



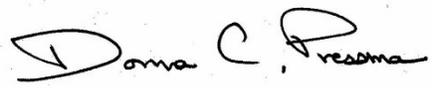
The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ), is a statewide non-profit agency serving New Jersey's most vulnerable individuals and families, including kinship care providers. Each year CHSofNJ helps individuals create pathways to success through delivery of family-focused services designed to support, nurture and encourage sustainable improvements to quality of life.

For nearly two decades, CHSofNJ has been providing high-quality and professional services to kinship care providers - those individuals caring for children, nieces, nephews or cousins of their family members in seven central New Jersey counties. In 2019-2020, 87 percent of CHSofNJ kinship caregivers were over age 41 and 37 percent were over age 60; a number of kinship caregivers were in their mid- to late-80s. Kinship caregivers struggle financially, with 78 percent of kinship caregivers considered low-income as defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services 2021 poverty guidelines. Of the 78 percent, 42 percent were very low-income according to the NJ state definitions –with less than \$20,000-\$22,000 in annual income. Kinship caregivers also struggle with myriad other social determinants of health – most have assumed care of their kin because of unstable or unsafe conditions those children were living in, and many have chronic health or mobility limitations that add complexity to an already tough situation.

One of the biggest barriers CHSofNJ kinship caregivers face is lack of access to reliable transportation. Many kinship caregivers do not own their own vehicles and have limited funds to pay for bus passes, taxis or services like Uber/Lyft. The limited availability of public transportation, especially in Mercer County, New Jersey where many of our kinship caregivers live, makes getting to doctor appointments, school meetings, or supportive services extremely difficult.

A large passenger van, such as those that hold 12 – 15 individuals, would allow CHSofNJ to transport kinship caregivers enrolled in CHSofNJ programs to and from service offerings such as informational workshops about financial security, maintaining health and fitness as we age, and what kinship caregivers can expect to see developmentally from the children in their care. Presently, CHSofNJ offers such interactive and educational multiple times per week, engaging approximately 1,100 kinship caregivers each year. Having the ability to offer transportation to kinship caregivers will help CHSofNJ to alleviate some of the daily stress caregivers face by ameliorating the challenges of securing transportation, making it easier and more likely for caregivers to engage in service, thereby increasing their chances of success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna C. Pressma". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large 'D' and 'P'.

Donna C. Pressma
President and CEO