



# NORTH AMERICAN FAMILY INSTITUTE, INC



**Shaping Our Future  
Empowered By Our Past**



# Celebrating NAFI's 45 years of care

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## 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Greetings

Howard Rich, Chairman of the NAFI/NFI Board of Directors

*What a wonderful celebration — NAFI/NFI's 45<sup>th</sup> birthday — 45 years of remarkable service to our fellow men, women and children that began humbly, but with great hope, in a garage in Marblehead, Massachusetts 45 years ago.*

Who would have ever believed that Yitzhak Bakal, a young man born in Baghdad, Iraq, could have had the vision and drive to build this great organization — NAFI/NFI!

Change is the norm in our world. We live in a society in which few organizations last more than one or two generations. NAFI/NFI is, however, one of those rule-breakers. It beat the odds by virtue of its unique culture, its entrepreneurial spirit, and the wonderful people who embraced the Normative Approach propounded by Dr. Bakal. Throughout its history, its creativity met the difficult challenge of providing social services in bad as well as good times.

Culture is what NAFI/NFI is all about. It starts with Dr. Bakal, who inspires all by his leadership, his vision and the Normative Community. His belief that building communities of sharing and trust, whether in the home, office or in NAFI/NFI's many programs, is essential to the mission of the organization.

NAFI/NFI's sense of caring and commitment permeates the whole organization. Although NAFI/NFI staff provide great services for their clients, they are more than employees — they lead lives inspired by high ideals and a sense of service. I feel privileged as a Board member to get to know them and to help them perform their work.

Happy Birthday NAFI/NFI — we love and admire you!



Congratulations  
on 45 years  
of spreading  
kindness.

*Roger & Cheryl  
Marcorelle*

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## Words from NAFI/NFI's Board of Directors

"Since 1974 when Dr. Bakal founded NFI, I have been privileged to see and/or be part of the organization in different ways. NAFI/NFI innovates to mend the lives of troubled and disadvantaged youth and families in this country and does so with unparalleled compassion and respect. Light emanates from the programs that provide innovative treatment services that empower individuals, heal families and support communities. Embodying the spirit of community and fueled by community needs, NAFI/NFI serves as a model for the world."

Nancy Grossman

"NAFI/NFI grew out of deinstitutionalization and a real commitment to community-based services. Every Board meeting I attend I am not only impressed by the innovation that is happening but also the degree of dedication, professionalism and absolute commitment to evidence-based practices. I have never seen an agency rally around a mission with such passion and service. Congratulations to the founder and all the dedicated staff of NAFI/NFI."

Bill Madaus

"At NAFI Board meetings, I am often in awe when various staff members come to present to the Board. They invariably have been with the organization for decades and are totally committed to helping one another. It is evident that their reward is the work — but more importantly — it's the relationships they build while helping people."

Roger Marcorelle

"NAFI's broad purpose, its diverse service offerings and its successful history embodies a single notion — the value of humanity. And it has done so with resilience through ever-changing conditions. Each challenge has meant opportunity — to create, to innovate and to grow in order to address the needs of an increasingly diverse client population. This is the reason for our persistent success. Much must be attributed to strong and continuous leadership and an energetic team of committed professionals who fully embrace NAFI's mission. I look forward to every Board meeting."

Jackie Rosario

"With longer service on the Board I am continuing to learn more about the way that NAFI/NFI serves as a role model for social service agencies in our country and around the world. Our programs are respected and adopted by others, enlarging our impact beyond the more visible things that we do."

Matthew Sagal

"I recently joined the NAFI Board after serving on the NFI Board as a parent advocate as my son used so many of their services. With juvenile mental health and substance abuse reaching a crisis point, these services have never been more vital or valuable to the families and individuals concerned. The organization's deep commitment to improving the lives of young people and families is really making a lasting and positive difference."

Katherine Turner

"As a long-time member of the Board, I've been honored to be associated with NAFI. I'm always impressed by the enthusiasm, optimism, and competence of NAFI leaders and staff, no matter the challenges they have faced through the years. May we continue to go from strength to strength!"

Barbara Vinick

"At a time of political discord and continuing acts of violence against the most vulnerable and innocent members of our society, the work of NAFI and other like-minded organizations provide hope, stability and care when it is most needed."

Jim Zafris

"NAFI Board meetings are exceptional. I always look forward to them and come away refreshed and energized. The Board is lively, engaged, seriously involved, and eager to learn and help. The agenda often includes clients or special presentations from the field — informative, often very moving and confirmation of the deep commitment of the staff, which in turn reinforces the Board's commitment to this outstanding organization."

