

IMPACT REPORT

20

A YEAR OF PROGRESS  
THROUGH PREVENTION

25



# Contents

Message from our Executive Director	3
2025 at a Glance	4
Financials	5
New Initiatives	6
Geetha Arulmohan Scholarship	7
International Overdose Awareness Day	8
Support Progress	9
Our Staff	10
Board of Trustees	12

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to read our Impact Report and for being part of a community that believes prevention matters.

In 2025, I had the opportunity to start a Prevention Subcommittee within the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Professional Advisory Committee. The goal was simple but powerful: **to elevate the understanding that all clinical work addressing substance use and mental health disorders should include intentional elements of prevention.** Prevention is not separate from treatment—it is foundational to it.

The subcommittee highlights an important distinction between **attribution and contribution.** *Attribution* helps us see clear cause-and-effect relationships in well-defined systems. *Contribution*, on the other hand, recognizes the reality of complex systems, where outcomes are shaped by many interconnected efforts. As we often say, attribution is about cause-and-effect, while contribution is about collective influence. **Prevention work lives squarely in this space of collective influence—and that makes it both challenging and incredibly impactful.**

At a time when communities face increasing complexity and strain, our agency continues to advocate for sustained funding and focus on prevention. The evidence is clear: **primary prevention reaches broader populations, strengthens protective factors, and delivers meaningful economic and social benefits.** These benefits include reduced healthcare costs, increased productivity, and improved quality of life by preventing or delaying illness and injury. Some preventive measures are directly cost-saving, while others are highly cost-effective—delivering strong returns even when downstream costs aren't eliminated.

According to the New Jersey Prevention Network, **for every dollar invested in substance use prevention, communities save an average of \$18 in related costs, including healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity.** This research affirms what our work has shown for decades: prevention is not only compassionate—it is smart.



Mercer Council's vision of "Empowering Communities Through Education & Support" and our mission to create pathways that reduce substance and behavioral health challenges through education, support, advocacy, and partnership remain as relevant as ever. Today, we are fortunate to have stronger research and better science that validate the dedication and impact of our past and present team members, collaborators, and supporters.

We invite you to continue this work with us—by donating, volunteering, consulting, or partnering alongside us. **Together, through collective effort, we can build healthier, stronger communities where prevention is valued, visible, and sustained.**

With gratitude and hope,

Margarita Leahy,  
MA, Ed.S, NCC, LPC, LCADC, ACS

### Schools

**5,100 +**

students reached through in-school programs, services, presentations, and youth development activities

- **2800+** student interactions sponsored by ASYSST
- **805** 7th-graders received Botvin's Life Skills Training
- **46** received counseling services
- **274** received Teen Mental Health First Aid training
- **1,180+** received direct evidence-based, multi-session curriculum lessons

### Communities

**4,300 +**

adults benefited from virtual community-based programs, trainings, workshops, events and activities throughout the year

- **193** attended across **11** monthly PCMC meetings
- **164** seniors at Healthy Outlooks for Older Adults workshops
- **461** attended **41** All-Recovery Meetings
- **168** substance use evaluations
- **91** emergency dispatches through our Opioid Overdose Recovery Program

### Online

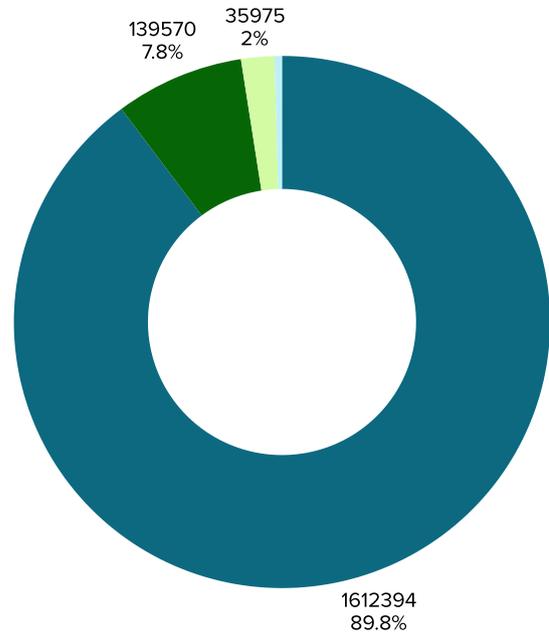
**20,000 +**

users engaged through our online presence

- **15,000+** social media impressions
- **6,443** active web users
- **20,281** website views

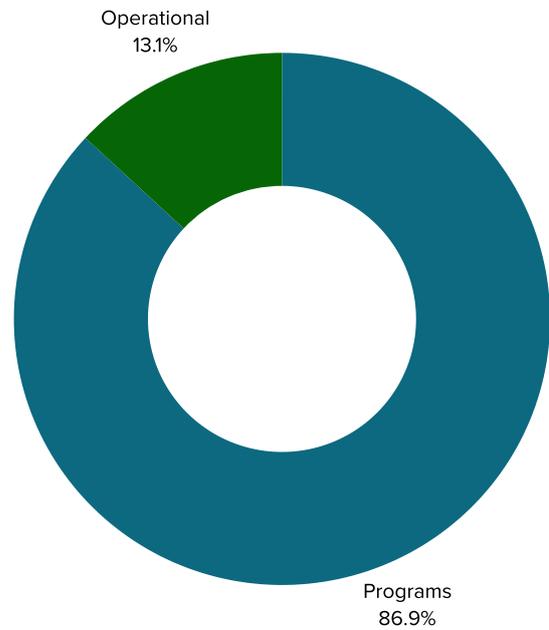
### Revenue \$1,814,106

State	1,612,394
Other	139,570
In-Kind	35,975
Donations	8,045
ROIs	18,122



### Expenses \$1,724,784

Programs	1,498,821
Operational	225,963



## Opioid Settlement Funds

Programs that honors lives lost in the opioid epidemic by centralizing prevention

