

 **BERKSHIRE**
FARM CENTER & SERVICES FOR YOUTH
2022 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM MANY VOICES COMES ONE MISSION

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OUR MISSION

To strengthen children and families so they can live **safely, independently, and productively** within their home communities.

*Please note, names and photos in some stories have been changed to protect the identity of our clients.

A Message from our President & CEO



We are honored to present our annual report for 2022. With your support, we have been able to make a positive impact in the lives of countless children and families in need across New York State.

I am proud to share with you that in 2022, we were able to serve 8,053 children and families through our statewide programs and services. Of those, we were able to reunite 89 children with their families, find ‘forever families’ through adoption for 66 children, and helped 3,745 children and families stay together during times of crisis with the support of our family preservation programs.

In this report, you will meet a few of those children that your support helped create a positive and lasting impact include Janae, a young woman who now has the resources to expand her education, Tommy, a little boy whose resiliency inspires many, Bob Hayes, a foster dad who has fostered and now adopted three children, and Mandy, a little girl who has come so far from where she started. These success stories would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff and the generosity of our donors and community partners. I hope their stories of resiliency and achievement demonstrate as proof to what we can accomplish when we work together.

Moving forward, we remain committed to growth and change. Berkshire’s geographical footprint positions us as the largest child welfare organization in New York State. With that, comes great responsibility to lead with intention and expertise which is what our 650+ staff do each and every day through our evidence-based practices and ever-evolving programming to best meet the needs of those we serve.

We will work tirelessly to provide essential resources and support to those who need us the most, and we will expand our relationships with community partners knowing that we are always stronger together.

Your support has been instrumental in helping us make a difference in the lives of those we serve, and I am grateful to have you as a partner. Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission.

Warm regards,

Brian

Brian Parchesky, LMSW
President & CEO



100% of the children and families we serve come to Berkshire with a history of trauma exposure. Embracing a trauma-informed model of care, we work with children and families to overcome their past traumas so they can live safely and take control of their lives.

With programs and services all across New York State, Berkshire provides trauma-informed care right where children and their families need us the most - in their homes and communities. And, when working with families in their homes is not an option, Berkshire provides a safe haven for children in need of care through one of our over 550 certified foster homes, community group homes, and non-secure and secure detention centers.



FOSTER CARE
1,113

Our Foster Care Program's primary goal is to work alongside our foster families to reunify children with their biological families as safely and quickly as possible. When that is not an option, our team works tirelessly to identify "Forever Families" for those youth freed for adoption.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
2,609

Our Behavioral Health Services strengthen families so they can make informed decisions about their care. We provide nursing, clinical and care management along with mental health and substance abuse services to help avoid emergency room visits.



FAMILY PRESERVATION
3,475

Our Family Preservation Programs work with families who are in crisis and at risk of separation. We partner with parents to educate, support, and strengthen families where they need us the most - in their homes, schools, and communities.



DETENTION SERVICES
244

Our Detention Programs provide youth a safe and secure setting by virtue of their choices and circumstances. Our trauma-informed program provides youth with the support and assistance they need to choose a better path with new educational and vocational opportunities, and stronger, more positive connections within their homes and communities.



