

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 Human Services • TN Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
United Way of Greater Chattanooga • Weldon F. Osborne Foundation



Scan the QR Code to access our digital annual report
and to see a complete list of individual donors.



FRIENDS OF SPECIAL CHILDREN



**SIGNAL
CENTERS**
BUILDING FUTURES, CHANGING LIVES

**2020
SPECIAL EDITION
ANNUAL REPORT**

A WORD FROM OUR CEO

Signal Center's focus on lifelong independence for all is the heart of our agency as we continue to respond to the devastation of the coronavirus, destructive tornadoes, and calls for racial justice. I firmly believe that the disruptions of the past year will have a lasting **positive** impact on our work.

We did more than transition to temporary virtual services, we carefully considered the systemic changes to our work that would inform and direct our future. We've advocated with community leaders to include individuals with disabilities and early childhood education in their plans and services. New partnerships with nonprofits, funders, government and businesses, have empowered us to not only meet urgent needs but also create sustainable solutions for the communities we serve. We are grateful for the support of our board, friends and funders.

This year, when we were so far apart physically, we brought our staff together in regular Town Hall meetings to celebrate our programs, address systemic racism, and build a workforce committed to each other and to our mission.

This annual report for 2020 tells the story of our efforts to embody resilience and forge a better future for the families and communities we serve.

Optimistically,
Donna McConnico





Tracy Bryant



Alejandra Castro



Carolyn Boyd



Leatrycia Smith



Wesley Mayes



Maria Vives



Valerie Renfro

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

- Maya Angelou



Simone Davis



Jerrica Aguilar



Byron Meador



Jennifer Vinson



Charlotte Hubert



Donna McConico



Joyce Jackson

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT SIGNAL CENTERS

Signal Centers has been a leader in celebrating diversity and advocating for equity and inclusion for individuals with disabilities and their families. This year has demonstrated the need for Signal to expand our understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The death of George Floyd launched a nationwide conversation and raised awareness of disparities existing in the justice system. The pandemic further exposed the racial inequities in housing, health care, and employment. More of us than ever before understand that communities of color have a different experience and we are aware of the need for systems change.

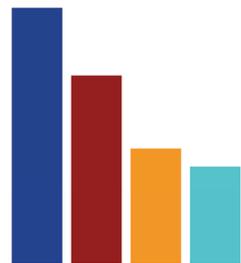
Signal Centers is committed to making intentional efforts to address any inequities that exist within our organization and to be a community leader in DEI. We began Town Hall meetings focused on diversity, equity and inclusion in May of 2020 and formed a DEI Panel to help guide our work. The following are a few of the intentional steps we have taken since that first meeting:

- Bimonthly Town Hall meetings to address diversity, equity and inclusion
- Staff and board survey by an external evaluator
- Training for managers and over 150 staff members
- Review of all policies and practices
- Intentional efforts at recruiting diverse staff
- Solicitation of minority owned businesses as vendors
- Board Development Committee is addressing the need for diversity

We encourage our team to listen, self-reflect, and seek knowledge to gain understanding and grow compassion. We are firmly committed to standing against any form of racism.

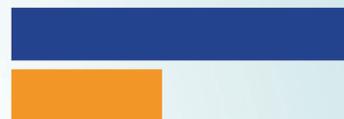
OUTCOMES DURING COVID

ADEQUATE PRENATAL CARE FOR MOTHERS



BABY UNIVERSITY: 100%
HAMILTON COUNTY: 76%
TENNESSEE: 59%
TARGET ZIP CODES: 49%

TEEN PARENT GRADUATION RATE



BABY UNIVERSITY: 91%
UNITED STATES: 53%

510

Assessments made with families

LIVELIHOOD DURING COVID

STABILITY INCREASED BY

HOUSING VULNERABILITY DECREASED BY
INCOME VULNERABILITY DECREASED BY

+35%
-21%
-28%

3,339

Contacts made with Baby U families

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. Throughout the pandemic, Baby U continued to provide intensive case management, mentoring and support virtually; provided emergency assistance with rent, utilities, diapers, food and other supplies to young families.

65,000

Diapers delivered to Baby U families

Delivering diapers and supplies to families was a vital service we offered during the pandemic, not only because of the need for those supplies, but as a way to check in and reduce the feeling of isolation in our families.





411

Virtual visits completed with children and families

161

Children served through Children's Services and Summer Camps

70

Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) completed for children with disabilities

Because of the care our educators took in ensuring a safe, sanitized learning environment, we had minimal closures in Children's Services during the pandemic.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

In the first two months of the pandemic, our teachers found creative ways to continue educating our children virtually through a distanced learning program. Because of our COVID protocols, children returned to in-person services in May. This allowed parents and essential workers to return to work, children to stay engaged and teachers to continue developing relationships with families.



EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The first step in addressing developmental delays is conducting an assessment. Signal Centers provides this assessment for children across East Tennessee. This assessment provides the roadmap for early intervention services. This year's shift to virtual appointments yielded the advantage of increased engagement by parents in the assessment process.