## County of Mercer

Building meaningful systems to secure a healthy future for our community

- Expand county overdose response services
- Provide additional resources to increase the scope of direct services



- Introduce evidence-based harm reduction principles in middle and high schools
- Implement researched methods to promote wellness among seniors



- Engage families and communities in the recovery process
- Fund support groups for caretakers and loved ones affected by substance misuse



- Incorporate prevention education into student athletics curriculum
- Draw from best practices for early intervention



## The Geetha Arulmohan Scholarship Award

This \$500 educational scholarship honors the memory of Mercer Council’s former Executive Director, Geetha Arulmohan. Recipients receive tuition support to pursue education or certification in fields related to substance use prevention or behavioral health. The recipient receives an additional \$500 match if they choose to join the Mercer Council team as an intern.

### Scholarship Recipient



“I want to be part of the solution by promoting mental wellness, prevention, and education in ways that create real change, just like Mercer Council... I am so grateful to Mercer Council and the donors who help to make my education possible.”

**Kirsten Mackney, Rider University**

Visit [www.mercercouncil.org/donate](http://www.mercercouncil.org/donate) to support the Geetha Arulmohan Scholarship Fund

### Legislative Aid Interns



“...this experience has enabled me to grow both professionally and personally. Throughout my internship, I learned how to track and keep records of key legislation, government officials, and state and federal budgets and grants that directly affect the work of Mercer Council.”

**Isabella Irilli, TCNJ**



“...the opportunity to be a part of such a positive work environment with supportive and enthusiastic colleagues has undoubtedly facilitated my personal and professional development, and I am excited to continue to grow in the future.”

**Maura McGrath, Tufts University**

Visit [mercercouncil.org/jobs](http://mercercouncil.org/jobs) for internship opportunities

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual International Overdose Awareness Day



## A Day of Remembrance

Each August, we gather to join the global community in honoring those lost to addiction and overdose.

The highlight of the event was our inspiring **candlelight vigil** and **memorial walk**, where attendees displayed photos and shared stories commemorating loved ones who are no longer with us.

## A Call to Action

- **9** generous sponsors
- **40** partners and vendors
- **200** registered participants



*“We are here to **break the silence, end the stigma, and lift each other up** as we continue to fight and advocate.”*

## Donate

Visit <https://www.mercercouncil.org/get-involved/donate/> to support us with one-time or monthly contributions.

Your contributions strengthen prevention and recovery efforts across Mercer County and support our mission to foster healthier, safer, and more responsible communities. Please consider these meaningful ways to support our work.

### Progress T-Shirt, \$25

Show your commitment to prevention and recovery by purchasing our *Progress, Not Perfection* shirt (sizes S-2XL). This shirt serves as a reminder that recovery is a journey, and every step counts.



### Memorial Pavers \$100

Honor the memory of a friend, family member, or loved one by purchasing a Memorial Brick. These engraved paver bricks are installed on a pathway outside our building, creating a lasting tribute to community members who have been affected by substances.



### Executive Team



**Executive Director**  
Margarita Leahy  
MA, Ed.S, NCC,  
LPC, LCADC, ACS



**Director of Operations**  
Catherine Arulmohan,  
CPM

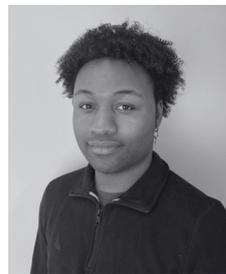
### Operations Team



**Senior Support Specialist**  
Lisa Kauffman



**Projects Assistant**  
Abubaker Ahmadi



**Front Office & Facility Coordinator**  
Lorenzo McCollum



**Recordkeeping Assistant**  
Smriti Singh

### Opioid Overdose Recovery Program



**Recovery Specialist & Asst. Patient Navigator**  
Trina Nixon



**Recovery Specialist**  
Stacey Ross



**Recovery Specialist**  
Jon Macciocca



**Recovery Specialist**  
Jaleel Shabazz



**Bilingual Recovery Specialist**  
Miquia Delvalle



**Recovery Specialist**  
Marc North

### Prevention Educator Team



**Director of Prevention Education Services**  
Amy Argiriou



**Prevention Educator**  
Alyssa Scaglione



**Prevention Educator**  
Wil Kauffman



**Prevention Educator**  
Amy Coffey

### School-Based Youth Services Program



**Programmatic Supervisor**  
Shakita Johnson,  
BA, CD, PCD



**Youth Development Specialist**  
Cristabel Acquah, BA

### Community Prevention Coalitions Team



**Director of Advocacy & Prevention Coalition**  
Charlene Phelps, MBA



**Coalition & Community Engagement Coordinator**  
Caitlin Allen

### Clinical Services Team



**JJC Substance Use Evaluator**  
Rodrigo Moliner,  
CADC



**Substance Use Evaluator**  
Mischelle Kristofor,  
MA, LCSW, LCADC, CCS



**MEAS/EAP Trainer**  
Denise Higgins



**MEAS/EAP/DOT Therapist**  
David Petersen,  
MA, CEAP, SAP, CART

### Board of Trustees



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Attorney, Stark & Stark



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Trenton Public Schools



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Drug Counselor,  
College of NJ



**Christopher Jakim**  
HIDTA Deputy  
National Coordinator,  
Overdose Response  
Strategy



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Health Care Quality  
Institute



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Campaign Manager



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Chief of Police,  
College of New Jersey



**Lenora B. Keel**  
Licensed Clinical  
Social Worker



**Janice Howze**  
Telemedicine  
Physician Assistant

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