

A NEW FACE AT FAMILY SERVICE SOCIETY



Community service key to programs' success

By Jeffery Smith
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CORNING | Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, recently named the new executive director of Family Service Society Inc., said her primary goal is to better understand the needs of the community in which she serves.

The Family Service Society, founded in 1918, offers a range of

services designed to aid families and individuals through a staff of social workers, counselors, therapists, prevention specialists and youth workers.

“The community service is very important, because its goal is to prevent people needing greater services that would remove them from their community,” Ayers-Friedlander said.

She replaced Robin Foster, who

retired in late December. Ayers-Friedlander holds a master of arts in counseling, from Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., and a license in mental health counseling. She also received a master of public administration in 2014 from Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse.

Ayers-Friedlander said one thing

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the state is looking at is how it can reduce out-of-home placement for children.

“The way to do that is to really have robust community services,” said Ayers-Friedlander.

Janalee Orfanides, also of the Family Service Society, said in addition to individual and family counseling, the company offers structured after-school and youth programs, along with specialized counseling for sexual abuse and domestic violence, and a mentoring program for youth.

“I think the Corning Youth Center meets the needs of parents, giving them access to quality afterschool services for their children,” Ayers-Friedlander said. “It’s really a great program for the children.”

The other services are available at several locations throughout Steuben County.

Ayers-Friedlander said the near 50 paid staff workers at Family Service often also collaborate with other local agencies.

“It’s a wonderful agency,” Ayers-Friedlander said.

Family Service Society programs include:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Southern Tier
Employee Assistance Program

The Laura Richardson Houghton Corning Youth Center - Free after-school drop-in facility for children and teens ages 8 to 18.

Prevention Program - In-school prevention counseling and substance abuse prevention education.

Advance After-School Program - Free for middle school students in the Corning-Painted Post School District.

Choice Program - Provides sexual abuse counseling for child victims and their families.

General Counseling Program - Tailored to individual and family needs. Offices are located in Bath, Corning and Hornell.

Family Focus - Offers families facing the challenges of child abuse and/or child neglect by providing parenting education, using family strengths and community resources to help parents learn.

Professional Training Institute - Educational conferences and workshops pertaining to mental health, psychological and sociological issues for human service workers, social work professionals, educators, psychologists and the general public.

For more information about the Family Services Society, call 962-3148 in Corning, 776-3822 in Bath and 324-2460 in Hornell.