

STEPPING Stones

NOVEMBER 2021

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

MANSEF NEWS

Join us virtually on May 6, 2022

Since the start, 46 years ago, MANSEF has been dedicated to providing individuals with learning challenges an educational experience appropriate to their needs. Please join us for a day of learning with your MANSEF colleagues. We are in the final stages of preparing an amazing one-day experience, full of information and resources you need to continue serving students with special needs. We are committed to providing our educators with the latest professional development.

With only 5 months to go we are sending out a final Call for Presenters.

Interested in presenting at the upcoming MANSEF Conference on May 6, 2022. If we have learned anything from the past year and a half, it has been to roll with the punches and take new experiences as they come. Our conference will be held on a virtual platform hosted by Whova. All components of the conference will be navigated through this platform, keynote, sessions, breakout rooms, etc. We are excited for this new adventure but can imagine that there may be some trepidation if a virtual conference platform is new to you. As such, we will have a Presenter Training in early February to prepare you for how best to plan for this conference. Please keep this in mind when filling out the Google Form. While this training is not mandatory, the Conference Committee feels it will be beneficial to attend to ensure ease of accessibility of your presentation.



If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Rae Meneses, Conference Chair at MenesesR@ChildrensGuild.org.

The 2022 MANSEF Conference Link to presenter application: <https://forms.gle/memjKiN2M2MF4hD66>

Keynote is confirmed – featuring Debbie Silver – Deliberate Optimism: Reclaiming the Joy in Education - How do teachers maintain a positive learning environment while addressing increased emphasis on standards, new teacher evaluations, and other challenges in education? Dr. Debbie Silver discusses

how educators can maintain a sense of self as well as help their students become independent, resilient learners. Through her research and understanding of human behavior, Debbie provides insights into how to maintain one's sanity while giving every student a reasonable chance at success. Using her well-known candor and sense of humor, Debbie offers participants an entertaining and thought-provoking look at how to empower both teachers and learners.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we finish the season of Thanksgiving and head towards the Holiday season, there is so much to be thankful for! Our membership has shown strong ties and support for each other as we navigate through these very challenging times. I have been so encouraged on the member meetings by the sharing of ideas, the pooling of resources, and authentic conversation of our association members' needs. Being a part of this group means that while each school is unique, we are aligned in our mission and passion for the best we can do for our students and team—it is something I will never take for granted. And, as we look forward to 2021 coming to a close and 2022 beginning, we have a lot to look forward to: our MANSEF conference, exciting developments in our strive for teacher parity, and—hopefully—a return to meeting each other again in person!

So, while I know we are working through the challenges and needs that operating a special education school during this particular time can bring, please take time to count what we have accomplished this year, and all that we will do in the future!

With Gratitude,

Sue McLendon

Sue McLendon

MANSEF Board President

MANSEF CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS



Fia's marathon and graduation from KTS



Katherine Thomas School

Transitioning from The Katherine Thomas School: Fia's Story

The Katherine Thomas School (KTS) is very proud of our students who persevere and make remarkable accomplishments despite challenges. Instruction at KTS is always aimed at enabling students to make smooth transitions from one stage to another. Fia, a 2021 graduate of KTS, is a student that we are very proud of. While at KTS, Fia was a very hard worker and received numerous awards and recognitions for her efforts. Most recently, in 2019, Fia was one of two students selected to give a speech and present her artwork in Annapolis, MD through "Celebrating Through Art: The First Lady's Mental Health Awareness."

We recently caught up with Fia and her mother Stacy to share Fia's experiences, insights, lessons learned, and the transition from KTS to college.

Tell me about Fia. How long did she attend KTS?

Fia is responsible, kind and creative student who has high-functioning autism.

She attended KTS for eight years from 5th grade until she graduated in June 2021. Fia is now a freshman student at a top-rated, college in Leesburg, Florida for students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and ADHD.

If you could describe your KTS experience in 3 words, what would they be?

Open-minded, respectful, and fun.

What is Fia's best memory from KTS?

Attending the fall and spring Fiestas and making a lot of good friends there who understood me.

What or who motivated you most at KTS?

Some of my favorite teachers throughout the years motivated me to be curious and do my best work. Also running club motivated me to strive to get stronger and to be a mentor and good leader.

What was your favorite class and teacher, and why?

