We Are Andrus

Winter 2024

OUR MISSION Andrus is dedicated to transforming lives through innovative, coordinated social and emotional support for all.

OUR VISION Our vision for the community we serve is for children and families to discover a place of safety and healing.

One System of Care–in Practice

A Message From Our President & CEO, Heath Bloch

Shortly after announcing the partnership between Andrus and **Westchester Medical Center (WMC)**, we witnessed the benefits of the collaboration as they unfolded in a real-life situation.

When one of our residential students sustained a knee injury during campus horseplay that required corrective surgery, staff quickly transported the student to the hospital where he was greeted warmly by familiar faces—members of his regular, coordinated care team whom he knew, and had been seen by, on campus.

Thanks to our collaboration with WMC, we were able to ensure a seamless transition for our student, eliminating any delays in treatment that likely otherwise would have taken place. He presented at the hospital with a full picture of his medical history and current medications on hand, and was placed in the care of the providers who knew him.

A staff member with residents at the second annual Andrus holiday gala.

His story is just one example of the success of our commitment to providing one system of care where the client's needs come first. Our student's recovery was swift and without incident, allowing him to get back to life on campus, recovering during his short hospital stay and returning to Andrus in time to enjoy the campus holiday party.

Happening at Andrus

February 12	100th day of School
February 15	2Q Honor Roll Ceremony
March 20	Andrus Years of Service Celebration
April 17	Parent Teacher Conference
April 17–19	Sanctuary Institute Network Days

The Orchard School

Emphasizing Academic Achievement

Reflecting on his six months as principal at **The Orchard School**, Roland Lewis touts the benefits of focusing on academic achievement to boost confidence and self-esteem. He and his team of talented teachers are raising the bar both academically and socially by promoting academic skills; by showcasing students' work, celebrating Students of the Month, Honor Roll awardees, STEM projects, and STARS ceremonies—all to recognize and focus on the positive elements of their education.

"Discussions with parents, faculty, and staff about and with the children we serve should lead with positive encouragement, rather than with negative feedback about behavior. The children are used to adult interactions where their behavior is the lead in conversations. My approach is, instead, to prioritize learning and academic excellence."

Since Mr. Lewis arrived, the expectation at the Orchard School is that students' academic successes will be honored by the students themselves and that their academic work will be displayed openly and safely. Mr. Lewis emphasizes, "Operating out of an expectation that students' work will not be respected by other students is not a solution. We need to convey our belief in the children's capacity to respect their own work and that of their peers. Trust in our students' ability to raise the bar should be our default stance."

Principal Roland Lewis discussing a project with a student during the Book Float Parade, an event where students craft shoebox floats inspired by their favorite books.

Recreation Therapy Update

The 2023 sports season was remarkable for our student athletes. The **Andrus Bulldogs** achieved multiple season records showcasing talent, teamwork, and leadership under the guidance of our coaches. We extend gratitude to everyone who supported and contributed to the 2023 season. The 2024 season has commenced with three consecutive wins! The Andrus Bulldogs continue to excel in basketball. Best wishes to our Bulldogs!

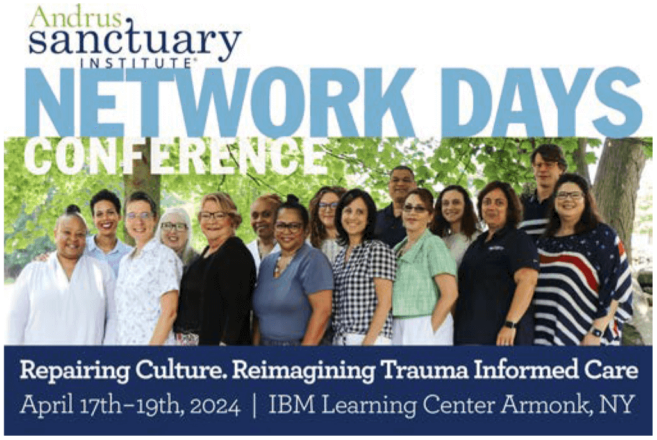
The Sanctuary Institute

Guiding Organizational Change

Save the Date:

April 17th–19th, 2024

IBM Learning Center
Armonk, NY



The Sanctuary Institute at Andrus is collaborating with **Columbia University's World Health Organization Center for Global Mental Health** on a three-year research project led by Dr. Kathleen Pike and Dr. Sabrina Hermosilla.

