

## Social Worker Appreciation



Social workers play a critical role in supporting individuals and communities, and at JFO we know it's important to show appreciation for their hard work and dedication. This year we provided special breakfasts for the caseworkers in Schenectady and Rensselaer counties. We provided goodie bags filled with hand cream, snacks, candy, candles, and coffee for the caseworkers in Albany and Greene counties. We think it's important to remember that social workers often face challenging situations and can experience burnout, so expressing gratitude and support can go a long way in helping them feel valued and motivated in their work.



"As a caseworker I have utilized the CarePortal program on several occasions to help families be able to access items and needs that they otherwise would not have the ability to obtain. These efforts have strengthened so many families in the community to increase their abilities to provide safe and stable homes."

*Audrey Lowe*

"Thank you so very much for everything you do to help our families! It is such a relief to us to know that we can offer this service for concrete needs our families have that we take for granted."

For the CarePortal folks to think of us is a bonus! Thank you for the kind & thoughtful gesture, it was much appreciated."

*Betsy Martineau, Supervisor B  
Schenectady Co. Children Services*

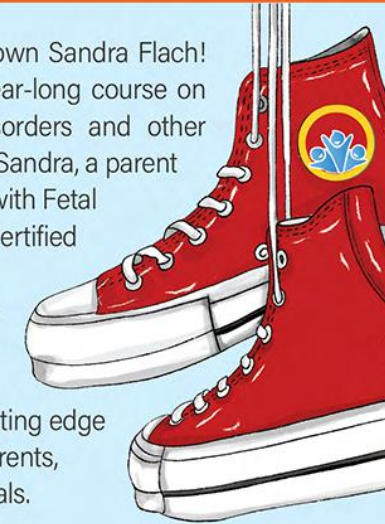


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## Congratulations

Congratulations to our very own Sandra Flach! She recently completed a year-long course on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and other NeuroBehavioral Conditions. Sandra, a parent of two teenagers diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, is now a certified facilitator of the FASCETS Neuro-Behavioral Model. This new certification, along with her lived experience as a parent, allows JFO to offer cutting edge FASD training for adoptive parents, foster parents and professionals. To learn more or register for our upcoming online or in-person workshops visit [justicefororphansny.org/events](https://justicefororphansny.org/events).



We offer training about FASD, Poverty, Trauma, and COPE (Cost of Poverty Experience). Check our EVENTS page at [justicefororphansny.org/events](https://justicefororphansny.org/events) to find upcoming workshops and training opportunities.

## Podcast Feature



THE  
Adoption & Foster Care  
JOURNEY

Our Adoption & Foster Care Journey Podcast is an invaluable weekly resource for adoptive parents, foster and kinship caregivers, and professionals working with children. Be sure to check out our series What Every Parent Needs to Know. These 21 Bonus Episodes feature Dr. Jerrod Brown PhD. who specializes in trauma, FASD, Autism, and more. Find all of our podcast episodes on your favorite podcast platform or on our website at [justicefororphansny.org](https://justicefororphansny.org)



# NEWS

## 1ST QUARTER 2023



### CAREPORTAL ALBANY:

Total Children Served .....1,026  
Economic Impact .....\$403,345  
% Requests Met .....78.66%

### CAREPORTAL SCHENECTADY:

Total Children Served .....2,125  
Economic Impact .....\$656,178  
% Requests Met .....84.83%

### CAREPORTAL GREENE

Total Children Served .....245  
Economic Impact .....\$88,839  
% Requests Met .....84.28%

### CAREPORTAL RENSSELAER

Total Children Served .....87  
Economic Impact .....\$34,110  
% Requests Met .....82.61%





## Love Albany Day 2023

Love Albany Day 2023 was a tremendous success thanks to the collaboration of several local churches. The event took place on Saturday, February 11, and focused on meeting the needs of children and families in the Albany community. Using the CarePortal platform, six churches were able to serve 48 children and fulfill 13 requests.

