



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



PEOPLE INCORPORATED

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PREMIER SERVICES
AND PROGRAMS

- Acquired Brain Injury Services
- Adult Foster Care
- Autism Services
- Behavior Services
- Children’s Center
- Community Engagement Center at RPA
- Community Playroom
- Community Supports
- Day Habilitation Life Skills Program
- Day Services
- Diabetes Association, Inc
- Early Intervention
- Early Intervention Parenting Program
- Elder Services
- Employment Services
- Environmental Concepts
- Family Support Center
- Healthy Families
- Individual Supports
- Jack Rua Camp for Children with Diabetes
- Preschool
- Residential Services
- Shared Living
- SMILES
- Training and Workforce Development
- Transportation Division
- United Partnerships Program
- Urban Youth Collaborative
- Welcome Family
- Young Parents’ Learning Center



PRESIDENT &
CEO’S MESSAGE

We started the year with a well-thought-out plan focused on staff recruitment, retention, and professional development. However, 2020 quickly took any expectations we might have had entirely off the table. We continued our work while rapidly switching gears to face the onslaught of a widespread pandemic crisis that impacted every division of our Agency.

Facing tough decisions is an expected part of a CEO’s job. Making those choices over the past year alongside a strong Administrative Management Team and our dedicated staff ensured we could mobilize, shift, and act effectively during these tumultuous times. COVID-19 forced us to adjust nearly every aspect of our Agency. Some of our programs moved to telehealth service provision, while others condensed or closed for a short time. We experienced unprecedented impacts between these and other adjustments, including the unfortunate need to place employees on leave.

However, the crisis also brought to light the incredible depths of our resilience. Every day our highly trained human service professionals are the embodiment of “going above and beyond” as they work with some of the most vulnerable populations - adults, children, and families facing the additional stressors of the pandemic while still needing care. When a need surfaces, our people are first to say, “How can I help?”

Regardless of where they work, our employees willingly and drastically change their lives to serve best the people we support. Our Residential Division maintains its 24-hour operations without missing a beat, supporting 150 individuals in 33 homes, and often going into “lockdown” for 14 days with an individual who tests positive for the virus.

Our staff connects even when social distancing makes it nearly impossible. We read to children via pre-recorded videos, drop off packages to homes, continue providing assessment and other services through online sessions, and help families handle the stress of isolation, remote learning, and the unknown. We provide virtual museum trips, cooking events, Bingo, discussion groups, and more via Zoom and YouTube because people simply need human interaction. Our staff members’ commitment to the children, adults, and families that People Incorporated supports is outstanding.

I am proud to say that we have wrestled with the past year’s challenges, staying resilient and focused through this pandemic because we choose to remain true to our mission. We strengthen our community for each of its members by providing premier services for children and adults of all abilities in a collaborative and creative environment.

To our dedicated employees, I say thank you. Thank you for your flexibility, hard work, and deep commitment, even in the most challenging circumstances. I know that in many ways, 2020 defies description. However, through this annual report, we attempt to acknowledge what we have gone through together and recognize a few of our collective achievements.

Thank you for all that you do. I am proud to work alongside you!

Megan Stirk
President & CEO



CHAIR’S
MESSAGE

As we reflect on the past year, we know that many viable organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit, will not survive the unprecedented trauma of 2020. However, People Incorporated will certainly not be among those ranks. Regardless of the circumstances, this outstanding Agency has innovated, flexed, and continued to grow since its inception in 1968, currently supporting over 6,000 individuals and families annually throughout the communities of Southeastern Massachusetts.

While this may not have been the year we all expected, it pointed out some crucial things:

When our community hears the call, they come together in remarkable ways. While so many around us are struggling, our Agency still received PPE, food, program supplies, cleaning supplies, and holiday gifts for our families. We cannot adequately express our gratitude.

The staff and the people served are so much tougher than ever imagined. Even while facing the fear of the unknown, potential illness, or confirmed illness, Megan, Bill, and their staff kept moving forward, getting things done and taking care of each other. It was heartwarming in ways we cannot describe.

When we put people first, amazing things happen. Agency employees came in early, stayed late, volunteered for shifts or lockdowns, cleaned and sanitized around the clock, administered or stood in line for COVID-testing, took on tasks they had never done before, and then did it all again. This crisis pointed out these amazing people with a purpose are the very heart of People Incorporated.

So, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we want to thank Megan, Bill, Liz, Kerry, Cat, Jerilyn, Beth, and the entire People Incorporated team for their fortitude in the face of such adversity. Their leadership, combined with the staff’s professionalism and unfailing dedication, keeps this Agency on the path forward to success and opportunities for all that we serve.

Thank you.

Jason Rua
Chair, Board of Directors

As this report was in production, we learned that our friend and board member, **Dennis Read**, had passed away. He served on the boards of People Incorporated and People Improving Communities and Neighborhoods (PICAN) for many years, including serving as Treasurer. Dennis was also a dedicated friend to the Diabetes Association, Inc., raising funds to support Camp Jack through the Jack Rua Invitational held annually at Crestwood Country Club.

