since our proximity makes these sessions easier to schedule and attend. Our presence in these schools helps reduce student absenteeism and classroom disruptions while improving individual health, academic performance and graduation rates. It also benefits our staff and administrators through greater revenue and staffing predictability, which helps to ensure that we all can do our very best work.

Speaking of doing our best work, that commitment led us to make the difficult but important decision to transfer our CarePanion program from our Senior Services team in August 2025. We realized that, although we were providing these services adequately – even generating growth in some respects – the resources we were allocating to managing and serving that population could be redeployed and better used in our core focus areas like behavioral health and other parts of the senior services spectrum. Best of

**CLINICIAN GRACE HARVEY,**  
LMSW, onsite at Silver Creek  
Central School, provides  
students with better  
access to mental health  
counseling while reducing  
its overall stigma.



## Senior Care Clients Served by Municipality



all, we identified a local provider who was poised for growth and expansion of the senior services they already offered. They were happy to accept those clients and welcome our staff. Thus, it was a win-win-win-win scenario for our clients, our employees, our partner and Harmonia.

This decision was, in part, a product of our enhanced board of directors, which grew from seven to 10 members during 2024. Together, their expertise in healthcare administration, academia, clinic management, legal services, and business development has helped us to view our landscape differently. Their spectrum of experience are bringing fresh paradigms and perspectives for us to consider. They've also increased our visibility across the region's healthcare, human resources and development industries, thereby enhancing our marketing, recruiting and fundraising capabilities.

As we move forward, we intend to reinvigorate the board's governance and executive committee, which should lead to even stronger leadership development and engagement. We also hope to embark upon a capital campaign which would fund a new roof and other building maintenance at our Derby headquarters, in addition to expanding our breadth of services and the footprint in which they're offered. We are steadily evaluating our delivery model too, exploring additional location and partnership possibilities that might allow us to help more of our neighbors in need.

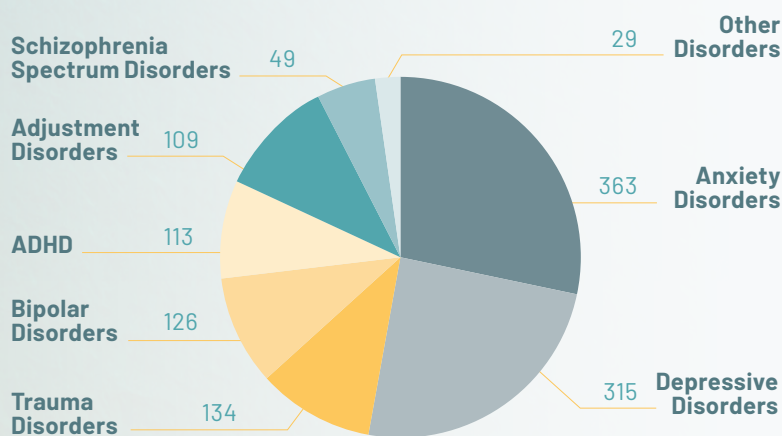
Specific to fundraising, we received transformational support from some wonderful organizations to help us navigate a new and

uncertain landscape. Specifically, the Tower Foundation provided a pivotal \$250,000 that allowed us to maintain normal operations during a challenging stretch. Similarly, the Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation provided us with \$25,000 in funding as well. Our mental health team received a substantial boost from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, as well as the Dan and Flavia Gernatt Family Foundation, which were crucial in our expanded reach within area school districts. In addition, the New York State Office of Mental Health supported our adult mental health service efforts through a stigma reduction grant and student loan forgiveness incentives to our clinical staff.

Operationally, our behavioral health team has rebounded nicely from a brief but significant downtick in staffing during 2024. Its year-over-year service hours compared favorably through the first six months of 2025 and are tracking to return to 2023 levels. Our team of licensed clinicians offers a broad swathe of therapeutic services and specializations, from individual, marital and family counseling to crisis intervention and medication management. As always, we remain committed to treating the entire person – not just their symptoms – and stand ready to meet clients where they're at, delivering services according to their preference and circumstances. To that end, our service area has grown to 95 zip codes across nine counties and our expanded youth services has positioned us for more in-office and telehealth client sessions beyond our in-school presence.



## Diagnostic Trend: Clients served by Diagnosis 2024



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

Similarly, we continued to see strong performance from our Senior Services team, including a 160% year-over-year increase in the number of people assisted in Erie County in 2024, as well as a 32% increase in new intakes as of 2025's midway point. We have also seen steady growth from our partnership with the Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), which helps its members address social determinants of health, improve chronic conditions, and reduce the cost of care. WNYICC was selected as New York State's official Social Care Network affiliate for the Western Region in 2024. Part of the state's 1115 Healthcare Waiver initiative, this designation better positions WNYICC to connect us with people in need of services, which increases our reach and ability to serve our neighbors.

We have a long-standing history of providing other services through our WNYICC relationship too, and we continue to grow these services. These include its Community Health Coach program, which empowers individuals with chronic conditions to better manage their care and improve their quality of life through the assistance of a Health Coach; Falls Prevention program, which evaluates a client's risk of falling at home through assessments and risk reduction, and Healthy Ideas program, which integrates depression awareness and management with health coaching.