Margaret Zusky



Dr. Yitzhak Bakal and NAFI:

**The quintessence of  
45 years of inspired leadership and  
compassionate services.**

Congratulations with great admiration!

*Sharon & Howard Rich*



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## 45th Anniversary, A Reflection

Dr. Yitzhak Bakal, President, NAFI/NFI



Throughout our 45 years of providing care for tens of thousands of youth, adults and families, we have worked hard to continually break new ground to develop holistic continuums of service to meet ever-changing needs and realities. But we have also recognized that it is easy to become stuck in the status quo, of repeating what has worked in the past at the expense of being pioneering and nimble. We pride ourselves in attracting and retaining staff who over the years have become competent and knowledgeable leaders who always seek fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. They also have served as great role models for the new, younger employees joining our organization.

Continually adapting and evolving in these ways have kept us on our toes, vital and enthusiastic but also helped us to play a role in leading the field of behavioral health, education, and human services. We continue to anchor our work in the principles of the Normative Community Approach, emphasizing the sense and the spirit of community, spirit that encourages mutual support, mutual healing and mutual teaching. Such a community approach embraces diversity in all its forms — diversity of staff, diversity of cultures and diversity of interventions.

Combining the wisdom of the old with the dynamic innovation of the new has enabled us to address the underlying sources of conditions that needed change, rather than only the immediate challenges they present. Focusing on these deeper principles and concepts has informed our practices and even the Normative Community Approach that gives individuals and communities opportunities to shape their own futures.

NAFI/NFI operates in a decentralized, non-hierarchical way, empowering every region and every part of the organization. It helps us integrate into communities to better understand and support each local need. At the same time, we remain united by our mission and by our sense of community, always keeping our clients front and center. We have regularly analyzed our work, trying to learn from our mistakes while still taking healthy risks. As we grew from a single outreach program in Massachusetts to a diverse, multi-state agency, we have encouraged entrepreneurship and breaking new ground but never undertaken growth for growth's sake or survival at any cost. There were times when we stumbled, or felt beaten by budget cuts, yet we tried to never compromise the quality of care or safety of our clients. It has allowed us to lead the way with cutting-edge community-based and home-based care, and more recently with highly effective early intervention and prevention initiatives. Today NAFI/NFI programs and services are renowned nationally for achieving healing and treatment successes.

As we contemplate the ever-evolving challenges that shape NAFI/NFI's ongoing work, I am confident that our leaders, whether Board members, executive or program staff, will remain forward-looking and undertake the necessary risks to support our mission to better the lives of all those we serve.

# 45 Years Strong!

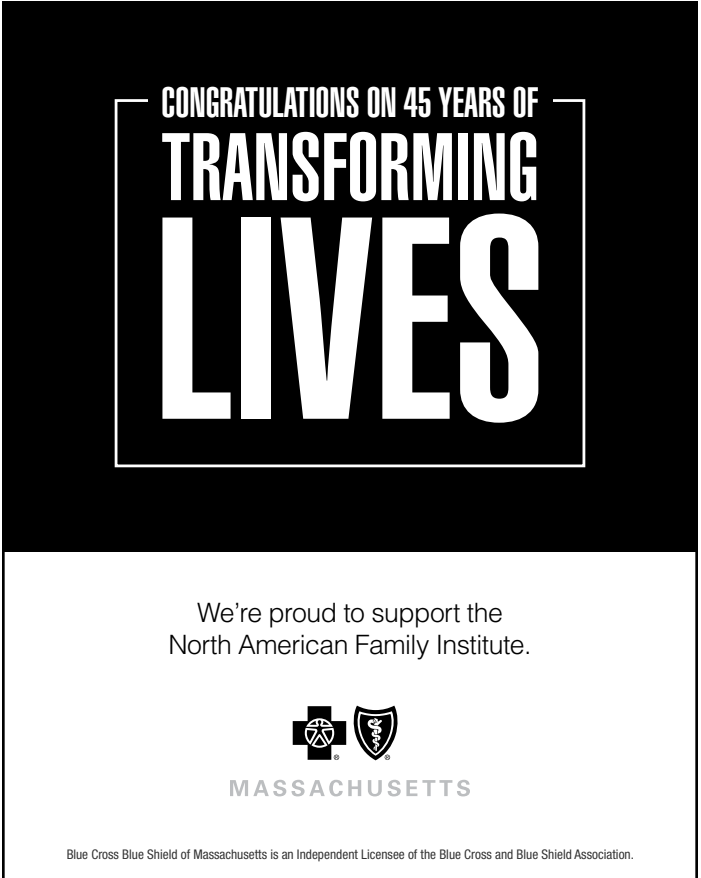
Hildy Paris, Chief Operating Officer, NAFI/NFI