My middle school English teacher, Mr. Matt Vadney, inspired me to love reading — all kinds of different materials. And my high school English and Geography teacher, Ms. Laura Wilson, inspired me to explore poetry and classical literature and to learn about new cultures around the world.

How did the school prepare you for your college and life in general?

Over the years, KTS taught me how to self-advocate and practice little by little over the years. I also took an internship class as a junior that gave me some real-life work experience.

Do you keep up with other alumni?

Yes, I stay in touch with some of my closest friends that I attended KTS with for years.

What has been your biggest success in college?

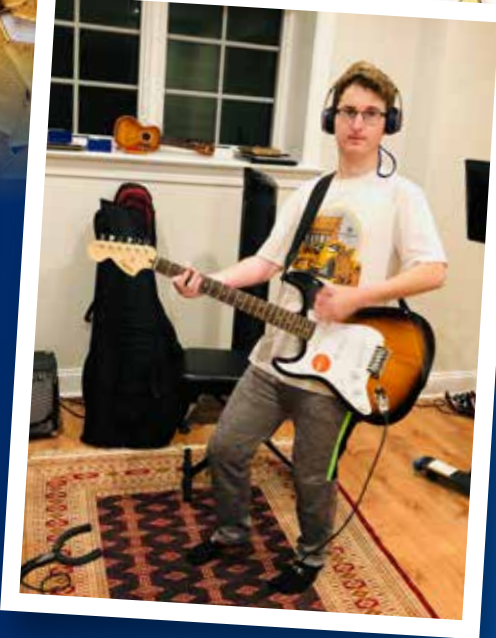
I am doing really well at college. I am living independently — in a dorm apartment with four other freshman and I have made a wonderful group of friends. I have been successfully navigating the academic and social rigors of college life, regularly expanding my use of the college supports (such as regularly meeting with my Learning Specialist, instructors and using the Writing Center). I have been using my problem-solving and self-advocacy skills that I learned at KTS.

What advice would you give students who are about to graduate high school?

Don't be afraid to be yourself — use your strategies and your support resources. Be brave to experience new things in the world ... that's how we become wise. Be kind and loving and patient with yourself and set goals for what you want to do in your life.

Fia with First Lady and Assistant State Superintendent Marcella Franczkowski





High Road celebrates students' amazing talents and abilities

High Road Academy of Howard County

In honor of Learning Disabilities & ADHD Awareness Month in October, High Road Academy of Howard County celebrated our students' amazing talents and abilities. While our students may face challenges in certain areas of learning and academic performance, we also know that our students possess tremendous skills and capacities outside of the classroom. Amongst our current student population, we have extraordinarily gifted artists, musicians, and athletes, just to name a few. It is imperative that we all continue to reflect upon the significant achievements our students make every single day. High Road Academy is committed to creating a brighter and stronger future for all of our students!



LinWood

John joined the Linwood School in February of 2015. Over the last six years, John has flourished into a young man with great independence, self-advocacy, and focus for the future. Within the school, John serves as a pseudo-Mayor figure - he takes a personal interest to meet and know all of the students and staff he meets. Given his growth, he navigates the building independently, works off campus, and serves in many other helper roles. In his community, John has apprenticed at doing all types of work from landscaping to hospitality and more. For fun, John enjoys jamming with his band, cruising around on his moped, and keeping up with sports and wrestling. The sky is the limit for John's future and he is a shining star at Linwood.



John

Pathways

At Pathways, like at many of the MANSEF schools, we help students explore their post-graduation hopes and dreams, often having them sample career options. **Aidan** graduated from Pathways in 2021 and he has wasted no time expanding on the work experiences he began as a high school student. He is working at a Safeway near his home three days a week. An avid train enthusiast, he is continuing the volunteer job he had while at Pathways at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore one day a week. He is excited that he will be volunteering at the Marley Station Mall train exhibit during the holiday season.

Aidan's mother wrote that he is "busy and a lot less stressed." She also wrote, "you all will always hold a special place in our hearts. You did so much for Aidan with your loving, caring and professional support. He would never have graduated without you. Pathways was a godsend."

