



## CYN CONNECTION

JANUARY 2026

### INSIGHTS AND UPDATES ON *Real Stories. Real Support. Real Progress.*

#### A Note from Our Executive Director Gail Weil, LCSW, CADC



Dear Friends,

After many years in this work, I've learned that real change rarely happens in big, dramatic moments. It shows up in conversations. In consistency. In the steady work of building trust and helping people feel supported over time. The pieces in this issue reflect that kind of work.

You'll read about young people finding stability through mentoring, families gaining tools and confidence, and programs focused on meeting people where they are. None of this work is flashy. It is practical, relational, and rooted in what people actually need. That has always been central to how CYN approaches mental health care.

For nearly 50 years, our focus has remained the same: making sure children, teens, adults, and families in our community can access support when and where they need it. The settings change. The needs evolve. But the importance of being present, listening, and responding therapeutically does not.

Thank you for taking the time to read these stories and learn more about what's happening at CYN. Your continued interest and support make it possible for this work to continue, day after day.

Warmly,  
*Gail*

#### In this newsletter:

Insight from a Parent, Setting Goals, National Mentoring Month, Joy Summit - Keep reading!

#### Add to your calendar:

The Joy Summit: Saturday, Jan 31, 2026 from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Zion-Benton Township High School

CYN Gala: Saturday, September 26 at the DeerPath Inn in Lake Forest



## Through a Parent's Eyes

*"I want to say thank you for your kindness and generosity. Thanks for choosing the job you have and being active with [my son]. [He] looks forward to the time you guys spend and it has made him a better person. I think he believes some of the stuff I say when he gets in trouble because he says that you say most of the same stuff I do.*

*I could never repay you for this time I am forever grateful and appreciative.*

*I hope the rest of the year treats you and your love ones good and the new year is all you want, need and more"*

– Parent of a Mentee in CYN's  
Therapeutic Mentoring Program

Growth usually  
starts with one  
small choice.



## Starting the Year with Balance and Intention

As we move into a new year, it can help to think about goals with **intention rather than pressure**. Change does not have to be dramatic to be meaningful. Progress is often built through small, consistent steps that fit into real life. **Choosing goals that feel realistic** makes it easier to stay engaged and less likely to feel overwhelmed.

**Caring for your mental health also means paying attention to how you manage stress.** Balance comes from routines that support you, setting boundaries when needed, and giving yourself permission to rest. That might look like getting outside, moving your body, making time for something you enjoy, or simply stepping back when things feel heavy. **These choices matter.**

**Emotional health is also closely tied to connection.** Making time to check in with people you trust, talk things through, and build simple moments of togetherness can strengthen relationships and offer stability when life is challenging. Growth rarely happens overnight. Steady, compassionate steps forward are what create lasting change, and support is always available when you need it.



## JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

CYN's Therapeutic Mentoring program connects youth in Lake County with supportive, positive mentors at no cost to the mentee participant. The program serves young people who have been impacted by opioid and other substance use and are often navigating related mental health challenges. At its core, this work is about making sure youth feel supported, understood, and not alone.

Each participant is matched with a trained professional mentor who meets with them two to three hours each week, for up to a year. Time together may include one-on-one support and group activities, giving youth space to build relationships, talk things through, and learn alongside peers.

These consistent connections help reduce emotional and behavioral challenges while encouraging healthier choices and more positive ways of coping.

The program emphasizes practical skills like problem-solving, self-advocacy, and managing stress, while also helping youth think about their goals and next steps.

Mentors support young people as they strengthen relationships with family and peers, explore school and career interests, and connect to resources that can open doors and create new opportunities.



Interested? Reach out to CYN at  
(847) 548-6000 ext. 10 or [info@cyncounseling.org](mailto:info@cyncounseling.org)  
for more information.

# SAVE THE DATE BEHIND THE MASK



## 2026 GALA

SATURDAY | 26 SEPTEMBER

Deer Path Inn, 255 E Illinois Road  
Lake Forest, IL 60045

### HERE'S WHAT WE'RE DOING IN LAKE COUNTY AND BEYOND.

The Lake County Joy Summit organizations are excited to host the 2nd Annual Joy Summit on Saturday, January 31, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (expo opens at 8:00 a.m.) at Zion-Benton Township High School's South Commons in Zion. This community event focuses on bringing energy and connection to the winter months, with the goal of supporting mental wellbeing and helping combat the effects of seasonal affective disorder.