I joined NAFI/NFI 30 years ago after spending numerous breakfast meetings with Dr. Bakal discussing the prospect of leaving state government to join NAFI, a mission-driven agency that he started with the belief that organizational bureaucracy could be replaced with agency consensus building. I recognized then the uniqueness of Dr. Bakal's leadership style and his ability to create an organization that was more like a family and a close knit community. I've witnessed much growth and many changes in the years since then, and that spirit and commitment to the mission have never wavered.

Dr. Bakal has instilled in us his "normative approach" which is utilized by all NAFI/NFI programs to unite diverse people around a shared mission and then empower them to make their own unique contributions. NAFI/NFI is built upon a culture of trust and sharing, where leaders are encouraged to take chances and be entrepreneurial in service to the children, families and adults we represent. When a risk pays off, we share the benefits and opportunities across the agency. When a risk proves painful, we share the lessons across the agency and help one another overcome challenges.


This entrepreneurial courage has kept NAFI/NFI on the front lines of change for 45 years. From the dismantling of institutions to the advent of community-based care and family-based services, we have fought to secure maximum empowerment and independence for all of our clients. The move toward evidence-based programming and community prevention initiatives has us pushing again, as we seek to secure new resources to do more for people in the most effective and humane manner possible.

I am motivated by our mission and core values every day. As the Chief Operating Officer, my role is to empower our staff and secure every advantage possible to allow NAFI/NFI to continue driving innovation and standards of excellence. I celebrate 45 years of NAFI/NFI with all of you and with our clients — past, present and future. May we remember to celebrate every milestone and think outside of the box so we will maintain the integrity of Dr. Bakal's early vision and hard work as we adapt to the ever-changing needs and opportunities of the world we live in. For all of the great achievements, I say congratulations NAFI/NFI on "45 Years Strong!"



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**TRANSFORMING  
LIVES**

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# Some Thoughts on the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NAFI/NFI

Dr. Dan Rosenn, Medical Director

It is hard to believe that we are approaching our 45th anniversary. It seems like just a few years ago that I was introduced to NFI for the first time. I met with Yitzhak, Steve Hahn, and Paul Gerson in a conference room with a spectacular view overlooking the Danvers marina, replete with yachts, sun sparkling off the water, and marshlands rippling in the soft wind. Coming from a stark urban hospital setting, I couldn't help thinking what a wealthy, privileged company was interviewing me.

Over the ensuing 35 years, I have come to realize just how wrong and how right my first impressions were. Financially, of course, we have never swum in the big bucks. Yet in a health care environment that has been ever-changing, unpredictable, and the opposite of extravagant, this organization has always creatively found the path forward. Constantly forging new programs, pruning old ones no longer relevant, but always persevering no matter what the systemic challenges. This quality of resilience and endurance has always been, and continues to be, an essential part of our personality.

But the real wealth of NAFI/NFI has always been the devotion and caring of our staff. Despite the fact that we come from so many different and diverse backgrounds, each of us has melded into a larger community with underlying common values. At its heart, it's been the shared effort to restore our clients to their best potential, to not see them as broken or defective, but to build on and redeem their strengths and skills. I have the utmost admiration and amazement for our staff, who in the face of ever increasing cultural disruption and often harrowing clinical challenges, have continued to find strength and dedication from each other, from our internal culture, from our "model."

While my first impression of wealth and privilege was laughingly wrong, like so many aspects of discovery, my initial instincts have emerged unexpectedly true and accurate. The genuinely real privilege, which I think we all feel, has been to work within this organization and to learn and grow with it. I must express my gratitude to all the people who have made me feel part of this family and have given so much of themselves to our mission. Central to this process has been Yitzhak, who has always played a uniquely Mosaic role. It is difficult to put into words my respect and warm personal regard for him. He has been a mentor and a model. He personally comes as close to embodying the soul of NAFI/NFI as any single person can. My heartfelt wish is that the next 45 years of this organization remain true to the principles and compass framed by these wonderful first 45 years.