Aidan and the train exhibit at Marley Station



Sheppard Pratt School at Frederick

Frances joined the RISE program as a second grader in 2019; this spring she will leave The Sheppard Pratt School as an upcoming 6th grader. Since joining RISE, Frances has worked towards accomplishing IEP goals and honing skills which have assisted her in being successful in a mainstream general education classroom. Frances is a charismatic girl with an infectious sense of humor, so it was no surprise that she would be well liked by the mainstream students and staff. Recently, she was nominated as the student of the week and her class wrote many kind notes about her. The staff at the RISE program are very proud of Frances and excited to see what she accomplishes next.



Frances

Ivymount

Ivymount School tenth grade student **Ethan** is working towards a partial transition to a county public school next year. As an aspiring professional graphic artist, who already assists his father with professional art projects in the community, Ethan has the skills and motivation to access more classes in a public school setting. His journey to success at Ivymount and beyond began with a recognition in fifth grade that Ethan needed support to manage emotional and behavioral regulation when he joined Ivymount. With teacher assistance, trust in his school team, commitment to his education, strong parent support, and strong determination and perseverance, Ethan is now equipped with strategies to manage regulation challenges and handle the ups and downs of school and community life. Ethan and his parents continue to work closely alongside his Ivymount educational team to monitor progress and set even more goals for the future.

Ethan



Antoine

The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County

Antoine Wingo is a student attending the high school program at The Children's Guild. He has been incremental in the development of our student council in its inaugural year by serving as the co-chair of the council. He is not only dedicated to building the school community through advocating for students, but he is also a dedicated student. Antoine has had perfect attendance so far this school year, which is evident in how much progress he has made in his academic and social skills.

Chelsea School

Chelsea Literacy Coordinator Recognized for Outstanding Teaching

For the past 12 years, Karen Gallo has overseen all aspects of Chelsea School's literacy programming. In that time, she and her reading specialists have helped hundreds of dyslexic students to become independent, lifelong readers. This fall, Karen received the Altra Federal Credit Union Cash for Classrooms award after being nominated by a former student's family. This family shared how Ms. Gallo changed the course of their son's life for the better, and he is now pursuing a degree and a job that he loves.

In their nomination application, the family wrote, "Teaching reading to students with dyslexia is especially challenging, but doing so with creativity, humor, patience, & enthusiasm warrants special recognition. Karen knows these challenges for kids and uses evidence-based methods to help them read, and more importantly, believe that they can learn – the foundation for success in school. If you listen to students who have been instructed by Karen, it fills your heart with joy and hope for kids who have felt hopeless in school. It's like a new lease on life for them."

Chelsea School's faculty and administration, and our entire school community, echo these sentiments. Karen has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of our students by giving them the tools to be lifelong, independent readers. She is an inspiration for us all, and we are so grateful to have her as a Chelsea Knight!



SCHOOL News



Baltimore Lab School

Baltimore Lab School's transformative classroom experiences and engaging, multisensory, arts-based curriculum set us apart from other schools. Every year BLS selects a school wide theme in order to enhance our academic philosophy, create cross-curriculum connections, and promote opportunities for hands-on project-based learning. This year our theme is Live It, Learn It, the title of a book written by BLS founder, Sally L. Smith. Sally believed in immersing students in their learning through the integration of the arts in order to involve the whole child in the experience of learning.

This year at BLS we will be highlighting all of the creative, project based, experiential learning that is an integral part of educating our amazing BLS students.

Follow along each week on our BLS Facebook page as we shout out our students and teachers for Living It and Learning It! All thematic shout outs will have the hashtag #LiveItLearnIt.



Middle School students read excerpts from Baltimore Lab School Founder, Sally L. Smith's book, Different is not Bad, Different is the World. Students then created "I am Unique" fingerprint artwork depicting their interests, strengths and challenges. Additionally, students learned about the science of making sun prints and each designed an art piece on photosensitive paper to represent themselves and to "shine the sun" on their creativity!

Foundation School

Autism Speaks Walk

On October 23, staff, friends, and family of The Foundation Learning Center walked 1.54 miles in the 2021 Autism Speaks Walk held at National Harbor. This distance represents the 1 in 54 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We are proud to announce that we exceeded our fundraising goal and were among the top 10 teams bringing vital support to the cause.



