The Astor Home for Children
2005-2006
Annual Report

... Because Every Child Deserves a Childhood
The Astor Home for Children made enormous strides in 2005 – 2006 towards reaching our vision to be a world class organization. We have consistently demonstrated this vision throughout our agency by our commitment to comprehensive, high-quality service delivery to children and families, administered by highly trained and committed staff.

This year, we proudly served over 6,000 children (and their families) at our more than 25 sites throughout the Hudson Valley and the Bronx, NY through an array of treatment, prevention and early childhood programs. These programs and their clients differ along many dimensions. However, most of our clients have one thing in common - the likelihood that they could have the kind of childhood anyone of us would want for our children is small. We believe that their involvement with one of our programs changes that outcome. Astor provides that childhood; one filled with smiles and dreams and hope for the future. Last year we introduced the simple phrase, "...because every child deserves a childhood," to eloquently describe our impact on children and families. This year we copyrighted the line and will incorporate it throughout the organization’s communication material to portray the spirit of our mission and vision. As we use this tagline, it will help establish the Astor brand as a world class organization to our constituents.

Our record as one of the preeminent providers of child mental health services and early childhood education is well established. Astor has implemented new, innovative programs using evidence based treatments, and widely accepted best practices. We have made significant progress in creating an agency-wide set of outcome measures, allowing us to objectively analyze the impact Astor has on children and families.

Astor’s leadership role in the region is evident in all that we do. Our staff are leading several major efforts within our local communities as well as nationally to inform and impact policies affecting our children. We regularly invite recognized experts in their respective fields to inform our staff about how to best serve our clients and to educate the community. The Dutchess County Early Childhood Coordinated Service Initiative (ECCSI) is an example of how we leveraged our reputation to bring together community providers to strengthen the service system for all families in the community, not just our clients. ECCSI is a collaborative of agencies (i.e., early childhood, government, housing, mental health, substance abuse, physical health, etc.), who are creating a system of quality care for infants, toddlers, and their families that is seamless and utilizes the most current thinking about infant brain development, attachment and infant parent bonding and evidence based curriculums in early childhood centers. This initiative is recognized locally as an effective partnership. More impressively, experts throughout the country are monitoring the development of ECCSI, seeing the collaboration as a potential model to be replicated.

This annual report documents Astor’s excellent work to provide the children and families who are our clients the type of support, treatment and education they deserve. The needs of our clients are many. Now, more than ever, Astor relies on your support as we continue to strive to meet these needs. We appreciate everything you have done to support our vision. Together, we have helped provide thousands of our children the kind of childhood they deserve.

Best regards,

James McGuirk, Ph.D.
Executive Director/CEO

Stephen Kelly
Chair, Board of Directors
Our Mission

The Astor Home for Children promotes the emotional well being of children, youth and families through leadership in the development and provision of preventive and treatment-oriented behavioral health services and early childhood education.

“A life was pretty bad before Astor. My son had behavioral issues. Nobody was able to help us. I heard of the program...at The Astor Home for Children. It’s been one year...and our lives have changed in more ways than I can ever imagine. Now his behavior has improved so dramatically and our lives are so much better.” - Parent
Astor Early Childhood Programs
2005 – 2006 Highlights

In 2005–2006, we continued to provide the highest quality, comprehensive family- and community-focused Early Childhood Programs in Dutchess County. The nurturing of children by highly trained and committed staff is the principle guiding our Early Childhood Programs.

This year, while providing high quality service to children, we continued to strengthen our leadership role in the Early Childhood field and the communities we serve by ensuring that best practices are shared and coordination of service delivery is optimized. For example:

► The creation of the Dutchess County Early Childhood Coordinated Services Initiative (ECCSI). ECCSI is a collaborative effort by Dutchess County government and agency leaders to provide a comprehensive system of preventive care for children from zero to five years of age. Astor secured funding from the Dutchess County Department of Social Services for ECCSI and will leverage that funding with other funding sources.

► The Zero to Three Partnership. The Partnership is a group of interested parties committed to improving services for the youngest members of our community. Astor hosted quarterly meetings with strong participation from government and community agencies.

Additional Highlights:

► Staff Training – Our emphasis on continued training and educational opportunities for qualified staff continues to produce outstanding results. Sixty-five percent of our Head Start teachers have earned a B.A./B.S. or higher. Additionally, five teachers received High Scope certification, one mental health professional became a nationally certified counselor, and two mental health staff members earned doctorates in psychology. Other staff members are pursuing higher education degrees and professional certification.

► Maternal Mental Health Project received funding, for the second consecutive year, from the Maternity and Early Childhood Foundation to provide home-based services to women at risk of post-partum depression.

