**CommuniCare Client Testimonial**

**A Mental Health Resource Center**

 “You know that moment when you cross the finish line and the adrenaline and excitement rushes over you? In that exact moment you think to yourself, “Because I persevered, I accomplished my goals.” That is nothing like how I felt in 2017 my second year of High School. I was all set to begin my sophomore year when everything that could go wrong did. I suffered from depression, which is very prevalent in high school students. While some students were perfectly okay, I panicked always in a constant state of worry and sadness. I had confided in my mother by telling her what I was feeling. She did the best she possibly could have. She suggested that maybe it was because I wasn't exercising daily like usual. So, she researched information about my home high school, so I could join the track team. The season would not start for a couple of months, so I would have to hang on tight until then. She also brought me to therapy weekly. Therapy is only a useful tool if you want to help yourself, which I did not. Unfortunately, I wasn't getting the help I needed because I did not want it. The sadder I felt the more I slipped from reality. It started with the little things. I wasn't sleeping enough at night, I would deprive myself from food and, I wouldn't interact with anyone, ever. Then things began to escalate. I stopped giving my all-in academics, I wouldn't go to school and, I let my behavior get me in trouble. These actions were completely out of character for me. I was always someone who loved school and thrived in it. I wouldn't so much as miss a minute of school. I was always the happy-go-lucky, smiling, caring, and thoughtful girl. I never got in trouble, not at home, not anywhere. I was always the girl who people were envious of, I had friends, a great personality, and I got whatever I desired. So how could this amazing, happy person with a great life suddenly not want it anymore? Well it's where every girl steers into a path of destruction, a boy. I had met him my Freshman year and we had been talking since then. I had never had a boyfriend before, so I wouldn’t so much as let him kiss me. Our relationship got serious quicker than I had expected. At first, I didn't even like him, but that's how they sneak up on you. So, we're still talking and eventually the next school year rolls around. As I previously stated I was not feeling happy at all. I would come home crying every day because that's how unhappy I was with my life. I got sick of it, I felt like eventually my sadness would rub off on him and he wouldn't want to deal with me anymore, so I broke up with him. Months had passed, I felt the same but at least I wasn't dragging anyone with me. Woefully my great aunt had passed away from cancer. I blamed myself, we weren't that close but I felt like I could've done a better job communicating with her while she was alive. Shortly after I had begun speaking to my ex-boyfriend again and I had asked him to do something for me on my social media account because I wanted a break from it. He saw something he didn't like in a conversation with another boy while we were dating. I shouldn't have shared my password with him, you never share your passwords ever. We got into a huge argument in which he said some unkind things. At the point in my life I was very fragile so that night I went home and attempted suicide. A million things race through your mind but all in all you just want the pain to end. You no longer desire to suffer. You feel worthless, hopeless and unloved. What it's like to return to a life you tried to end is very detrimental, especially being African American. Mental illness is frowned upon, in fact many believe it is fiction. We are known for our strength, our beauty our willingness and power to overcome. Some people do not seek the help they need in fear of disappointment and failure. The act of asking for support and openly receiving is probably one of the hardest life skills to practice, yet it's the skill that can make you a better human being and a stronger leader. How I overcame my obstacle? Simply by using my obstacle as fuel rather than allowing it to become an anchor. I used healthy coping skills I was taught in therapy. Taking my medicine as prescribed. Ignoring the negativity and focusing on the positivity of the future. Life is what you make it, and I want mine to be amazing. Overcoming obstacles in life is very important to a developing person. This is extraordinarily necessary because it determines who you are, what you will be, and how you are going to get there. The greatest challenge I faced was my mental illness. At some point in our lives we face difficult situations that needs to be resolved in some shape or form. Having survived through tough times is certainty something to be proud of. However, these hard times should be a reflection of how you grew as a person. That no matter the depth of the situation you still came out on top. This obstacle was meaningful to me because I am no longer that person. My goal is to not let other people's words affect me. What other people do or have done, say or have said to and about me. That has nothing to do with me but with them. My goal is to continue to get the help that I need, and continue to participate in therapy for the better. Not for anyone else but me because deserve to be happy. I am worthy. I am valuable. I am hopeful. I am loved. I will achieve this goal by changing my obstacle into opportunity's.”

**Better Health of Cumberland County**

**Direct Medical Aid and Diabetes Education**

A diabetes clinic client came in to see us for assistance having a painful tooth pulled. Uninsured and recently laid off, he had no means to see a dentist, and was in extreme pain. We sent him over the same day to see our partner dentist. After extracting the tooth, the dentist pointed out an area of concern and advised the patient to see a specialist. The client thought that the area was due to the abscessed tooth, and did not realize it was unusual. He was able to get in to see a physician and was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Through community connections, he was able to get assistance to have the mass removed and receive treatments. He is now employed and feeling much better. Thanks to the services available through United Way and Better Health, he received a critical diagnosis before it was too late!

**Connections of Cumberland County Client Testimonial**

**A Homeless Day Resource Center for Women and Children**

The client below is a single mother of three facing health, financial, and family/community support barriers. She was homeless and was referred to the program last year. She engaged with CCC case management in order to obtain stable housing and employment. The program assisted her with deposits to move into stable housing and later assisted with utilities due to COVID 19. The client has actively utilized Connections to improve her life by being active in the programs available and resources offered. Client has been active in workshops, events, and case management. Recently, the client obtained a new pair of shoes through donation of a community shoe store. The client shared that she had not had a new pair of shoes since 2018.

Client states: “This agency is a Blessing to your family because they listen and value your input, reach out to connect you to the resources you seek, include your kids in many of their workshops, and support you in many ways. Connections’ has order and certain protocols that make sure you reach your goals in a certain time frame without setting you up for failure. My kids enjoy this agency because they are included in the workshops, Connect to Fellowship, and even get books! Kids are able to play, and learn life skills while meeting new people. It’s about community and building yourself up in more than one area. I get to hear other moms' stories that are inspiring as we get a break from our kiddos during certain sessions where it’s just MOMS; a safe place and short break to be free while lifting each other up and encouraging one another through life trials. This agency supports you financially, mentally, socially and emotionally with the sessions from W.O.W, W.I.T, the day resource center, budgeting workshops, and other resources. I have grown and overcome many obstacles since being connected here. The staff is always smiling, caring, and takes time to help other families in their time of need at any time. There's so much more I can say about this awesome agency! The staff treat you like family and I’m glad to be part of it! I’m heading towards my goal to become successful through this agency!! From one mom to another we can do it with the right community and mindset!”