Autism Speaks walk participants and "THINK PINK" day at Foundation School



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The Foundation Schools went pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Students participated in educational activities to raise awareness and empathy for those suffering from breast cancer. Students and staff showed off their pink spirit on "THINK PINK" day by wearing their favorite pink attire and standing strong in the breast cancer awareness fight.



Our Students Are Published

We are so proud of our six middle school students who entered the nationwide poetry contest and were published in 'A Celebration of Poets.'" Students submitted their work to a poetry contest and their submissions were selected for publication. From writing about overcoming their challenges, to the relationships they are building, their poetry offers an inside look into the lives of our special students.

Lessons in STEAM

The Foundations Schools supercharged in-person learning with new STEM lessons this school year. Students made a STEM pear annihilator creating a wrecking ball out of recycled materials, sticks, some art supplies, and a pear. The goal was to knock down as many markers with one hit. At The Foundation Learning Center, our students with autism are rotating through our new STEAM classroom for focused lessons. A 2014 study found that STEAM can positively impact cognitive development and increase literacy and math skills. We know for sure that it is also FUN!

**By Carrington C., Grade 8
(Spring 2021)**

Math is my favorite subject
Because math problems are the object.
School work is easy for me,
Staying on task is just the key.
Achieving goals is what I want,
Going to high school is the start.
Making friends is so much fun,
My journey has just begun.



Students had their poetry work published in "A Celebration of Poets"



STEAM classroom lessons including pear annihilator



More!

SCHOOL News



Children's Guild

The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County hit the ground running for the 2021-2022 school year. Before the school year even started, staff were busy painting and cleaning the building to ensure it was ready for our in-person instruction. Once the school year started, everyone was busy with planning activities and events that were COVID friendly. The Children's Guild – PG Campus has been able to host a back-to-school night, first quarter awards ceremony, fall-a-bration, and honoring families drive thru luncheon. We have also been able to show our gratitude towards our families by providing Thanksgiving meals for 37 students and their families.

High Road Academy of Prince George's County

Dyslexia Awareness Month: Walk in my shoes #GO RED# For Dyslexia

As we know October is Dyslexia Awareness Month and we chose to #GORED# to support all individuals living with the unique disability of dyslexia. The initiative is meant to address the successes and challenges of dyslexia and hopefully serve as a catalyst for change to start speaking more openly about the disorder. Dyslexia is an invisible condition that involves difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters, and symbols but does not generally affect intelligence.

Throughout the month we learned of amazing success stories from our staff and students who all battle dyslexia and shared moments of how they felt when they were first diagnosed. We are so proud of our students and staff members and were grateful to have the opportunity to share our experiences.

Sheppard Pratt School - Glyndon

The Sheppard Pratt School in Glyndon put a less frightening spin on Halloween by celebrating a "literary characters day." Students and staff came to school dressed as their favorite characters from books and graphic novels. The variety and the creativity were simply amazing! The school was visited by Ms. Frizzle, several students from Hogwarts, the Cat in the Hat along with Thing 1 and Thing 2, Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, three dalmatians and Cruella Deville, Puss in Boots, Captain Underpants, and many other superheroes and fictional characters. It was a fun day for the entire school!

Students dressed as characters from
Hogwarts





Sheppard Pratt Residential Treatment Center

A Peek into the Future

It sure would be nice if our high school students had that crystal ball to take-a-peek at their future career paths. Since this is not a reality, our Guidance Counselor, Damon Chalk, has arranged for the students at Sheppard Pratt School and Residential Treatment Center an opportunity to explore career options through a monthly college/career speaker series. Experts in the field of cosmetology, culinary arts, architecture, engineering, social work, cyber security, business, and construction work, to name a few, are talking with interested students via zoom to share their knowledge and answer questions related to their field.

In September, students had an opportunity to join a mechanical engineer who works for a company that designs and manufactures sorting and conveyor belt machines used by companies such as Amazon and USPS.

In October, a gentleman from Anne Arundel Community College's Hospitality and Tourism Institute shared information about his school, as well as valuable "tips of the trade." As a follow up to this presentation, students catered dessert for a school-wide event to showcase their talents with a creative and tasty array of cupcakes. The reviews were 5-STAR!

Coming up, a representative from the armed forces will join our growing guest speaker list, as well as a cosmetology specialist, and a therapist.

