

# 2023 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

## Leading with Vision, Embracing the Future



### Dear Friends of Empower,

As we embark on 50 years of impact, we reflect on all the lives we have touched. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue our vital work alongside the community. It is not always easy to measure the impact of prevention or the protective factors we instill in communities. However, seeing the smiling faces of families and the “aha” moments of the individuals we serve reaffirms the significance of our mission, and that is magical!

In 2023, we continued our extensive work in substance use prevention and tackling the opioid crisis through our Overdose Fatality Review Program. We distributed hundreds of Narcan kits and trained numerous community members and businesses in Narcan administration in an effort to save lives from overdose deaths. We expanded our suicide prevention and response programs within school districts, while enhancing our social and emotional learning initiatives.

We continue to strive to promote resilience and improve mental health and educational outcomes for youth across the state. This effort is particularly crucial as we acknowledge the complex ways in which young people are recovering from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, after a hiatus since 2020, we were thrilled to host all of our Pioneer Family Fun Nights and daytime events in person once again.



This year, Empower proudly assumed the role of the One-Stop Operator of Somerset and Hunterdon counties, playing a vital role in supporting job seekers to secure and successfully maintain employment, while also aiding businesses by providing well-prepared candidates to re-enter the workforce and fill job vacancies. Employment stands as a critical social



determinant of health, offering community members income, access to healthcare, social connections, and a sense of pride and achievement. This new role advances our mission of transforming communities and improving the lives of those we serve. To further our mission, we spearheaded a new Drug Free Communities coalition this year – The BOUND for Healthy Youth Coalition. This coalition is dedicated to preventing and reducing youth substance use through education, collaboration, and community-wide change in Bound Brook and South Bound Brook. Our coalition is working tirelessly to effectively address underage drinking and marijuana use in youth in these communities.

There is so much more work to be done, and we approach the future with gratitude for the trust placed in us by countless individuals and families in the community. We invite you to visit us at the Empower offices or our Pioneer Family Success Center at 50 Division Street in Somerville, located just across from the train station. We hope to see you soon!

With gratitude,

*Kristen Schiro*

**Kristen Schiro**

Executive Director & The Team at Empower



# A Year in Review

## Mental Health Awareness

**651**  
individuals  
trained in Mental  
Health  
Awareness

- ▶ **576** participants trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
- ▶ **75** participants trained in Question, Persuade, Refer
- ▶ **5** instructors certified to teach Youth MHFA and Adult MHFA



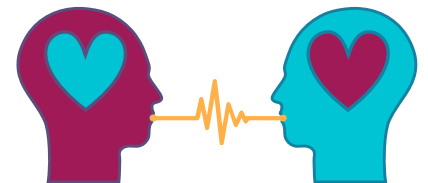
“The most helpful part of the course was the real life simulations because we were able to practice what to do in the real world”

Mental Health First Aid Training Participant

## Lifelines Suicide Response and Prevention Program

### Somerset County

- ▶ **14,042** students attend Lifelines schools
- ▶ **268** faculty and staff members are trained
- ▶ **10** school districts participate in Lifelines



### Statewide

- ▶ **38,328** students attend Lifelines schools
- ▶ **361** faculty and staff members are trained
- ▶ **14** school districts participate in Lifelines

## Overdose Fatality Review Program (OFRP)

- ▶ **30** case reviews conducted
- ▶ **13** recommendations developed
- ▶ **465** Narcan kits distributed
- ▶ **11** total trainings



## One-Stop Operator

- ▶ **16** partners supported
- ▶ **4,199** customers served

# Pioneer Family Success Center



**791**  
families served

**20,207**  
views on social media

**633**  
linkages and referrals

**2,477**  
individuals served



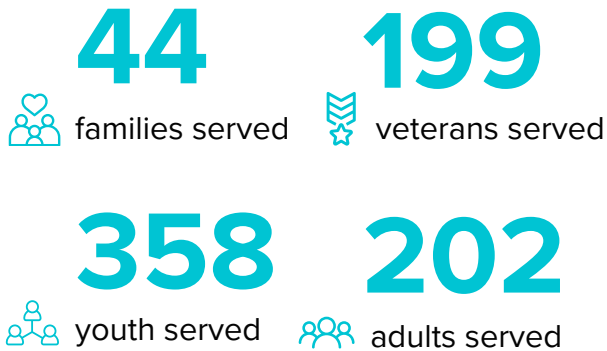
# A Year in Review

## Prevention Education



"This program has made my life easier because now I can deal with my stress and the people and things that cause it... I feel like I've got my life back."

Veteran Program Participant



### School Climate Survey (Pride)

▶ 4,568 students completed the Pride Survey

### Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act

▶ 98 individuals trained in Opioid misuse

### Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

▶ 50 professionals trained in SBIRT

▶ 192 students completed AlcoholEdu®

## Adolescent School Health

6,464

students were impacted through school health programs

▶ 399 families participated in educational workshops for teens and parents/caregivers

▶ 863 educational videos were viewed on SoberTruth4Youth.org in English and in Spanish

▶ 29 educational videos were viewed on TheRealTruth4Youth.org in English and in Spanish



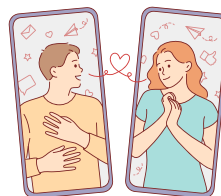
"I felt the program was informative and gave me some insight on handling situations that arise with my daughters."

Teen Speak Participant

### Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)

Teen Pregnancy and STI Prevention

- ▶ 311 students served
- ▶ 112 parents/caregivers participated in Teen Speak
- ▶ 123 PREP educational workshops were delivered



### Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Program (SRAE)

Abstinence and Positive Youth Development

- ▶ 113 students enrolled



Joetta Clark speaking with students from Toms River High School North

# Gratitude, Collaboration, and Growth

## Thank You to our Funders and Donors

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NJ Department of Health  
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NJ Prevention Network  
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