



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating. 1921-2021

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

## Summary of Legacy Organizations/Mergers

The La Grange Community Nurse and Service Association/  
Community Nurse Health Association/  
Community Nurse Health Center

- 1921-2018

Berwyn Family Services/Fillmore Center for Human Services

- 1928-2002

South Suburban Mental Health Association (SSMHA)

- 1956-1970

Family Services of La Grange/West Suburban Family Counseling  
Service (WSFCS)

- 1956-1970

SSMHA and WSFCS merge to form Community Family Services and  
Mental Health Association

- 1970-2002

Fillmore and Community Family Services merge to form Community  
Care Options

- 2002-2006

Des Plaines Valley Community Center/Pillars Community Services

- 1968-2006

Community Care Options and Des Plaines Valley Community Center  
merge to form Pillars Community Services (brand name: Pillars)

- 2006-2018

Community Nurse and Pillars merge to form Pillars Community  
Health

- 2018-present

## From Our President and CEO



I have been reflecting about celebrating our 100th anniversary in the midst of very turbulent times. I have asked myself whether it is appropriate to celebrate this anniversary year while so many are suffering from COVID-19, so many have suffered family loss and devastating economic consequences, and racial and cultural disparities are so devastatingly impacting those we serve. But all this turbulence just makes it more important to celebrate a 100-year legacy of

making our community and those who live in it healthier and safer. This is an organization that was formed in the aftermath of World War I and the Spanish Flu epidemic, and has survived and grown through a second World War and two economic depressions. This is an organization that, supported by its community and donors, has been committed to a common, shared humanity by looking after our neighbors, regardless of race, income, or politics. This is a celebration of community.

Our 100-year legacy is made up of thousands upon thousands of moments of success for our patients, clients, volunteers, and staff. Our work is the means to the end: The success and health of our patients and clients is our true purpose, and, without their success, we wouldn't have success either. On behalf of myself, our Board of Directors, our staff, and our volunteers, thank you for taking this moment to learn more about and celebrate a century of healing, caring, and educating.

Angela Curran, JD, LLM  
President and CEO

## From Our Board Chair



Pillars Community Health and its predecessor agencies have made a truly significant impact and immense contributions to the communities served since its inception in 1921. Over the course of a century, Pillars Community Health has been a community bedrock and core service provider within our communities. The agency improves the lives of our clients, patients, and neighbors by providing quality whole-person care. The dedication, innovation, and resiliency of the staff and

volunteers demonstrates the agency's commitment to equal access to care.

I am continuously humbled and inspired by the work our organization does, the impact made, and depth of services offered. Pillars Community Health is poised to continue the agency's legacy as the new century unfolds, to create even stronger and healthier communities.

Stephen J. Ryan, Jr.  
FY2021 Chair of the Board of Directors

## Preface

I have been fortunate enough to spend several months organizing and reviewing 100 years of historical files, dating back to World War I and inclusive of newspaper articles, board meeting minutes, photos, slides, handwritten notes, and program materials. I meticulously went through every single document available in order to ensure any historical account would be as inclusive of our source materials as possible. What follows is a written summary of the organization's history based on our review of those files.

One of the toughest aspects about writing down a historical account is that you cannot possibly include every person who made an impact on the organization—or even every service we have offered—over 100 years. History often remembers those who were at the top of the hierarchy or gave the most money, and not necessarily the hundreds of people who were on the front lines of this work day to day. The exclusion of certain people or programs in this historical summary is in no way a reflection of the value of our front-line staff and volunteers and their service

provision to this organization. The benefactors and leaders of the past came together for the sole purpose of seeing the front-line work succeed. In no way could this organization have made it a century without the innumerable hours of dedicated service provided by our staff and volunteers, the commitment and determination of our donors and funders, or the bravery and hard work of our clients, patients, and partners. This is their history. This is YOUR history.

Some themes arise in the pages that follow. Among these is a tireless commitment to advocating for and meeting the changing needs of the most vulnerable residents of the western suburbs of Chicago. From the very beginning, and often with only a couple of people sitting around the table, our staff and board members and funders have innovated and problem-solved and piloted new initiatives to ensure people have access to the care they need, when they need it. Over and over, we see people who won't take no for an answer, or who hear no and say, "Then let's go find another way to get it done." That persistence and resource-



fulness is perhaps most evident among female leaders and volunteer board members—many of them just everyday citizens who saw a problem and fearlessly advocated for a solution.

Our most recent merger in 2018 formally brought medical and dental services under the same proverbial “roof” as behavioral health and social services. But as you’ll discover, our predecessors have understood the inseparability of health and the social determinants of health as far back as the Great Depression. Our first community nurse advocated for individual’s needs and connected them to resources even when there wasn’t a physical issue at hand. Our legacy organizations became forces in the community because their work existed in the context of family, community,

and local institutions. With that in mind, we would be remiss to not also call out the success of our partnerships, which have been fundamental to our ability to move projects forward and address the whole health of the community. We hope our partnering schools, police departments, faith-based organizations, human service agencies, and government leaders find and celebrate their own success in this narrative.

We cannot separate our history or decision-making from the systemic racism, sexism, and other ‘isms that are pervasive both now and then. Unfortunately news media of the past did not use dignifying terminology in many cases, particularly in reference to people of color and people with disabilities. In this retelling we use

modern-day terminology whenever possible—though in the case of many women who were only documented by their husband’s names (in some cases into the 1980s), their first names are lost to history. We’ve come a long way as a society, but we have a long way to go.

Finally, I must call out in gratitude the many people who compiled information and written histories of our organization in decades past, many of them unnamed. Thank you to recent sources of information including Helen Stewart, Anna Padron Sikora, Ann Schreiner, Florence Forshey, Mary Stecher, Judy Faigen, Sue Hickerson, Sara Mikuta, Pat Seghers, Don Bestwina, Lynn Siegel, Ellen Kunkle, Jean Janda, Sue Longo, the La Grange Area Historical Society, the Berwyn Historical Society, and others who have given their information and knowledge to this project, as well as Angela Curran who edited the account. It was a pleasure reminiscing with you, it is an honor to be part of the staff carrying on your legacy.

Jackie Gibson  
Vice President of Marketing and Business Development

This organization is the result of thousands of people coming together to ensure availability of services based on a sense of shared humanity—something we should celebrate and write into our future.

If there are people or moments in history you would like to give voice to, we encourage giving a shout-out on your own social media or send us a note to add to our archives:  
[info@pchcares.org](mailto:info@pchcares.org)



100 Years of Berwyn History, Through the Eyes of Pillars Community Health

You can view webinar versions of our historical account on our YouTube page: [youtube.com/pillarscommunity1](https://youtube.com/pillarscommunity1)

## 1920s

The story of Pillars Community Health can be traced back to World War I when the local Women's Club began wartime volunteerism (led by Mrs. William Hoskins 1919-1920 and Mrs. L. C. Brown 1920-1923). When the war ended, in the wake of the Spanish flu epidemic, and soon after they gained the right to vote, these women turned their attention to the needs of local children. The result was the advent of the La Grange Public Welfare Committee, the local chapter of the Illinois Child Welfare League.

The committee hired a male physician, Dr. J.A. Gardiner, on a volunteer basis to examine babies in La Grange every Wednesday in 1919 at the Town Hall. In August 1919, Mrs. Albert D. Adams called a meeting in the Lyons Township Hall to consider the need for a health center and child welfare station in La Grange. The state chairman of the Child Welfare League spoke to the local La Grange chapter about the possibility of hiring an ongoing local nurse for the community. This led to the hiring of



the first school nurse for Lyons Township in 1919.

Shortly after, the committee hired its first paid community nurse, Marion Jean MacLeod (above left), who began providing well-baby checkups from the back of H.P. Smith's Pharmacy in La Grange on January 24, 1921. The pharmacy was located at the corner of Hillgrove and North Stone Avenue. Only one currently operating free clinic predates this organization—in St. Joseph, Missouri, the Social Welfare Board of Buchanan County.

Nurse MacLeod also held well-child clinics in other donated spaces, such as the La Grange Public Library and the Lyons Township building (present-day La Grange Village Hall).

MacLeod worked six days per week, with the volunteer assis-

tance of Dr. Gardiner once per week. Her salary was \$150 per month, which the committee paid for through fundraising. (In just two months, the group had raised \$2,668.97, which equates to more than \$38,000 today!)