Meg Stirk, President and CEO, said, “It’s with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dennis, our friend, Board Member, and longtime supporter. Dennis was a champion for Camp Jack’s children, and we are eternally grateful for his outstanding guidance and leadership. He will be greatly missed.”



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Elizabeth Machado**
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- Kerry Budnick**
Vice President of Finance
- Catherine DeTerra**
Vice President of Communications
- Jerilyn Ingham**
Vice President of Day Services
- Beth Pelletier**
Vice President of Human Resources

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

On January 24, People Incorporated joined forces with nine other organizations to host the SouthCoast Human Service Advocacy Legislative Breakfast at White’s of Westport. This event brought together legislators, direct care staff, individuals and families, and leaders from ten human service organizations representing more than 3,000 constituents who work and live in communities throughout Southeastern Massachusetts.

The topic of discussion focused on the workforce crisis facing the human service field. Sheri Baker, an assistant residential director within our Agency, took to the podium to share her experience. Sheri described the positive impact that direct care professionals have on the lives of the many individuals they serve. She also advocated for higher wages for the many frontline employees who provide these critical services.

During the breakfast, the testimony focused on the incredible flexibility and dedication exhibited by direct care professionals as they carry out their critical work each day. As it was only January, we had no idea how the pandemic would bring our human service professionals to the forefront in a few short months, highlighting their importance in keeping children, adults, and families healthy and safe.

We were so thankful to the legislators who joined us at the event and even more grateful for the Chapter 257 rate adjustment that increased our residential staff’s pay. People Incorporated will continue to advocate for all of our direct care professionals to provide a livable, competitive wage for the meaningful work they do each day.





STEPPING INTO THE FRAY

COVID-19 quickly became omnipresent in 2020, influencing nearly all aspects of every program at People Incorporated. As the Agency adapted to new safety regulations and state mandates, one of the needs that quickly moved to the forefront was for personal protective equipment (PPE) to meet the demands of the new safety protocols. Items such as masks, gloves, and sanitizer became prime commodities in high demand. While the pressure to adapt to the new world of COVID-19 was challenging and taxing on the Agency's programs, a renewed sense of community resulted among businesses, organizations, and individuals in the area, as many stepped up to donate not only PPE, but also other items to assuage the impact of the pandemic.

One of the first donations received at the onset of the virus in March was from Mayor Paul Coogan, who personally delivered boxes of gloves and masks to give the Agency's supply an initial boost. Then, as the demand for PPE increased even further, the United Way of Greater Fall River

established a COVID-19 Relief Fund in early April. The fund supplied our Agency with PPE for frontline workers, specifically our direct support professionals in the 24-hour Residential Division homes. In September, we received another generous PPE donation from the United Way after they received a substantial amount from a donor.

As in years past, our Agency had received grant funds from the United Way of Greater Fall River for Community Supports, The Diabetes Association, Inc., and United Partnerships programming. However, this year, the United Way agreed to have a portion of funds from all three programs used to fund remote learning pods – a new learning environment People Incorporated implemented for students in the Fall River Public Schools to attend during their remote days away from school.

Another crucial and supportive organization in 2020 was the SouthCoast Community Foundation, which created

the SouthCoast Emergency Response Fund to donate significant funding to organizations for purchases related to COVID-19. We were a grateful two-time recipient from this fund, using it to increase our PPE supply and support operating costs in our remote learning pods. The Fall River Women's Union, typically a supporter of programming for the Diabetes Association, Inc. and the SMILES mentoring program, shifted its focus to COVID-19 grants this year, awarding funding to People Incorporated.

The private sector stepped forward to assist in the PPE realm, as well. Rua-Dumont-Audet Insurance provided \$1,000 to help with purchasing supplies. Bolger & O'Hearn, a Fall River business in the chemical industry, donated eight gallons of hand sanitizer for the Agency's staff. Chris Crowther from Certified Rescue Courses, a familiar face in the Agency who trains our staff in First Aid, CPR, and lifesaving skills, donated an infrared thermometer and masks.

