Celebrating Our Volunteers in Massachusetts

In April, more than 100 people gathered in Worcester, MA to celebrate and appreciate our Massachusetts volunteers and community partners. We cannot do the work that we do without them and we were thrilled to have this opportunity to say thank you! Special thanks to our generous sponsor, Thrivent Financial, for making this event possible.

Attending the event were individuals that volunteer as mentors, tutors, community circle members, interns, researchers, graphic designers, board and committee members, teachers, childcare providers, legal assistants, and more. Their volunteer service impacts the lives of refugees, including unaccompanied refugee minors, individuals with developmental disabilities, children in foster care, immigrants, seniors, and teen mothers and their babies.

We were inspired by the stories and testimonials given by several volunteers and community partners. Their words touched our hearts and reminded us all of the power of human connection. Special thanks to Brie Tangney, Jeffrey Warden, Molly Caulfield, Janice Johnson-Plumer, Eida Norford, Frank Kartheizer and Saint Cyr Dimanche for expressing, so eloquently, why they invest their time with Ascentria. For more information on volunteering, please visit ascentria.org.

“Despite the challenges of the past year, we’re finding ways to do more with less. Ascentria is committed — now more than ever — to advocate, innovate and collaborate in creating new opportunities to empower the people we serve.”

William Mayo, Ascentria Board Chair and CIO, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, and Angela Bovill, Ascentria President and CEO

The Ascentria Giving Society
Investing in Ascentria’s future, today

Last year, we introduced the Ascentria Giving Society — an annual leadership giving program designed to ensure the individuals and families we serve have the resources and tools they need to move forward in their lives. Unrestricted contributions through the Ascentria Giving Society support innovative direct service and social enterprise initiatives that are making Ascentria a leader in the human services field.

In its inaugural year, we were thrilled to welcome many new members to the Society who gave our clients a path forward to success with unrestricted donations of $1,000 or more throughout the year. We are grateful for the generosity of these members, and look forward to celebrating them at a special President’s Reception in October!

If you would like to learn more about becoming a member of the Ascentria Giving Society, please visit our website at ascentria.org/ags.
Dear Friends,

With every challenge comes opportunity. As the federal government squeezes human services, Ascentria is applying resources in new, innovative ways to help more individuals and families, while creating a strong future for our organization — one that is less reliant on government funding in support of our programs.

This year, we’ve been developing a new strategic plan to chart our course for the future. With a focus on customer and client needs, we see opportunities to expand services — transportation, workforce development, in-home support, language and cultural services — into the healthcare and business sectors. Such “social enterprise” employs for-profit strategies to deliver nonprofit social services... and then new income can be reinvested in underfunded programs.

Using our Equipped-to-Thrive holistic care model, we can improve the socioeconomic factors, health behavior, and physical environment that affect a person’s overall health. In that way, we can reduce healthcare costs and staff turnover, while improving health outcomes and staff productivity.

Our progress wouldn’t be possible without generous people like you — donors, volunteers, faith partners and Ascentria Giving Society members. You make a profound difference in the lives of many others!

On behalf of Ascentria and everyone we serve, I sincerely thank you for supporting our mission: To strengthen communities by empowering people to respond to life’s challenges.

Gratefully,

Angela Bovill
President and CEO

The Power of Our Faith Partners... by the Numbers

Thank you to our faith partners who have impacted the lives of thousands of our clients throughout the year. Inspired by our faith-based heritage and guided by compassion, courage and integrity, we are rising together to help one another. Here are just a few ways that these partners put their faith in action this year!

- Over 1,500 Christmas gifts were donated by 24 faith partners and given to 600 individuals we serve across New England.
- Ascentria was invited by 15 congregations to speak to members about our work during the 50 Days of Easter campaign.
- Members from 31 Lutheran churches donated personal care items and bedsheets to the individuals and families we serve in response to our 2018 New England Synod Assembly appeal.
- A total of $46,538 was generously donated to Ascentria by 51 faith partners during the year, in addition to 55 faith partners who donated in-kind gifts.

“Second Acts” Intergenerational Workforce and Volunteers

Second Acts for Strong Communities is a new initiative at Ascentria. It seeks out volunteers age 50+ to power an intergenerational approach to supporting teen mothers in our care at our teen parenting programs in Brockton and Worcester, MA.