*Of Marion Jean MacLeod, the La Grange Centennial newspaper said, "It is hard to realize how this community ever got on without her."*

Four services were initially offered to the community in 1921:

1. Bedside nursing and well-baby checkups (services were free if a family made less than \$12 per month)
2. Community welfare including delivery of baskets of food around the holidays, the Party with Santa event to provide a holiday party
3. A thrift shop, which began as a rummage sale in the library basement every Saturday afternoon
4. Mother's Conferences, in which mothers were invited to come together to have their babies weighed and to discuss their nutrition



*The first Mother's Conference was held in La Grange in 1921. Georgia Schwab, Nurse MacLeod's assistant and chair of the conferences, is pictured next to Jean MacLeod at the far right of the photo.*

By 1924, the community nursing operation gained a new name:

### **The La Grange Community Nurse and Service Association**

(Community Nurse). Members of the association raised enough money to install a dental chair at Cossitt School by March 1926, and five dentists volunteered their time to provide dental services for children from low-income families. They also opened tuberculosis clinics, with assistance from a traveling Chicago clinic, and began distributing free milk to area schools, which they would do until 1941 when the school districts took over that effort. A medical equipment loan closet (which would remain open until 2005) allowed patients who could not afford to purchase medical equipment to borrow items like crutches and wheelchairs for free.

In 1921, Mrs. James Kidston, one of the association's founders, persuaded the women of the committee to raise money for a library annex on 47th Street, where they could experiment with a three-month village "rummage" sale to raise money for Community Nurse. The



women secured free space in the basement of the La Grange Road Library, and in three short months, they raised \$1,000 (which would equate to \$12,080 today). The operation continued past the initial three months, and by 1928 it became a formal program of Community Nurse with a new name: The Community Shop.

These early activities were carefully documented by local newspapers, and those archives still exist in both the Pillars Community Health historical files and at the La Grange Area Historical Society.

The economy boomed in the 1920s. As a result of more families having more money to spend on health care, the demand for hospital services increased. That led to the mass

accreditation of hospitals across the country—and an increase in health care prices, which priced a lot of people out of quality care. People across the country formed social services organizations to address the care needs of low-income families.

Berwyn launched its Health Department in 1920 (today known as the Berwyn Public Health District). Eight years later, Health Department employee David Abram suggested three local welfare groups—the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, the Welfare

Public Relations Forum of Welfare Council, and the Suburban Family Agency Committee—join forces to help meet the social needs of Berwyn families who were increasingly requesting township relief funds. **Berwyn Community Welfare Association** was born on May 20, 1928, with funding from the Berwyn Community Chest and private donations. Initial work included helping Berwyn residents obtain milk at a cheaper price (9 cents instead of 11 cents per gallon) and purchasing lots for community gardens.



From 1921 to 1998, Community Nurse provided visiting nurse and home care services. The organization stopped providing those services in the 1990s when other area for-profit and nonprofit agencies expanded their offerings. A homemaker service program was also provided,

in which patients could request a homemaker/companion for in-home services. The program closed in 2006 when state licensure would have made the program too costly and there were already other licensed agencies providing the services to the area. In this 1954 photo, Nurse MacLeod is seen returning from her retirement to teach the La Grange Girl Scouts about bedside nursing.

## 1930s

On August 7, 1930, Community Nurse was incorporated as a private, not-for-profit health and welfare corporation.

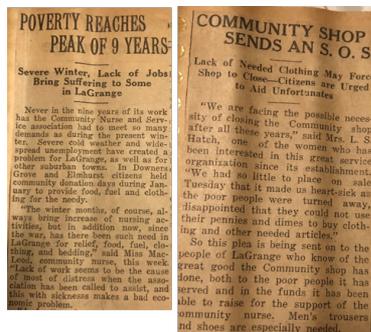


Berwyn Community Welfare Association received its official charter in 1932 and, in 1936, dropped "Community" from its name, becoming the Berwyn Welfare Association.

Amid the Great Depression, the federal government began distributing financial assistance through local welfare organizations, including the Berwyn Welfare Association, which served more than 1,000 families during this difficult period. Articles from this time reveal bare shelves at The Community Shop in La Grange and a struggle for donations. Some newspapers asked people to take another

walk through their homes to see if there was anything at all they could part with.

Community Nurse took on social welfare work to help La Grange-area residents suffering from the poor economic conditions. This included making small loans to low-income families for rent, providing eyeglasses, giving out milk, opening a child care program for working mothers, and opening an employment bureau to help men find work. The organization also increased its local advocacy, urging vaccination of dogs, the eradication of ragweed, the introduction of silver nitrate for newborn babies' eyes, and prohibition of dogs in grocery stores. Legal cases (from deportation proceedings to child abuse) were often brought to the



nurse to see whom she would recommend or if she could help in any way. This additional work became too much for one employee to handle, so the association hired a social worker in 1932. By 1934, news articles reported that Community Nurse had "become a prop upon which the entire village has leaned, especially in these last few years of unsettledness."

In 1937, Community Nurse began sponsoring a year-long recreation program for the Village of La Grange, and by 1941 that program was moved under the village and paid for by a residential tax (today this is known as the Park District of La Grange).



In 1939, the Berwyn Welfare Association formed an auxiliary to fundraise; the auxiliary would later open a thrift shop called the Piggy Bank to help support the association's social work.



In 1939, the Episcopal Church in La Grange donated its old parish house, and Community Nurse paid \$2,153 to move the house to 218 Washington. There, Community Nurse opened the East Side Community Center (that house would eventually be replaced by the current Park District Community Center at 100 Washington).

## 1940s

In 1941, two years after the start of World War II, Community Nurse hired its first paid physician, Dr. Edward S. Baxter. He was paid \$5 for each four-hour clinic he worked. When Dr. Baxter was drafted into military service, a female pediatrician, Dr. Jean McBean, was hired for \$8 per clinic. The Party with Santa tradition was discontinued in 1943, when governmental sugar restrictions caused shortages in candy and other donations. (It would be revived again in 1988 through the mid-2010s and today is managed by the Rotary



Club of La Grange.) In 1944, Community Nurse moved from its site at the corner of Hillgrove Avenue into a larger space at 117 Calendar Avenue, which could also house The Community Shop.

From 1939 to 1948, Berwyn Welfare Association served 1,000 families. Amid the war, the association was authorized to clear employers' emergency furloughs on behalf of the Red Cross, supplement the income of low-income families, and provide services to veterans' families.

## 1950s

The 1950s brought a post-war boom and the introduction of the Civil Rights Movement. An outcropping of the Civil Rights Movement was a national



*In 1944, after 20 years of work, Marion Jean MacLeod left her position and a new nurse, Lucile M. Lord, was hired. By this time, the nurse was seeing approximately 120 patients per month.*

“deinstitutionalization” policy, a reaction to and against the abuses of state-run mental health institutions. That policy called for moving people with severe mental illness out of asylums and into mainstream society, supported by federally funded, community-based mental health services and the development of new medications. The Eisenhower Administration also passed social security and vocational rehabilitation laws in 1954, which (arguably) freed up local welfare groups to focus on other issues. Seeing that the need had

shifted in the community, Berwyn Welfare Association turned its attention to mental health and, in 1958, changed its name to the Berwyn Family Service Association. Its focus became casework, counseling, psychiatry, and emergency assistance.

Other nonprofits formed from the deinstitutionalization movement, including the **Southwest Suburban Mental Health Association (SSMHA)**, which opened a mental health clinic on the second floor of 23 Calendar Avenue in La Grange on October 15, 1956—just down the street from Community Nurse. SSMHA’s goal was the prevention of emotional and mental illness in Lyons Township; its clinic was said to be the only



**STRESS MENTAL HEALTH**—Educator and television personality Dr. Maria Pletz (second, from left) was guest speaker Monday night for a program of the Southwest Suburban Mental Health Association at the south campus of Lyons Township High School. Her topic was “How Much Security?” With her, before the program, are (from left): program chairman, Mrs. E. V. Nemas, 1927 Johnson, Western Springs; Reverend Theodore Carlson, minister of St. John’s Lutheran Church, La Grange and board president of the SSMHA; and Bruce Smith, administrative director of the association’s clinic in La Grange. (LIFE Photo)

one in the western suburbs offering mental health services to those who did not have the ability to pay. SSMHA was led by Dr. Norman T. Welford (who was also helping to found La Grange Memorial Hospital at this time), Rev. W.Q. Halverson, Dr. Conrad Fischer, Mrs. Virgil Martin, and the association’s first executive director Bruce Smith. Funding came from the Community Chests of La Grange, La Grange Park, and Western Springs.

**Family Services of La Grange** launched its operations in the mid-1950s as well, later changing their name to the **West Suburban Family Counseling Service (WSFCS)**. This agency







*Dr. Sophie Sloman was medical director at SSMHA in the 1960s and president of the Chicago Council on Child Psychiatry. Dr. Sloman died in 1966. She was one of the first women to practice psychiatry in the Chicago area.*

of educational workshops for community groups, launched a Junior Women's Club to oversee fundraising in 1969, and piloted a psychiatry residency program. The residency program made SSMHA one of only two mental health clinics in Illinois selected to run a training program for child psychiatry students from nearby universities.