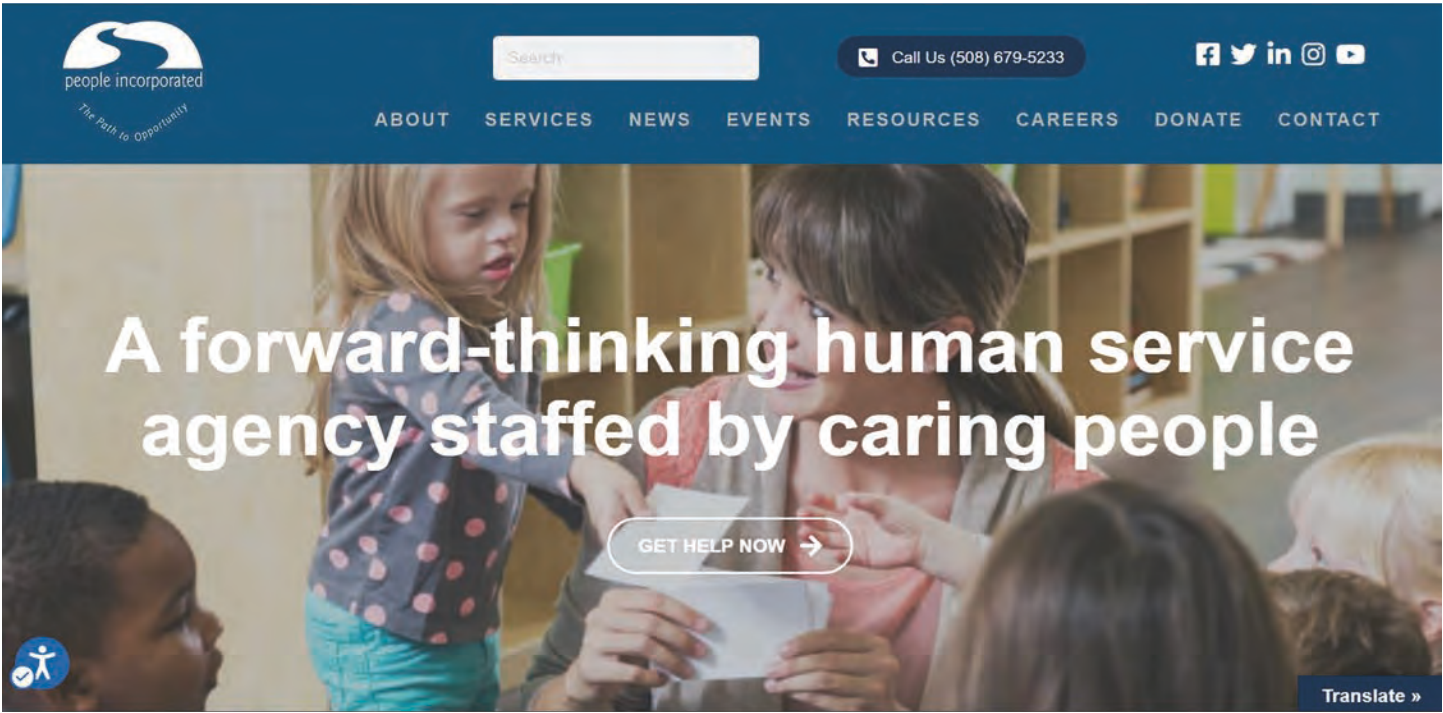
The donations to help with the pandemic were not limited to PPE. We suspended our Preschool programs with the shutdown in March. When the children returned to the classrooms in July, they were surprised and welcomed by wrapped (and sanitized) books donated by GiftsToGive in Acushnet. Also, through a partnership with the United Way, Sid Wainer & Son donated numerous boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables for the Residential staff to prepare and serve for the people who live in the homes.

All of these generous donations came as our Agency was scrambling to adhere to new codes and strict regulations recommended by the state and the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services. Long lines of cars full of staff members waiting to receive COVID-19 tests became familiar sights at both the Agency's Rigenbach Road location and Troy Street parking lot. As testing became more regular, the testing frequency requirements for staff members went from once monthly to twice monthly, and we increased our operation to accommodate this need.

Talks of the COVID-19 vaccine had been in the background since the summer, and it became more palpable in the fall when Pfizer and Moderna released news of the promising effective rates of their vaccines. Just in the middle of the holiday season, with the vaccine on the horizon, we began working closely with the state to discuss rollout efforts to administer the vaccine to our staff and the individuals we serve. The year 2020 posed many challenges and setbacks, but with the advent of the vaccine and more efficient testing methods, 2021 appeared to hold some encouraging days ahead.

