

Roots and Wings Announces New Executive Director: Shaun Adams, LCSW



Denville, New Jersey - Roots & Wings (R&W), a nonprofit founded in 1999 to support young adults who have aged out of the foster care system in New Jersey, has appointed a new Executive Director, Mr. Shaun Adams, LCSW. A nonprofit leader who has supported vulnerable populations for more than twenty years, Adams joined R&W as program director in 2019.

Founded by Irene DeGrandpre, a CASA volunteer and New Jersey Hero honoree, R&W began in Morris County as a community-based volunteer operation. R&W established the RISE Program, a residential program to support young people as they transition from foster care to independence. R&W's accomplishes its mission by providing safe housing, educational support, case management, counseling and life skills in order to empower motivated young adults toward self-sufficiency. The FLY Program initiative collaborates with colleges to provide aged out foster youth who have housing with all other services through on campus courses.

While an undergraduate student at Iona College, Adams realized his life's passion to provide support and resources to others in need during a service trip to Nairobi, Kenya. There, he assisted in the construction of a community center in the impoverished village of Kibera and provided support and counseling to its residents.

Adams received his Bachelor of Social Work degree from Iona College and began his career as a case manager at the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) in West Harlem, N.Y., providing direct care services to severely mentally ill, homeless individuals. During that time, he earned his Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from the Hunter College School of Social Work's Advanced Standing Program. Subsequently, he was promoted to social worker and oversaw evidence based social services to mentally ill and formerly homeless adults living at Christopher Residence in Chelsea, N.Y.

Over the next decade, Adams was promoted to direct care worker and moved through the administrative ranks as a clinical coordinator, assistant director and then, program director at the Prince George Hotel—the second largest supportive housing development in the United States, which provided housing and rehabilitative social services to more than 415 individuals.

After nearly two decades of working in supportive housing with adults, Adams chose a new career path—to work with at-risk youth and young adults. "I was excited to join Roots and

Wings as the program director and I'm honored to continue this work as its executive director," says Adams. "Maintaining a sense of community, ensuring our young people are safe, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and expanding our outreach is a critical component of who we are and what we do."

Roots and Wings' focus to expand and strengthen its services includes a redesigned FLY Community Outreach program, more robust mentoring program and an increase of intensive, evidence-based practices that provide wrap around services, and link clients to community-based resources such as therapists, psychiatrists, doctors and other professionals during critical times of transition.

"We have always believed that our model of helping young adults age out of the foster care system is one that could be greatly expanded and we are beyond thrilled that Mr. Adams has accepted the position as executive director. We welcome his leadership and forward thinking as we continue to grow and expand this very important mission," says, June Toth, board president of Roots & Wings.

For more information visit rootsandwingsnj.org or call Shaun Adams at 973-525-3326 or Shaun.Adams@rootsandwingsnj.org