

February 1, 2021

The Center for Great Expectations

Somerset, New Jersey

Submission for NJ YMCA State Alliance and NJ Department of Health

Community Conversations: New Jersey's COVID-19 Storytelling Project

July 2020 - February 2021

Interviewer: Jennifer Unger, LCSW, LCADC, CCS, Program Manager, Adult Women's House

Participant: Jamie

I believe the clients we serve have been affected by the pandemic in numerous ways.

First, it has been difficult for our pregnant mothers to give birth while wearing a mask. Also, pregnant mothers have only been allowed one visitor during childbirth and each day afterwards for visitation. Thus, it has been tough for mothers who cannot afford child-care or who do not have family to help with siblings. Their birth partner must leave the night after childbirth to take care of the other children, and the mothers have felt alone during this miraculous and life-changing event.

CGE's Adult Women's Residential Program serves pregnant and/or parenting mothers who struggle with substance use disorder, have a significant trauma history, and are homeless. The stimulus checks and unemployment money given out during the pandemic has increased the opportunity for substance use and decreased motivation for change.

Also, our clients have displayed resiliency and patience through all the challenges they have faced during the pandemic, including reduced visitation, and reduced and canceled off-sight passes. I have observed our clients pulling together and be there for one another during this time.

*(Images below: Jamie Reunified With Son)*