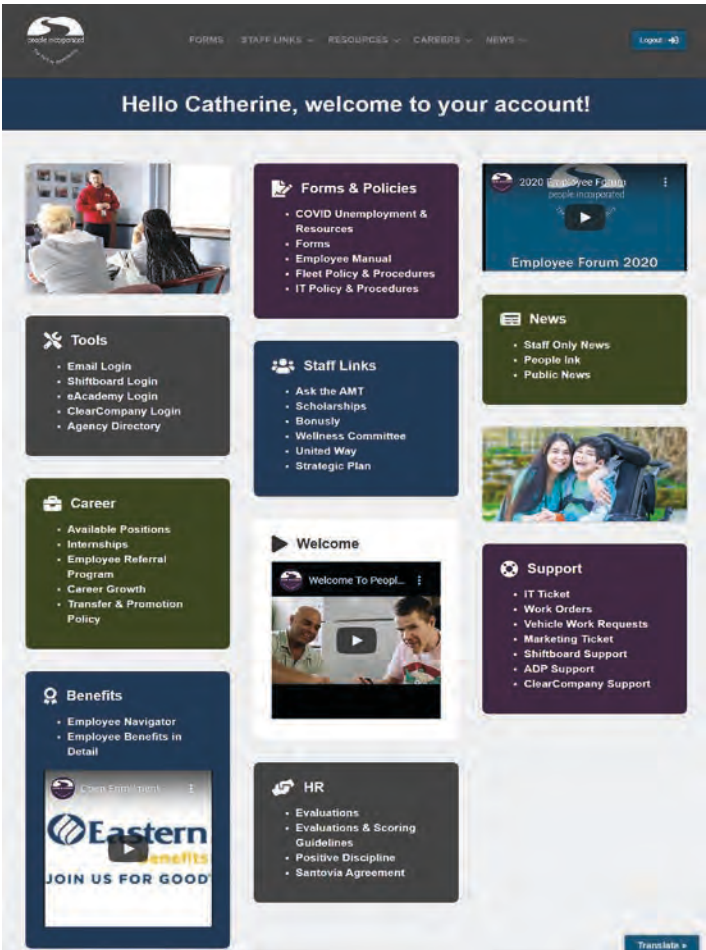
“...a renewed sense of community resulted...”





During the summer of 2020, People Incorporated rolled out a redesigned **AGENCY WEBSITE** (peopleincfr.org) and separate secured Employee Portal (peopleportal.org), both of which showcase our refreshed brand through a user-friendly experience.

We inform and promote awareness of our Agency and services while ensuring web accessibility under Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and ADA guidelines through the use of a third-party overlay.



When engaging with the site, the user experiences AI-controlled automatic screen-reader adjustments, individual content adjustments, and interface features along with manual user adjustments through the overlay. Users can start with an Epilepsy Safe Profile, Visually Impaired Profile, and more, and then adjust the settings to work best for their particular needs. For example, the Cognitive Disability Profile starts with various assistive features to help users with cognitive disabilities such as autism, dyslexia, CVA, and others, to focus on the essential elements of the website while significantly reducing distractions and noise. Additional aspects of the site can then be turned on, off, or adjusted as needed. This state-of-the-art, comprehensive website immediately greets visitors with a “Get Help Now” link in the home page’s center. Clicking on this link directs the visitor to a precise breakdown of the Agency’s myriad of services.

The website also augments the Agency’s ability to reach a broad range of linguistically diverse people through a subtle but visible Translate button at the home page’s bottom right. Clicking on this tab brings up American English, French, Haitian, Portuguese, and Spanish options, each represented by its respective country’s flag for ease of recognition. Clicking on a flag changes the web page to that language. This easy process allows for a more accessible site that is user-friendly for the many culturally diverse people seeking our services.

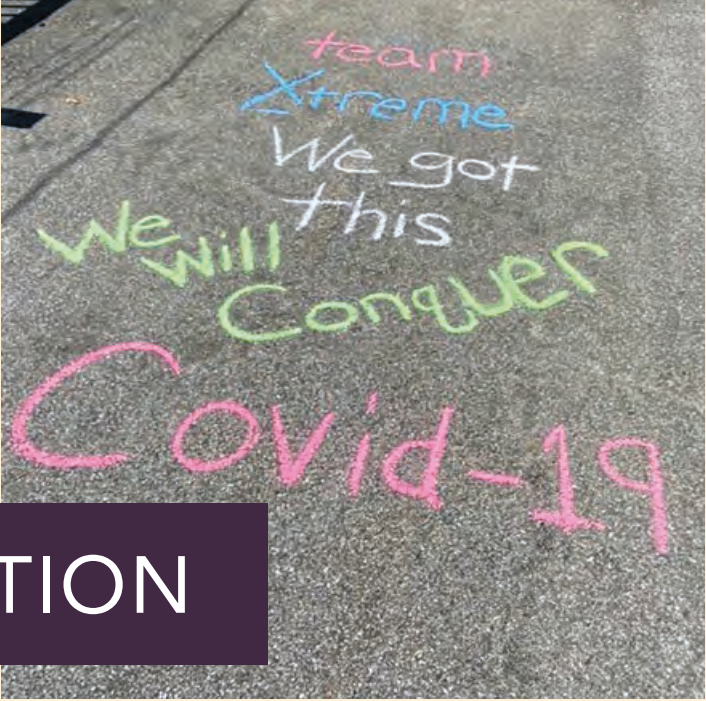
When the COVID-19 crisis hit, none of us had any idea it would continue to be our front and center focus throughout the remainder of the year. The familiar was gone, and uncertainty was now a way of life.

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Early on, we recognized that our most critical function was to sustain our people – our staff and the people we serve – many of whom were experiencing fatigue and more stress than they ever have, and it was on every front in their lives. To stay whole, we needed to understand, empathize with and continuously acknowledge the myriad challenges our people were coping with and provide support to enable them to serve throughout the long days, weeks, and months ahead.

