



## The Child and Family Guidance Center

**For:** The Child and Family Guidance Center  
180 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

**Contact:** Takeia McAlister (203) 394-6529 x3320,  
cell: (203) 249-5355 or [tmcalister@cfguidance.org](mailto:tmcalister@cfguidance.org)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **STRATEGIC INTERVENTION OF HIGH RISK YOUTH PROGRAM AWARDED GRANT FROM FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Bridgeport, CT, June 29, 2011— Recently, The Fairfield County Community Foundation awarded The Child and Family Guidance Center's (CFGC) SIHRY/CASASTART program a grant in the amount of \$20,000. SIHRY/CASASTART was developed by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University in 1992, and is a "Promising Blueprint Model" mentoring program for youth at high risk of delinquency, substance abuse, and academic failure.

As the story of one program graduate illustrates, the future of children who participate in this program is promising... In 1994, J., age 12, was skipping school, had failing grades, and hung out with known local gang members. Her parents were growing increasingly concerned for their daughter. J. They felt defeated because they had tried every course of discipline and didn't know what to do. That's when the Luis Munoz Marin School suggested SIHRY/CASASTART.

J. was assigned a SIHRY/CASASTART family mentor who visited her at school daily and at times at home. Immediately, J.'s attendance and behavior improved dramatically. She became a valued member of the SIHRY/CASASTART group, and it didn't take long for her to only be involved in positive social activities with a positive social group. No more gangs!

Since then, J. successfully graduated from high school, enrolled in a work skills program, and then went on to an internship. She secured a job as a secretary at a mental health organization and within a short time was promoted to a position as a Family Enrichment Specialist. She is also enrolled at Housatonic Community College where she is pursuing an Associate's degree. J. gratefully acknowledges that her life may have gone down a very different path if she had not become involved in this program.

SIHRY/CASASTART utilizes highly trained mentors who are available 24 hours/day; 7 days/week to high risk youth ages 9 to 13 who attend Luis Munoz Marin School in Bridgeport. SIHRY/CASASTART mentors make linkages to existing systems and agencies that impact on youth and their families, including the school, DSS, DCF, the Housing Authority, the Bridgeport Police Department and the Juvenile Justice System.

#### **About Fairfield County Community Foundation**

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation provides philanthropic advisory services, and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$120 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit [www.fccfoundation.org](http://www.fccfoundation.org).

The Child and Family Guidance Center is a child centered, family focused and community based agency that offers a continuum of quality behavioral health services to children under the age of eighteen and to all members of their families.

To learn more about The Child and Family Guidance Center visit [www.cfguidance.org](http://www.cfguidance.org).

***HELPING KIDS AND FAMILIES TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW***

---

180 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06604-3794  
Tel (203) 394-6529 Fax 394-6534

80 Ferry Blvd., Stratford, CT 066151  
Tel (203) 378-1654 Fax 380-9169

48 Beach Road., Fairfield, CT 06824  
Tel (203) 255-2631 Fax 256-8532

###