**Congratulations  
NAFI on 45 years  
of community  
dedication.**



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# Celebrating Years of Service

Lynn Bishop, Executive Director & Amy Lefebvre, Director of Operations, NAFI Connecticut

As Dr. Bakal and NAFI/NFI celebrate 45 years of Creating Diverse and Innovative Services for People, NAFI CT celebrates 25 years of service, NAFI NY celebrates 14 years of service, and NAFI RI reaches their pearl anniversary at 30 years of service! These three individually unique states are now united under the NAFI Connecticut, Inc. umbrella, truly embodying Dr. Bakal's vision of a "decentralized, but unified" organization. The success of this new partnership is strongly attributed to the birth of the Normative Community Approach 45 years ago. The Normative Community Approach provides the strong roots of shared values and beliefs as we grow wings and venture into an exciting three state collaboration, poised for great success.



## NAFI Connecticut

Celebrating 25 years of service, NAFI CT is proud to announce that the organization has been named a "Top Workplace" for the fourth year in a row! The fact that the "Top Workplace" recognition is determined solely by employee feedback is a true testament to the foundation of the Normative Community Approach. Time and again, we have seen that what's most important to employees is a strong belief in where the organization is headed, an understanding of how it's going to get there, and the feeling that everyone is in it together. The Normative Community Approach provides the vision, sense of purpose, and connection that matter most to our employees across the state.

Dr. Bakal's emphasis on a decentralized but unified organization further empowers leaders and programs to be responsive to the unique needs of clients in our region while forging strong relationships with local stakeholders. Over the past 25 years, NAFI CT has established itself as a leader for cutting-edge and effective treatment and services for children, adults, and families throughout Connecticut.



**Thanks for making a difference.**  
It's an honor to celebrate the things that bring our community together.



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## NAFI Rhode Island

Cindy Livsey, Regional Director, NAFI RI

Celebrating our 30th anniversary this year, NAFI RI has endured many changes over the years as we have grown from a small residentially focused agency to a multifaceted organization providing a wide variety of programming to children and families. Even our group homes have received a facelift by adopting the Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) model of care. This infuses evidence-based principles into NAFI RI's expertise in building transformative congregative care communities. We are currently providing services for adults and semi-independent group care, foster care and several family-focused community based programs that allow us to provide a more expansive service array to Rhode Islanders.

NAFI RI has strategically and successfully reinvented and adapted to the changes taking place within the state of Rhode Island. Embracing the vision and mission of our founder, Dr. Bakal, NAFI RI has remained creative and flexible, while keeping our consumers front and center. Whether it be our partnership with NAFI CT, evolving service systems, or the dynamic needs of those we serve — each transition has made NAFI RI resilient and stronger. As an agency, we do not fear change, but rather feel prepared and equipped for the ever-changing world of human services.

## NAFI New York

Ayeshah Parker, Regional Director, NAFI NY

The New York Region congratulates and celebrates NAFI/NFI and Dr. Bakal for 45 years of providing care for youth, families and adults! NAFI NY has been delivering high quality services for 14 years. A commitment to our shared values of improving the lives of others through innovation, diversity, and the belief that people can change has produced a NY team full of passion, expertise, and dedication to our clients and families.

Over the last 14 years, the NY Region has been a catalyst for change. Through our work with youth in foster care, support of family preservation, and advocacy for improved community and police relations, we have used our communal purpose to manifest the vision, established by Dr. Bakal, of collective responsibility.

Entering our next chapter, we are even more energized by our union with the Connecticut and Rhode Island regions as we work towards strengthening our organizational structure and culture, which infuses our daily work with a commitment to sustainable, inclusive and pioneering practices. As we look to the future, we can't wait to be a part of the activities and progress on which this agency is built, and are very proud to be on board for this journey.



The Bakal Family

salutes

**NAFI/NFI**

on its

**45 years of care**



**abacus**

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## Congratulations to NAFI and Staff

45 years of serving the community with great successes and achievements

Abacus Benefit Consultants proudly support the NAFI Programs in creating, maintaining, and providing positive life changing experiences for many youth, families and adults.

Best wishes to all in the coming years!

*Bob Chin & Staff*



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JMK Systems Solutions, Inc. **congratulates Dr. Bakal and NAFI/NFI on 45 successful years** of transforming the lives of others through their strong mission and practice of community, leadership, diversity and compassion.