Community Nurse sold its 117 Calendar Avenue location in 1963 to the Village of La Grange; it was turned into a parking lot for the Metra station. With proceeds from the sale,



Community Nurse purchased 27 Calendar Avenue, which had been the village's first fire house, and moved both the pediatric clinic and The Community Shop into that building.

Later that year, the organization added a dental clinic to 27 Calendar, with the donation of a dental chair from Dr. M.D. Cohen and a \$100 donation from the LaGrange Rotary Club. The dental clinic was staffed by volunteer dentists, a visiting dentist from Cook County Public Health,



and volunteer support staff from the La Grange Women's Club. From 1963-1966, 457 children from 19 area schools visited the dental clinic. Members of the school PTAs transported children to and from the clinic to ensure children could access services. Meanwhile in Summit, a recreation center at 6125 South Archer Avenue, called the Des Plaines Valley Youth Center but locally referred to as the "Teen Inn," was sitting empty. The building had been a speakeasy and bakery at other points in time, and from 1955-1967 had provided services to local youth. The community rarely accessed the center, but the board of the center knew there was an ongoing need for social services. So they contacted Hull House in Chicago, noting that



like its founder Jane Addams, they had a "vacant building and a dream." Hull House had never had an affiliated community center outside of the city, but they agreed there was a growing need for social services in the western suburbs. So on January 1, 1968, **Des Plaines Valley Community Center (DVCC)** was formally established and became Hull House's first affiliated community center.

Upon launch, DVCC's only staff was Dr. Thomas K. Jager who oversaw after-school tutoring in Summit D104, ballet and arts programs, and programs for seniors. The War on Poverty included a VISTA volunteer program nationally, and DVCC gained two volunteers from that



program. In April 1968, DVCC hired its second employee, Florence Forshey, who began providing social work and managing social work interns from the University of Chicago. Forshey helped launch the Head Start program in Summit in the fall of 1968, with 30 children and a rented station wagon. (The Head Start program also originated from President Johnson's War on Poverty.)



## 1970s

The 1970s brought the Women's Liberation and Battered Women's Movements. The first battered women's shelters and rape crisis centers opened around 1972 in California, Minnesota, and Washington, D.C. By the late 1970s, there were more than 250 shelters across the United States (today there are several thousand). Brookfield

police took notice of the increase in local awareness and domestic violence calls and reached out to DVCC to explore possible solutions, including a local domestic violence shelter.

After months of advocacy by Florence Forshey, township official Ann Painter, and others, DVCC zoned a house on Eberly Avenue in Brookfield on October 31, 1978, and became one of 12 founding members of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence that November. (ICADV was tasked early on with planning for the use of Illinois Title XX funds, introduced in 1978 for the prevention or remedy of "neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children and adults.") DVCC's shelter opened on April 24, 1979, with the help of women from the Sisters of St. Joseph and Bethlehem Woods, who volunteered to decorate the shelter and help find furnishings. Ann Schreiner was hired as a social worker a few months later (three decades later she would become president and CEO of Pillars Community Services). In July, the program received a bequest from the Constance Rothschild Morris Foundation,



*The shelter opened with five staff: Forshey, Linda Strothman (program director), Phyllis Spinal (social worker), Joan Gardinier (social worker), and Marilyn Lansberry. Ann Schreiner was hired as a social worker a few months later; three decades later she would become president and CEO of Pillars Community Services.*

and the shelter was named Constance Morris House.

In addition to opening Constance Morris House, DVCC began providing drug counseling at Argo High School, in partnership with the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission. With new HB708 funding from the Community Mental Health Act and additional funding streams between 1970 and 1975, DVCC added 18 new staff, merged with the Bridgeview Head Start increasing its Head Start numbers to 52 students, began providing G.E.D. English classes, launched Spanish-speaking substance use services specifically



In the late 1970s, DVCC Executive Director Tom Jager and Hull House Executive Director Robert T. Adams flew to New York City to meet with the Constance Rothschild Morris Foundation, which was interested in supporting the project. Constance Lily Rothschild was an author and philanthropist with an interest in the needs of immigrant families. She married Ira Morris, a philanthropist born in Chicago, and they encouraged their daughter Constance Irene Morris to get involved with issues involving people experiencing homelessness. When the Constance Rothschild Morris Foundation donated the money for the opening of our domestic violence shelter, it was named in honor of Constance Irene Morris. A portrait of Constance Irene Morris is in the Smithsonian National Art Gallery, and a bronze bust of her is currently available for purchase from a private collection in London.



for Latinx clients, and opened a second site at 6140 South Archer Avenue in Summit. That second site was demolished shortly after, so they moved to 6227 South Archer Avenue and relocated Head Start there, reserving the 6125 space for administration and the introduction of Crisis Intervention Services.



Community Nurse also made a number of moves in the 1970s. The day care program was converted to a licensed preschool for 3-5 year olds and was moved to the new Community Center at 100 Washington Street in La Grange. The preschool was later moved to the First Congregational Church of LaGrange. Community Nurse made the difficult



decision to close the school in 1983 because many other preschools were now operating in the area. Once again shifting to meet the need, the association refocused on primary health care and expansion of dental services for low-income children.

Berwyn Family Services established new programming in this era, most notably its Interpersonal Learning Center (ILC), a part-time psychiatric rehabilitation pilot program for adults with severe mental illness who were experiencing frequent psychiatric hospitalizations and job loss. The goal of the ILC program, spearheaded by program director Edward Wise, was to help those individuals maintain employment and work on their social and psychological skills. With no initial funding available, they borrowed space from the Stickney Public Health District and utilized personnel from



partnering agencies. By 1974 with the advent of a federal Task Force on Psychiatric Rehabilitation, funds were made available that helped the ILC program increase its services to become a full-time day treatment center. New research suggested a living-working situation could benefit clients, so in 1976 the staff helped organize a client-run small business known as ILC Enterprises. Clients served in office, support, or factory roles, the latter producing wooden items for sale. The ILC program had positive outcomes and the lead staff were invited to speak about it at a mental health symposium in Toronto in the mid-1980s.

Berwyn Family Services also launched programs that they then helped spin off into successful, independent organizations including Youth in Crisis (present-day Youth Crossroads),

Berwyn-Cicero Council on Aging, and a therapeutic day care for children called Grant Works (present-day Children's Center of Cicero-Berwyn).

In the 1960s, the State Department of Mental Health had asked organizations across the state to explore ways to more closely align mental health and family services.

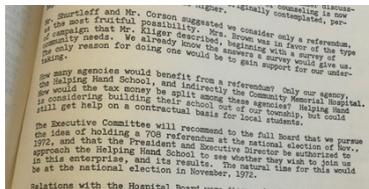


*In 1978, the BFS Women's Auxiliary had grown to have nearly 50 members, all women from Berwyn, who held annual fundraisers into the 1990s. Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka became a regular emcee at their luncheons. Following the organization's renaming to Fillmore Center, Baar Topinka was awarded the Lucile Fillmore Award in 1995. Baar Topinka would go on to emcee the Welford Award banquets of another legacy organization, Community Family Services, and later the CCO fundraiser in 2006, and present a resolution at Community Nurse's 90th anniversary celebration in 2011. She is shown here receiving an award from Mary Stecher at Community Family Services.*



Dr. Welford, who had helped form both organizations, suggested the merger of SSMHA and West Suburban Family Counseling Services. The two merged on November 12, 1970, forming the **Community Family Services and Mental Health Association**. The organization combined staff (there were fewer than 10 at the time) and began operating out of both 23 Calendar Avenue and 14 South La Grange Road in La Grange. They then launched a family services division of social work under the direction of Jim Walsh at 7641 West 63rd Street in Summit, which would become known as Stepping Stone.

With increased funding, Community Family Services expanded its offerings to meet more community needs in the 1970s, under the leadership of executive director Walt Miller. The organization began running a group for mothers of children



*Community Family Services partnered with Helping Hand and La Grange Memorial Hospital to urge Lyons and Riverside Townships to pass a local HB708 referendum to fund mental health services. The referendum was passed in Lyons Township in November 1972, with funds available by 1974, creating the Lyons Township Mental Health Commission.*

with developmental disabilities at Helping Hand in La Grange; provided on-site social work at Argo High School in Summit; visited clients at Madden Day Treatment Center; and helped start the local Council on Aging at the La Grange YMCA, with supplemental funding from the La Grange Kiwanis. Like DVCC, Community Family Services launched its own Crisis Intervention Services in the 1970s, taking referrals for behavioral health crises from area hospitals, police



departments, and churches. In 1973, Community Family Services launched its first day treatment program, Foxfire Psychosocial Rehabilitation, which would move into 6253 South Archer Avenue in Summit in 1977. They then closed their two La Grange offices and moved to 47 South 6th Avenue in La Grange.