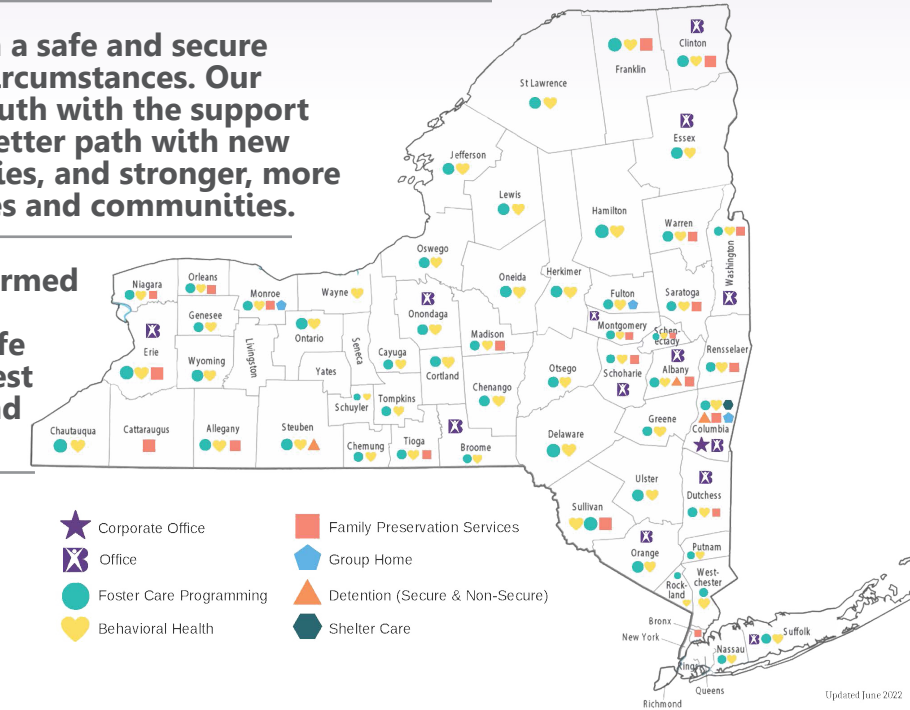
GROUP HOMES
36

Our Group Homes provide trauma-informed care for youth who are struggling in their home and community. Through life skills, we empower youth to be their best selves and work toward future goals and independence.



SHELTERED HEARTS
576

Our Sheltered Hearts Program provides short-term shelter care for unaccompanied children while our team works diligently to unite them with family members in the United States.



Tommy's Story

A STORY OF RESILIENCE & COMPASSION

At five years old, Tommy suffered a loss that most adults are not even able to grapple with – the loss of a loved one in the hands of tragedy.

Tommy came into the care of Berkshire in the fall of 2020 following the sudden loss of his younger sister, Cara. He worked closely with his treatment team which consisted of a family specialist, various care managers, nurses, a dedicated director of clinical services, and last but certainly not least, his new foster parents - Shyanne and Matt.

Faced with adversity from the start, Tommy was struggling with severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and low self-esteem due to his history of abuse and neglect. On the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scale, Tommy scored at the highest level. This scale is a tally of different types of abuse, neglect, and other adverse childhood experiences. The CDC describes that the higher your ACE score, the more susceptible a person is to experiencing future violence, victimization, perpetration, and lifelong health problems.

Even as a trauma-informed agency, we knew we had our work cut out for us. Over the course of the next two years, Tommy's care team worked diligently to combat the effects of abuse and other challenges. He was shown compassion, encouragement, and love, he was given reminders of his self-worth and nurtured every step of the way.

Against all odds, Tommy was resilient. He began to express self-assurance, exclaiming statements like, "I can do this!" He was even learning to cope with the grief he suffered from the loss of his sister and would make assertions such as, "she's with me everywhere I go." Tommy has thrived, making enormous strides in his emotional growth as well as improving his speech. He is making friends in school, embracing his new foster cousins whom he has grown to adore, and fostering relationships with his role models. Not to mention, his grades have gotten much better.

Cristin O'Brien, clinical director at Berkshire said, "The reason Tommy is so successful now is because of them [his foster parents], their love and consistency with him, along with lots of patience."

Tommy's story gets even better because with the new year comes the announcement of his upcoming adoption. Shyanne and Matt showed Tommy the love, empathy, and compassion he needed to thrive and are over the moon to be adopting him this year. We're excited to follow this family's journey and see where it takes them!



Not All Heroes

WEAR CAPES

Mandy and her family had been in Berkshire's Home Run Program since September 2016. In the past, families have not participated for this long, but it has been a unique situation – to say the least.

Mandy joined the Home Run Program during the second week of her kindergarten year. The family has most often worked with Lori Griffa. Lori is a Prevention Senior Family Specialist who works with children at the Anna Merritt Elementary School located outside of Buffalo.

There have been plenty of challenges during Mandy's journey, but she has made incredible progress with Lori's help, dedication, and diligence.

Over the past few years, Mandy's changes in behavior were closely observed – including times when she became physically and verbally aggressive and struggled academically. It became very apparent that Mandy required a nurturing environment, structure from the school staff, and opportunities to express her feelings in an appropriate manner without being aggressive. When given the tools she needed to thrive, thrive Mandy did.

Mandy deeply struggled with remote learning during the pandemic, but that didn't stop Lori from making the extra effort needed to meet with Mandy one-on-one and

provide some of the structure she needed during this time.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Mandy – again – continued to make progress. She was able to complete difficult schoolwork and interacted with her peers and teachers in a positive manner. Mandy actively listened and followed directions. She was in a classroom that was both structured and nurturing – just what she needed. Her reading improved and she excelled in math, all while making new friends and taking on leadership roles in both the classroom as well as in the Home Run program.