“The ‘Second Acts’ mentors for these mothers are women of experience and wisdom, each with a personal history of hard work and success,” explains Ascentria’s Intergenerational Workforce Project Manager Janet Waters. One of these mentors is Leona Martin, a professional career coach and a recruiting consultant. Leona was a teenage mother herself, and encourages the young mothers to build their confidence and empowers them to become independent and successful. She said, “I ask them what their goals are, and discuss what kind of help they might need. Being a safe
Bank of America

We were thrilled to welcome Bank of America employee, Camelia Calle, to volunteer teaching financial literacy to youth in our Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program in Worcester, MA. The curriculum included lessons on money management, budgeting, banking, savings, and maintaining good credit. A significant benefit for the youth is that the classes were taught in Spanish, a language that is spoken and understood by all in our program!

Camelia said, “It is my pleasure to assist Ascentria with this program not only because I believe in the cause, but because meeting these strong, young individuals who have gone through very difficult times helps me realize how much we take for granted. Each of us can make a difference by giving a little of our time and expertise to help them on the difficult road they still have ahead of them.”

We are grateful to Camelia and Bank of America for helping our refugee youth understand the importance of financial literacy and paving the way for their future success!

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

For the fifth year, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) chose Ascentria as a community partner for their annual company-wide Service Day, held on September 21. During this event, 100 BCBSMA volunteers enthusiastically helped to prepare 200 gift baskets filled with fresh fruit and healthy snacks, and 200 gift baskets filled with all of the ingredients needed to make a large pot of hearty vegetable soup. With generous funding from BCBSMA for this Service Day project, Ascentria, in turn, purchased the fresh vegetables from Waltham Fields Community Farm, which helped to support another local nonprofit’s work.

Sharing the gift of nourishing food with hundreds of Ascentria’s clients was a successful collaborative effort thanks to BCBSMA’s commitment to supporting community partnerships!

Did you know...

Lutheran Home of Southbury (LHS), a member of Ascentria Care Alliance, is celebrating its 100th Anniversary! To kick off its centennial year, LHS held a Proclamation Day on February 28 which included presentations by Rev. Robert Schipul, former Chaplain of LHS; Judy Katzmark of the LHS Guild; and Rev. Leo McIlrath, LHS’s current Chaplain. During the next ten months, LHS will undergo significant renovations and updating, including the oldest residential care unit in the facility, the Schuster Wing. We look forward to showcasing these changes, as well as celebrating the 100th anniversary, next year.

A Birthday Wish for Education

For many years, Miranda and her family thought about fostering or adopting a child. In 2017, they attended a presentation by Ascentria on how to become a foster family for refugees, and left feeling inspired. Having worked overseas for almost 15 years, and speaking three languages, they felt that they could offer something to newly resettled youth. Earlier this year, Miranda’s family was thrilled to become a respite foster home!

For Miranda’s recent birthday, she asked her friends to make a donation to Ascentria’s Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program for the Diomande Memorial Scholarship Fund, allowing refugee youth to further their education. With the generous support of her friends, Miranda was able to raise $735 for the Scholarship Fund! Thank you to Miranda and her family for all they have done for the refugee youth in our program!
Older adults are a proven resource when it comes to helping equip young people for success. Thank you to the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities for funding this initiative! As Ascentria mobilizes this generation of “second act” talent, we bring the generations together to inspire new solutions and improved futures for the teen mothers in our care.

“Second Acts” Continued from page 2

Roeshana Moore-Evans from the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, MA organized a “Back to School Drive” with her colleagues to help prepare children in Ascentria’s programs for the school year. Her affinity group organizes community service events throughout the year, and Ascentria was fortunate to be a recipient of their generosity. More than 60 backpacks and school supply kits were donated to benefit youth in Ascentria’s programs including Intensive Foster Care, Therapeutic Family Connections, Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, and Florence House. Thank you to the scientists, software engineers, administrators, and staff at Broad Institute that generously donated and assembled the backpacks and school kits, and to Roeshana for organizing this drive!

Preparing Students for Success

Florence House, one of Ascentria’s teen parenting programs, is moving to a new, larger location in Worcester! The residential neighborhood, increased play space, more cohesive layout, and increased access to community resources make the new site much more beneficial to the mothers and their babies who live at Florence House. Thank you to The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation and The Stoddard Charitable Trust for awarding us $45,000 towards various expenses related to the move. If you would like to support this next step for the teen mothers, please designate your gift to “Florence House move” using the enclosed envelope. The mothers and their children are looking forward to moving into this new space later this year!

Did you know...

Roeshana Moore-Evans

Celebrate Giving Tuesday with Ascentria on November 27, 2018!

Last year our #GivingTuesday appeal raised more than $147,000 — a record for Ascentria! Please help us exceed our goal this year. All proceeds benefit the individuals and families we serve throughout New England. Please visit us at ascentria.org/donate and watch for our communications!