The Residential Division is our largest, at more than 51% of our budget, so any impact they experience rapidly reverberates throughout the Agency. In addition to keeping people safe, staff worked to keep morale high for individuals unaccustomed to being confined to their homes. As the days passed, our Residential team was quickly facing illness and dramatic schedule juggling, yet this did not deter them. They turned up each shift, ready to tackle any challenge to ensure our individuals received premier care. If a hole appeared in the schedule, they filled it. If supplies were running low, they found them. If an individual tested positive for the virus, staff willingly volunteered for a 14-day lockdown to be by their side. Their commitment to the people we serve is outstanding.

Our Day Services and Transportation Divisions also experienced a seismic shift rather quickly, as sites closed and services transitioned to remote offerings to keep our individuals safe. Some staff moved into other roles, finding new ways to serve. For example, many on our team took on the critical task of coordinating and delivering Meals on Wheels to ensure that people had access to a well-balanced meal each day. Other staff helped with the influx of necessary supplies we were receiving to support our programs, including PPE, diapers, and healthy food. As Day Services sites reopened again in late July and early August, participants welcomed the return to a



bit of “normal” as our seasoned team adopted new protocols to keep everyone healthy while engaging in activities.

Our Adult Foster Care and Shared Living staff adapted to the ever changing COVID-19 guidelines and rapidly switched over to telehealth when in-home visiting stopped in early March. Staff contacted families weekly and provided critical support necessary to help families who experienced periods of crisis throughout the pandemic.

It certainly wasn’t all dark days during those long months. There were bright spots. Individuals and staff alike enjoyed fun food, art projects, crazy outdoor antics, group games, online field trips, and superhero days. Through it all, uncertainty was met with determination and resilience, and People Incorporated’s unique ability to work together, adapt, and find a solution has carried the day ever since.



DEVELOPING LEADERS

People Incorporated was proud to have two exemplary staff complete the Leadership Southcoast (LSC) community leadership program in 2020. Our Human Resource Compliance Manager, **Jennifer Lazaro**, and Public Relations Director, **Pete Daley**, graduated in October.

In addition to providing an in-depth ten-month professional development experience, LSC places its class members into diverse teams who work together developing and completing a project to benefit the community and addressing particular social, economic, and other needs.

Pete’s team worked with United Neighbors of Fall River to stock the Home Project’s store with items for those in need, especially individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness. The photo below is from the Curbside Care Day the team held for the Home Project.

Pete said, “Leadership SouthCoast allows its participants to connect with people from all over the region who have extensive knowledge and expertise in various fields. The

group project that spans the session’s ten months brings you even closer to the community while making a positive impact. I’m grateful for the experience and thankful to have met so many dedicated individuals in my LSC Class of 2020.”

Jenn’s team was Perpetuate Better Living, who worked with Fenway Health and their Violence Recovery Program that provides counseling and advocacy of domestic, sexual, and hate violence – primarily in the LGBTQ+ community. Their project goal was to provide community outreach, create a SWOT analysis, and develop the first all-volunteer Advisory Group for the Greater Fall River and New Bedford Area.

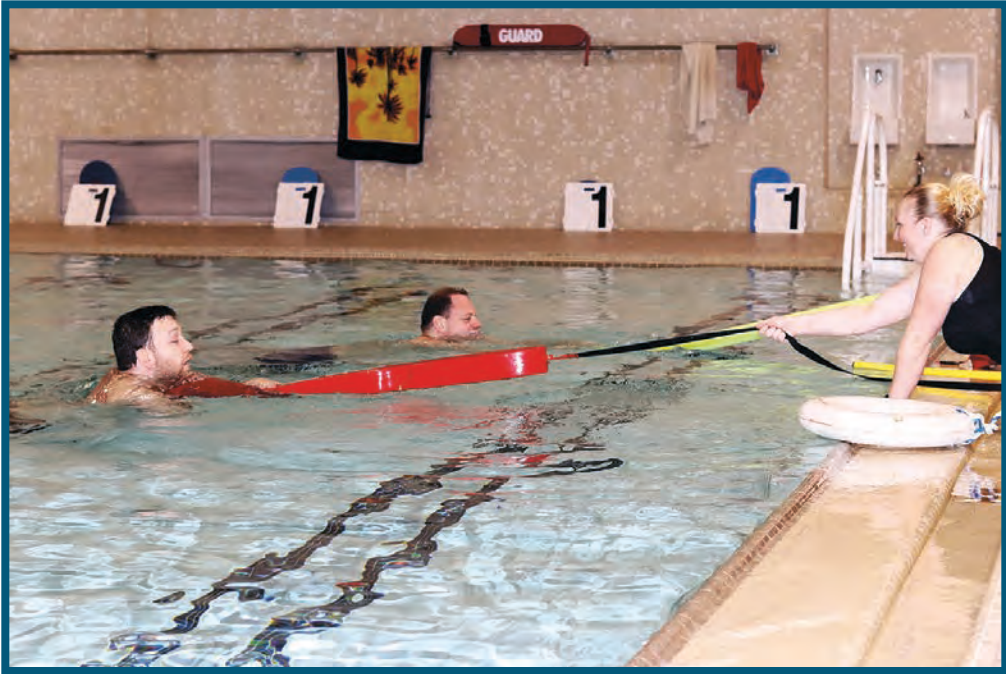
Jenn summed up her experience this way: “Being immersed in a group of motivated and dedicated individuals is an empowering feeling. While the COVID-19 pandemic limited our group project ideas, our enthusiasm and excitement never faltered from working together and helping make an impact in our communities. The 2020 cohort faced many challenges throughout the year; however, our Leadership Southcoast graduating class proved what it really is to be a leader.”



