

Signal Centers Major Funders

Benwood Foundation • Chattanooga Ophthalmological Foundation • City of Chattanooga

Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga • Early Head Start • Head Start

Friends of Special Children • Hamilton County Department of Education • Hamilton County Government

TN Department of Education • TN Department of Health • TN Department of Human Services

United Way of Greater Chattanooga • Weldon F. Osborne Foundation

Signal Centers • 109 N Germantown Rd • Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411 • 423.698.8528

A complete list of donors can be found on our website at www.signalcenters.org.





ANNUAL REPORT

2019





Three-year-old Ember and her seven-month-old sister Zora are keeping Signal Centers Childrens Program in the family.

Wow! 2019 was the largest year of growth in Signal Centers history! Not only did we expand services and create new opportunities, but we won several awards as well.

Signal Centers was honored with two prestigious awards:

- 2019 Non-Profit of the Year by the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce
- 2019 Best Nonprofits to Work For, a National Award by Nonprofit Times Magazine.

Both awards were the result of intentional efforts to make Signal Centers a great place to work and a focus on improving the quality of our programming.

Our growth included adding new programs like Child Care WAGE\$ Tennessee, launching the first Global Accessibility Awareness Day event in our area, adding two new early childhood classrooms, totally renovating the exterior of the building, expanding camp for students who have visual impairments and completing a new strategic plan. We doubled in size as we grew to over 200 staff and a budget of over \$18,000,000.

These new milestones are only possible because of the incredible staff, Board of Directors and Friends of Special Children. Working together we build futures and foster lifelong independence for children and families in our community!



Donna McConnico, CEO



CHILDRENS SERVICES

The importance of early childhood education can't be overstated. The early years are the foundation for lifelong learning. Most of a child's brain is developed by the age of three. At Signal Centers, children of all abilities and incomes explore and develop together. We use play as a means for building strong brains and bodies as well as developing the social and emotional skills needed for future success.

82%

Graduates with special needs required on average 22 hours less special education services per week

18%

Graduates with special needs required no further special education services

93%

Caregivers stated Summer Camps helped their child gain social skills

223

Total children served



Two-and-a-half-year-old twins, Abigail and Rebekah Mizutani, are new to Signal Centers. Their mother chose us for the individual attention we provide every child in our early education program. Abby has Cerebral Palsy. Since enrolling and receiving regular physical therapy, her balance is improving and she is well on her way to the goal of walking independently.

ABIGAIL AND REBEKAH MIZUTANI



EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Identifying delays and disabilities at the earliest point in life helps maximize the potential of every child. Signal Centers provides assessments and home based services for young children from birth through age three who may need developmental therapies. These services are available throughout East Tennessee and are funded by Tennessee Early Intervention System at no cost to the family.

240

families served
in the home

2,905

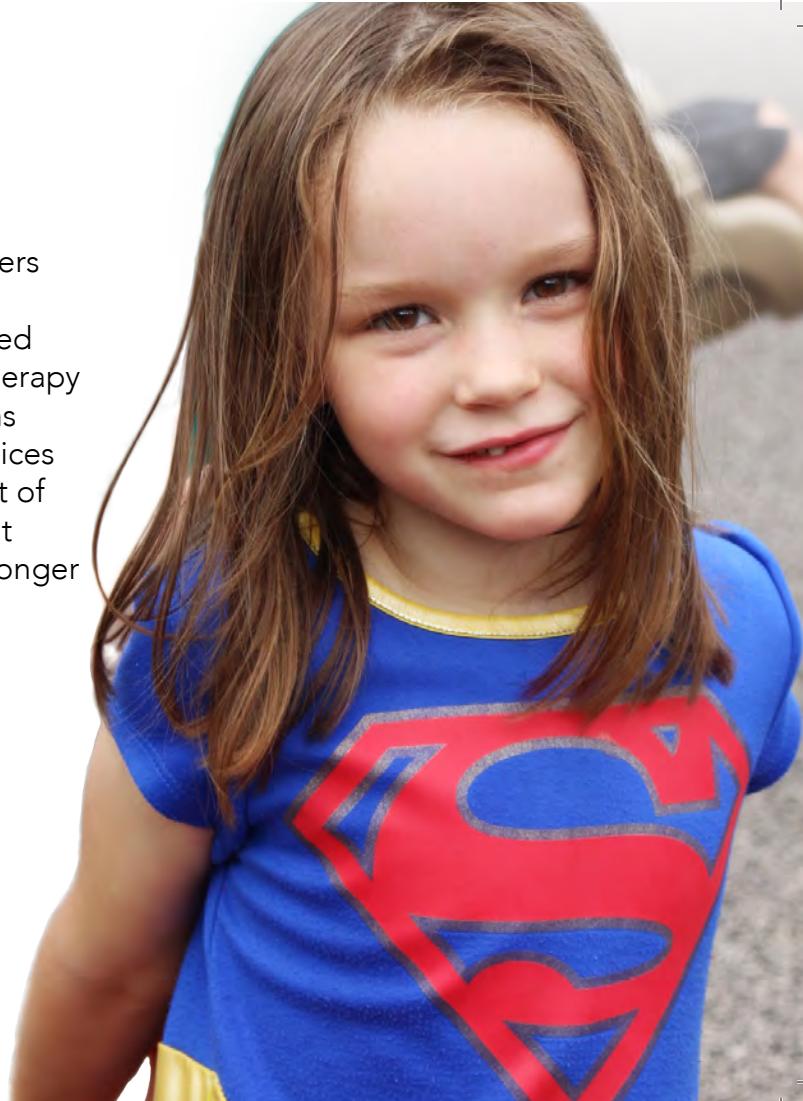
Hours of
developmental
therapy delivered