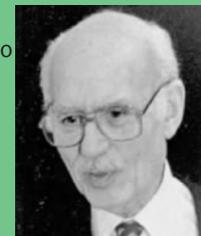
## 1980s

The Anti-Rape Movement can and should be traced back to the struggle of African American women against slavery, racism, and rape, as the rape of enslaved women was common and legal (CALCASA, 2009). This movement took hold in the 1980s, with passage of the

Ellen Quinn (left) was executive director of Community Family Services in the 1970s. Quinn was a known leader in mental health and a regular speaker in the Chicago area on social work issues in the 1970s. Today, the Community Behavioral Health Association, of which Pillars Community Health is a member, gives an Ellen Quinn Award each year in her honor. Quinn had served as president of the association's board of directors and was recognized by her peers as a dedicated administrator and clinician who was committed to the delivery of community behavioral health services.



Dr. Lee Gladstone (right), known as a pioneer of modern-day addictions treatment in Illinois, was also once an employee of Community Family Services. He served in World War II as a physician. In the 1950s, after completing a psychiatry residency at Northwestern Medical School, he was hired to run its first alcoholic treatment program. In 1956, he founded McHenry Hospital (now part of Northwestern). Shortly after, while working with the YMCA, he created a detoxification program and a system called MILT that used basic blood tests to screen for alcoholism, a version of which continues to be used today. In 1974, he consulted at the founding of the Community Family Services Foxfire program and became staff psychiatrist there into the 1990s. He died in 2003 at the age of 88.





Oprah Winfrey attended a DVCC fundraiser in 1983, the year she moved to Chicago to host AM Chicago. DVCC's 18th anniversary dinner in 1986 featured "an evening with Oprah Winfrey" in Hickory Hills—this was the same year she launched The Oprah Winfrey Show and received an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in The Color Purple. Above: Florence Forshey with Oprah Winfrey.

Also in 1980, shelter director Linda Strothman appeared on the "Chicago Feedback" local television show alongside actress Angela Lansbury to discuss domestic abuse. Below: Angela Lansbury (second from left) with DVCC staff including Florence Forshey (second from right) and Strothman (right).



Illinois Violent Crime Victims Assistance Act and the Violence Against Women act, and the launch of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. By now there were more than 400 rape crisis centers operating across the United States, and anti-rape education was spreading across American universities. With women at the helm at DVCC (Florence Forshey as executive director and Ann Schreiner as director of mental health), the organization launched sexual assault services in 1985. As our predecessor organizations had done so many times before, DVCC saw an increase in need—in this case, an increase in the number of families seeking mental health counseling for child survivors of sexual abuse—and responded by providing services.

DVCC also expanded its domestic violence offerings, by moving its shelter to a new, undisclosed location in 1988. The new shelter allowed the organization to increase the number of people it could house, from 5 to 24. Lynn Siegel



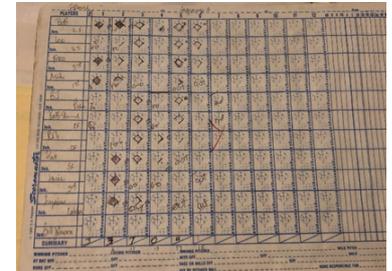
(who had been hired in 1986) became the shelter director; she would retire as Vice President of Domestic and Sexual Violence Services 35 years later.

Although Medicare and Medicaid were introduced in the 1960s, many organizations did not feel the shift right away. Community Nurse completed its Medicare survey in 1980 to be reimbursed for Medicare and to become a licensed, certified home health agency. Similarly, while the federal Community Mental Health Act of 1969 (HB708) permitted townships to tax residents to pay for mental health services, townships did not have to do so and many did not right away. Florence Forshey advocated for Lyons and Riverside Township 708 funding in the 1970s. Berwyn Family Services advocated for 708 funding from Berwyn and Cicero in the 1980s; the result was the creation of the 708 Mental Health Boards/Commissions.

In 1981, Berwyn Family Services moved to 6918 Windsor Avenue in Berwyn and named the building after Lorin Fillmore, who had been on the board for more



In addition to becoming the namesake for our legacy organization, Lorin Fillmore founded the Fillmore Day Camp at the Pav YMCA in Berwyn and the 1st Baptist Church of Berwyn. He died in 2001 at age 80, mere months before the Fillmore Center merged and changed its name. Fillmore is pictured at right (far right) standing next to then-Executive Director Carl Bartolucci at the renovation of The Fillmore Center building.



In 1980, Fillmore Center launched the West Suburban Mental Health Softball League, of which Fillmore Center employee Carl Bartolucci was the commissioner. The Fillmore Fire baseball team (composed of Fillmore Center staff including clinician Pat Seghers, who started as an intern in the 1970s) played against staff from other nearby mental health and social services organizations.

than a decade and donated funds for the building in his mother's memory. That same year, the organization renamed as the **Fillmore Center for Human Services**. In order to reach more people in need of services, Fillmore Center opened satellite

offices at 1010 Lake Street in Oak Park in 1987 and 5814 West Cermak in Cicero in 1989.

Fillmore Center began many new partnerships in the 1980s, including providing outpatient care for clients at Riveredge Hospital;

becoming MacNeal Hospital's sole psychiatric provider for a time; and running the diagnostic facility for Hephzibah Children's Association in Oak Park (which Hephzibah now runs). Like DVCC and Community Family Services before them, Fillmore Center opened Crisis Intervention Services in 1989.

Community Family Services also expanded its geographic footprint in the 1980s, opening clinical offices inside Riverside Township Hall and Riverside-Brookfield High School. Both sites came under the direction of clinician Mary Stecher, who started her career as a graduate student at Community Family Services in 1972. Community Family Services also



By 1986, Mary Stecher was executive director (middle) of Community Family Services, leading the organization with three other women: Non Finkelstein as associate director, Elise Cade (right) as board president, and Helen Sauer Brown (left) as director of development.



In 1982, Community Family Services introduced the Welford Award, its most prominent award that would be awarded for the next two decades. The award featured a large stained glass symbol of a phoenix, symbolic of people rising from the ashes, designed and produced by Dave Condon of Brookfield's Colormsmith Stained Glass. The first award, which honored distinguished service to mental health, was given to its namesake, Dr. Welford. The phoenix symbol was then chosen as the logo for Community Family Services. A Phoenix Society (made up of the top donors to the organization) was created in 1986, the brainchild of Helen Sauer Brown, the association's first director of development. Community Family Services also launched the Welford Society, an auxiliary board for advocacy, in September 1989. Dr. Welford died five months later.

Fillmore Center and Community Family Services became known in the Chicago area as the pinnacle placements for quality mental health training. At least a dozen of our former



clinical interns are now professors in the Chicago area, training the next generation. In addition, Community Nurse's pediatric clinic was a pediatric residency site for Loyola University Chicago from the 1970s through the late 2000s; our present-day chief medical officer, Kisti Catalano, MD, completed part of her pediatric rotation at the Community Nurse pediatric clinic. Community Nurse also trained nursing students from St. Xavier University, Lewis University, Loyola, and others.

Today we continue to work with the La Grange Family Medicine Residency Program for physicians in training, serving as a site for community health rotations at our Medical Center and for Healthcare for the Homeless. Our Student Training Services continue to provide quality training in psychotherapy, which gives interns exposure to work in a community mental health setting and in turn provides the latest university insights to our full-time clinicians. Our undergraduate and masters-level internships include weekly clinical supervision, group trainings, and a final internship presentation on a topic of the intern's choosing.



In the 1980s, DVCC began using a logo with five people in a circle, which would later become the Pillars logo until 2018. Fillmore Center was using a similar logo with three people in a triangle, and Community Nurse was using four people in a row. Could they have foreseen that one day they would all merge into one organization?



In the 1980s, Rose Wall became program coordinator for the Community Nurse homemaker program (in which patients could request a companion for in-home services) and would continue to work with the organization for the next 25 years.

opened an office in the Lenzi Apartments in Hodgkins (6001 Lenzi Avenue) in 1981, with Maria Elena Humphrey as counselor. Humphrey would work there until the closure of the apartments, the disbanding of the Neighborhood Action Group, and her subsequent retirement, in 2019.

Community Nurse had an eventful start to the decade. On December 28, 1981, an electrical fire at 27 Calendar Avenue in La Grange forced the organization to temporarily move to the La Grange Bank and Trust. The fire gutted the second floor and the roof. The pediatric clinic and dental clinic were closed for renovations, and nurses made house calls from a makeshift clinic at the Town Hall. Pediatrics reopened in 1981, and the children's dental clinic reopened in 1983. Day care services were closed and funds were shifted



into the dental program. By 1988, the organization expanded dental clinic services to low-income, uninsured adults. Dental services were provided by volunteer dentists, including Tim Robieson, who had started his volunteerism at the organization in 1978. Robieson became Community Nurse's first paid dental director until he retired in 2016. He worked with Shirly Cannon, who managed the Dental Center from 1996 until 2016.

