



### **Frontline Heroes – Thrive’s Healthy Transitions Team**

Even in the best of times, transitioning from adolescence to adulthood can be a daunting experience. During this period, young adults are asked to embrace new roles and take on new responsibilities in order to become responsible members of our society. Sadly, this is also the period of time when many people experience their first episode of psychosis.

The onset of psychosis affects people from every walk of life, impacting 100,000 adolescents and young adults every year in the United States. The word “psychosis” is used when an individual experiences a loss of contact with reality. During psychosis, an individual can experience hallucinations (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling something that is not real) and/or delusions (believing in something that is not real even when presented with facts).

In 2014, Thrive’s Healthy Transitions program was created to provide 16 to 25 year olds who have experienced the onset of psychosis with the tools they need to understand their symptoms and begin their road to recovery. The program is funded in part by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It offers a nonjudgmental environment and wraparound services to improve individuals’ quality of life. This includes giving them access to clinicians, case managers, nurses, psychiatrists, substance abuse specialists, and employment and training specialists. This team works together to ensure participants have the tools they need to improve their behavioral health, meet their goals, and successfully transition into adulthood.

The global pandemic has brought profound uncertainty and increased restrictions to our community. Thrive's Healthy Transitions Team has had to find innovative ways to continue to meet program participants' needs and ensure their mental health does not destabilize. The team understands that a large part of participants' clinical success happens outside of the confines of the office. They know how to think outside the box when outreaching, engaging and providing treatment to their clients. Throughout COVID-19, they have continued to follow this practice. In the words of clinical supervisor Erika Cannon:

*“Recovery looks and feels different for each individual stepping through our door; for many their focus is to decrease symptoms of psychosis - and for others it's finding a career path that gives them a sense of purpose. Every day, we have the privilege of witnessing someone's recovery firsthand – by hiking with them across the Audubon – or helping them obtain a driver's license – or assisting them with completing housing forms so they can move into their own home. My team is there by their sides, every step of the way, and a pandemic isn't going to keep us from doing everything we can to help them continue to achieve their goals.”*

Thrive is proud to recognize the dedicated members of its Healthy Transitions Team as “Frontline Heroes” for everything they have achieved for their clients during the pandemic. This dynamic team includes Clinical Supervisor, Erika Cannon; Individual Clinicians, Karissa Libutti & Adele Janik; Family Support Clinician, Joanna Pomykala; Wraparound Case Manager and Assistant Team Leader, Louis Berry; Supported Education and Employment Specialist, Kelly Pinheiro; Nurse, Julie Hendrickson; Chemical Dependency Professional, Nick Bottella; Peer Support Specialist, Lauren Matera; and Psychiatrist, Dr. Elisabeth Taylor. For more information about this valuable program, visit [www.ThriveBHRI.org](http://www.ThriveBHRI.org).