► Parent-Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT), an evidence-based treatment practice, was introduced to work with chronically violent pre-school children in a therapeutic setting.

"Positive relationships with children, families and community have been the cornerstone of the success of our programs."

- Mary Sontheimer, Assistant Executive Director
Residential Treatment Programs
2005 – 2006 Highlights

Our Residential Treatment Programs: Residential Treatment Center (RTC) and the Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) continue to provide 24-hour high quality residential treatment and special education to children from families in the Hudson Valley and New York Metropolitan areas, as well as from upstate New York. Astor serves children with a broad range of special needs, focusing particularly on school-age children suffering from severe emotional disturbances who need treatment beyond what could be provided in a less restrictive setting.

Because of the quality of our Residential Programs, our staff and our commitment to our children and families (working with the families as “partners” in our service delivery), our leadership role in the field and community we serve strengthened in 2005–2006. For example:

- Our Residential Treatment Program was selected by the Office of Children and Family Services as one of five agencies in New York State to participate in the Andrus Sanctuary Leadership Development Program. The program involves a three-year commitment to learn and implement program change according to the precepts of the Sanctuary Model®, a method for creating and changing program culture to more effectively promote healing from psychological and social trauma.

- The Executive Director and RTF leadership played a key role in advocating the establishment of uniform standards among State agencies with respect to the use of physical restraint. The effort resulted in the passage of legislation to achieve this goal.

- The Non-Secure Detention (NSD) Program Director serves as a member of the Advisory Board and Chair of the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Committee in Orange County, and participates in the Dutchess County Court-Involved Youth Committee.

Additional Highlights:

- Our goal of forming stronger partnerships with parents is being realized through a combination of staff/parent/supervisory training and workshops. A special series of programs celebrated A-S-T-O-R (Awareness, Safety, Teaching, Ownership and Resilience) in an effort to teach the core values underlying treatment.

- Staff Training – For several years, public policy and “best practices” have urged all settings (e.g., hospitals, residential centers) to minimize the use of physical restraint to manage extreme dangerous behaviors. Increased staff training and ongoing program development have yielded remarkable results at Astor. To sustain this initiative, Astor has emphasized staff training in crisis intervention using Ross Greene’s Collaborative Problem Solving and the Sanctuary Model® of Dr. Sandra Bloom.

- Program Expansion – Our Residential Services experienced a year of exciting and significant transition with the addition of the Non-Secure Detention Program.

- Applications for foster-parent certification increased by 22 percent after we implemented a program designed to expand the pool of consistent, high-quality homes to provide care for the children entering Astor programs.

- An increase in cultural and religious life was reflected in new activities including weekly non-denominational services and “Special Services” at local churches featuring music, puppets and dance. A choir was formed and had its performance during our Christmas, St. Nick’s event. The choir’s goal is to perform at other internal agency functions.

“Every child and family is unique. That’s why at Astor we offer a wide spectrum of therapeutic services and techniques -- individual, group and family therapy -- to insure that each child is fully engaged in his/her program. “

- John Kelly, Assistant Executive Director
The Bronx Outpatient Behavioral Health Centers and Day Treatment Programs continued to provide seriously emotionally disturbed children and adolescents with high quality services.

Family participation in both treatment planning and the treatment process is an integral part of our approach. We focus on each family’s strengths in order to develop and implement an individualized treatment plan for each child or adolescent admitted to our programs. This year, staff used evidence-based assessment tools to develop strengths-based assessments and treatment plans. In addition, evidence-based treatments were employed to direct the treatment process.

Our Preventive Services Program expanded with reinvestment funds from New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services. The expansion included hiring additional staff and consultants in child psychiatry, domestic violence, and drug and alcoholism treatment. Modular space has been leased and placed on the Tilden Street property to accommodate the program expansion.

Astor’s staff members are leaders in the field of mental health and preventive services. They are often called upon to serve on key committees to provide leadership and direction that will inform government, funding sources and planning bodies regarding systemic issues, the needs of children and families, and barriers to service delivery. In 2005 – 2006, for example, our leadership role on these committees consisted of:

► Several Senior staff members serving on both borough-wide and city-wide committees, including the Bronx Children’s Committee and the borough-wide Preventive Services Committee. Dr. Joan DiBlasi, Assistant Executive Director, continued to represent the agency and serves as the co-chair of the Bronx Mental Health Council and on the board of the Coalition of Mental Health Agencies. She also served on the conference planning committee of the Urban Institute for Behavioral Health, New York City.

Additional Highlights:

► New Initiative – The Astor Child Guidance Center is participating in a new initiative to provide school-based clinic treatment services in six middle schools in the Bronx. Satellite clinics will be established in each school. Funding for this initiative was awarded through a competitive bid issued by the New York City Department of Mental Health. The clinic has employed two full-time social workers and a half-time supervisor to launch these new models.

