

Unique Caring's 2020-2021 Annual Report

Executive Summary

Unique Caring is a comprehensive program that provides specialized foster care services and employment and community services to adults and children in Charlotte, NC, and the surrounding areas. This report evaluates how well operations are implemented to manage UC, and the extent to which services are effective and efficient, and the clients are satisfied with the services received and the accessibility to the services.

UC continues to operate sufficiently to manage services. We remain fully staffed, trained, and maintain all regulatory and CARF policies and procedures up to date. We have a multiple streams of income, i.e. state and county funds. Each month UC randomly selects and reviews client billing records to ensure accuracy in billing as well as stakeholders, clients and personnel satisfaction, to include staff engagement. Data is reviewed and analyzed by management and leadership in order to continue strengthening program services.

Counseling is a critical component of UC's program services. Overall, counseling is a protective factor for improving client behavior, and the youth's ongoing stability in foster care. Counseling is aimed at improving academics and fostering socially acceptable behaviors in school, the community and the home(s).

UC overall data evidences that the majority of stakeholders, clients and staff share support and satisfaction for the services provided. UC is characterized as welcoming, and safe to the majority of its stakeholders, clients, parents, and visitors. UC was a visionary following the Covid-19 pandemic, and engaged in a number of preventive practices later enforced by the state. The resulting outcomes noted no reported infection(s). We continue to maintain safe measures both in the office and foster homes. Foster parents assist with virtual learning with the assistance of the educational institution attended by the client(s).

Evaluation Scope

The scope of UC's evaluation process is to ensure the ongoing implementation of programming as necessary, participate in state and other regulatory entities collaboration, as well as participation and collaboration with other community based organizations services and or initiatives.

Business Practices:

Personnel

- Staff are hired, oriented, retained, and trained appropriately.
- Staff appraisals consistently conducted/completed.

- Staff trainings are linked to their roles & responsibilities.

Policy

- Unique Caring's policies and procedures are implemented and up-to-date as required by state government and CARF.
- Unique Caring's annual attestation policy is reviewed annually and remains in place.

Marketing

- Unique Caring markets its services via the following outlets:
 - ❖ Radio
 - ❖ Public Service Announcements
 - ❖ Flyers
 - ❖ Community Events
 - ❖ Website
 - ❖ Social Media
- Unique Caring provides ongoing community outreach activities on an ongoing basis, including:
 - ❖ Quarterly Foster Parent Association & provider meetings
 - ❖ Quarterly agency givebacks. These givebacks provide assistance to foster parents in the form of: clothing, back-to-school supplies, furniture, small household appliance, bedding, and more.
 - ❖ Community public forums to share information to the public concerning the challenges and process to becoming foster parents. The forums also provide Q&A opportunities for participants.

Financial

- Unique Caring is reimbursed according to established benchmarks for the type(s) of supportive service(s) it provides.
- The Unique Caring financial operations provides sustainable outcomes for the program. Due to the Pandemic there was some impact to operations however strong fiscal policies and practices resulted in minimal impact to the overall agency's operations.

Service Delivery

- Unique Caring's services continue to demonstrate effectiveness, efficiency, and overall satisfaction from stakeholders, and clients served. Previous program monitoring from funders and referral sources were positive and yielded no major concerns for operations.

- Unique Caring’s services are readily accessible. The agency’s admission process is seamless.

Methodology

Program data continues to highlight the growth and development of the overall success of the agency.

Indicator	Goal	Responsible staff
Time from contact to admission	Under 5 days	Program Director
Client Retention	80%	All staff
Admissions		Program Director
No illicit drug use	90% within first 3 months	Counseling
Socially acceptable and academic behavior*	85% after first year	Counseling
No Juvenile arrests or illegal activities	85% after first year	Counseling
Client satisfaction	80% overall satisfaction	Program Director
Stakeholder satisfaction	90% overall satisfaction	Program Director
Referrals to Unique Caring from other providers		Program Director
Grievances / Complaints	Less than 8 annually	Program Director and Counseling
Compliance with medical referrals	90% follow through	Counseling staff
Health & Safety Drills	Monthly	Program Director

- UC satisfaction surveys demonstrates that providers, persons served, as well as, stakeholders are pleased with the services that we are providing.
- UC turnover rate in very low. During the COVID pandemic we only experience an 8% turnover rate. Mainly due to providers relocating or finding other career opportunities.
- Our performance reports continue to show the growth of Unique Caring as a premier Behavioral Agency. We continue to be sought after by DSS offices throughout the state as an agency of choice for hard to place consumers. Some changes in the state’s managing during the Pandemic;

Service Limitations:

Unique Caring operations has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- ❖ It's operation: Unique Caring Foundation has been faced with the challenges that may other child care placing organizations have been faced with during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ One of the greatest challenge was designing a program to assist foster parents with foster children during the regular school day. The closing of schools created barriers for foster children having to transitions to online learning. This challenge directly impacted most of our foster homes. Many of the foster children did not have school computers. Additionally, they were not equipped to transition to online learning platforms. The foster children and foster parents lacked to skills needs to navigate the online learning software. Not to mentions, trying to get and stay online throughout the school day. This coupled with the fact that many of our foster parents are required to continue to go to work didn't make matters better. Unique Caring was able to Collaborate with Project CARES, a grant funded educational assistance foundation, to provide tutors both during and after school hours to assist our foster children over this educational barrier.
- ❖ Financially: The cost of having foster children home during the regular school day created a new set of financial responsibilities for our foster parents. Unique Caring was able apply for county and state COVID-19 funds to assist our foster parents with this financial burden.
- ❖ Service delivery: Our case managers have not been able to go into many of our fosters homes for various reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they have been providing their weekly and monthly supervisions and home visits virtually. Child and family teams meeting have also been scheduled virtually.
- ❖ Unique Caring It does not engage in information communication technology and maintained in person contact and have been throughout the years and during the pandemic. UC employed CDC & State guidelines for in person contact with no experienced or reported problems. Examples of specific activities included but were not limited to providing masks, hand sanitizer and encouraging social distancing.

Conclusion Unique Caring 2021 Accomplishments

- Unique Caring Foundation continues to shine as a specialized foster care program and employment & community service agency. Our experience in providing quality services has opened the doors for us to expand our services

throughout the state. The Department of Social Service Agencies from across the state continue to seek us out as their premier service provider. Our performance outcomes continue to show how much we have grown as an provider agency.

- Our organization has been rated highly by the MCO's and other state agencies that we have contracts with;
- Our greatest success stories come from the number of our foster children that are reunified with their biological families each year. We have had over a 90% success rate. We have been sought after as the premier agency of choice throughout the state to provide residential and community based placements. Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services has given us a specialized contract to provide rapid response foster care to the hard to place foster children.
- We continue to be praised by school administrators, teachers, parents etc. for the exceptional job that we continue to do.

2022 Network Accomplishments

- INCREASED THE NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED
- WEEKLY REVENUE 85K
- INCREASED REVENUS BY 40%
- INCREASED THE NUMBER OF AFL BY 35%
- ORGANIZED A SET OF PROCEDURES FOR UNIQUE NETWORK TO ALLOW FOR FUTURE SUCCESS
- PROVIDED POSITIVE GROWTH WHILE MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMPANY
- ESTABLISHED CONTACTS WITH ALL LME'S TO PROMOTE UNIQUE NETWORKING
- DURING COVID OVERHAULED THE DAYSITE TO ENCOURAGE THE CONSUMERS MINDS DAILY
- DURING COVID CREATED ENTHUSIASM FOR CONSUMERS/CARE PROVIDERS TO BECOME A PART OF THE NETWORK FAMILY
- SURVIVED 2 YEARS OF COVID PANDEMIC
- MAINTAINED GROWTH AND CONTINUE TO GROW IN A POSITIVE MANNER
- CREATED MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- BECAME MORE INVOLVED WITHIN THE LME'S
- HAVE LESS THAN A 8% CARE PROVIDER TURNOVER
- CREATED A PEER AUDIT SYSTEM WITHIN THE OUR AGENCY
- CREATED A TEAM LEAD AT DAYSITE
- HAD WEEKLY TESTING AVAILABLE FOR CONSUMERS, STAFF, & PROVIDERS DURING COVID

- HAD A MEET AND GREET WITH DEREK BROWN OF THE CAROLINA PANTHERS
- SCORED 100% ON CARDINAL AUDIT OF CONSUMER/CARE PROVIDER FILES
- PASSED EACH AUDIT OF ALL AFL HOMES ON YEARLY BASIS
- DURING COVID MAINTAINED THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL OUR CONSUMERS
- DAYSITE REMAINED OPEN THROUGH COVID
- PROVIDED BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS FOR ALL CHILDREN
- PROVIDED STAFF APPRECIATION DAYS FOR ALL CARE PROVIDERS
- EDUCATED STAFF AND CARE PROVIDERS ON COVID PROTOCOLS
- PROVIDED STAFF WITH DIRECT DEPOSIT OPPORTUNITY
- CREATED A NEW WAY TO COMMUNICATE NEWS THROUGH THERAP
- HAD ZOOM TRAININGS AVAILABLE THROUGH COVID
- CREATED MORE OUTINGS THROUGH DAY SUPPORTS
- ADDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT WITHIN OUR AGENCY