



SPEAKING OUT

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Children now have Hillside-Crestwood team on their side



GUEST
ESSAYISTS

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AND
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Since the early 19th century, Hillside Children's Center and Crestwood Children's Center have been serving Greater Rochester by providing services for children who suffer from behavioral challenges, emotional disturbances and mental illnesses.

We have done so as independent, not-for-profit agencies successfully competing for contracts and funding from human service agencies such as the Department of Social Services, the Office of Mental Health, the state Special Education Department and United Way of Greater Rochester.

Equally important to the success of our service delivery has been the generosity of thousands of donors and volunteers. We, of course, are not the only agencies that serve the special needs of children and their families in our community. In fact, 129 agencies across New York state provide similar services to similarly challenged young people.

A recently released Center for Governmental Research study concluded that there are unique opportunities to create administrative efficiencies among area nonprofit agencies. An editorial in the Jan. 31 *Democrat and Chronicle* spoke to this issue, stating, "more difficult than articulating the issue is gently prodding the agencies toward action."

Hillside and Crestwood have recognized this opportunity and have taken action. On Dec. 18, 1998, the Hillside

and Crestwood boards signed an affiliation agreement whereby Crestwood Children's Center and the Crestwood Children's Foundation will become affiliates of the Hillside Behavioral Health System, which is the governing corporation for Hillside Children's Center, the Hillside Children's Foundation and the Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection.

This is not a merger. The Hillside and Crestwood board and staff created a model that will allow each organization to preserve its history and identity. At the same time, they will build and share administrative expertise.

Crestwood will remain Crestwood Children's Center and will continue its long and proud history of serving children and families. Hillside will do the same.

Additionally, this agreement will result in improved services and service delivery for children and families; improved staff development; more diverse services; coordinated points of entry for families; expanded capability to seek research funding; more organizational stability; and greater cost efficiencies. Ultimately, the Hillside and Crestwood affiliation will provide the highest quality and diversity of services to children and their families in this community.

This affiliation will result in many winners as savings are reinvested into services. Clearly, the aforementioned human service funders will benefit as will Hillside and Crestwood staff.

Yet, it is our children and families who are the true recipients of this affiliation agreement. Reallocating our combined cost savings to better meet the needs of children and families is what our community and our special clients deserve. □

Richardson is president and CEO of the Hillside Behavioral Health System. Cimino is president and CEO of Crestwood Children's Center.