Pete’s team worked with United Neighbors of Fall River’s Home Project at Merrow Manufacturing to stock their store with items for those in need



People Incorporated's Direct Care Professionals participated in a water safety training class where they learned about important precautions to take in an aquatic environment as well as the proper rescue and assisting techniques. Led by Training Manager Chris Joinson, participants gained valuable skills to better support the people we serve.



CENTER OF SUPPORT

The excellence of our **Family Support Center** team and our Agency does not go unnoticed. We proudly announce that People Incorporated secured another five-year contract from the Department of Developmental Services to continue the Center’s critical work.

The Family Support Center (FSC) serves the Greater Fall River area assisting children and adults with an intellectual or developmental disability living with their families in the community. When the pandemic first hit our area, FSC staff were unsure how the crisis might impact service provision. Still, they knew they would not stop providing the necessary resources and supports that people need to maintain their independence and quality of life.

The FSC team knew that out of all the years they have been in operation, 2020 required even more connectivity with the individuals and families we serve. According to a recent letter in the American Journal of Psychiatry, “...few are more adversely affected by COVID-19 than individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.” Individuals who may already feel marginalized and isolated can be especially distressed to switch to social distancing and have reduced access to in-person support services and limited access to therapies.

FSC staff recognized that “business as usual” was no longer an option, so they quickly hit the ground running. The team had four goals:

- provide accurate and accessible information to help keep people safe
- link people to needed community resources
- keep people connected to avoid isolation
- ensure that intensive support and stabilization services were still available to families in crisis

To help keep people safe, People Incorporated used its multiple social media channels to distribute credible information translated into more than ten languages from the Centers for Disease Control on social distancing, COVID-19 prevention, disinfection, safety, and more.

The impact of the pandemic made it difficult for some families to access food and necessary community resources. In response, the Center posted emergency links to the Department of Transitional Assistance and SNAP, announced food pantry dates and locations, and provided the Center Director’s phone number so that individuals could receive personalized assistance. While some businesses were not providing service, our staff members were receiving shopping lists from families, going to the store to purchase the needed items, and delivering them to their homes.

Social isolation was a hurdle, but the staff had a plan.

The Center is on Facebook @FamilySupportCenterPI, offering resource materials and connecting families and young adults. Postings include newsletters, activities, events, training sessions, links, and more. The Day Trip Squad (DTS) is a social recreation group (with a private Facebook Group) formed at the end of 2019 specifically for young adults on the autism spectrum. The Day Trip Squad Facebook Group was created as a private platform for group members to share their ideas, interests, photographs, drawings, and flyers. FSC staff and DTS members discuss news and activity suggestions, including visits to museums, restaurants, sporting events, dances, and more.

Throughout 2020, the staff used emails, posts, and online events to offer families entertainment and opportunities to connect. The team provided Zoom chat events, including pizza making, a pet show, donut decorating, a Mom Chat, the ever-popular Zoom Bingo, holiday events, and more, plus multiple links to videos of staff reading books, virtual field trips, technology ideas, and other fun activities for families.

When the state entered a new phase that allowed for small, socially distanced gatherings, staff organized a healthy outdoor picnic, and a kite flying/ice cream event in the park.

Some families were hit harder by the pandemic than others, and they needed personalized, intensive supports to deal with the stress and traumatic issues they were facing. FSC staff almost immediately donned masks, hit the streets, and started grocery shopping and delivering food and supplies to vulnerable individuals. They distributed items like facemasks, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and store and restaurant gift cards to ensure that families had enough to eat. The team handled intense crisis situations, often calling upon bilingual staff to advocate and support families experiencing destabilization, homelessness, food insecurity, and issues with daily living due to stress and trauma, difficulty with social distancing, and the lack of regular access to their support team.

The People Incorporated Family Support Center staff never faltered in their dedication to the individuals and families they serve because they knew they were frontline workers providing essential services to keep people safe. It was simply their duty. ☺



BEHAVIOR SERVICES

At People Incorporated, we continuously strive to look for new ways to provide premier services for the individuals in our care. In 2020, our Agency’s Behavior Services Division adopted the **Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training** program. Developed from evidence-based research, this approach provides staff with a comprehensive understanding of effectively preventing, minimizing, and managing behavioral challenges.

