



Center for Family Services: Strengthening Family Ties

Center for Family Services (CFS) is a non-profit human services agency dedicated to improving the lives of children and families in southern NJ. They have 50+ programs focused on prevention, intervention and education and have been around for 90 years.

The organization, like so many others, had been experiencing a high degree of change – downsizing of some departments, expansion in others and moving a major residential program.

Every year, CFS holds a Staff Unity Networking day designed to help staff members successfully weather those changes. In the late winter of 2012, their VP of Counseling and Community Service asked us if we could help him with the design and delivery of their June meeting. This meeting had an added challenge – integrating 250 new Head Start folks into the organization.

We started with an in-depth planning session. We have learned that every great program we lead is truly an act of co-creation. We always ask the question:

“It’s a year from now, we are sitting together and you tell us that this program made a big difference, it worked like a charm. What would have happened for you to say this?”

He said that he wanted the meeting to be both inspirational and aspirational.

Even more, he wanted attendees to:

- Convene as a community of practice
- See how they are connected to a larger whole
- Feel appreciated and valued for what they contribute
- Meet people they haven’t met
- Learn something new
- Feel proud to be a part of CFS & leave with a “I can’t wait to get back to work” feeling
- Walk away saying “*WOW, that was really cool.*”





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Based on our discussions, we designed the session around a key theme – ‘Strengthening Family Ties’. The theme had a double meaning – CFS wanted to strengthen the Family Services ties as well as strengthen the family ties within the communities they serve.

We put together an agenda to achieve the intended outcomes. It included:

- The Wisdom of We™ Keynote
- Thriving in Whitewater™, Navigating Change Workshop
- Mover & Shaker™ speed networking and interviewing
- Standing Ovation™ appreciation segment

Typical of a DillonMarcus session, interaction was high. This one day event was a success on so many levels. Folks were inspired, they learned, they listened, they exchanged ideas and they acknowledged their accomplishments.

Since then, DillonMarcus was invited back to lead their 2013 meeting.

Check out highlights from the CFS Staff Unity Networking days on the DillonMarcus website. It says so much more than our words can say here.



“DillonMarcus delivered on every one of the high notes.”

T. Comito
V.P. of Counseling and Community Service

For more information on Center for Family Services, visit www.centerffs.org.

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