

# the link



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the 9,000+ people we serve annually, thank you for taking the time to read our latest updates. We are proud of our accreditation status with Council on Accreditation after a very successful visit. We are also proud of the excellent work of our team serving individuals with autism in the applied behavioral analysis program where we focus on group therapy sessions and community integration – skills that help people to live their best lives. Familylinks' intensive outpatient program is now open, and we are ready to serve individuals with a substance use diagnosis and/or co-occurring disorder as they step down from an inpatient or partial hospitalization program.

Best of all, this issue pays tribute to John Amato, M.Ed., Director of Training & Consultation Services, who will be retiring after four decades of dedicated service. Though John's irreplaceable style of training, perpetual grace, professionalism, and counsel will be missed by many, we share our sincere congratulations on a well-earned retirement following a legacy career.

As always, thank you for your continued support,



Stacey Vaccaro  
President & CEO

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## Familylinks Achieves National Accreditation Through COA

Familylinks has achieved national accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA). Organizations pursue accreditation to demonstrate the implementation of best practice standards in the field of human services. COA visited Familylinks for three days in October and evaluated all aspects of our programs and services, including management and administration.

COA, a service of Social Current, is an objective, independent, and reliable validation of an agency's performance. The accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administration, management, and service delivery functions against international standards of best practice. The standards driving accreditation ensure that services are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and provided by a skilled and supported workforce. COA demonstrates accountability in the administration and creates a framework for ongoing quality improvement.



**Based on its findings, COA's Accreditation Commission voted that Familylinks had successfully met the criteria for accreditation. This decision was delivered in less than three weeks based on Familylinks' high performance!**

## April is Autism Acceptance Month

Join us as we raise awareness to promote autism acceptance, to celebrate each individual's unique differences, and to foster inclusivity and connectedness.

In March of 2023, Familylinks established a new Autism Services division to address Western Pennsylvania's shortage of evidence-based, clinical treatment options for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Our Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) program is an evidence-based, individualized treatment option for people with autism ages 2-21. ABA helps clients acquire the skills and supports to live productive and independent lives in their communities of choice. Participants engage in a variety of skill-building activities delivered both 1:1 and in small groups at our ABA clinic and in the community. Since launching the program, we have seen high program utilization and strong preliminary clinical results.

**Familylinks ABA clinic is located at 2644 Banksville Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15216, and we are currently accepting referrals.** If your child or someone you know could benefit from these services, please contact 412-924-0246 or [autismservices@familylinks.org](mailto:autismservices@familylinks.org).



### Meet the ABA team!

Back row from left to right: Kaitlyn White, Isaiah Baynes, Krystal Detweiler, Lauren Kurpiewsky, Taneha Scott, Karen Markle  
Front row from left to right: Claire Madden, Sheyanne Bell, Ashley Willey, Erin Cox

## New Leadership Team Member



Rebecca Sweeney Worsham

In January, Rebecca Sweeney Worsham joined Familylinks as the Senior Director of Human Resources and Employee Engagement. Rebecca brings 20+ years of broad experience in employee management and engagement to Familylinks' leadership team. In this role, Rebecca will provide strategic direction, development, innovation, and oversight to employee-facing programs in alignment with Familylinks' strategic plan.

## Intensive Outpatient Program Now Open

Familylinks is now offering an intensive outpatient program at our Shadyside location. This program is for individuals ages 18 and older with a substance use diagnosis, and/or co-occurring disorder, who are stepping down from an inpatient or partial hospitalization program.

Interested individuals will first attend open access to complete an assessment. Open access is offered at two convenient locations:

- 250 Shady Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 on Monday-Thursday from 9:30am-1:30pm
- 2644 Banksville Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15216 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9:00am-2:00pm, and Tuesday, Thursday from 9:00am-3:00pm

After the assessment is complete, individuals will then attend group sessions three days each week for three hours each day. These sessions are offered at 250 Shady Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15206 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9:00am-12:15pm.

For more information, please call 866-583-6003.