Once assessed, Signal Centers' staff provide ongoing developmental therapy sessions for families in Southeast Tennessee. Providing intervention at the earliest point in a child's life promotes better outcomes for children for lifelong learning. Performing these sessions virtually empowered parents to be more hands-on with implementing developmental strategies. This led to parents becoming partners with therapists and better advocates for their children.

ASSESSMENTS

6,487

Referrals received

4,350

Telehealth evaluations

DEVELOPMENTAL THERAPY

2,086

Visits via Telehealth

235

Families served virtually



Director of Early Intervention Services, Michele Valadie, leads a virtual developmental therapy session, using a doll as a visual aid, for father Nathan Grubb and his daughter Avery.

CHILD CARE WAGES® TENNESSEE



The WAGE\$ program has seen a huge uptick in applications as word about the program continues to spread across the state. It took nearly 14 months to grow the program from zero to one million dollars in supplements distributed, and only 5 months to go from one million to two million dollars.

\$2,345,353

In salary supplements distributed
(Through March 2021)

1,180

Educators paid

515

Child care centers
participating

WAGE\$ recipient Kazuki Smith said her supplement helped her and her husband build up their savings account. This cushion helped alleviate a lot of stress for her during the pandemic.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL NETWORK

The pandemic has been devastating for child care providers and for families who depend on this industry to maintain their employment. CCR&R has been able to actually *enhance* the training and professional development of the child care workforce, and support the quality of child care services statewide by shifting to virtual training and coaching for educators. New trainings were added to provide practical guidance on safely providing child care in the midst of the pandemic.

The Lean Into You podcast was launched to promote self-care for child care providers who were stretched to continue providing vital services this year. To date, Lean Into You has been downloaded over 4,000 times.

Scan the QR code to listen to
the Lean Into You podcast.





SMALL BUSINESS ACADEMY

Prior to the pandemic, CCR&R launched the Small Business Academy to help support the business practices of child care centers and family care providers. We could have never predicted how important these services would prove to be, as COVID forced child care centers to close all across our state. Jacquetta Maples, owner of Loving Childcare, completed the Small Business Academy prior to COVID. She says the academy increased her confidence as a business owner and helped her business survive once the lockdown forced closures around the state.

VIRTUAL CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING

Like many of our other services, CCR&R converted all of our trainings to a virtual format. When it came to offering CPR and First Aid training, both of which require hands-on instruction, this became particularly challenging. We collaborated with our contracted instructors to develop a hybrid training program that incorporated both virtual instruction and in-person, socially distanced assessments.

16,087

Professionals attended CCR&R trainings

1,295

Educators certified in CPR

383

Professionals attended Small Business Academy



ADULT DAY SERVICES

STAYING CONNECTED FROM AFAR

One of the most important aspects of Adult Day Services (ADS) is connectivity. Our outcomes have proven that ADS has reduced feelings of isolation and depression in our participants. When COVID forced us to cease in-person services, our primary focus became continuing to provide that feeling of community with participants at home. We accomplished that by dropping off activity baskets, writing frequent letters, and creating "Club Signal," a club where participants could stay in touch while engaging in virtual activities, from going to concerts to traveling the world.



360
Activity packs distributed
to promote physical
and emotional health

2,620
Family and participant
contacts to encourage
engagement

193
"Club Signal" virtual
events held to reduce
social isolation



Our adult participants are one of the most high risk populations at Signal Centers and we took extra precaution in bringing them back on campus. We limited the number of people in the center, installed partitions and sanitation stations, and require participants to wear masks.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Assistive Technology Services promotes independence and an improved quality of life for individuals with a variety of disabilities. We assessed and provided equipment and devices to meet the individualized needs of each person. Services for those with low vision included creating support groups, training, orientation and mobility and more.

ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS SUMMIT

The second annual Signal Centers Accessibility Awareness Summit was converted to a virtual event over the course of a few weeks. Headlined by our keynote, Jared Spool, the summit was comprised of eight sessions with accessibility experts, covering topics ranging from voice technology to artificial intelligence. Over 300 people attended the event from all over the world.