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## On NAFI's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Lydia Todd, Executive Director, NFI Massachusetts

When we reflect on our history, we naturally consider our illustrious founder, Dr. Bakal, and the thousands of individuals and families who we have been honored to serve. Indeed, by maximizing potential, restoring hope, and building community, we have been witness to so much positive transformation that it is hardly surprising that we have thrived for so many decades. On the occasion of our 45th anniversary, NFI Massachusetts are reflecting on the transformative power of NFI on the lives of the thousands of staff members who have blessed us with their commitment, time and talent.

Some of us found NFI young — fresh out of school even — and fell in love for the long haul. These loyal team members decided that we would dedicate our lives to this good work, and we number in the dozens. The wisdom and stability this core group provides is invaluable.

Some of us found NFI even younger — we were service recipients or family members that so appreciated how we were nurtured that we made a career of “giving back.” This group provides client and family voices and compelling advocacy for social justice. These folks are a testament to the transformative work we receive and deliver.

Some came a little later to NFI, after experiencing other settings and environments, and we recognize that NFI has a lot of heart, and that we care deeply about the quality of life of those who nurture transformation. This group reminds us that this is a special place, and also brings innovative and novel ideas in to make us even more effective.

And then there are those who have returned after a “sabbatical”; we were at NFI and left for various reasons, only to realize that being surrounded by caring and compassionate human service workers on a daily basis is priceless. Nearly 15% of us fall into this category. This group has decided the grass really ISN'T greener, and that NFI is more than just a job.

The 600 folks that are here with us today represent just the tip of the “School of NFI” iceberg! There are literally thousands of NFI alums throughout the Commonwealth and we bump into them everywhere. They invariably speak of the skills they developed while they were with us, and the camaraderie (and frustration) of group home and community work. These former NFI interns and staff are now teachers, police or probation officers, social workers, administrators, court officials, politicians, preachers, doctors, service people... you name it. It's not just a small world; NFI has truly had an effect far beyond our service to clients and families. We have positively inoculated the Commonwealth with individuals who cleave to our fundamental values and are striving to make the world a better place. On this anniversary, we reflect on how our interactions every day with our colleagues — old and new — help make the world a better place, and how rare and sweet it is to be surrounded by truly good and decent people who are continuously challenging, transforming, creating and seeking to maximize everyone's potential.





# 45 Years! Shaping Our Future — Empowered By Our Past

Paul L. Dann, PhD, Executive Director, NFI North

What a journey we've been on! From the early days of the organization where the addition of one program could represent a 50% growth in our service delivery to the present day where the Agency's impact is felt across the life span through its more than 100 programs and services. And while the tale of our growth is remarkable in and of itself, the most remarkable aspect is found in the core values and beliefs that informed our very genesis and continue as a driving force.

We've stayed true to the importance of dignity, respect and empowerment. We've held fast to the idea that all people have something meaningful to contribute and that the voice of the people we serve must be honored. We've also taken the stance that we should learn from each other, that no one is perfect, and it's only by understanding our foibles that we are able to truly learn and grow. Inherent in this is that the road forward is one of possibility and growth.

Taking this perspective does not happen by chance. Today's society is more likely to blame and scapegoat rather than work to understand and empower people. We're fortunate that Dr. Bakal, with the support of the team here at NAFI/NFI, has taught us to act in a way that is "anti-gravitational". We choose to keep our core values and beliefs intact as we pursue the organization's mission.

Sticking to the values that were central in the creation of the organization is more than an exercise in nostalgia. On the contrary, it's an important part of how we have successfully met the challenges and demands inherent in our work. Today, with our mission and values front and center, we've been able to help tens of thousands of individuals. We've stayed true to our roots by keeping an eye on the ways in which the larger system could be improved. This has made it possible to extend our impact beyond individuals to the communities we serve. Our mission and the values that we hold have provided a guidepost and the power of the normative community has helped us to advance our practice and make a difference in the lives of so many people.

The team at NFI North feels blessed to have played a role in the growth and development of NAFI/NFI. As we look back on the lessons from the past 45 years we are buoyed by the knowledge of what the future will bring. We are thankful for Dr. Bakal's leadership and for the opportunities he's provided for each of us. Happy 45th NAFI/NFI!

**Congratulations**  
to NAFI/NFI and  
its staff for  
**45 years of excellence**  
in service  
to kids and families



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# NFI Vermont: Our First Venture Out of Massachusetts

Dr. Chuck Myers, Executive Director, NFI Vermont

In 1984, the state of Vermont reached out to NFI (at that time only 10 years old and only providing services in Massachusetts) and invited us to develop programs to divert children and adolescents from the state psychiatric hospital. NFI responded and met the challenge with a proposal to develop a comprehensive continuum of care including crisis stabilization, residential care, and therapeutic foster care. Our proposal was accepted and NFI Vermont was born.