The start of the recent school year has been eye-opening for Mandy. It was determined that Mandy had made the growth needed to move to a 15:1 classroom next school year. Mandy's class will be small, but she will have the support necessary to be successful.

Mandy joined the school's chorus club, and she now serves as a member of the Kindness Club and is considering auditioning for the school play. She was even nominated for "Student of the Month" and the "Lion Proud Award".

94% of children
achieved their treatment goal (another term for permanency)

90% of children
in our family preservation programs were engaged in their treatment

Janae FROM FOSTER CARE TO INDEPENDENCE

At the end of 2022, we said goodbye to Janae, who left foster care to move into her first apartment. Janae was with Berkshire since the summer of 2019 and spent the past three years building strong, positive relationships with her foster parents and foster brother.

While reunification is the primary goal of foster care, some youth - like Janae - work toward independence. Having recently turned 18, Janae felt it was time to be on her own and began looking for an apartment. With the help of her Berkshire care team, and her foster parents, she was able to furnish and secure her first apartment.

Janae has had many ups and downs over the years, but she made incredible progress and growth - especially in the last year. Janae is currently attending a full-time education program through Lincoln Tech where she is earning a mechanics certificate with the help of Berkshire's Mott Family Scholarship. Janae was able to obtain a part-time job at a local AutoZone and is interning through her school at a Dodge dealership. Janae will have multiple career opportunities following her graduation next fall and hopes to continue working for Dodge.

Janae has worked diligently with her team on outlining goals like applying for schools, jobs, and (formerly) apartments. Janae is a bright, independent, and resilient young woman and we are very proud of her current and future successes!

*Janae (left) pictured with Sarah Stamberg (right), a Berkshire Family Specialist and a revered member of our Poughkeepsie Team

For more information on the Mott Family Scholarship, visit berkshirefarm.org/mott-family-scholarship



Bob Hayes A CHAMPION IN FOSTER PARENTING



In the fostering world, we have the ability to learn all about folks who truly act with the best intentions and pure selflessness as they open their doors and hearts to children in need. We had the privilege of chatting with one of these remarkable folks just last week.

Robert Hayes of Luzerne, New York has been working alongside Berkshire Farm Center for nearly 15 years. While he had fostered children previously, he first opened his home for Jade, a child in Berkshire's care, when she was eight days old. Robert

fostered Jade for another three years and he adopted her in November 2014. She is now 11 years old and goes to school in Warren County where she has continued to live with Robert on his farm. Here, they tend to beef cows, horses, goats, and various gardens on the property.

Robert has continued to foster over the years and three years ago, he was asked to provide respite care for two young siblings, Millie and Spencer. Respite care is described as giving foster parents needed time off - from a few hours to a weekend or more - usually

on a regularly scheduled basis. While this placement started as respite care, Robert's family of two would soon become a family of four when Robert adopted Millie and Spencer three years after that first respite visit. Millie and Spencer would require extra care due to Millie's cerebral palsy and Spencer's high-spectrum autism, but Robert was up for the challenge! Robert travels to Burlington three to four times a year for doctor's visits because that's where Millie has always gone. He feels the medical center there offers the best doctors. Even with the challenges

they've faced and those ahead of them, Robert and his family find time to enjoy things like outdoor concerts, camping in the woods, Great Escape visits, and listening to as much music as possible. This past fall, the family had a blast apple-picking and checking out the Thurman Fall Farm Tour. We can't wait to hear about their next adventure! Robert reminds us that one ordinary person can make an extraordinary impact!

We're so glad we've been able to work alongside him for over 15 years.

97% of children
in our foster care and group home programs were engaged in their treatment