We also continued to partner with Cradle Beach to offer the Pathways for Caregivers program, which provides much-needed respite for those charged with caring for a loved one. Supported by The Exhale Initiative (funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and Health Foundation for Western and Central New York), it reinforces caregiver well-being and effectiveness, leading to better health and social-emotional outcomes, while lowering the costs of care for families with older adults in their care.

Lastly, our Health Home program saw a 44% increase in clients in outreach and a 32% rise in clients enrolled in 2024. This team, which also

received support from an Office of Mental Health grant, helps people overcome major challenges and roadblocks, including addiction, homelessness and malnutrition. Many also battle mental and physical health issues, which can make their difficult situations exponentially worse. We build relationships with these individuals and help them form good habits to remain healthy and out of hospitals. Best of all, we had a 4% increase in clients discharged, meaning we helped even more people to connect with social service programs, regain their dignity and become able to live on their own.

Through the aforementioned grant, our Health Home team was tasked with creating pathways to increase outreach and engagement with people in need of services. Thus, we began a partnership with the Kristen Vincent Respite & Recovery Center in Buffalo's Fruit Belt neighborhood.

Lastly, we've maintained our presence in the community through a variety of volunteer service commitments. This includes service on the boards of the Southtowns Chamber of Commerce, Evans Economic Advisory Committee, WNYICC and the Village of Hamburg's Senior Service Advisory Board. We also partner with a variety of organizations and host tables at several fairs and festivals throughout the year.

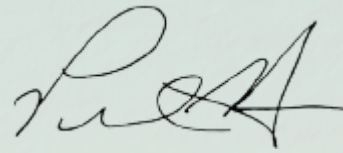
Despite all of these successes, we're just scratching the surface of the impact we could have on our communities – and **your support would mean more today than at any other point in our history**. For example, we hope to make strategic investments in technology, including a new electronic medical record and data management system, which would result in a more user-friendly process for our clients and better data measurement for our team. We also plan to enhance our website to provide a better experience for all users across all browsers and devices, making it easier and more effective to connect with our providers.

As you can see, we have had an eventful journey this year – and we're eager to travel further. We're accepting new clients at both of our locations and would be honored to meet with and assist people who are important in your lives. Indeed, we have the capacity to expand all three of our service areas; yet, to do so meaningfully, additional funding is needed.

We appreciate donors of all types who wish to give via any of the options listed on the inside back cover of this report. Moreover, if you know of or work with a foundation or municipality, we

would truly appreciate the chance to share our plans and goals in greater detail. We're confident you'll see the potential we have to improve even more lives, particularly in the underserved suburban and rural areas of Southern Erie County and Western New York – and we'd be proud to have you join us on our voyage.

Sincerely,



Valarie Nowak, LMHC, MPA  
Chief Executive Officer



## 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.



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



We all have times when we're not our best. It's how we manage those moments that make the difference – and sometimes, that means having the courage to send out an S.O.S.

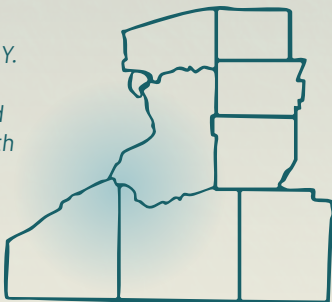
Harmonia's behavioral health team takes a holistic approach to helping clients through whatever rough stretches they've drifted. Whether those struggles stem from anxiety, depression, anger, trauma or illness, our team of professionally trained and licensed clinicians understand how rocky those shores can get – and how strong those undercurrents can pull. From individual counseling and group therapies to medication management and crisis intervention, we're ready with a host of options to make sure our clients stay afloat.

*Because we all need a lifeline,  
from time to time.*

## COUNTIES COVERED

**Southern Erie  
Northern Chautauqua  
Cattaraugus**

We can serve  
anyone in WNY.  
Our service  
has expanded  
with telehealth  
capabilities.



+ 14%

**IN-SCHOOL  
TREATMENT  
SESSIONS**

+ 18%

**IN-SCHOOL  
STUDENTS SERVED**  
(6/30/25 vs. 6/30/24)



## IN-SCHOOL COUNSELING

We now serve four schools/ districts onsite, allowing us to develop stronger relationships and serve more students – while supporting more families and teachers in the process.



## MEDICATION TREATMENT

Our highly trained prescribers help individuals age 10 and 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 and family systems.





# SENIOR CARE



In a crowded harbor, the vessels that everyone stops to marvel at are always the oldest – the ones with a history and story to tell.

Harmonia has that same appreciation for our community’s seniors. We have a long, proud history of serving them, because we believe they deserve to be cared for with the dignity they’ve earned. Our Senior Care Managers provide compassionate care to those neighbors facing the challenges of a changing lifestyle. We provide free assessments and connect them to a host of services catered specifically to their needs. From healthcare, nutritional and transportation needs to fall risk reduction to caregiver respite, our team is committed to helping seniors remain independent in their homes for as long as they wish, enjoying a high quality of life with pride and respect.