Safety-Care’s prevention, de-escalation, and restraint reduction practices are designed from applied behavior analysis and positive behavior supports. With this method’s adoption, individuals are taught new and appropriate behaviors while decreasing the need for restraints. By fostering positive social outcomes, individuals benefit from overall enhanced quality of life.

After six employees, representing Behavior Services, Day Services, and Human Resources, completed a three-day training on Safety-Care’s core curriculum and a one-day training covering the program’s advanced module, we implemented the Safety-Care model. These employees have become People Incorporated’s Safety-Care trainers, delivering the core curriculum and advanced module training to other Agency staff. This engaging training allows staff to learn how to identify and stop or de-escalate crises and provides an opportunity to practice these new skills through a series of interactive role-plays.

We are now training other staff groups, focusing on our Residential Division first, and expanding to Day program employees later in 2021. As training continues, the Safety-Care model will provide wraparound support to various programs, with clinical support available to the Adult Foster Care program and Family Support Center. We aim to eventually expand this model into the Agency’s Children’s Division, with support to Early Intervention services. By implementing the Safety-Care model throughout our Agency, we are continuing to ensure that our practices best meet the needs of all the individuals we serve. *CS*



People Incorporated’s Children’s Center and Preschool are lively places where learning is engaging, exciting, and focused on each child’s individual needs. While laughter can often be heard as one walks through each location’s hallways, these programs experienced an unusual and abrupt silence in March 2020 as they were required to close temporarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even though the classrooms were uncharacteristically empty, our dedicated teachers and Children’s Division leaders found some very creative solutions to ensure the learning and fun did not stop for our Agency’s students.

KEEPING CONNECTED

Maintaining a connection with families and providing stability for our young learners were key priorities during these uncertain times. The Children’s Center staff conducted weekly check-ins with families through phone calls, video calls, emails, and texts, while teachers established weekly classroom Zoom meetings for all of the kids served by the program. During these meetings, infants enjoyed hearing and seeing their teachers through the screen, toddlers had fun participating in circle time, and preschoolers worked on learning their letters through “show and tell.” Preschoolers also received biweekly socially distanced visits from their teachers. During these visits, families received activity envelopes with supplies and instructions, offering a fun and interactive way to learn at home.

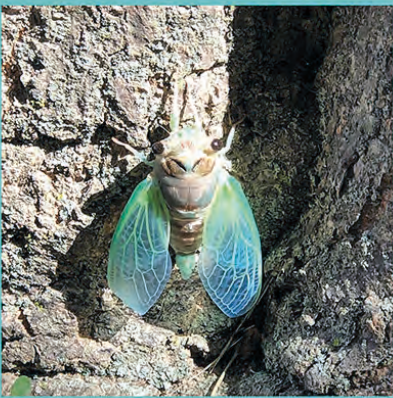
Managers, teachers, and staff at the People Incorporated Preschool provided similar support. They worked together to create and personally deliver 155 “sunshine bags” full of treats and activities to keep students busy while the school was closed. Preschool Director Michele Varanese-Lima commented on directors and teachers delivering the bags by saying, “What fun they had; both student and teacher were so happy to see each other!”

Another familiar face students enjoyed seeing was Megan Tavares, the Early Childhood Support Specialist for the People Incorporated Preschool and Children’s Center. Ms. Megan checked in with students through YouTube videos, where she read stories and helped children understand how to talk about, and work through, their feelings. These

combined outreach approaches helped ensure that families stayed connected and students could continue to build a strong educational foundation.

In addition to maintaining a strong relationship with families, our Children’s Division team knew it was important to celebrate students’ achievements – especially graduation. More than 250 people usually attended the People Incorporated Preschool’s annual graduation ceremony; however, a new plan was needed to safely recognize the 2020 graduates, leading teachers and staff to set up a graduation parade. During the parade, children and families drove through, received a graduation bag from their teachers, and were able to take a family picture with their teachers. COO Bill Perkins and the entire People Incorporated Preschool team attended and showed their support with signs, banners, cheering, and horns, making this a memorable occasion for the students.

Graduates from the Children’s Center also had a special celebration. The four children who were leaving the program for Kindergarten each received a personal graduation ceremony. Two teachers and the Children’s Center Program Director, Karen Lacroix, stood socially distanced from one another at each child’s home for the ceremony, where the student received their diploma and a special award. Families were thrilled with these unique graduation experiences. Once again, our staff showed their resilience and dedication to helping future leaders thrive – whether doing so virtually or in the classroom! ☺



TYLER'S TENACITY

People Incorporated's Residential Services division has been providing residential supports since 1969, evolving and changing over the years to ensure we continue to contribute to the absolute highest quality of life for each of the individuals we serve. Residential Services includes a wide range of living choices and supports that are individualized based on each person's particular strengths or needs and are adaptable to reflect changes in each person's life.