89% of parents
were engaged in our services



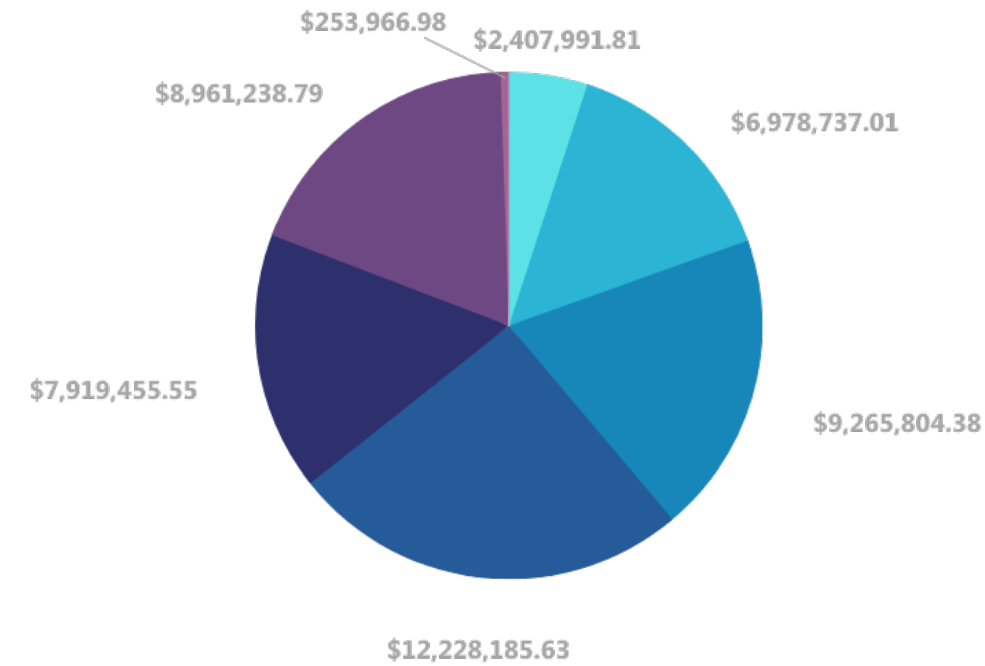
92% of our staff believe we are taking steps to expand our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiatives.

This is a photo from our first ever DEIB Summit.

*Source: 2022 Employee Satisfaction Survey

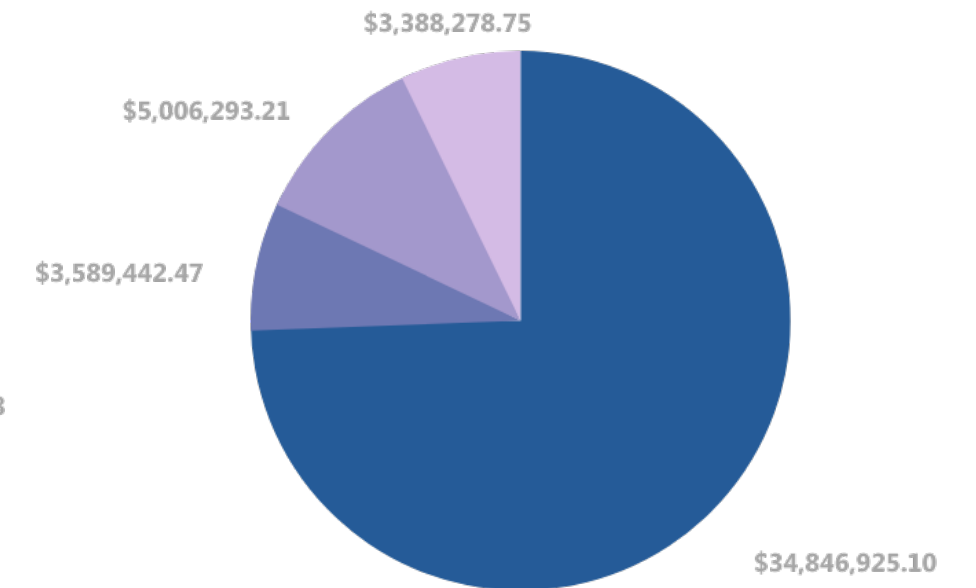
Revenue & Expenses

Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022 Revenue



- Group Homes
- Detention Programs
- Foster Care Programs
- Preventative Services
- Behavioral Health
- Sheltered Hearts
- Other

Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022 Expenses



- To pay interest and other expenses
- To support our youth (activities, healthcare, food, etc.)
- To operate programs and maintain buildings
- To pay our employees and provide benefits

*Totals based on pre-audited financials.

CHECK IT OUT...

We take great pride in knowing that not only are our 650+ employees across NYS committed to Berkshire's mission, but they are dedicating time outside of work as engaged and active members of their home communities.

**Kenneth Ackley**

We wanted to extend a special thanks for his service in the United States Air Force and the Vt. Air National Guard between 1986 and 2007 - Mr. Kenneth Ackley.

Kenneth started with Berkshire in October 2020. Since his honorable discharge in 2007, he has continued to work with veterans who suffer from PTSD, The North Country Honor Flight, as well as his local VFD and EMS.