Community Nurse already had a 60-year legacy of helping patients find access to healthy food or gathering donations of toys and gifts. In the 1980s, staff and volunteers began a more formal emergency food pantry at the First Baptist Church of La Grange. The pantry allowed staff to provide emergency assistance when needed, and volunteers also assisted with food giveaways during holidays. The program was discontinued in 2010, but Community Nurse continued offering emergency food assistance in the form of gift cards or smaller donations from its Health Center location.

Mrs. Gallagher of La Grange



Dr. James Harizin (right) in the 1987 photo was a family practice resident with the Residency Program. Dr. Dipankar Mukhopandhyay (left) was an attending with the pediatric clinic.



Community Nurse's pediatric clinic was named after Ann B. Painter (right) in 1981, for her 30 years as volunteer leader of the association. Ann Painter was on the local 708 board and later became Lyons Township supervisor. This put her in frequent communication with other predecessor organizations including Community Family Services and DVCC, who were seeking funding from the township. She played a major part in acquiring funding for the opening of Constance Morris House. Above, Painter is pictured with Ann Cuneo, who would succeed her in leadership at Community Nurse.

Park contacted Community Nurse in the early 1980s to re-establish a Christmas give-away for Community Nurse's young patients. She organized all of her relatives to participate. By the late 1980s, efforts were spearheaded by the family of Floyd Kalber, a long-time local news icon, His wife Betty and their daughter Kathy Kinsella Kalber collected carloads of gifts from friends for distribution to Community Nurse patients. The effort soon enjoyed the support of dozens of volunteer "elves" and thousands of dollars of donations, and the annual Secret Santa giving program was officially established. (Today Secret Santa is led by the Rotary Club of La Grange in partnership with Pillars Community Health and the Park District of La Grange.)

## 1990s

The 1990s were a decade of economic growth in America, and concentrated rates of poverty fell. Yet the need for health and social services in west suburban communities remained high and funding allowed our predecessor organizations to expand many service offerings. For



example, sexual assault services expanded in 1997, as DVCC opened a West Suburban Sexual Assault Victim Services Office at 5531 West Cermak in Cicero in 1997. A quilt made by survivors visiting the office still hangs at Pillars Community Health today.

DVCC entered the 1990s with females at the helm of most departments, including Florence Forshey as executive director, Sue Longo as finance director, Lynn Siegel as director of Constance Morris House, and Jane Collins as the agency's first director of development (Wayne Vanek was the long-time director

of addictions services). In the latter half of the decade, women also took the helm



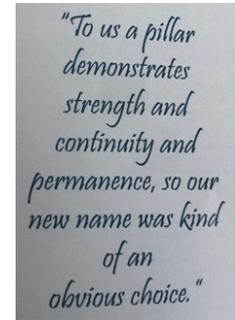
of the DVCC Board of Directors, with Louise Hillegass and later Margaret Kachadurian serving as board president. Margaret had an idea for a historic house walk to raise funds for the DVCC. The first annual House Walk of La Grange was held in 1998 and would continue to be held annually through 2013 under the direction of volunteer and La Grange realtor Joan Smothers.

Following decades of volunteer leadership from Ann Painter,



In the 1990s, Ann Rigney and Sally Kurfurst of the Junior League of Chicago and Marianne Gillmeister of Western Springs (among others) began exploring the possibility of opening a resale shop to benefit DVCC. In 1995, this became a separate 501(c)3 called the Hope Chest in La Grange, which remains open today and whose sole beneficiary is Constance Morris House. The organization also provides free clothing to women residing at Constance Morris House.

Community Nurse hired its first paid executive director, Ann Cuneo, in 1988. In the 1990s, Cuneo was assisted by Pat Gregory, who would remain with Community Nurse for around 20 years. In 1990, Community Nurse purchased 110 Calendar Avenue in La Grange to house medical services for uninsured adults. At the time, these services were supported by La Grange Memorial Hospital and its Family Medicine Residency Program. Many physicians,



In the early 1990s, Florence Forshey hired a designer to create DVCC a new logo; that designer came up with the phrase "pillar of the community." DVCC began issuing an internal newsletter called "The Pillar." Later in 1997, The Doings newspaper published photos of DVCC board members dressed for the holidays, standing by a column and asking donors to come give money and take your place here as "pillars of support."

themselves graduates of the residency program, volunteered at the adult clinic through 2012 when Community Nurse became a Federally Qualified Health Center. Eric Spratford, MD, a current Pillars Community Health board member, completed some of his residency program at Community Nurse.

From the mid-1990s through 2005, Community Nurse ran flu shot clinics at partnering churches, before flu shots became more widely available at pharmacies. Staffed by volunteers, these clinics were the first of



Dr. Ken Nelson (left) served as the volunteer medical director of the adult clinic in the 1990s and stayed in a volunteer role until 2012. Dr. Nelson partnered with Chris Golden, RN (right), who served as the adult clinic coordinator for over 20 years. Pediatric medicine was coordinated in affiliation with Loyola University including such clinicians as Drs. Tom DeStefani, Ruby Roy, and Mary Beth Eraci, among others.

their kind in the western suburbs. Community Nurse also operated a meningitis vaccination clinic in partnership with Lyons Township, before meningitis vaccines became widely available at pediatrician's offices.

In 1992, Community Nurse purchased the entire building of 23 Calendar Avenue, including the second floor that had housed SSMHA in the 1950s and the main floor that had once housed Giesche Shoes. Administrative offices were relocated to the second floor, and The



Joan Stone and Ann Painter led the effort to open a sister shop at 27 Calendar Avenue in La Grange called the Corner Shoppe to house furniture and other items that could be consigned rather than donated. The Corner Shoppe and Carousel Shop would later combine in 2017, renaming once again to The Community Shop.

Community Shop took up the first floor. The Community Shop was



renamed The Carousel Shop in 1994 because of the children's carousel located there. In addition to selling housewares and other goods, the shop began providing free clothing to BEDS Plus clients experiencing homelessness.

Community Nurse also opened a co-location in the 1990s with the Hodgkins Park District, as part of their Neighborhood Action Group. This gave clinicians the opportunity to offer flu shots



Nurse Susan Lins (left), who coordinated the pediatric clinic in the 1990s, is pictured here giving a flu shot to local news icon Floyd Kalber, whose family helped coordinate Community Nurse's Secret Santa program.

and health education to Hodgkins residents, and to attend meetings alongside Community Family Services at the Lenzi Apartments.

New fundraising efforts emerged at Community Nurse in the 1990s, with the formation of the Community Nurse Women's Auxiliary in 1996 and the advent of the annual Lobster Bake event (which would be held annually from 1995-2003 and again from 2016-2017). The Women's Auxiliary was supported by dozens of women through about 2012. The auxiliary also supported the Secret Santa program, layettes for newborns, the resale shops, and dozens of events for Community Nurse.



In the 1990s, Paula Bresnahan (left, with Angela Curran) joined the Community Nurse board of directors. She had been a staff member at DVCC's Constance Morris House for many years.

Community Family Services experimented with the launch of its own resale shop in the 1990s, opening Legacies and Lace in Western Springs on November 25, 1994. The resale shop was established under the leadership of Patty Weber and the Women's Auxiliary Board, which was founded in 1991 with the purpose of fundraising.



Also like Community Nurse, Community Family Services sought new property to serve as its headquarters in the 1990s, purchasing 1023 West Burlington Avenue in Western Springs in 1990.



Apart from shifting its leadership and locations, Community Family Services also piloted new programming. The state Department of Mental Health and the Department of Child and Family Services launched the first SASS effort in 1994 (Screening, Assessment, and Support Services), with the goal of having third-party organizations provide screening, discharge planning, and follow-up to DCFS children who were receiving inpatient psychiatric care. Community Family Services applied to offer the program locally.

Community Family Services also received a five-year federal



*Mary Stecher, at the helm as executive director, hired Ann Schreiner (formerly of DVCC and Riveredge Hospital) in 1991. Schreiner became a clinician at the Riverside Township office and two years later became associate director of the agency.*

Community Wraparound Initiative grant, becoming one of just 40 agencies in the United States to receive the grant. This led to the introduction of family resource developers who could provide peer-based, home-based therapeutic services, in partnership with families and schools and grounded in the therapists' own lived experiences. Virtually no one in Illinois was doing home-based therapy at the time, though it is widely offered today. The wraparound grant also included funding for caregiver relief and therapeutic support for youth with mental illness. When the grant period was over, Community Family Services expressed a desire to continue offering the services to clients. The program relaunched in 1994 as Respite Services (present-day Community Support-Individual and Community Support Team) under the direction of Don Bestwina, who continues to direct the program today. The program currently focuses on helping clients practice therapeutic skills out in the community.

