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How Berkshire Farm Center & Services For Youth Is Changing Lives

Berkshire Farm Center & Services for Youth, the organization that's helping foster children find homes, is in great need of homes for teens.

Patch Patch Spotlights, Brand Partner

Posted Fri, Mar 15, 2019 at 1:45 pm ET

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[Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth](#) is one of New York State's leading nonprofit child welfare agencies, serving thousands of children and their family members across the state. For more than 130 years, the organization has been empowering children, their families and their communities to become healthier and stronger.



Director Carly Katz and Program Coordinator Alison Novohradsky of Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth, take pride in their job of reuniting children with their biological family or helping a child find their "forever home." Patch caught up with Katz and Novohradsky to learn more about their gratifying work, as well as the organization that is changing children's lives for the better:

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Katz and Novohradsky: Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth has

been around for over 130 years, but in the Westchester area we are fairly new and have only been around for about one and a half years.

Patch: What attracted you to the line of work you're in, and how did you get started?

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Katz and Novohradsky: What really attracted us to this line of work was the desire to help others in need. Foster care is an area with a large need for help, especially in our Westchester County area. Choosing the field of social work gave us the opportunity to become involved with foster care.

Patch: If you had to sum up your business mission to a stranger in five words, what would those words be?

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Katz and Novohradsky: Community, family, permanence, safety and stability

Patch: What's the biggest challenge or most difficult moment you've faced in your job?

Katz and Novohradsky: For us, it would probably have to be finding foster homes for youth in need, specifically homes for teenagers. There is a higher need to find foster home placements for teenagers, or a “forever home,” as we like to call it. Some older youth are residing in residential facilities or group homes and are ready to step down and find their forever home. Some of the youth are also in need of a willing foster parent to help them overcome some hurdles in life, in order to return home to their biological family. The hardest thing to see is a child, no matter what age, without a warm and loving home to have at the end of the day.

Patch: What's the most satisfying part of your job?

Katz and Novohradsky: The most satisfying part of this job is to being able to help a child reunite with their biological family or being able to see a child find their forever family and be adopted.

Patch: How would you say your business or organization distinguishes itself from the others?

Katz and Novohradsky: All of our foster parents are certified to be therapeutic foster parents, which means that they are trained specifically to meet those needs of children in foster care; children who have experienced trauma at all different levels. We want our foster parents to understand and be able to meet the needs of a child who has gone through extensive life changing traumas.

When our foster parents can understand and have knowledge of “what happened to this child” instead of the “what is wrong with this child?” we see success and positive outcomes. We all strive to work together as a team here at Berkshire. It is a tough job to be a foster parent and witness behaviors that are a result of trauma. We want to assure that, along with our youth in care, that our foster parents needs are also being met. Our team is made up of a huge support system, from the director, the program coordinator and homefinder to the family specialist and the clinician, we are all here for support.

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Patch: What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever been given when it comes to success?

Katz and Novohradsky: Keep moving forward, no matter how hard it gets and appreciate the bad times and little successes, because they will only help you grow in the end.

Patch: Are there any new projects or endeavors you’re working on that you’re extra excited about?

Katz and Novohradsky: Continuing to build our foster care program in Westchester County and striving to find foster parents willing to take in and help teenage foster youth.

Patch: How can Patch readers learn more about your work and business?

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Katz and Novohradsky: If you are interested in becoming a foster parent

please contact our homefinder, Lisa at (516) 406-1853 or [by email](#). You can also visit [our website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#).

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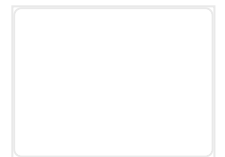
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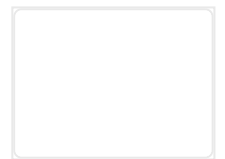
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