This year, as NFI is celebrating our 45th anniversary, NFI Vermont is celebrating our 35th anniversary. NFI quickly established a reputation for offering high quality mental health treatment in small programs focusing on children and families with intense needs. Our programs became known as places where the Department of Mental Health and the Department for Children and Families could refer youth in some of the most challenging situations to get a chance to heal and grow. With our help, the state of Vermont came to rely less on out-of-state and residential placements and more on treating children at home or in their communities.

NFI Vermont continued to diversify program type and funding, including developing several alternative schools and marketing services to private insurance companies, and consulting to schools and other organizations. As we continued to refine our system of direct services to consumers, we focused on several areas intensely. Our insightful, gifted, and highly committed staff studied directly with internationally renowned clinicians and researchers in the areas of wraparound, developmental trauma, and organizational trauma. We translate these learnings into our services.

We also have developed new roles in the quickly changing health care environment including developing programs, and consultation and training about developmental trauma, organizational trauma, and trauma informed and evidence-based and evidence supported practices. We now consult to and train organizations in the fields of mental health, child welfare, education, judicial, and juvenile justice. In addition, we have been asked by several communities to consult with them to develop wraparound and trauma informed services. We are involved in state-wide efforts to transform the physical health care system.

Over the last 35 years, NFI Vermont has been recognized for providing cutting-edge mental health and education services that are individualized for adolescents and families who are in some of the most challenging situations. As we move forward into our next 35 years, we are inspired by those who came before us. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with so many courageous adolescents and families, who trust us to share their struggles and accomplishments as they transform their lives. We are hopeful for the future to be broadly more equitable, as we collaborate with individuals, their families, and community partners to create new realities from possibilities not yet known.



# Standing on the Shoulders of Our Elders

Peter Carey, Executive Director, Homecare Choices

As we celebrate the great achievements of NAFI in its 45th year, our Homecare Choices program on Cape Cod is delighted to be pursuing the same NAFI mission in one of the most rapidly expanding sectors of need. Our senior population will double in coming years and people living longer lives want to retain independence and joy as they age. Thanks to the vision and support of the NAFI Board and Executive Team, Homecare Choices was able to introduce a client-centered model of home care resources in a community with a high level of need. In the NAFI tradition, our larger goal is to join seniors and caregivers as partners with a shared belief in the possibilities of better choices for aging in your own community.

There are beautiful people doing inspired work throughout the home care world but the challenges often drive quality down and leave staff and clients discouraged. With the guidance of Dr. Bakal and daily support from generous colleagues at the corporate office, we have remained steadfast in our full-service approach to every client and family. We emphasize constructive feedback and encouragement as well as team problem solving and a burnout prevention philosophy. All of this has resulted in a loyal team of nearly 40 caregivers, who tell us that they feel part of a mission to honor their clients and peers.

In the NAFI tradition, partnerships are a key strategy for overcoming barriers. We have identified partner agencies with shared values and we work together to staff cases and to encourage one another through challenging times. We are developing plans to broaden our reach together through collaboration.

The spirit of innovation born 45 years ago in a garage is alive and well as we empower good people with hope and encourage them to take new approaches to old problems. We are providers but we are also social change advocates and community builders. We find greater dignity as staff and clients because we are fueled by the NAFI spirit to include everyone and achieve something greater together.



## Congratulations on your 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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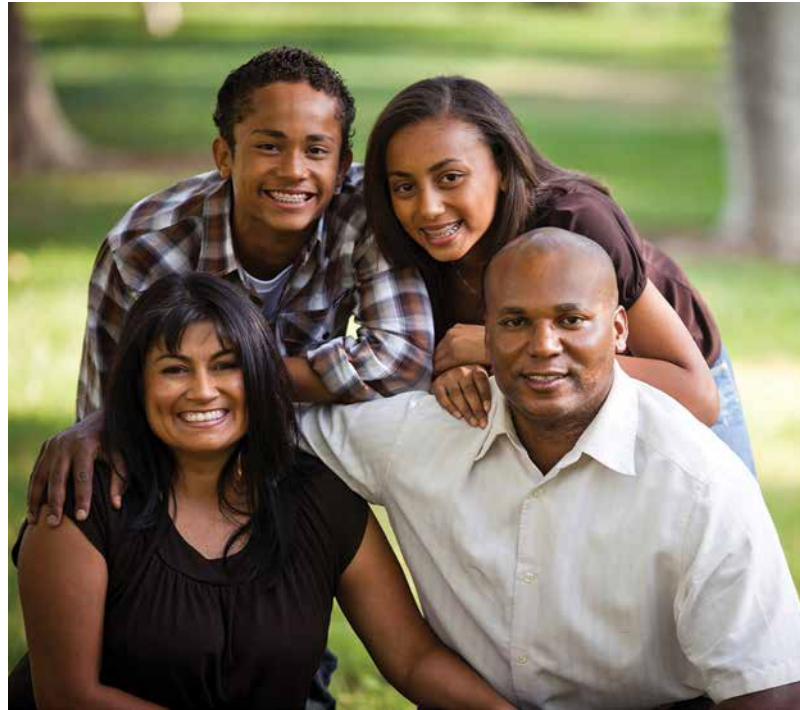
# Prevention, Early Intervention and Community-Building

