We all want to connect with others, to have a sense of purpose, to maintain positive mental health, and to work towards achieving our personal goals. At CUCS program sites we offer opportunities for our clients whether they are living on the streets, in transitional sites, or in permanent housing. These opportunities include therapy, case management, recreational activities, and self-support groups.

What motivates you to face the challenges of your job each day? For some IMT nurses, like Judson Carter, the answer is the personal connection they make with their clients. When carts full of shopping are set aside, and the tears in their eyes turn into a smile, that is what motivates him. He has found that by supporting wellness and belonging that is critical for mental and emotional stability, he is able to connect with his clients and help them maintain positive mental health.

As we recognize Mental Health Awareness Month this May, it is crucial to recognize the tremendous impact of the wellness programs offered by CUCS. These programs are essential components of maintaining positive mental health and overall well-being. They include personal goal setting activities, peer support programs that allow clients to process life experiences, gardening programs that encourage clients to eat the vegetables and fruits they grow, inspirational activities that encourage connection between clients, and tutoring for children at family sites that also inspire parents to connect with their children.

Wilfred Schermer is an IMT nurse who has dedicated his career to helping clients achieve their goals. As an IMT nurse, he always wears many hats. Some of his responsibilities include going to school with clients, accompanying them to medical appointments, and providing care in the community. He has observed that many patients have "fallen through the cracks," and it is his job to find them and provide the care they need. He has found that by working with patients in a residential setting and using a flexible approach, he is able to reach many who would otherwise be lost.

Another unique aspect of our client relationships is that we foster close bonds with patients in achieving their goals. We provide care without judgment, instead of working in an office. Our patients feel like we are there for them, and they are not being judged. This is critical for mental and emotional stability.

Our clients are individuals who have "fallen through the cracks," and it is our job to help them get back on their feet. This can be the most challenging aspect of this work, but it is also the most rewarding. When clients are able to achieve their personal goals, it is a testament to the power of the relationships that we form with them.

Inspirational activities that encourage connection between clients are a key component of our program. These activities include jewelry-making, which provides a creative outlet for clients and a sense of accomplishment. We have seen clients who were previously isolated become active participants in these activities, and it has been a powerful moment for many.

The CUCS/Janian psychiatric program is an IMT program that provides telehealth psychiatry appointments. This program provides access to mental health services for clients who may not be able to physically access a provider.

We consistently track and measure our impact to ensure that we are making a difference in the lives of our participants. The CUCS/Janian psychiatric program is run by Breaking Ground, and CUCS/Janian has provided psychiatric services to 10,371 clients as of July 1, 2022. Our clients are individuals who have "fallen through the cracks," and it is our job to help them get back on their feet.

Closing Thoughts

As we learn from Wilfred Schermer's story, the healing power of creative expression is a key component of our program. Wilfred credits his mentor with changing his perspective and taking him in a new direction. He learned how to be a leader himself, which inspired him to start leading himself. Wilfred's story is a powerful reminder of the healing power of creative expression and the importance of connecting with others.