One of the churches, Redeemer Church, had a particularly heartwarming experience. They were able to build one of four beds for a family in need and spent around 30 minutes with them, ending in a prayer. The family was incredibly grateful for the help they received.

The Church of Newtown Road also had an impressive turnout, with 19 volunteers showing up to serve 18 children. Ten of these children received beds and bedding, and the team was able to make a significant impact on the lives of these families.

Mount Moriah Ministries delivered and installed a washing machine, several beds, living room furniture, and a TV for a single mother. Mark Spallone's team from Kings Chapel and Amber Bleau from United Church of Cohoes also delivered beds for local families in Albany County.

Overall, Love Albany Day 2023 was a beautiful display of Christ's love spread throughout the community. It is inspiring to see churches coming together to serve those in need and make a positive impact on their lives. We hope that this event serves as a reminder that small acts of kindness can go a long way in making a difference in our communities.



## Grand Tour with CarePortal Area Director of NYS, Steve Poissant



CarePortal

On Tue., Mar. 7, Executive Director, Sandra Flach, and Regional Managers, Karen Laing and Kathi Sewak spent their afternoon giving the CarePortal Area Director of NYS, Steve Poissant, a grand tour of the Capital Region. It was a long day, but a big day, as they showcased the incredible work being done in the region to help children in need.

The first stop on the tour was Liberty Church, where they met with Pastor Dennis, who heads one of the most active CarePortal churches in the area. The team then headed off to Schenectady, where they met with Community School Coordinator Kayla Ambesi and the Director of Schenectady County DSS, Aurelia Colamarino.

In addition to these important meetings, the team also met with Director, Cara Brown and Commissioner, Kira Propesel, who played pivotal roles in getting CarePortal off the ground in Rensselaer County and Greene County. These individuals are held near and dear by the team, as they had all contributed to the success of the initiative.

Throughout the day, the team was dedicated to showcasing the incredible work being done in the Capital Region of NY. They are passionate about ensuring that children are always at the center of what they are doing, and that their efforts are making a real impact on the lives of those in need.

## COPE Cost of Poverty Experience



As JFO continues to expand, we are focusing in 2023 on adding trainings related to the complexities of child wellbeing to our work. We currently have trainings on FASD, Poverty, Trauma and COPE. We have had two Cost of Poverty Experiences so far this year and both were a hit with the participants!

COPE is a 2.5 hour immersive role-play that allows participants a glimpse into the daily decision making process of those living in poverty as well as a debrief time that encompasses discussions on community limitations, access to resources, language limitations and other factors that can leave a family struggling to escape poverty. The debrief is also tailored to the participants and how their new, deeper understanding will change the way they work or volunteer.

We have been blessed to partner with SEAT Center in Schenectady. The young adults who are enrolled in this workforce development program serve as the community resource leaders. Their willingness to roleplay allows the participants to completely enter the experience as well.



Our first COPE was a community one with lots of different agencies, churches, and businesses represented. Our second one was hosted by Siena College and consisted of students from their psychology, social work and history departments along with a few professors. Both groups expressed a deeper understanding of the world of poverty and it enhanced their compassion and their determination to help solve this problems related to poverty.

Doris from our community event said *"Collectively, I have attended more than 100 trainings at the national, state and local levels in my roles as a Program Director for a community center, a preschool teacher and Education Coordinator for Head Start as well as an Early Childhood Supervisor and Statewide Training Coordinator with the NYS Education Dept. Without a doubt, the COPE training I attended today at Redeemer rates in the top 10%! Thank you for the opportunity. It was exhilarating, informative, synergistic, empowering, challenging and thought provoking, inspiring and humbling."*

Judy from Siena College reported *"they all learned a lot about living in poverty. They also would like for the program to come back next year!! I'm just thrilled...thank you all again. It was a wonderful program!"*

If your business, non-profit, church, school, or community organization would like to host a COPE for your team, please use this link to start the conversation with us!  
<https://www.justicefororphansny.org/poverty>.