Jay Paris, Director of Youth Link

Upon reaching our 45th year as a nationally renowned social services agency, it is remarkably special that the mission that drove Dr. Bakal to launch the organization from his North Shore garage those many years ago remains so fully intact. His powerful conviction that disenfranchised kids and families could greatly better their lives if given a chance to participate in their own wellbeing is still our credo.

Not that it has been easy. For 45 years the path has wound down many streets that were at times blocked by unexpected obstacles. But NAFI/NFI's ethos of being bold, entrepreneurial and mission-driven has remained constant as it took on deinstitutionalization for individuals, then community-based care in the context of families and, eventually, helping entire communities rebuild.

I am pleased to share that these innovative community-building approaches have melded into an organization within NAFI/NFI called Youth Link, which focuses largely on creating and implementing programs and services that are preventative in nature. These include the Youth and Police Initiative (YPI), which brings beat officers and at-risk teens from challenged neighborhoods together over several weeks to build genuine communication and trust. With our YPI Train-the-Trainer model, we have brought the training to over 32 cities across the country and also Bermuda and Belize. Our dedicated team has also developed a Youth Leadership Academy, a cutting-edge performing arts initiative called Hoop Suite, a culinary arts program that has launched a catering company and several community-building interventions in public housing developments in White Plains, New York, Providence, Rhode Island, New Haven, Connecticut and Boston, Massachusetts. We have embraced Dr. Bakal's philosophy of taking well-calculated risks and then learning from our successes and failures. As NAFI/NFI approaches its fifth decade, we are encouraged by the opportunities ahead to impact entire neighborhoods and look forward to entering the new frontier that prevention and early intervention bring.



**Congratulations  
NAFI/NFI on  
45 years of  
outstanding service  
to the communities  
you support!**

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## Reflection

Deborah Yates, Director, NAFI Southeast

While reflecting on my own journey with NAFI as we prepare for our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, I am reminded of the thousands of lives that have been touched, and in many cases saved, through the vision and mission of a champion in his field 45 years ago!

Although I am representing NAFI Southeast, my NAFI journey dates back to 1991 and the Mid-Atlantic Region. My decision to join an agency that was in the business of changing lives literally changed MY life, values and decisions as I was given the opportunity to work with programs and initiatives in Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Washington, DC and Florida. During the past 28 years I have witnessed the extraordinary power of the Normative Approach in the workplace and in everyday life... shaping, changing and empowering lives of youth, families and staff as we fulfilled our mission of believing people can change if given the opportunity, the support and encouragement for success. Our NAFI communities of "Dignity and Respect" have created a safe and nurturing environment for youth to face their challenges and dare to succeed beyond their wildest dreams!

The Normative Approach has been the benchmark of empowerment, lasting change and success for the youth and families we have served as our vision has been transformed into tangible missions for successful daily life. As our staff members have become change agents, they have often reflected on the valuable principles and tools from this approach that they have utilized within their personal lives and that they have taken with them as they have ventured into other fields and services. Over the years I have had the joy of keeping in touch with youth, families and staff whose lives have changed as the result of NAFI services within our region.

The courage, resiliency and resourcefulness of those we serve provide the impetus to continue NAFI's vision for our future, empowered by the challenges, opportunities and successes of our past. On behalf of the NAFI Florida staff, we are proud to be a part of the NAFI family!

Thank you, Dr. Bakal.

Our heartfelt  
congratulations  
on this wonderful  
occasion.