Also in the early 1990s, Community Family Services opened its

first CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangement) apartments, providing on-site support to adults with mental illness who were transitioning out of the hospital. The organization was also chosen as one of just eight sites nationally for a pilot project to address children who were at risk as a result of a parent's mental illness or substance abuse.

In 1995, Community Family Services received its first accreditation from CARF (the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). Fillmore Center received its first CARF accreditation in 1995 and



*Shirley Speciale joined the board of directors of Community Family Services in 1995 and was on the steering committee of Legacies and Lace. She died in 2003 and was the namesake of a legacy Community Family Services award.*

renewed it again in 1999. Pillars Community Health has received the highest level of accreditation on every CARF survey since 1995.

Fillmore Center added new services and new locations in the 1990s as well, under the direction of Executive Director Carl Bartolucci and with a new tagline, "Making Connections, Saving Lives." Their new offerings included their own SASS provision, a development program for fundraising, and a 5K called Run More for Fillmore.



Lorin Fillmore (left) with Mary Stecher of Community Family Services, at the 5K Run More for Fillmore.

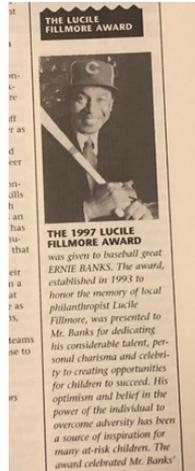
A merger was brewing by 1997, when Community Family Services and Fillmore began talks of a possible affiliation to grow resources jointly. By July 1, 1998, a formal affiliation was announced, and Mary Stecher of Community Family Services became the CEO and executive director of both organizations. Ann Schreiner oversaw legacy Community Family Services operations, and Judy Faigen oversaw legacy Fillmore programming. In 1999, the two agencies held their gala together, combining the efforts of the Fillmore Auxiliary and the Community Family Services Phoenix Society.



Around 1995, Fillmore Center purchased 6415 Stanley Avenue in Berwyn to house the ILC program. That same year 1995, after 25 years on staff and 17 years as executive director, Carl Bartolucci died. On June 12, 1998, the agency had a dedication of the Stanley building and renamed it the Carl Bartolucci Center. Lorin Fillmore (below, second from right) and Berwyn Mayor Tom Shaughnessy (far right) were in attendance. Judy Faigen, who had been working at the organization as a clinician with her husband Woody since the 1970s, stepped in as interim executive director.



In the 1990s, Fillmore Center opened a used bookstore on Windsor Avenue in Berwyn. It was first called Bound to Entertain and was later renamed Fillmore Used Books. Jean Janda served as the head of the volunteers there (second from left, Carl Bartolucci left). Today Janda is coordinator of benefits and authorization at Pillars Community Health.



Lorin A. Fillmore was the son of Lorin and Lucile Fillmore. Lucile had owned Lucile Fillmore's Dress Shop on Windsor Avenue in Berwyn. In the 1990s, the Fillmore Center began giving an annual Lucile Fillmore Award to honor internal and external mental health services. Baseball legend Ernie Banks was among the first to receive the award.



Community Family Services gave its community collaborator award to DVCC at the Welford Awards Banquet in 1995. The two agencies would merge more than a decade later. Florence Forshey (bottom left) received the award on behalf of DVCC.



## 2000s

In 2000, Community Family Services expanded to include the childhood bereavement program Buddy's Place, which Linda Moran had founded in March 1999 to serve children who had experienced a death of someone significant in their lives. The program held its first 8-week session for children and their families in September 2000. Moran would remain program director until her retirement in 2009, managing both programming and volunteers.

The Fillmore Center also expanded to include additional children's services, becoming the lead mental health agency for the Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative in 1999. Helen Stewart was hired to be the program lead. The grant tasked Fillmore Center with developing a program to provide mental health interventions for the highest-risk families in Berwyn and Cicero schools. Staff decided the best way to provide these intensive services to students was in the home. This led to the introduction of home-based therapy at Fillmore.

The Fillmore Center affiliation with Community Family Services turned into a formal merger on July 1, 2002, under the direction of Community Family Services Board President Sara Mikuta, Fillmore Board President Corey Andrews, and Executive Director Mary Stecher. The newly formed organization was named **Community Care Options (CCO)**. The Fillmore Bookstore and Legacies and Lace resale shop remained open as part of CCO, but the ILC Enterprises psychiatric rehabilitation program and client-run business closed its doors.

Community Care Options discontinued its lease at 5814 West Cermak in Cicero, relocating those clinicians to the Fillmore Center building on Windsor Avenue in Berwyn. With ILC closed, the Carl Bartolucci Center in Berwyn sat vacant for a few years. In September 2005, the CCO SASS team moved from 1010 Lake Street in Oak Park to 120 Marion Street, co-locating with Oak Park Family Services (present-day Thrive). A few years later,



the SASS team relocated to the Carl Bartolucci Center where we continue to operate crisis and SASS services today.

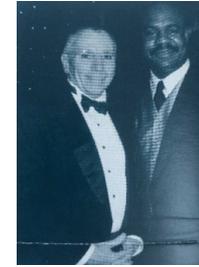
On July 3, 2000, after formally separating from Hull House, DVCC



changed its name to **The Pillars Community Services**. Board leadership explained that people were misunderstanding DVCC as an organization from Des Plaines, Illinois, and the separation from Hull House was intended to increase responsiveness to the needs of local suburban residents. The name change would be just one of many iterations the organization would see in the coming years.

Florence Forshey retired as Pillars Community Services executive director in July 2001 after 33 years with the organization. She was succeeded by John Shustitzky.

Around the same time, in 2000, Ann Cuneo retired as executive director of Community Nurse



*Pillars Community Services launched two fundraising arms in 2001: the Friends of the Pillars auxiliary and the Pillars Society of top donors. The auxiliary helped launch Party for Pillars fundraising events and the organization's first black-tie event, A Harlequin Ball, which would later become the Pillars Ball. Dave Duerson of the Chicago Bears (right) was an attendee, pictured here with then-Board President Frank Bomher.*

after 12 years with the organization. She was succeeded by Ann Wohlberg. At this time, Community Nurse was part of the Access to Care network, a program administered by the Suburban Primary Health Care Council to provide a continuum of services for low-income, uninsured adults. They would remain part of this network until 2009.

Perhaps in a nod to the 1920s women's conferences, Community Nurse launched a Healthy Beginnings prenatal program, with funding from Community

Memorial Foundation to coordinate prenatal care, case management, counseling support, and nutrition and other education. Women would come to a mobile van, parked at the American Legion Hall in La Grange, for their prenatal care. Patients were able to attend prenatal classes at Community Nurse, and deliver their babies at La Grange Memorial Hospital or Loyola Medical Center. (Today, Pillars Community Health partners with the La Grange Family Medicine Center to provide prenatal care to approximately 80 women per year.) In addition, Community Nurse began offering car seat safety checks, training alongside local fire



*Prior to her role at Community Nurse, Ann Wohler was assistant program director of Buddy's Place with Linda Moran, then part of Community Family Services.*

departments who were also beginning to offer this assistance at the time.

Angela Curran, who had joined the Community Nurse board in 2003, was hired as executive director of Community Nurse in 2007. The organization hired its first full-time, paid pediatrician, Dr. Mary Beth Eraci, and pediatric nurse practitioner, Lisa Radville. Sue Hickerson was hired as the organization's first coordinator of the pediatric clinic in 1993.

Major shifts were under way again in the middle of the decade. On July 1, 2006, Community Care Options (formerly Community Family Services and Fillmore Center) merged with Pillars Community Services (formerly DVCC) to become **Pillars**. The organization used the logo featuring people standing in a circle from Pillars Community Services and the tagline "making connections, changing lives" from Community Care Options. Mary Stecher of CCO retired at the merger, and John Shustitzky of Pillars Community Services became president and CEO of the merged organization. Other

leadership included Ann Schreiner as senior vice president, Dave Piwowar as vice president of finance, Jeff Nichols as vice president of human resources, Heather Alderman as vice president of advancement, and John Nylen as board chair. Fillmore Used Books and Legacies and Lace closed amid the merger.



