



center for
CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH

Healthy Futures

FALL
2015



FIST *in* MY POCKET

CCFH school-based program helps young man transform anger into ambition

By the time Felder Shackleford reached middle school, he had been suspended for fighting so many times that he was no longer allowed to attend public school in South Carolina. When his family decided to move to Durham in eighth grade, a teacher at the alternative school he was attending predicted he would be dead or in jail in two months.

The move gave Felder a clean slate, and he was able to enroll at Neal Middle School and then Southern High School. He made good grades, but the pattern of fights and trouble continued. "I was so angry, and whether I was winning or losing, it just felt good to be in a fight." That toughness made him a natural for gang activity, and he soon learned how much money he could make from selling drugs and hustling.

In tenth grade, he fathered a child, which proved to be a turning point. "I decided I would not be a statistic," Felder says. He started wearing a tie to school, and he got a part-time job to, in his words, replace the hustle money with honest money. But he still found it

too difficult to keep his fist in his pocket and himself out of trouble.

That same year he was referred to SPARCS, a school-based intervention led by CCFH clinicians Eboni Lanier and Donna Newberne. "I thought it had something to do with taking medication for anger management," he says, but he soon learned it was about becoming self-aware, understanding his peers, and developing skills in self-management.

"I honestly had never talked with anyone about what I felt," says Felder. "I kept everything bottled up until someone provoked me, and then I would just snap." Now, though, he was learning how to slow his anger down and make the choices he wanted to make. He also found a more productive use for his hands: putting his thoughts and feelings into writing that more and more took the shape of poetry.

He came back to SPARCS at the beginning of his junior year to see what else it had to offer. During one discussion on living a divided life, Felder remembers getting very quiet and self-

Above: Felder in front of his Durham home.
Photo by: Anna MacDonald Dobbs

conscious. "Everyone in there knew I was talking about change but still doing my dirt," he says, "and that's when I finally decided I was done."

He started working 40-50 hours a week outside of school and focusing all of his remaining attention on being a father. He even took a trip back to South Carolina with his son to show his teacher what had actually become of him. Felder entered the U.S. Army in 2008 and graduated from Southern High School in 2009.

Today Felder is married and has three children. He owns a catering business and invests a lot of his time in writing and speaking to young people who are where he was in high school. His first book of poetry – "Untold Lyrics of the Heart, Mind, and Soul" – is available on Amazon, and he is working on a second volume with poems and art contributed by students from Southern and Hillside High Schools.

Photo and story shared with permission from the individual featured in the article.

SPARKING CHANGE

Student learns to manage emotions, improves academic performance

When Sharon graduated from her SPARCS group, she took CCFH clinician Eboni Lanier to meet her teacher and get a report on how much her behavior, attitude, and academic performance had improved. It was quite a change from 13 weeks earlier.

Multiple traumas complicated Sharon's transition to a new school. Her grandmother suffered a stroke, and that health scare triggered painful feelings similar to those she experienced earlier that year when she was assaulted at a bus stop.

When Sharon came to the school's Wellness Clinic, she reported that her attitude would "just take over" and that she felt out of control of her own emotions. As a result, she was disrespectful to adults, and she acted defiant in the classroom and hallways.

She also had trouble concentrating on her class work, which was unusual for her.

She reported that her attitude would "just take over."

Sharon was fortunate to have access to school-based mental health treatment, because her parents could not take time off from work to take her to a traditional therapist. She took advantage of it as an active participant.

Hearing other students' struggles helped Sharon feel less defensive, more connected to her peers, and more normal. The group provided a safe space to explore her own emotions, learn how her feelings affected her behaviors, and practice strategies to manage her feelings so that she didn't lose control. The opportunity to address her own

Stock photo: does not depict actual CCFH client(s)

traumatic stress translated into positive behavioral and academic outcomes that also contributed to a better learning environment for her peers.

Sharon's teacher confirmed that over the course of the 13 weeks, she had become less defiant, more focused on her classwork, and better motivated. When SPARCS ended, Sharon was also looking for other constructive ways to spend her time: she had applied for a part-time job, and she looked forward to trying out for the basketball team.

Names and details have been changed or withheld to protect client confidentiality.

S TRUCTURED
P SYCHOTHERAPY
-for-
A DOLESCENTS
R ESPONDING
-to-
C HRONIC
S TRESS

SPARCS is a group intervention for teens whose lives are significantly disrupted by chronic stress.

Problem areas include emotional regulation and impulsivity, self-perception, relationships, numbing and avoidance, and struggling to find meaning in life or see a future for themselves.



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FAMILY CONNECTS

Born in Durham, adopted across the country

Word gets out quickly when you hit on something that works, especially when you can prove it.