For more updates and stories, follow us on social media @FamilylinksInc

## Staff Spotlight

It is with both joy and a touch of sadness that we announce the retirement of our esteemed Director of Training & Consultation Services, John Amato, M.Ed. After an incredible 41 years of unwavering dedication and service, John has decided to embark on a new chapter of his life. As we bid farewell to a true



John Amato, M.Ed.

cornerstone of our organization, we cannot help but reflect on the remarkable impact John has made during his tenure.

John joined our team over four decades ago, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge, experience, and a passion for helping others succeed. From the very beginning, John exemplified Familylinks' commitment to excellence and genuine care for clients and staff. As Director, John played a pivotal role in shaping the development and growth of our organization. His achievements have included developing and leading the Familylinks Training Institute, which has delivered continuing education for behavioral health workers and other direct service professionals throughout Pennsylvania for more than 30 years.

Throughout his tenure, John has been a beacon of inspiration and mentorship, guiding countless individuals on their professional journey. His ability to connect with people on a personal level, coupled with his deep understanding of organizational dynamics, has empowered teams to reach new heights of success. Whether leading a training session, offering strategic advice, or simply lending an ear, John's impact has been profound and far-reaching.

Beyond his professional achievements, John is admired for his warmth, kindness, and unwavering integrity. He has cultivated a culture of respect, collaboration, and inclusivity, fostering a sense of belonging that extends throughout our organization and beyond. He leaves a legacy of compassion and empathy that will endure for years to come.

As we celebrate John's remarkable career and bid him farewell, we are filled with gratitude for his countless contributions. Please join us in extending our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to John as he embarks on this new chapter of his life.

## Help Make Our Communities Strong. For Life.

Familylinks is one of the Pittsburgh area's largest, most comprehensive, and most respected human service providers. Our mission is to positively impact lives through integrated community, behavioral, and social programs – and we are proud to have served Western Pennsylvania for more than 65 years. We provide a vast array of services that address the multi-dimensional and complex needs of individuals and families in the areas of mental health, substance use, prevention, service coordination, emergency shelter, supportive housing, senior care, and more.

As the needs of our community continue to grow and expand, we look to our supporters to help us continue to make our community Strong. For Life. **With your help, Familylinks can continue to serve more than 9,000 individuals annually in 24 counties across Pennsylvania.**

Please consider making a gift to support Familylinks' essential mission. Now more than ever, your contribution will make a real difference in the lives of those we serve. The enclosed envelope is a convenient opportunity to support a specific program or contribute to our most urgent need. You may also make a donation by visiting our website at [www.familylinks.org/donate](http://www.familylinks.org/donate), or simply scan the QR code below to be directed straight there.



**Our Mission** – To positively impact lives through integrated community, behavioral, and social services.

**Our Vision** – Thriving communities of healthy and strong people.

**Our Impact** – Familylinks serves more than 9,000 individuals annually through programs and services that assist the most vulnerable members of our community.

**Visit [www.familylinks.org](http://www.familylinks.org) or call 866-583-6003 to learn more.**



401 N Highland Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
[www.familylinks.org](http://www.familylinks.org)  
866-583-6003

## We Are Hiring

Join our growing team! Just as our employees are committed to helping our clients, Familylinks is committed to its employees. We offer competitive salaries and benefits for full-time and part-time employees and their dependents.

To see a full list of open positions, visit <https://familylinks.org/careers> or scan this QR code.



## We're Here to Help!

### We accept Medicare, Medicaid and Commercial Insurance Plans

Familylinks accepts Medicare and Medicaid insurance for many of our services, in addition to commercial insurance plans. If you don't have insurance, our staff can help you apply for assistance if you are eligible. In some cases, our services are also covered by government programs which we can identify for you. If you need help, don't hesitate. Call us at 866-583-6003. We are here for you.

## Save the Date for the Lanny Frattare Golf Classic



Familylinks' 38th Annual Lanny Frattare Golf Classic will be held at Chartiers Country Club on **September 9, 2024**, and we hope you will join us. The outing includes 18 holes of golf, lunch, dinner, drinks, contests, prizes and more! **Sponsorship opportunities are available.** For more information, visit <https://familylinks.org/get-involved/events>.

## Familylinks & United Way

You can donate to Familylinks through your United Way campaign where you work. Our Contributor Choice number is

**254**

We are grateful for your support!