**Deborah Minners**

Deborah Minners, a Berkshire employee, has been managing the accounts payable team since June 2011. She has been an active member of the Hudson Elks Lodge since its inception, 21 years ago.

She is actively involved with donating her time and energy to various lodge projects, like delivering dictionaries to school kids where she finds the most joy in seeing how excited the kids get - her alter ego is Elroy Elk.

And - if you can believe it - she does so much more! To Deborah, it's all about the children, the seniors, and the veterans who serve our country.

**Lori Griffa**

Lori Griffa, one of our Prevention Senior Family Specialists, has been with Berkshire since February 2005 when she started with the No Child Left Behind Program. She has since switched to the Home Run Program where she has been for the last 15 years. She is also an active member of Berkshire's DEIB Committee.

Lori enjoys giving back to her community by co-leading a Girl Scout troop of 40 girls at the school where the Home Run program is housed. She holds several roles on the WNY Girl Scout Council as well as being a Co-Leader for the Girl Advisory Board; member of the Adult Recognition committee and so much more!

**Reine Fitzgerald**

Reine Fitzgerald (pictured on right), who started with Berkshire in 2018 as a home finder, is very active in the Syracuse ZONTA club. ZONTA is dedicated to ending childhood marriage, sex trafficking, and violence against all women.

Every year, Reine's ZONTA chapter collects over 1,000 bras to send to women in third-world countries.

In addition to her work with Zonta, Reine is very active with The Academy of Excellence in Syracuse. The academy is involved in fighting for racial equity - especially in policy and programming. The main focuses are representation, inclusion, diversity, and equity.

**Tammy Madden**

Tammy Madden is a member of the Stephentown Volunteer Fire Department. She joined the department in 1985 and became a NYS certified Emergency Medical Technician.

Through the years, Tammy has held many offices in the department and also achieved the rank of Assistant Fire Chief for the fire district.

Tammy has worked on both the accounts payable and accounts receivable teams for Berkshire since her start in July of 2018.

**Patrick York**

Patrick York started with Berkshire in August of 2022 and we wanted to acknowledge his dedication and service in the United States Marine Corps.

Patrick enlisted in October of 1996 where he served in various roles throughout his career until his retirement in 2022 after decades of faithful and dedicated service.

His personal awards include a Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (3rd award).

**Kimber Root**

Kimber Root is a Volunteer Firefighter with the Tsatsawassa Fire company. She serves her community by being a certified EMT and runs the Hoag's Corners Ambulance.

She is a Committee person with the local Boy Scout Troop where her son earned Eagle Scout status. In addition, she volunteers with the Northeast PYR rescue by being their Treasurer and fostering dogs that need to learn family life.

Kimber firmly believes in staying in touch and active with her community as she has lived there her entire life.

**Melissa Dufrane-Hellijas**

Melissa Dufrane-Hellijas is a home finder with Berkshire and has been with us since April 2019. She is a volunteer leader with BSA Scout Troop 8061 in Malone and is also the Scout Committee Advancement Chairperson and Eagle Scout mentor. She has been actively involved with the troop for over eight years.

The photo above is of Melissa and her son, Tristan Hellijas, at his Court of Honor for Eagle Scout rank. Even though her son has gone off to college, she still enjoys being a volunteer with the troop.

94%
OF EMPLOYEES
AGREE THAT STAFF IS
COMMITTED TO DOING
QUALITY WORK

96%
OF OUR EMPLOYEES
FEEL LIKE WHAT THEY
DO MATTERS

91%
OF OUR EMPLOYEES
FEEL THEY HAVE A
SUPPORTIVE NETWORK
AT WORK

ONE ORDINARY PERSON CAN MAKE AN EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

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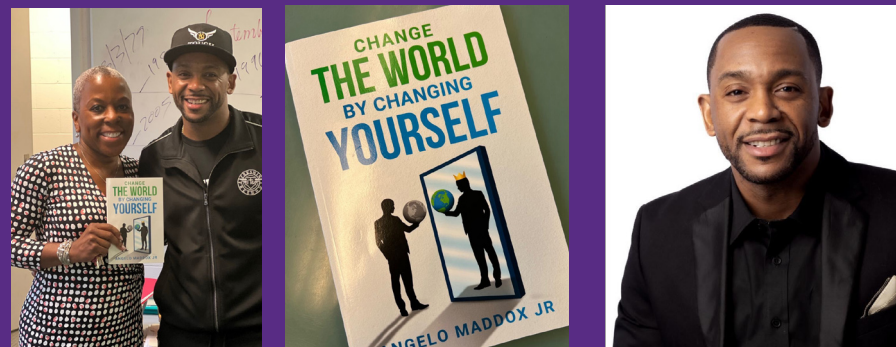
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Angelo Justice Maddox, Jr.
Author of Change the World by Changing Yourself

Angelo Maddox is a passionate entrepreneur, business owner, author, and an all-around game-changer in the Capital Region Community.