To complement our business/marketing speaker, our students will gain first-hand money-management experience through a workshop hosted by our IEP Coordinator, Katie Hood. We are also excited to announce that some of our students will be offered a part-time volunteering position with the Sheppard Pratt lunch staff.

We look forward to the valuable insights that our guest speakers will offer throughout this school year. I guess we won't be needing that crystal ball after all!



Sheppard Pratt School - Reisterstown

Students from the Sheppard Pratt School in Reisterstown attended an event that was hosted by the League of Dreams organization and University of Maryland, Baltimore County. College athletes from the soccer, softball, and baseball teams ran a variety of drills with the high school students, helping them to learn new skills while promoting a highly encouraging environment. There were also informative sessions regarding college life at UMBC. It was a high-energy day in the Retriever Center with numerous positive interactions between the college athletes and the high school students. The Reisterstown crew had a great time and left feeling motivated to participate in sports and work towards college acceptance. It was a rewarding experience for the Wolf Pack!

More!

SCHOOL News

Yoga at Katherine Thomas School



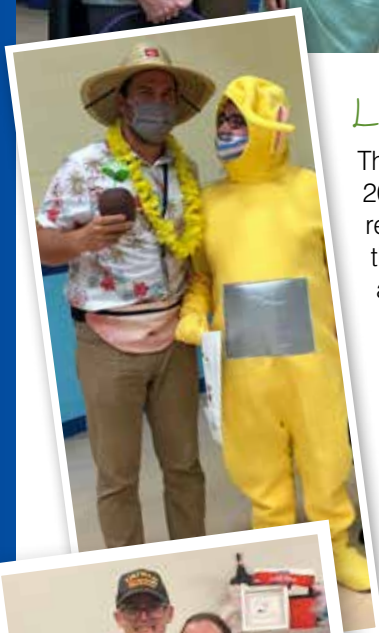
Kennedy Krieger School

Kennedy Krieger Increases Capacity to Serve Students at the New Powder Mill Campus

This past August, the previously named Kennedy Krieger School: Montgomery County Campus moved to a new location in Prince George's County and is now known as the Kennedy Krieger School: Powder Mill Campus (KKS: PMC). Just a stone's throw from the previous location, the new building will continue to serve students with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities from Montgomery County and other counties in the region. Currently serving about 75 students, KKS:PMC now has the space to expand capacity to serve an additional 10 students.

In addition to bigger classroom spaces, the building has a multi-sensory environment, an occupational therapy gym, an exercise room, a student cafeteria, a leisure room, separate locker room areas, an outside field and a new playground built especially for the school and its students.

As students and staff settle into the new space, they are looking to increase community and vocational opportunities in the new area for students. Future projects include a kitchen redesign and a mock apartment to support the functional life skills curriculum.



Linwood

The Linwood School has been excited to return for the 2021-2022 school year in-person and slowly work to return things to as "normal" as possible. The start of the school year brought on state testing which our staff and students worked hard to complete and their efforts show! Linwood was able to welcome the season with our first Spirit Week of the year. Students were able to enjoy Pajama Day, an onsite Pumpkin Patch, and some socially distanced trick-or-treating. Staff and students alike look forward to our next round of holiday events as the weather

turns cold. Linwood students have been put to work with offsite placement community-based instruction (CBI) at the Howard County Food Bank, the Howard County Conservancy, HCPSS' Old Cedar Lane building, and more.

There is always something fun and creative happening here and we look forward to sharing more as the year goes

on. moments of how they felt when they were first diagnosed. We are so proud of our students and staff members and were grateful to have the opportunity to share our experiences.

Linwood students and staff enjoyed the first Spirit Week of the year





Ivymount School

Ivymount School staff and students have truly appreciated teaching and learning together on campus this school year. Recognizing the ongoing transitions of the pandemic, Ivymount held a month of IvyCares activities. Students wrote letters of thanks to their families, created cards for patients at The Children's Inn at NIH, described their strengths in speech therapy activities, and built a post-it note "Gallery of Gratitude" - students are grateful for books, donuts, koala bears, ninjas, waffles and more! Ivymount School staff also led a series of 15-minute self-care sessions for colleagues to practice mindfulness, breathing, and positive thinking.