AVA TIGUE

Ava Tigue was referred to Signal Centers after receiving assessments through Early Intervention Services. She received developmental therapy and speech therapy in her home prior to entering Childrens Services. At Signal Centers, these services continued. Upon graduating in August of 2019, Ava moved on to kindergarten at East Ridge Elementary where she no longer needs any special education services.

4,967

Assessments
conducted in
East Tennessee





CHILD CARE WAGE\$® TENNESSEE

The “active ingredient” in a child’s development is their relationship with their parents, caregivers and teachers. The WAGE\$ program recognizes the importance of early childhood educators and rewards them for their education. Salary supplements increase teacher retention resulting in warm and nurturing interactions directly linked to a future of lifelong learning.

The WAGE\$ program is led by Signal Centers with funding, which began in April 2019, by the City of Chattanooga. Because of its success, it was expanded statewide with funding from the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

391
WAGE\$ recipients

\$423,800
In supplements
distributed

15,883
Children provided a stable
learning environment



HALEY DODSON

Haley Dodson, the first recipient of the WAGE\$ program, teaches for the Jewish Federation's child care center. Even with a degree, the average pay rate for an early childhood educator is \$11 per hour and the low pay is a major reason for teacher turnover. Haley says her salary supplement allows her to keep doing what she loves.

ADULT DAY SERVICES

Adult Day Services helps improve the quality of life for the participants and their families. Adults with physical and cognitive concerns have the opportunity to build friendships while enjoying social, art and recreation-based experiences. Adult Services provides an active, engaging environment with fun activities and purposeful projects. The program is also a source of support for caregivers, allowing them a chance to focus on other priorities. Our expertly trained professionals, support staff and volunteers also provide adaptive recreation and life skills development.



5,924

Caregiver
respite days

17

Field trips into
the community

22

Locations in the
community displaying
participants' original
artwork



CHRISTI MILLER

Christi Miller is a big fan of the Chattanooga Lookouts. When the opportunity arose, she decided to create an artistic salute to the team and the stadium. The piece is a work in progress and when completed, will be displayed at the Truesdale Gallery. Adult Day Services Director, Courtney Chandler, is an artist herself and inspires participants to embrace their creative side.

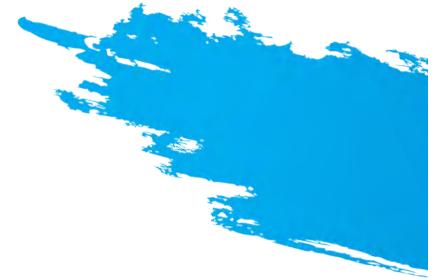
BABY UNIVERSITY



Funded by a grant from the City of Chattanooga, our mission is to prepare children for lifelong success from healthy pregnancies through early childhood development. Baby U provides intensive case management, mentoring and support to new and expectant mothers who may need the resources to provide a healthy start to life. This two-generation approach has a special focus on helping teen mothers complete their education. Baby U offers support to the entire family, including special fathering classes teaching dads how to be more involved and engaged in their children's lives.

34

Fathers committed themselves to their families through fatherhood programs



BABY U COLLEGE ATTENDEES

Baby U's two-generation approach has a special focus on helping mothers complete their education. Taelor Mayweather earned a Pharmacy Technician degree. There are currently nine Baby U moms pursuing post-secondary degrees.

93%

Teen mothers have graduated or are on track to graduate high school since program's inception