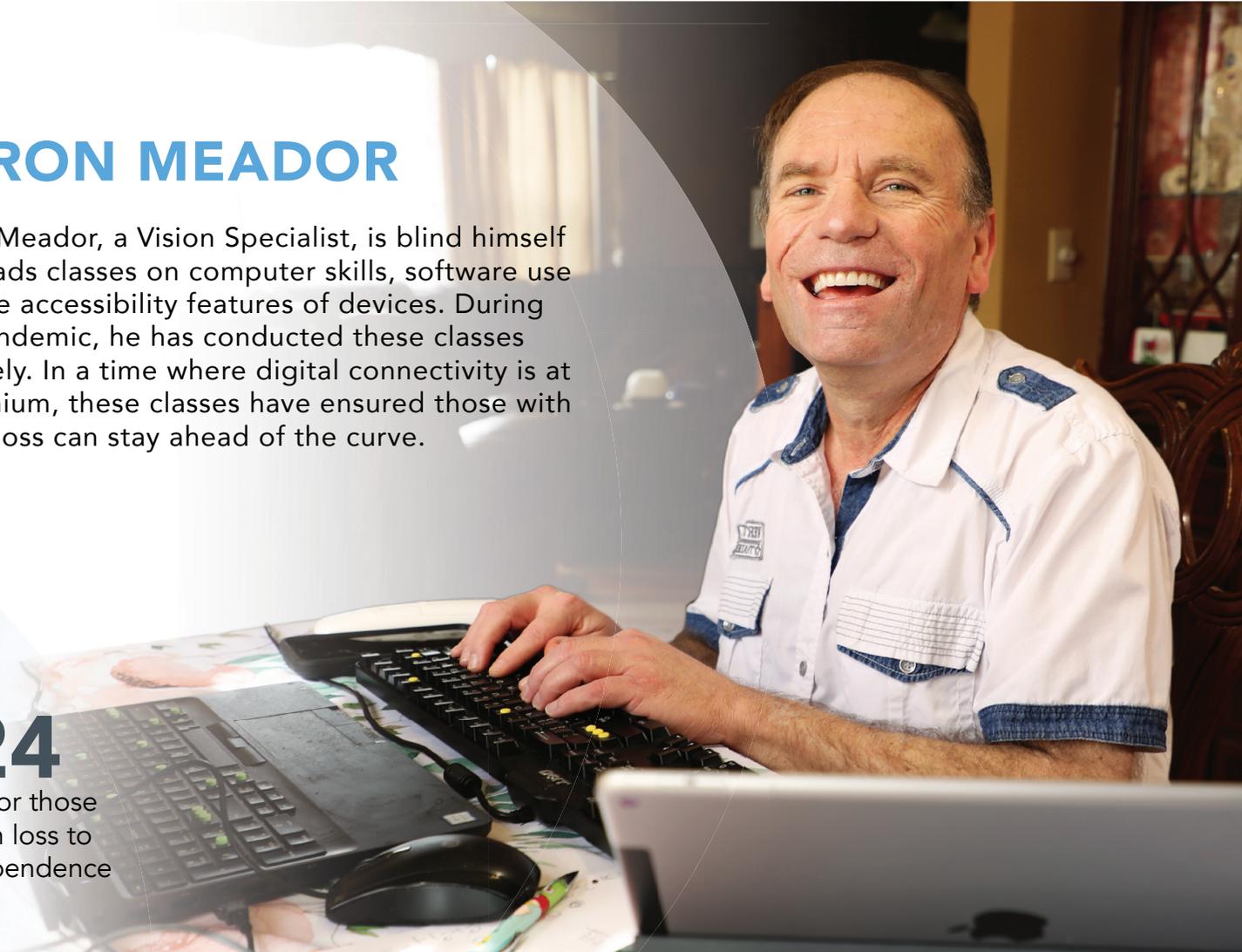
248
Devices given to
117 individuals to
promote accessibility

24
Individuals received 92
orientation and mobility
sessions to improve
quality of life.

524
Trainings for those
with vision loss to
foster independence

BYRON MEADOR

Byron Meador, a Vision Specialist, is blind himself and leads classes on computer skills, software use and the accessibility features of devices. During the pandemic, he has conducted these classes remotely. In a time where digital connectivity is at a premium, these classes have ensured those with vision loss can stay ahead of the curve.



HOMELESS SERVICES

In the midst of the pandemic, the City of Chattanooga recognized that the homeless population of our city would be disproportionately affected by the virus. Through Signal Centers' oversight of the Chattanooga Interagency Council on Homelessness (CICH), we have brought together a multitude of services and organizations to focus on ending homelessness for many families and individuals.

After Nakia Mathis, her husband, Pressley, and their children unexpectedly became homeless, local faith communities were able to find them temporary housing until they could get their feet under them. Here, they are sitting on the front porch of the house they now own in Harrison, Tennessee.

Scan the QR code to see
the CICH Dashboard



DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

In the fall of 2020, we learned that Hamilton County was about to become the only county in Tennessee to not provide the Imagination Library to young children. Signal stepped up and in January 2021, became the official partner for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Hamilton County. This meant becoming responsible for the fundraising to support this vital initiative. Hamilton County children of all incomes, aged birth to five, are eligible for enrollment in this program.

- Over 12,000 children in Hamilton County receive books each month
- Young children receive a free book a month until they turn five
- Every dollar donated is matched by the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Bill Lloyd
President-Elect: Mark Neighbors
Treasurer: Sue Munson
Treasurer-Elect: Rob Malone
Secretary: Anne Marie Stone
Secretary-Elect: Rosemarie Hill

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John Cosgrove	Rafielle Freeman	Jennifer Nichols	Jim Steffner
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David Fairchild	Cynthia Hall	Laura Pierce	Shula Yelliott
Marj Flemming	Ellen Heavilon	Butch Preisel	
Gabriel Franceschi	Marian May	Judith St.Charles	

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET: \$20,394,912

TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET



PROGRAM VS. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