*Daniel &  
Barbara Rosenn*





## Words from Our Partners & Consumers

"It has been an absolute honor working with NAFI over the last decade. What is most remarkable is that although NAFI is a large organization in multiple states, the experience is always the same — from top down, to bottom up — consistently exercising humility, professionalism, integrity and most of all compassion for both clients and employees."

*John Burek, CEO, Parenting with Love and Limits*

"Congratulations to such a wonderful organization on 45 years of exceptional services."

*Beth Ann Rosica, LLC, NAFI Consultant*

"It's clear that NFI is saving people's lives, helping people to move from despair to hope and recovery."

*Joint Commission Survey*

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"I was always a very active person and then I lost a lot of independence. Homecare Choices became my partner and we are exploring this new phase of my life together. Thanks to that partnership, I'm still an active person."

*Linda, Homecare Choices Client*

"The love, care and compassion that your staff brought into my mother's life was a godsend. You eased the burden she carried and allowed her to experience a normal life, which I feared she had lost."

*Bob, Homecare Choices Client*

"This agency gave me a chance when everyone else gave up. They are a team of caring, dedicated, involved and determined people who truly enjoy the work they do in assisting hard to place adolescents back in a family setting."

*Former NAFI NY Foster Child*

"I wasn't exactly the model child during my time before NFI... including the time I spent at NFI. The most valuable lesson was simple: to just be held accountable. Realizing that I was responsible for every aspect of my life was truly an empowering moment. That meant I could never be abused again. I would never allow myself to be a victim. I walked into NFI as a victim, but I walked out empowered. At 14, I learned to own my life, and that made me a very powerful person."

*Brittany, Former NFI Child*





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# My Tribute to Yitzhak Bakal

Andrew Vachss, Children's Defense Attorney and Author

All young people look for guideposts throughout their lives. Some search intellectually; some in the street, and some in their "homes", searching for any EXIT sign. I spent a lot of my younger years looking for those guideposts. I looked in a lot of places, some of them dangerous. I did a lot of things... some of them not well-advised. Finally, I came to realize that those guideposts I sought would not be found in religion, or in DNA connections. My family is my family of choice. And, to me, the war to protect children is the only "holy war" truly worthy of the name. I believe the human race is a race... and we're not winning it. But we haven't lost it, either. Not yet. Those warriors who stand against the destruction of our species cannot be identified by their rhetoric. You know them only by their behavior.

I hope this explains why, on the 45th anniversary of NAFI/NFI's birth, I salute its father as among our planet's greatest warriors. And why I am proud to say that I love him as my brother.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the birth of what is now NAFI/NFI. It was born from Yitzhak's indomitable refusal to surrender, from his passionate belief that there must a better way, and from his risk-it-all determination to prove that "change" with "at-risk youth" could be more than some proposal-writer's buzzwords.

I remember the first tentative steps at establishing programs that put achievement above those "stats" the government regards as Sacred Scrolls. I remember the empowerment of people to make change — people no other agency would ever even hire, much less trust with such a mission. I remember the stumbles, the falls, the roadblocks, the pain ... and how this made the eventual triumph all the sweeter.

When the euphoria of "deinstitutionalization" passed, when those magical grants dried up, when the quick-fix rhetoricians faded back into their much-deserved obscurity ... Yitzhak kept walking toward the goal of the mission. I remember when those who blathered endlessly about their commitment to the "revolution" in youth work had returned to their true roles, and become the bureaucrats and businessmen they always were. And I remember Yitzhak Bakal as the last man standing.

Now, NAFI/NFI will stand forever.

It is one of the great honors of my life to have participated, in very slight ways, toward NAFI/NFI's survival back in the days where the workload it carried seemed too heavy to lift, and the odds against its success seemed insurmountable.

Materialism may satisfy some, but it counts for nothing. No one can wish for more than to have mattered, to have actually made a difference. To have changed lives, changed minds, and changed opportunities for others. If the earth is no different from your passage over it, if you have left no footprints, no trail for others to follow, what purpose did you serve?

So let others have their plaques, their little tributes and their self-promotional brochures: The very existence of NAFI/NFI, never mind its incredible growth, speaks for itself. And it will continue to speak long after you and I have left this place. That makes Yitzhak Bakal as close to an immortal as any of us will ever meet.

I know that NAFI/NFI is not one man's triumph. I know it could not have been possible without the contribution of so many, for so long. All involved have earned my deepest respect. But none more than the man who gave them the chance to be more than they ever dreamed of being: My brother, Yitzhak.



## Celebrating North American Family Institute's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



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