In 2008, Community Memorial Foundation spearheaded the founding and funding of the Community Healthcare Network of the Western Suburbs. Community Nurse managed the Network, in partnership with Network members including Pillars, La Grange Memorial Hospital, and ACCESS DuPage. Chris Golden, who had been the coordinator of Community



Nurse adult clinic, became the Network's referral manager, coordinating the specialty care needs of hundreds of patients with about 50 local medical specialists who provided free or very low cost services to these patients. The Network's goal is to provide a continuum of care to low-income, uninsured, or medically underserved adults ages 19-64, in partnership with local health care organizations. Services include care coordination, comprehensive care, specialty care, free lab services through LabCorp, diagnostic and radiology services and hospitalization, and discounted prescriptions. The Network has now been in operation more than 10 years and has provided a continuum of services for thousands of low-income, uninsured adults, including adults experiencing homelessness or domestic violence.

While the Network made the partnership between Community Nurse and Pillars more formal, staff from the two organizations had been referring patients to each other for decades, and Pillars had opened a co-location at Community Nurse a year prior

(in 2008), to house a clinician at 23 Calendar Ave. who would provide behavioral health services to prenatal and pediatric patients of Community Nurse. The Network expanded that agreement in 2009 to ensure mental health services for adult patients, and Community Nurse began providing medical services to clients at Pillars' domestic violence shelter, Constance Morris House in 2012.

## 2010s

The Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010. Community Nurse led a network of health care navigators, which they staffed at Community Nurse and partnering agencies (including Pillars), who were trained to assist community members in enrolling in new Marketplace health care plans and newly expanded Medicaid benefits for adults. Pillars Community Health continues to staff certified Marketplace navigators to this day.

In 2012, Community Nurse became a Federally Qualified Health Center, switching from operating as a free, charitable clinic to a Community Health



In 1943, Community Nurse Vice President and Publicity Chair Florence Carr wrote that Community Nurse was “comparable to a tree in many respects, with the tap or main root representing the nurse and her work, and the branches the many different activities taken up. ...So long as nothing strikes at the basic good of the Association it will live and prosper.” At Community Nurse’s 90th anniversary, they changed their logo to a tree, with this analogy in mind.

At Community Nurse’s 90th anniversary celebration, La Grange Memorial Hospital presented a \$90,000 gift to help renovate and equip the Health Center at 110 Calendar Avenue in La Grange, recognizing the long-standing affiliation between the organization and the hospital.



Center and Healthcare for the Homeless provider, receiving federal grant support from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). FQHCs qualify for funding and enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, provide comprehensive services (including dental and behavioral health care), serve an underserved population, and offer a sliding fee scale, among other qualifications. Upon becoming an FQHC, the organization began doing business as **Community Nurse Health Center**, and Angela Curran’s title was changed from executive director to president and CEO. Cathy Arhontas was the organization’s first finance director. Ellen Kunkle, a volunteer for the Women’s Auxiliary, was hired by the organization in 2006 and became the organization’s first director of government grants in 2012. Elisabet Garcia, who had once been a patient at Community Nurse and worked in the Carousel Shop, became one of the Health Center’s first patient service representatives (PSRs) and is now lead PSR.

The Community Nurse clinic space experienced substantial

expansion in 2012, doubling in size with additional funding from Community Memorial Foundation and La Grange Memorial Hospital (present-day AMITA Health Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital). The adult medical clinic had been operating out of 110 Calendar Avenue in La Grange, and the pediatric clinic operated out of 27 Calendar. With the expansion, Community Nurse moved to a family practice model, housing both adult and pediatric services under one roof at 110 Calendar, where we continue to operate our Medical Center today. Dental services remained at 27 Calendar. In 2013, Community Nurse added a dental operatory (with a gift from long-time board member Gail Maca) at 27 Calendar, to meet the growing need for children’s services.

Also in 2012, Community Nurse received its first Healthcare for the Homeless Grant from HRSA, which supports provision of medical, dental, and behavioral health services to people experiencing homelessness. Pillars Community Health continues to partner with BEDS Plus and the La Grange Family Medicine



*Sue Hickerson (middle) was Community Nurse's first coordinator of the pediatric clinic in 1993. When she retired in 2014, she received the organization's first Jean McLeod award. Adult Clinic Coordinator and Network Referral Manager Chris Golden received the award posthumously a year later.*

Residency Program today to offer these services. Community Nurse also introduced a federal 340b pharmacy assistance program to assure low-cost medications for its patients. Since 2013, the Health Center has been named a HRSA quality leader, placing it in at least the top 30 percent of all FQHCs nationally.

With Community Nurse's expansion from a free and charitable clinic to an FQHC, its scope of services could be expanded to include psychiatry and behavioral health. Pillars and Community Nurse continued to collaborate to offer a continuum of behavior-

al health services to maximize resources and each organization's expertise. As sources of funding changed, Community Nurse began to offer more psychiatry services in 2014. Brief Intervention was adopted as a mode of behavioral health care to provide in the Medical Center, with continuing referral to Pillars for longer term and more intensive behavioral health services.

Pillars also amended its behavioral health services around this time, to meet best practices and current needs. In 2016, Pillars closed the Foxfire Recovery Center and psychosocial rehabilitation services with the recognition that services for adults living with severe mental illness had evolved. Today these clients receive therapy



*Ann C. Schreiner, AM, LCSW, then president and CEO of Pillars, with Zada Clarke, then-board chair.*

and community-based interventions through our Community Support-Individual program. In October 2016, Pillars partnered with NAMI Metro Suburban and Community Memorial Foundation to open The Living Room at 4731 Willow Springs Road in La Grange. The Living Room offers a free alternative to the emergency room for adults ages 18 and older who are seeking help in a mental health crisis.

After nearly 50 years of providing Head Start services to the area (with its origin in DVCC in 1968), Pillars became the federal grantee to oversee Head Start and Early Head Start programs for 18 area zip codes in 2015. They provided services annually to more than 600 children and oversaw a delegate organization, the Children's Center of Berwyn-Cicero.

In 2017, amid growth of continuums of care for patients (based on the system of "value-based care") and a desire to integrate physical and behavioral health, it became clear that further alignment between Pillars and Community Nurse would be beneficial. On August 8, 2017,

the boards of both Pillars and Community Nurse, led by Zada Clarke and Nick Chancellor respectively, voted to formally merge the two organizations. Thus **Pillars Community Health** was born on January 1, 2018. Ann Schreiner of Pillars retired on December 31, 2017, and Angela Curran of Community Nurse became president and CEO of the newly merged organization. Zada Clarke became chair of the Board of Directors, and Nick Chancellor became vice-chair. Helen Stewart, who had most recently worked as chief clinical officer at Pillars, became senior executive vice president. Linda Durkan became senior vice president of philanthropy and Phil Foust became senior vice president of organizational health.

As a result of this merger, Pillars Community Health became one

of the first organizations in Illinois to bring health and social services under one banner.



As administrative staff focused on the business of merging, program staff continued to develop services. In the year after the merger, the sexual violence team gave more than 750 prevention education presentations to area schools.



Domestic violence launched its medical advocacy program, offering in-person visits to patients experiencing domestic violence when requested by partner hospitals, something our sexual assault team also offers in addition to legal advocacy. Staff also included the Lethality Assessment Program, through which partner police departments can screen for a lethality level during a domestic disturbance and connect potential victims to safety and services. Among those resources are our domestic and sexual violence hotlines, which are staffed by more than 150 trained volunteers.

Health Center staff also focused on increasing access by opening a Family Health Center on-site at Anne M. Jeans Elementary School in Willowbrook in 2019, in partnership with Burr Ridge School District 180 and Superintendent Dr. Tom Schneider. The clinic offers affordable medical and dental services to all low-income residents in the area, with a particular focus on providing access for families in the Burr Ridge School District. Also in response to growing need for behavioral health services for adolescents, Pillars Community Health expanded



*The family of Marge and Jack Burke of La Grange made a generous donation to make the opening of the Anne Jeans clinic possible. Jack was a past member of the Community Nurse board of directors, and Marge had volunteered at The Community Shop. Their daughter Ruth (seated) attended the opening of the clinic.*

community-based services at area schools and collaborated with others in the community to address adolescent substance use disorders through the Coalition for a Drug Free Lyons Township.

In 2018, Pillars established the Cultural Equality Advocates, a group of staff who gather to focus on diversity-related issues and awareness within the organization. The committee had roots in the diversity and service excellence committees of Pillars and Community Nurse. In 2021, amid our 100th anniversary, Pillars Community Health is engaging consultants to help us become a Trauma Informed Organization while intentionally addressing issues of Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion. With the help of two sets of consultants, we are piloting a process that combines the two efforts and will form long-term plans and committees to continually and proactively address trauma and diversity moving forward.