Durham Connects, CCFH's universal home-visit program for families with newborns, was nationally recognized last fall as an evidence-based practice for preventing child maltreatment. Now the expertise that nurses and researchers developed in Durham living rooms and nurseries starting in 2002 is improving family and child health across the country.

"When a child is born, that family is vulnerable. They have lots of questions and needs," says Dr. Karen O'Donnell, CCFH staff and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Duke. O'Donnell is Co-Director at CCFH and part of the team at Duke's Center for Child and Family Policy (CCFP) that created and evaluated Durham Connects and is now disseminating the model, Family Connects.

Forty-three groups in states as diverse as Vermont, Maryland, Oregon, Illinois, and Missouri have expressed interest in Family Connects, according to Co-Director Ben Goodman. Communities in Iowa and Minnesota, in addition to six other counties in North Carolina, are already implementing the program.

The key to the model in any community is the home visit. In addition to checking the physical health of the mother and baby, nurses use the Family Support Matrix that O'Donnell developed to identify family strengths and needs in 12 areas empirically linked to child and family well-being. If appropriate, the visiting nurse refers families to existing community resources for further support. This model has resulted in Durham in reduced maternal anxiety, more child-friendly homes and positive parenting



Above: Dr. Karen O'Donnell (right) trains colleagues in child developmental assessment. Photo by: Lyn Stewart

behaviors, and fewer emergency room visits and over nights.

Liz Stevens, Assistant Director of Clinical Services for Durham Connects, helps train practitioners in the model both at CCFH and on-site, having visited Iowa for their launch earlier this year. She acknowledges the rewards and challenges of replicating Durham's success in different regions of the state and country.

"There are common threads to what all new parents need," she says, "but the communities and resources differ."

O'Donnell notes that the goal is to develop local experts in each community that implements Family Connects. To do so, representatives receive a year of intensive training, with regular phone calls and visits back and forth. Annual data from each site will be monitored and analyzed by CCFP to ensure model fidelity and track outcomes, and there will be an onsite visit every third year.

The promise of Family Connects has been demonstrated. Its potential to prevent child maltreatment and ensure family health is real, and the impact is personal.

"Every mom needs support," Stevens says, "and being with families during this time in their life is a privilege. It's awesome."

Assuming the trajectory continues, Family Connects nurses across the country will have that privilege in a rapidly growing number of communities and homes.

PROJECT BROADCAST

Creating a trauma-informed foster care system

North Carolina's foster care system serves more than 12,000 children each year whose homes are no longer safe. Many of these children will suffer from traumatic stress, and effective foster care requires trauma-informed resources, both for child welfare workers and for foster families.

That is the goal of Project Broadcast, a five-year pilot project at CCFH sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) with a grant from the federal Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (#90CO1058). Since 2011, the project has provided tools, training, and infrastructure to foster care systems in nine demonstration counties: Buncombe, Craven, Cumberland, Hoke, Pender, Pitt, Scotland, Union, and Wilson.

Tammy Shook is the project coordinator with the Buncombe County Department of Social Services. "There was a time when we had a sense of fatalism about the trauma we saw in children," she says, "a

sense that there was really nothing that could be done." Project Broadcast has dramatically changed that perspective. "It has shifted how we view *everything*," Shook says.

Project Broadcast uses three fundamental strategies that can be adapted to each county's needs. First, child welfare workers are equipped to identify trauma among children entering foster care. For this, CCFH developed a simple screening tool that has been used to assess more than 5,000 children in four years for trauma.

"This is not simply about implementing a particular tool. It's a fundamental change in the understanding of trauma."

— *Jeanne Preisler*

The second strategy is to equip social workers to respond effectively when they discover signs of trauma. The screening tool includes guidance on next steps, and case workers are trained on community resources. Project Broadcast has also helped the counties increase their local resources, such as the number of therapists who can provide evidence-based treatment.

Finally, CCFH provides and trains social workers to deliver eight-week Resource



Above: Foster parents participate in a Resource Parenting Curriculum workshop. Photo credit: Anna MacDonald Dobbs

Parenting Curriculum workshops for foster parents in each county. "The most helpful part was learning about behaviors," says Addie Lee Hardin, a foster parent in Cumberland County. "I don't know about [my boys'] history, but now I can see what was invisible to me."

Beginning in 2015, the state will begin to implement the model in every county. Jeanne Preisler is the coordinator for Project Broadcast at the NC DHHS. "This is not simply about implementing a particular tool," she says. "It is about a fundamental change in the understanding of trauma. We still have a lot to do, but based on the high levels of interest we are seeing in other counties, we are very encouraged."

2015 CCFH WELCOMES New BOARD MEMBERS

Photo credits: Anna MacDonald Dobbs



Margaret Dardess, PhD

Retired, UNC Health Care

"I have been associated with CCFH for more than a decade, and I am awed by their dedication to help families, and especially children, lead safe, nurtured, and supported lives."