The study aims to evaluate the Sanctuary Model, with a focus on establishing standard indicators for impact assessment, and to recommend updates to the Sanctuary Institute curricula.

The team has conducted customer focus groups, stakeholder surveys, a literature review, and a five-day Sanctuary training to deepen their collective understanding. The partnership looks forward to unveiling insights from this innovative collaboration.

Holiday Celebrations

Bronxville High School Welcomes Andrus

Bronxville High School welcomed Andrus students for caroling, games, and gift-giving, continuing a 30-year tradition.

Yonkers Motorcycle Club

The Yonkers Motorcycle Club, the oldest in the U.S., celebrated the holidays at Andrus for the eighth year, with gifts for the children on campus as well as for the children and families served at our downtown Yonkers location.

Holiday Gala

Our second annual Holiday Gala for Andrus students and their families was a joyful evening featuring dinner and musical performances by our students and staff. Returning volunteers from **Levitt-Fuirst and Teen Soyo of the Virgin Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church** in Yonkers graciously served food and participated in the festivities. The dedicated members of the Virgin Mary Antiochian Church have been volunteering at Andrus during the holidays, serving our clients and generously sharing gifts, for over 20 years.

Our resident Sam, one of several students who performed to great acclaim at the holiday party

Community Service Programs & Connections

Andrus Outreach

Heath Bloch Elected to the Board of Nonprofit Westchester

Heath Bloch at Nonprofit Westchester's roundtable discussion on April 11, 2023 on the topic of "Aligning Methods and Mission"

Our president and CEO, Heath Bloch, has been elected to the board of **Nonprofit Westchester**. This relationship puts Andrus at the table to build support for and strengthen Andrus and all of Westchester's nonprofit organizations, promoting positive change in our local community.

Providing New Services to Our Neighbors in Hastings Public Schools

Andrus is now providing clinical services in the **Hastings** public school system at the middle and high school levels, addressing the growing need for behavioral health support for youth in our local community.

Hastings Hornets logo

The collaboration between Andrus and the Hastings public school system aims to provide crucial, accessible mental health services for Hastings families facing challenges in securing timely outside counseling and psychiatric support.

Andrus Health Equity Access Program

Andrus initiated the **Health Equity Access Program** to provide uninsured and underinsured adults, children, and families with access to the community and behavioral health services it provides.

The program integrates the social determinants of a health screening tool, developed in collaboration with New York University's McSilver Institute, to ensure the appropriate care and support.

The Health Equity Acccess Program offers both preventive and restorative services to those who would otherwise not have access due to insufficient insurance. Since its inception in 2022, the fund has served 114 clients, providing over 535 sessions.

New Collaboration: Andrus and Yonkers Arts

Our residents enjoyed a curated tour of the **#letmefly DMX Tribute** thanks to the awesome team at **Yonkers Arts**.

The kids learned about Andrus alumni, Earl 'DMX' Simmons, and his impact on the music scene.

DMX joined Andrus at just 10 years old and stayed for 18 months. Later, he became a real inspiration, promoting #traumainformed support and encouraging others to open up about their struggles.

"Talking is actually one of the bravest things you can do. One of the bravest things you can do is... let it out."

(Quotation from the New York Post article, "Inside DMX's Traumatic Childhood: Legendary Ruff Ryder Survived a Lot" by Asia Grace, published on April 7, 2021.)

@andruschildren