

Two human-services nonprofits join forces

Rising Ground, the Yonkers-based nonprofit formerly called Leake & Watts, has agreed to acquire Brooklyn-based Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families, creating a human-services nonprofit with an annual budget of \$130 million. More than half of its programming will be devoted to child welfare and services for people with developmental disabilities.

Rising Ground CEO Alan Mucatel said factors motivating the deal included the shrinking foster care population and government agencies' desire to form contracts with fewer partners to lower administrative costs. Social service agencies are being asked to partner with medical providers and show data proving their programs are effective, he said.

"We're all being driven toward ensuring our social safety net is not disconnected from the health outcomes we're looking to achieve through the health system," Mucatel said. "As we become a stronger, more diverse organization, we play a better role in making sure people get the services they need."

Rising Ground received \$250,000 from the Booth Ferris Foundation, \$80,000 from the New York Merger, Acquisition and Collaborative Fund and \$45,000 from the Redlich Horwitz Foundation to help cover integration costs. The deal is pending the approval of the state attorney general.

In acquiring Edwin Gould, Rising Ground will add programs that serve survivors of domestic violence. It also gains a greater foothold in Brooklyn, whereas many of its services are in the Bronx, including a mental health clinic.

The combined organization will have about 1,800 employees and serve 25,000 people in New York City and Westchester County. Mucatel said the nonprofit would keep its program staff at the same levels, but plans to eliminate some redundant administrative positions. He expects fewer than 10 people will lose their jobs.