The Ivymount-SEEC Project SEARCH program began its newest session with a cohort of 15

interns from DC and Maryland, and students in the Post High School - School to Work program resumed practicing job skills with the Smithsonian's National Zoo and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). In October, Ivymount School also celebrated National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) by recognizing the dozens of jobsites and community partners who help prepare students for a successful transition from school to adult life.

To support student, staff, and community safety, Ivymount partnered with the Maryland Department of Health in November to hold a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, where 169 people, including 36 children, ages 5 – 11, were vaccinated.



PBIS

Congratulations - Positive Behavior and Supports Awards

Congratulations to the following schools for their OUTSTANDING achievement in earning badges for PBIS recognition this year! The teams in these schools put forth the effort and dedication required for the continued implementation of PBIS during this past year and their hard work paid off! The badges targeted the themes below and these amazing teams, used creativity, determination and a "think outside of the box" mentality, to reach students and their families in providing positive behavior supports during a very challenging time for our schools! You are all amazing and very much appreciated!

For more information regarding PBIS, please contact Abby Potter, MANSEF Point of Contact for PBIS at apotter@sheppardpratt.org.

Schools

Kennedy Krieger High School
Kennedy Krieger School- Montgomery County
Sheppard Pratt School- Cumberland
Sheppard Pratt School- Glyndon
Sheppard Pratt School- Reisterstown
Sheppard Pratt School- Rockville
Sheppard Pratt School- Residential Treatment Center/Towson

Themes

Data on my Mind
Instructional and Restorative Responses
Community Connections
Our Classroom, Our Community
The Power of Teaching
Teamwork makes the Dream Work!
Tier Two



PBIS award winners from top:
Kennedy Krieger, Sheppard
Pratt Reisterstown, and
Shepard Pratt Rockville



6501 North Charles Street
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Baltimore, Maryland 21285-6815

MANSEF is committed to creating optimum educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all Maryland children with disabilities through: ADVOCACY, NETWORKING, COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION/RESOURCES.

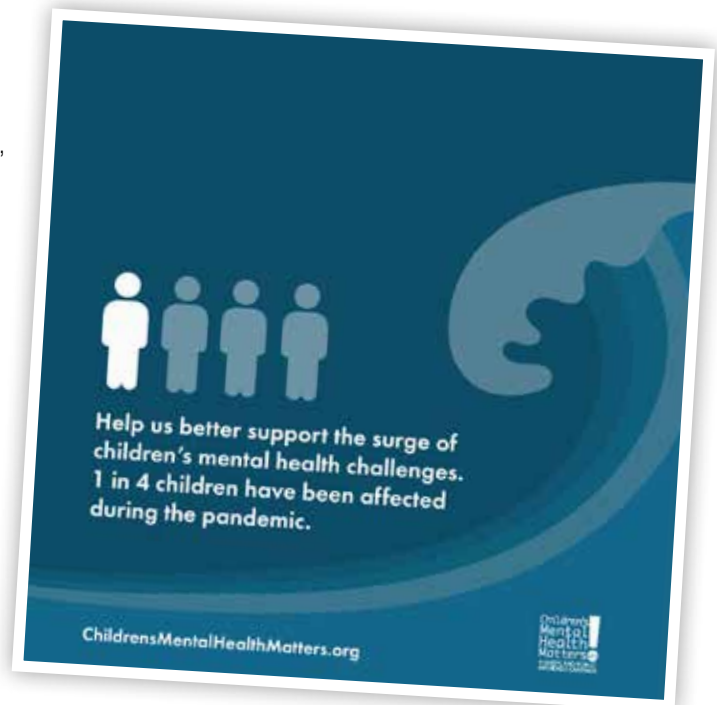
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 1 in 4 children, compared to pre-pandemic incidence of 1 in 5, are experiencing a surge of depression, anxiety, trauma, loneliness, suicidality, and substance use that will have lasting impacts on them, their families, and their communities.

By equipping adults with resources and improved understanding, we have the opportunity to change the trajectory of children's lives.

MANSEF is a proud partner of the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign and we invite you to make a lasting impact in the lives of children in your Maryland community. The campaign, with more than 500 community and school-based partners across the state, aims to increase awareness of issues around children's mental health. Each year, Children's Mental Health Matters! is celebrated with events, workshops, media outreach and other awareness-raising activities.

Materials and resources for your family, school or community are available year-round through the campaign's website at www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org.



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