► Staff Training – All Day Treatment and Outpatient Clinic staff completed a 10-hour on-line course prepared by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and received certificates of completion. Training for outpatient clinic staff on trauma-systems therapy began in October and continued throughout the year. All clinic staff participated in NYS Office of Mental Health training in the use of trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy targeted at depression.

“Our program expansions were based on our performance, and our competitive bids, which are evidence of the quality services Astor provides to children and families in the Bronx.”

- Joan DiBlasi, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director
Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs (Dutchess County) 2005 – 2006 Highlights

Astor’s Community Based Behavioral Health Services Programs provide high quality mental health and substance-abuse treatment services that are accessible, comprehensive, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of children, adolescents and their families in Dutchess County.

In 2005-2006 we continued to provide quality service and support to families in our region. In addition, our **leadership role** in the community and the field has us in the forefront of leading community efforts (working in partnership with key stakeholders), as well as lending our expertise to inform decisions in the field. For example:

► **We hosted a half-day regional conference**, “Words Can Hurt Forever: Protecting Kids from Bullying, Harassment, and Emotional Violence,” presented by nationally recognized expert James Garbarino, Ph.D. This conference was supported with funding assistance from the Mental Health Juvenile Justice Project.

► **Several senior staff members served on key committees.** Dr. Konstantine (Gus) Tsoubris, Assistant Executive Director, accepted an invitation to join the Executive Committee of the Children’s Service Council, a public-private partnership made up of staff from youth-service agencies to improve the quality of life for Dutchess County’s children; the Red Hook Counseling Center Director, who oversees the Youthful Sex Offender Program, joined a nine-member citizen advisory board to the Dutchess County Legislature to address issues of sex-offender management; while the High Risk Program Director and the Mobile Crisis Worker joined Dutchess County’s Trauma Team.

**Additional Highlights:**

► **Staff Training** – The Day Treatment and Outpatient Programs were accepted to participate in the NYS Office of Mental Health Evidence Based Treatment Dissemination Center. The center will provide training and ongoing supervision in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – an evidence-based practice for treating depression and most anxiety disorders.

► **The Foundation for Community Health provided funds** for mental health screening and mobile crisis capability to the eastern corridor of the county. We also received an **increase in our contract with the Department of Social Services** for the Family Preservation Program that allowed us to increase staff.

► **Enhanced Services** – With the addition of several psychiatrists, Astor entered into a contract with New York Medical College to provide psychiatric support to the Poughkeepsie Counseling Center.

► **Program Expansion** – The Department of Mental Hygiene provided Astor with funds to hire staff to obtain insurance authorizations for all pre-intakes. Prior to this agreement, Dutchess County provided this service to the counseling centers.

“There are frequent high-level training enables us to attract and retain qualified, caring clinical staff, reflective of Astor’s mission and values. It is this staff, our most valuable resource that makes it possible for Astor to provide the best care for the children and families in Dutchess County.”

- **Konstantinos Tsoubris, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director**
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Manolo Calvo
Mr. & Mrs. William Bagshaw

Lillian Coles
Dominic Armelie

Bernice DiMarco
Ms. Carol A. Zaccara

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Ms. Kathleen Davis & Mrs. George Gedge, Jr.
### Financial Highlights 2005-2006

**Astor Home for Children / Astor Learning Center / Astor Home for Children Foundation**

#### Combined Income 2005-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
<td>$23,964,930</td>
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<td>Non-Government Support</td>
<td>$1,384,150</td>
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<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>$12,151,302</td>
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<td>Private Fees</td>
<td>$618,132</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>$2,275,822</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$40,394,336</strong></td>
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#### Combined Expenses 2005-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Programs</td>
<td>$11,582,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Clinics</td>
<td>$4,750,316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>$10,822,339</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start/ Early Head Start/ Day Care</td>
<td>$6,831,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>$3,032,264</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>$3,324,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$40,344,102</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*unaudited*
Through a wide variety of innovative services of the highest quality, The Astor Home for Children provides support for emotionally disturbed or poverty-stricken children, adolescents and their families. Whether they need mental health programs, special education or early childhood development support...Astor is there!

- **Astor** serves over 6,000 children, adolescents and their families, annually.
- **Astor** is located in Rhinebeck, NY and in multiple locations throughout the Hudson Valley and in New York City.
- For over 50 years, **Astor** has offered nationally-acclaimed programs.
- **Astor** led the creation of the Dutchess County Zero to Three Partnership.
- In 2005, **Astor** opened ASTOR at Highbridge, a new children’s mental health clinic in the Bronx, NY.
- **Astor** is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).
- **Astor** is recognized as a National School of Excellence by the US Department of Education.