



CYN CONNECTION

MARCH 2026

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

A Note from our Chief Executive Officer Gail Weil, LCSW, CADC



Dear Friends,

As the seasons begin to change, it's a natural time to reflect on how important it is to stay connected to one another. Opportunities to gather with others across the community continue to show just how much people benefit from having support they can rely on.

At CYN, we see every day what a difference that makes. Whether it is a student meeting with a therapist at school or a family reaching out for help, access to care at the right time matters.

As we head into April, we are also thinking about Child Abuse Prevention Month. Prevention starts with support. When families have access to counseling, education, and consistent resources, we are better able to reduce risk and help create more stable environments for children.

We will continue to focus on being present, accessible, and responsive to the needs we are seeing across the community. Thank you for your continued support of this work.

Warmly,
Gail

In this newsletter:

Therapist Spotlight, Success stories, and a Gala Save the Date — keep reading.

Add to your calendar:

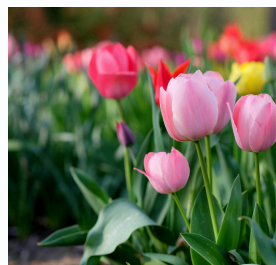
- **2nd Annual Día del Niño / Children's Day Celebration:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026, from 5:00–7:00 p.m
- **CYN Gala:** Saturday, September 26 at the Deer Path Inn, Lake Forest



Finding Her Voice

A high school student came to us hoping to build her confidence. She had moved to the United States as a young teenager and found the transition difficult, but she held onto a strong interest in theater and singing. With support and steady effort, she pushed herself outside her comfort zone and began to see herself differently. By the end of the year, she earned a leading role in her school play. It was a clear shift, not just in what she could do, but in how she saw herself.

Just like the seasons,
you are allowed to
grow, change, and
begin again.



CYN Therapist Spotlight Leslie Perez, MSW

I was born and raised in Waukegan. I continued my education at the College of Lake County and later earned my bachelor's degree from the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I went on to receive my master's degree from Dominican University. Before graduate school, I spent three years working in community mental health, where I gained experience that continues to shape my work at CYN.

I value the opportunity to work in Waukegan schools. It is meaningful to give back to the community where I grew up, even when the work is challenging. Being someone students can relate to, and offering guidance from that shared perspective, matters. I want them to see that where they come from does not limit what they can achieve.

Child Abuse Awareness

90% of child sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator in some way

68% are abused by a family member

Only 10% of sexually abused children are abused by a stranger

Neglect, the most widespread form of child abuse, makes up more than 59% of abuse cases

How you can create awareness

Encourage local businesses, schools, and the community to have open conversations about child abuse in Lake County. It's a good way to create awareness and help prevent child abuse.

Encourage dialogue between peers and empower children to have conversations about personal and body safety.

Sharing knowledge is also a good resource for advocacy. All children deserve a chance at a safe childhood, and support makes that possible.

SAVE THE DATE

BEHIND THE MASK



2026 GALA

SATURDAY | 26 SEPTEMBER

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