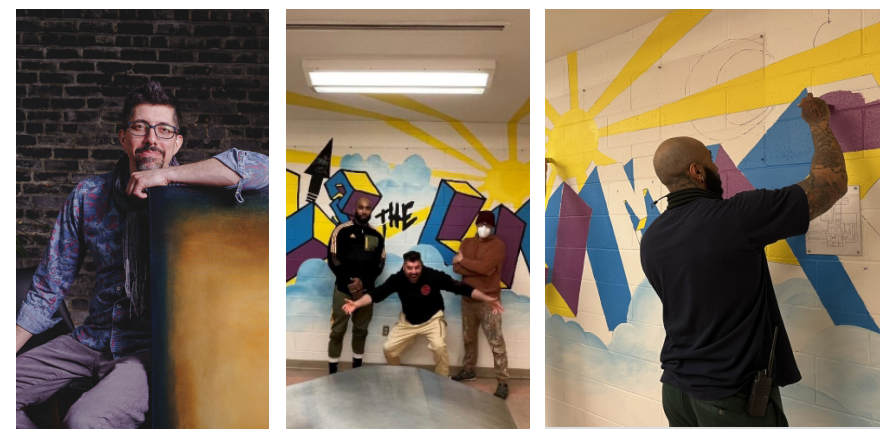
Outside of being a fashion-forward entrepreneur, Angelo has dedicated much of his time to giving back to his community. Following incarceration at the age of 17, Angelo vowed to do and be better... and he has not disappointed. He uses his experience to encourage others that no dream is too big. In fact, he used his experiences for his latest venture, the publication of his book, Change the World by Changing Yourself.

Angelo explains that he is a prime example that youth have the capability to get on the straight and narrow following a youth's exit from juvenile detention centers. There's always time to do and be better and to make something of yourself. In 2022, Angelo spoke to youth at our juvenile detention center, sharing his journey and lessons learned along the way. In addition, he provided copies of his book to each of the youth.

In January 2023, Angelo participated in a facilitator training as part of The Chris Wilson Foundation's Master Plan Program. This program trains formerly incarcerated men on how to positively influence youth in juvenile detention centers. Angelo is committing his time over the next three months to facilitate the Master Plan Program at our juvenile detention center.

Angelo feels the Master Plan Program is an opportunity youth should be proud to be a part of. He says, "The world is full of opportunities to tap into when you allow yourself to grow and be better." He says that once you do that and consider where you've been and what you've gone through, you can become the best version of yourself.

We are proud of community partners like Angelo and are grateful that he has joined our mission.



Tony Iadicicco
Executive Director, The Albany Center Gallery

Growing up in a military family, Tony has lived all over the east coast and in many places throughout New York State. Having lived in the Capital Region for the last 15 years or so, Tony has a full understanding of the Upstate landscape and what the arts community looks like in the Capital Region.

His focus has always been to share art everywhere he goes, especially with youth. It is his passion personally and professionally. He started as a volunteer for the gallery and eventually earned the role of executive director.

Tony recently partnered with us at our juvenile detention center to provide an opportunity for youth to experience the arts. Tony facilitated weekly workshops in which the youth could bring their art and ideas to life through a mural he helped create alongside another local artist, Oscar Bográn. The concept of the mural was, "The Sky is the Limit."

This evolved into another workshop where writing was the focus titled, "The Power of Word." These workshops tap into slam poetry, creative writing, hip-hop, and spoken word in which students will combine their stories to be collaged into one large message, with the goal of installing this mural right at the center. Oscar Bográn helped Tony spearhead this workshop as well.

Tony has used art as a tool to help youth process emotions as they navigate the repercussions of challenging times in their lives. He feels art helps to heal and inspire change. We are excited to see what other creative projects unfold with the help of Tony!



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MONTHLY GIVER Join our Monthly Givers Club and make a positive impact on the lives on children and families, year round. For more information, head to BerkshireFarm.org/become-a-monthly-giver.

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