Entering its 99th year, 101 years after the end of the Spanish flu pandemic, Pillars Community



Health and its staff were faced with addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization quickly shifted its service offerings to address emergent community needs. This included providing virtual services across programs, moving all Constance Morris House residents offsite to a facility where they could social distance until they could safely return to the shelter, and introducing curbside visits for chronic disease patients at the Health Center in La Grange. In May 2020, Pillars Community Health began opening COVID-19 testing sites, the first one at the Health Center in La Grange, with subsequent sites placed at Anne M. Jeans Elementary in partnership with DuPage County Public Health and Burbank in partnership with Stickney Public Health District. In January 2021, we opened a COVID-19 vaccination site at 27 Calendar Avenue

in La Grange. In keeping with our history, Pillars Community Health is leading a collaborative of community organizations to increase community awareness, education, and prevention about COVID-19.

Other programs drew to a close in 2020, including the Head Start and Early Head Start programs, upon the conclusion of our five-year grant. The programs are today being managed by Easter Seals and El Valor in our communities.

After employing the help of hundreds if not thousands of volunteers from up to 44 different civic and church groups over the last century, The Community Shop (that began as a “continuous rummage sale” in 1921)



permanently closed in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the financial challenges of operating a brick-and-mortar resale shop in an era of expanding online retail and resale platforms. However, the contributions of staff—like Cecilia De La Torre who worked in the shop for over 20 years—and decades of volunteers who supported all of the legacy organizations’ resale shops cannot be overstated. Many of these volunteers have also donated to our organization or served on our board of directors, helping further shape and sustain a remarkable organization.

As we enter our 100th year, still in the midst of the pandemic, all staff continue to be paid in full and all programs continue to operate thanks to the commitment of our donors, funders, staff, and volunteers. As we have done for a century, our staff and supporters continue to advocate for and meet the changing needs of the people of the western suburbs with persistence, commitment, creativity, and collaboration. We look forward to what our successors will say about us in the future.

As we look forward to the next decade and century, we continue to evolve and are launching a new set of mission, vision, and values statements to guide us forward.

**MISSION:** To improve the health of our communities and empower individuals through compassionate, whole-person care.

**VISION:** Communities where all people have access to the care they need, when they need it.

To achieve our mission and work toward Pillars Community Health’s vision of communities where all people have access to the care they need, when they need it:

- **WE VALUE ACCESS** to services and work proactively to remove barriers to care because we believe everyone should have access to care in their community.
- **WE VALUE COMMUNITY** and work in partnership because we believe collaboration and outreach are necessary to achieve social and health equity.
- **WE VALUE DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND RESPECT** and will build awareness of and strive to eliminate bias within our organization and communities because we believe in each person’s inherent worth and unique contributions.
- **WE VALUE SERVICE EXCELLENCE** that improves health outcomes and builds resilience because we believe each person has a right to quality care.



## Summary of Office Locations

### Community Nurse:

- Co-location at Cossitt School, La Grange (1920s)
- Hillgrove and Stone Ave., La Grange (1921-1944)
- 218 Washington St., La Grange day care (1939-1971)
- 117 Calendar Ave., La Grange (1945-1963)
- 27 Calendar Ave., La Grange (1963-2021)
- 100 Washington St., Community Center/100 6th Ave., La Grange, First Congregational Church of La Grange, day care (1971-1983)
- Second Baptist Church, La Grange, food pantry (1980s-1990s)
- 110 Calendar Ave., La Grange (1990-present)
- 23 Calendar Ave., La Grange (1992-present)
- Constance Morris House domestic violence shelter co-location (2012-2018)
- BEDS Plus co-location at La Grange Episcopal Church (2012-2018)
- Hodgkins Park District co-location (1990s)

### Berwyn Family Services/Fillmore Center:

- 3340 S. Oak Park Ave., Berwyn (unsure)
- 6918 Windsor Ave., Berwyn (1981-present)
- 1010 Lake St., second floor, Oak Park (1987-2005)
- 5814 W. Cermak, Cicero (1989-2002)
- 6415 Stanley Ave., Berwyn (1995-present)
- 120 Marion St., second floor, Oak Park (short time around 2005)

### Community Family Services

- 23 Calendar Ave., La Grange, SSMHA (1956-1977)
- 14 S. La Grange Rd., La Grange, WSFCS (1950s-1977)
- 7641 W. 63rd St., Summit, Stepping Stone (1970-2006)
- Argo High School co-location, Summit (1970s-2006)
- 6253 S. Archer and later 7420 S. Archer, Foxfire (1977-2016)
- 47 S. 6th Ave., La Grange (1977-1990)
- Riverside Town Hall office (1980-early 2000s)
- 6001/6030 Lenzi Ave., Hodgkins (1981-2019)
- 111 W. Harris Ave., La Grange, senior center (1990s)
- 1023 W. Burlington Ave., Western Springs (1990-2021)
- 1820 S. 25th Ave., Broadview, Community Wraparound (1994-2000s)
- Riverside-Brookfield High School co-location, Brookfield (late 1990s-present)

### Des Plaines Valley Community Center/Pillars Community Services

- 6125 S. Archer Ave., Summit (1968-1990s)
- Brookfield area Constance Morris House (1978-1988)
- 6140 S. Archer Ave. and shortly after 6227 S. Archer Ave., Summit, Des Plaines Valley Health Center (1970s-2004)
- Undisclosed location of Constance Morris House (1988-present)
- 6120 S. Archer Ave. (1990s)
- 5531 W. Cermak, Cicero, sexual assault services (1997-2001)
- 6610 S. Pulaski, Chicago, sexual assault services (2001-after 2008)
- 6915 W. Cermak, Cicero, sexual assault services (2001-2004)
- 8020 W. 87th St., Hickory Hills (2004-present)
- 333 N. La Grange Rd., Suite One, La Grange Park (2004-present)
- 7424 W. Archer, Addictions Center (1990s)
- St. Mary's School co-location, Riverside (1990s)

### Pillars

- IWS Children's Clinic co-location in Oak Park (2015)
- Community Nurse co-location, La Grange (2008-2018)
- Argo High School co-location, Summit (2006-2014)
- St. Mary's School co-location, Riverside (2018-present)
- Berwyn South D100 Schools co-location, Berwyn (2018-present)
- Living Room partnership, La Grange (2016-present)

### Pillars Community Health

- 9601 W. Ogden, La Grange, BEDS Plus co-location (2018-present)
- Family Health Center, Ann M. Jeans Elementary School, Willowbrook (2019-present)

*\*Not all co-locations listed; as a community-based organization, Pillars Community Health has co-located at numerous schools, hospitals, and other organizations and institutions throughout its 100-year history.*

## Summary of Resale Shops

### The Community Shop, Community Nurse

1921-2020 (basement of La Grange Public Library 1921, moved to 117 Calendar in 1945, moved to 27 Calendar in 1963, moved to 13 Calendar Ave. in 1982 after the fire, moved back to 27 Calendar in 1983, moved to 23 Calendar Ave. in 1992); other names/spinoff shops include the Carousel Shop and the Corner Shoppe

### Piggy Bank, Berwyn Family Services

Date/location unsure

### Bound to Entertain/Fillmore Used Books, Fillmore Center

1990-2006, 6834 Windsor Ave., Berwyn

### Legacies and Lace, Community Family Services

1994-2006, 821 Burlington Ave., Western Springs

### Hope Chest, a separate 501(c)3 that supports Constance Morris House

1995-present, 305 W. Hillgrove Ave., La Grange

## Entities That Have Roots in Pillars Community Health

- Lyons Township school nurse (Community Nurse)
- Park District of La Grange (Community Nurse)
- Aging Care Connections (Community Nurse)
- Rotary Club of La Grange Secret Santa program (Community Nurse)
- Youth Crossroads (Berwyn Family Services)
- Berwyn-Cicero Council on Aging (Berwyn Family Services)
- Children's Center of Cicero-Berwyn (Berwyn Family Services)
- 708 Boards of Berwyn and Cicero (Berwyn Family Services)
- 708 Board of Lyons Township (DVCC and Community Family Services)
- 708 Board of Riverside Township (Community Family Services)
- Lyons Township Council on Aging (Community Family Services)
- Hepzibah's psychiatric diagnostic program (Fillmore Center)
- MacNeal's psychiatric program (Fillmore Center)
- Riveredge Hospital's outpatient mental health program (Fillmore Center)
- Hope Chest (DVCC)

## FY2021 Board of Directors

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# Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.

Medical & Dental  
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders  
Domestic & Sexual Violence

**[www.PillarsCommunityHealth.org](http://www.PillarsCommunityHealth.org)**  
**708-PILLARS (708-745-5277)**

24-hour domestic violence hotline:  
708-485-5254

24-hour sexual assault hotline:  
708-482-9600

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PillarsCommunityHealth](http://www.facebook.com/PillarsCommunityHealth)

Instagram: @PillarsCommunityHealth

YouTube: [youtube.com/pillarscommunity1](http://youtube.com/pillarscommunity1)

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