Theyk Pappas

Community Volunteer

"We are blessed to have this safe place where children and families can work with talented professionals who prevent and treat childhood trauma. I am honored to be a small part of it."



Mary Ann Fuchs, DNP, RN, FAAN

Chief Nurse Executive, Duke University Health System

"CCFH is an expert in the intensive support and care traumatized children require and a leader in delivering programs and educating the clinical community about childhood trauma. It is an honor to serve as a Board member."



Larry Williams, PhD

MSW Program Director, School of Social Work, NCCU

"You can gauge the humanity of a society by how we treat our children, and a civilized society requires service. I have been so fortunate that I feel it is my duty to serve. I am proud to serve the needs of children and families in this way."



The 6th Annual URBANIAC-SANDERS FASHION SHOW & LUNCHEON

More than 340 guests joined us at the Washington Duke Inn on September 30 for the 6th annual Urbaniak-Sanders Fashion Show & Luncheon. The event, which raised a record \$63,000 to benefit CCFH's work preventing and treating childhood trauma, featured a silent auction and raffle in addition to a runway show and on-site boutique.

Smitten Boutique outfitted 14 models for the second year in a show directed by Cathy Anna Weddings and Special Events. Our models included staff and friends of CCFH, representatives from the League of Women Voters of Orange-Durham-Chatham, and community notables: Duke Women's Basketball Coach Joanne McCallie, UNC Women's Lacrosse Coach Jenny Levy, Tisha Powell of WTVD, and Judith Bell.

Above: A few of this year's fantastic models (L-R): Brenda Rogers, Joanne McCallie, Tisha Powell, Lisa Amaya-Jackson, and Cynthia Greene
Photo credit: Courtesy of Tisha Powell

"The venue, the variety of fashions from Smitten Boutique, the wonderful models, beautiful flowers and fine quality auction and raffle items all exceeded expectations," said Sandy Cohen, Event Chair. "We hope our guests had a wonderful experience, enjoyed the camaraderie, and will join us again next year."

Presenting...

THE C. EILEEN WATTS WELCH RECEPTION AREA

Although CCFH settled into its new home at Kent Corner many months ago, one finishing touch remained incomplete: a plaque dedicating the reception area in honor of Eileen Welch and her years of service as Executive Director for Advancement.

"Both at Duke and at CCFH, Eileen taught me about passion, and passionate people inspire others to do great things."

On October 23rd, CCFH hosted a celebration to unveil the plaque and thank everyone who contributed to the campaign for the reception area. Appreciations for Eileen's many contributions to the mission of CCFH were given by Executive Director Robert Murphy and recently retired Board member Mary Champagne.

Dr. Champagne, who worked with Eileen

for many years at the Duke University School of Nursing prior to her tenure at CCFH, noted, "Both at Duke and at CCFH, Eileen taught me about passion, and passionate people inspire others to do great things."

Reflecting on her years at CCFH, Eileen said, "Throughout my career, I never thought of my work as just raising funds, but as raising friends." She also expressed her gratitude for the longstanding support from many in attendance.

Every child and family who comes to CCFH for care enters through the Welch Reception Area, and we are pleased that Eileen and all of the campaign donors will be there in spirit to welcome them.

"Throughout my career, I never thought of my work as just raising funds, but as raising friends."



Above: Mary Champagne (left) and Eileen Welch (Right) with the plaque to be installed in the CCFH reception area.
Photo credit: Anna MacDonald Dobbs

trau•ma

: an intense event that threatens or causes harm to a child's emotional and physical well-being or to someone critically important to the child.

Child traumatic stress occurs when emotional and physical responses persist and affect a child's daily life well after the traumatic event has passed.

Emotional Responses

- Terror
- Powerlessness
- Hyperarousal
- Loss of control
- Depression
- Anger

Physical Responses

- Disrupted sleep
- Inability to concentrate
- Aggression
- Avoidance and isolation
- Difficulty in school
- Substance abuse
- Self-destructive behavior

Left untreated, these symptoms undermine the emotional, intellectual, and social development of a child.

Research shows strong correlations between untreated traumatic stress and educational failure, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, incarceration, and chronic illness.



1 in 5

children will have three or more adverse childhood experiences before the age of 16*

- ABUSE
- NEGLECT
- EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE
- HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION

4,200

children are born in Durham County each year



*www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy



The good news is that CCFH is able to transform the pain and suffering of childhood trauma into hope for a healthy future.

Our therapists use evidence-based practices that are highly effective, significantly reducing symptoms in 75 to 80 percent of children treated and restoring hope and stability to them and their families.

Traumatized children can heal, but they need your help.

**Please give at
www.ccfhnc.org**



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1121 W Chapel Hill St, Suite 100
Durham NC 27701
919-419-3474
www.ccfhnc.org

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