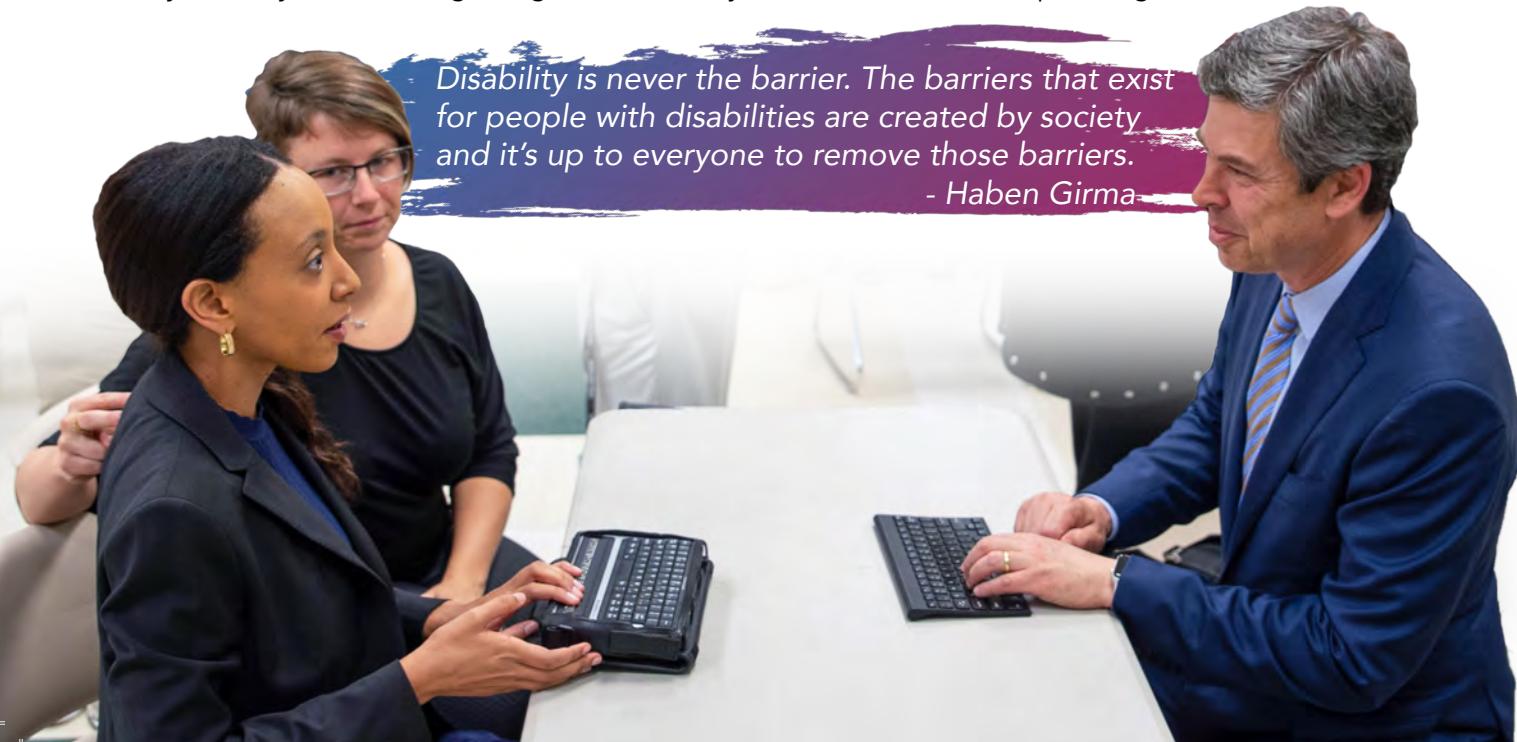
1,400

Adults and children, representing 396 families, were strengthened since the program's inception



ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS SUMMIT

Haben Girma is the first graduate of Harvard Law School who is both deaf and blind and she was the keynote speaker for our first Accessibility Awareness Summit. Over 175 members of the public, government employees, corporate partners and accessibility professionals gathered together for the summit to celebrate Global Accessibility Awareness Day. Here, Haben is having a conversation with Mayor Andy Berke using a digital braille keyboard while her interpreter gives her cues on her back.



Disability is never the barrier. The barriers that exist for people with disabilities are created by society and it's up to everyone to remove those barriers.

- Haben Girma

404

Participants empowered
through technology

2,581

Training hours

\$101,956

Worth of assistive devices
loaned to families

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES



ERNEST TSHISWEKA

Signal Centers Assistive Technology Services provides the technology, accommodations and training to help individuals with disabilities live their best lives. Ernest Tshisweka, born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, came to Tennessee as a refugee. Five years ago, Ernest lost his vision. Our accessibility experts stepped in to train him on computer and phone access, orientation and mobility and adjustment to blindness classes.

Ernest, fluent in eight languages, is now working for *Vive For A Dream Immigrant and Refugee Services* helping others adapt to their new lives. Many of the services Assistive Technology provides are supported by the Chattanooga Ophthalmological Foundation.

CCR&R NETWORK



The Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network is funded through the Tennessee Department of Human Services and provides early childhood resources for parents, early childhood educators, employers and communities. More than 100 Quality Coaches make it their mission to raise the quality of child care across the state. Coaching sessions include topics on health and safety, child development, teaching strategies and strengthening families.

4,086

On-site coaching sessions
to child care professionals

CPR CERTIFICATION

Choking can sometimes be fatal, especially among babies, toddlers and preschoolers. By providing CPR and first aid training to early childhood educators statewide, CCR&R is improving the safety of Tennessee's children.

20,463

Child care
professionals attended
training sessions

2,001

Parents trained
through workshops



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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET: \$18,185,758

PROGRAM VS. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Direct Program Services: \$16,501,217

Administration: \$1,684,542

TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET

\$379,826: Adult Day Services
\$544,217: Assistive Technology Services
\$826,200: Baby University
\$3,325,000: Child Care WAGE\$® Tennessee
\$1,598,138: Childrens Services
\$1,507,377: Early Intervention Services
\$10,005,000: Child Care Resource & Referral

