



...Because every child deserves a childhood

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## **Astor Receives a \$150k Three-Year Grant from Dyson Foundation**

### *Bilingual Parent Infant Educator to Work with Families*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

RHINEBECK – Astor Services for Children & Families has been awarded a \$150k three-year grant from the Dyson Foundation to continue support of the bilingual (Spanish) Parent Infant Educator (PIE). The PIE works with children, zero – 5 years old and their families through Astor’s Enhanced Childhood Coordinated Services Initiative (ECCSI).

The ECCSI Program is supported by the Dutchess County Department of Social Services. They coordinate services for all children, up to 18 years old, who are at risk of abuse and maltreatment and/or being placed in a foster home. Dyson’s support of the bilingual PIE supplements this county program by enhancing much needed services to a specific group of the community.

Through ECCSI, families have increased access to community-based support; improvement in local decision-making so services are effectively and efficiently coordinated; fewer referrals to the Social Service System; and less gaps in services. To that end, there are two processes in place to work with families: “Tier 1 Network” is made up of frontline providers who offer relevant services to assist specific children and families; and the “Tier II Network” is made up of county-level leaders who are committed to the goals of having fewer children in foster care, fewer referrals to the Child Protective System, and fewer families entrenched in the Social Service System. The Tier II Network is also a conduit for new initiatives in the field of early childhood education and development.

“There is a need now more than ever for sustaining the Enhanced Childhood Coordinated Services Initiative and we are thankful to the Dyson Foundation’s generosity and future commitment of the bilingual PIE. This grant will enable her to continue the important work she is doing in the community – providing an intensive program of home-visits to support the parents, and to help develop the child-attachment and bonding process. Dyson’s continued support of this key position will allow us to continue this very important work,” said James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, Astor Services.

The majority of the families served continue to be among the poorest and most underserved. They often are crisis driven and/or suffer from significant mental illness, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Bipolar Disorder; some have developmental disabilities or personality disorders. Many clients are



grandparents or relatives who have assumed responsibility for the children and need assistance navigating public support systems.

Astor staff work diligently with these families to assist them through current difficulties, linking them to resources in the community and helping them to problem-solve for future challenges. Staff work closely with Child Protective Services and advocate for preventative services. Each family completes a comprehensive family assessment to facilitate development of individualized plans. Cases are generally closed upon satisfactory completion of their goals.

The current faltering economy triggers more crises in our most vulnerable families. Certain situations can place families at high risk, even families unaccustomed to public support and services. Homelessness from evictions, foreclosures or condemned buildings brings families to the crisis point. Major illness frequently results in job loss and/or homelessness and is another reason families are referred to/or self-refer to ECCSI.

A Coordinator and full-time Bi-Lingual Parent Infant Educator works to identify unmet needs; strives to fill these needs; and partners with other agencies to access necessary resources to adequately address individual family needs, as well as helping the community.

About Astor:

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) provides behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving more than 6,000 children and families annually, Astor's current range of services to families in the Mid-Hudson Valley and the Bronx include: residential treatment, therapeutic foster family care, early childhood programs, and community-based behavioral health and prevention services. For more information about Astor Services for Children & Families, visit the agency's website at [www.astorservices.org](http://www.astorservices.org) or call (845) 871-1117.

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