*In other words, we help them sail on as they age – on their terms.*

## AREAS SERVED

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



+ 5%

NEW ERIE COUNTY  
SENIOR CASE  
INTAKES  
VS. 2024

+ 41%

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH  
INFO AND ASSISTANCE  
VS. 2024



## CASE MANAGEMENT

Helps seniors and their families by improving care, reducing costs and avoiding burnout, while giving seniors the chance to socialize and stay mentally sharp.



## FALLS PREVENTION

Reduces the risk of injury, allowing seniors to age in place at home with dignity.

## MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

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





# HEALTH HOME SERVICES



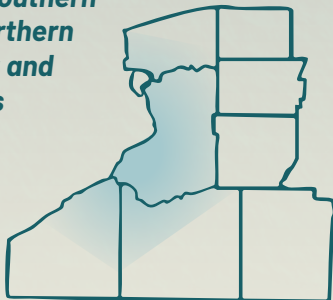
Life can be unpredictable. One day it's smooth sailing – the next you're in very rough waters. It might be caused by a loss of income. A relationship change. A sudden addiction. A loved one lost.

Harmonia's Health Home team is there to help stem the tides. With dozens of strategic partnerships, we guide those neighbors who are struggling with instability. We help them obtain housing, clothing and transportation. We connect them to recovery options and provide behavioral counseling. We secure crucial medicines and hygiene products to improve their physical, mental and social health. And we help them steer clear of costly emergency rooms and incarcerations with greater stability and better decision-making.

*Because the worst storms are often unexpected — but together, we can right the ship.*

## AREAS SERVED

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



44%

CLIENTS IN  
OUTREACH



4%

CLIENT DISCHARGES  
(ACHIEVED  
INDEPENDENCE)



## SOCIETAL RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

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



## NUTRITION AND HOUSING STABILITY

Help us build relationships and develop plans to secure housing, medications and social services for clients so they can regain their health, independence and dignity. Increases the likelihood that people take medications and avoid physical and mental health setbacks.

## HEALTH HOME-PLUS (HH+)

Clients are difficult to find/engage and use emergency rooms often, creating a greater financial burden on our communities.





# GARDEN PARTY

## Nurtures New Growth

Our second annual Garden Party was a great success, including a 15% increase in attendance to more than 130, along with nearly twice the auction items donated to our signature June event.

Held once again at the beautiful Legacy on 18 Mile Creek, our team built upon the success of 2024's inaugural event with great food, beverages, live music, lawn games, tarot card readings and garden fairies to add a little whimsy to the evening.



### WE ALSO MADE SURE TO CELEBRATE OUR CLIENTS

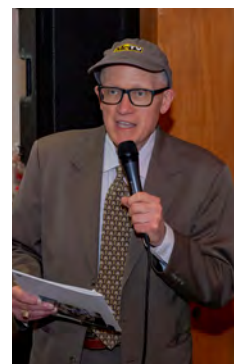
Including two guest speakers: Navy Veteran **Diana Patton**, who discussed the positive impact which our Behavioral Health team has had on her, and retiree **Elizabeth "Betsy" Emhof**, who shared her wonderful experiences with our Senior Services team.

We once again enjoyed the emcee talents of WBBZ-TV's John DiScullo, while Harmonia Board Chair Howard Martin and CEO Val Nowak shared their deep appreciation for all those in attendance – as well as the amazing colleagues and volunteers who helped make the evening a reality.

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*In the end, more than \$11,600 was raised, in addition to strengthened relationships and new friends made during a delightful and gratifying summer evening.*

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## 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

### TREASURER

Rajan Patel, CPA

### SECRETARY

Christine Kluckhohn, PT, DPT, MSHSA

### AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Louis Atti, CPCU

Paul Cesana, MSW

Lisa Denton, Ph.D.

John Grennell, Esq.

Tristan Keelan, MBA

Kathy Murray, CPHQ

Francesca Tioleco, MA

Director Emeritus Suzanne Jasinski

## EXECUTIVE TEAM

Valerie Nowak, LMHC, MPA

**Chief Executive Officer**

Laura Spencer, PhD, LMHC

**Director of Mental Health Clinics**

Kristy Gasiewicz, MS

**Health Home Program Director**

Jennifer Gunia, BS

**Director of Senior Services**

Michelle Chiappetta, AA

**Director of Finance and Administration**

Beverly Eagan, BS

**HR and Compliance Specialist**

## YOUR SUPPORT Will Never Make a Greater Difference

### DONATE

Harmonia Collaborative Care depends on public and private funding to sustain the quality of services we provide, which directly and indirectly impact the lives of our families and neighbors. Please, help us foster good mental health, independence and dignity in our community.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made at [harmonia-care.org/donate](https://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. It's a concept that resonates with our staff and our clients. It's engrained in our culture – and it's resulted in numerous Best Places to Work designations. Ask us about our commitment to work-life balance and visit [harmonia-care.org/careers](https://harmonia-care.org/careers) to see our available positions. We regularly consider new board members as well.







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Derby, NY 14047

harmonia-care.org  
716.947.5025

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case workers are ready to help  
our neighbors find safe passage.