Tyler has been receiving residential support from People Incorporated since February of 2018. When Tyler first came to us, he was not as independent as he is now. The staff did everything for him, like washing his laundry, putting his clothes away, washing his dishes, and then putting them away. Since that time, he has experienced remarkable personal growth.

Now Tyler puts his laundry in the washer, measures out the soap, turns on the washer, and transfers clothes to the dryer. Staff folds his laundry, and he puts it away. Tyler places his dishes in the dishwasher and makes his own cup of coffee now. He communicates his needs more directly by pointing to the items he wants and indicating what he wants to do.

Our staff genuinely enjoy spending time with Tyler, which is satisfying and fun. He has developed more patience during his time with us and has learned new strategies to use when frustrated. Tyler maintains a healthy diet and also enjoys helping with baking. He is much more independent in his daily living activities, including pouring his drinks, getting his utensils, plates, and cups, handing items to staff, and getting dressed on his own with less staff assistance needed.

Rides, music, and watching YouTube videos are just a few of the things Tyler loves. He is active and enjoys going for walks around the neighborhood and jumping in the pool for a swim. Tyler has a sensory room with a beanbag chair to sit in, where he uses his putty and does other relaxing activities. He also has a swing outside that he uses in the yard during the summer and fall, relaxing and enjoying the weather.

Direct Care Professional Edith Tirado feels that "Working with Tyler gives me a birds-eye view into the many positive changes he has made and how it has affected the quality of his life. Watching him grow makes me so proud of the work we do to support the individuals for whom we provide services." *cs*

We are the proud parents of our beautiful son Tyler Roque. He is a very loveable and affectionate young man towards his family and staff. Our experience with People Incorporated has exceeded our expectations on every level. We are very fortunate and very blessed to have People Incorporated in our son's life and the leadership of Liam Nary and his staff.

People Incorporated and their team has been a godsend for Tyler and our family. You came into our lives at a critical time in Tyler's life. You worked so hard to accommodate his needs and challenges, keeping him safe. He adapted so well and fast to your program and the house that has become a home to him.

Under the management of Liam and the dedicated staff's thoughtful care, Tyler has achieved so much. He has built trust, stability, and is treated with the utmost respect.

Tyler is able to trust again and you have become part of his family in his heart and ours. For the first time since he left our home, he is happy and feels at home. He shows it through his beautiful smiles and loveable gestures that he shows everyone in appreciation for all they do for him in his life.

As a result of the hard working staff at People Incorporated, Tyler's smiles came back. He feels at home and is so happy at this beautiful home you made possible for him. We are so grateful to all of you. Thank you so much for all that your team has done for Tyler.

Thank you.
Emanuel and Fatima Roque



NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

People Incorporated has served the developmental and therapeutic needs of children ages birth to three since our first Early Intervention program opened in 1976. Since then, thousands of infants, toddlers, and families have benefited from the hard work and dedication of our experienced and caring staff, therapists, clinicians, medical, and other professionals through our Early Intervention, Early Intervention Parenting Program, Welcome Family, and Greater Fall River Healthy Families programs.



Our Early Intervention Program Music Therapist, Rosemary Williams, works with a group of children and parents. The program uses virtual groups to keep connected with the families we serve, and here she is singing “The Wheels on the Bus” with her group.

At the beginning of 2020, each of these programs had been operating as usual. They received visitors at our main office, in our Community Playroom, at a community-based location, or they met with families in their homes or other sites to assist with enhancing their child’s development while providing support, education, resources, and services.

When the pandemic hit in mid-March, everything screeched to a halt as the Agency, and our many funding sources, assessed our ability to provide high-quality, effective virtual services. Once approved, we quickly realized that our staff needed extensive training to embrace virtual platforms and understand the best practices necessary to engage fully with families in a remote environment.

Initially, it was difficult. Our team found that some families did not have reliable electronic devices, internet connectivity, or understand how to access virtual services. Some parents wanted to wait to reconnect with program services “when this passes.” However, as the virus spread and time went on, positive comments about the remote services’ quality reached parents’ ears. Families returned, new referrals arrived, and virtual visits quickly became the “new normal.”

In addition to regular appointments, both Early Intervention and Early Intervention Parenting Program families enjoyed additional online activities like a group experience for mothers, music therapy, and infant massage. Healthy Families and Welcome Family staff offered things like virtual story reading, cooking classes, a parent education series to help deal with COVID, and more.

Each family was different in so many ways, but they all had one thing in common. Although faced with many obstacles throughout the past year, they were not alone. Our caring professional staff kept them connected to support, resources, and any services they needed despite the pandemic, and it was all just a call or a screen away.





Orientation Discussion

A pandemic does not stop the need for high quality staff, so our orientations continued throughout 2020.



MAP Class to Prepare for Certification

Medication Administration Program training ensures the safe administration of medication to individuals in our care.



Testing - Testing - Testing!

Throughout multiple sessions, and over the course of many days, our staff lined up for COVID-19 tests to ensure that they, and the people we serve, remained safe.





“ I just want to say thank you so much for all the work you are doing (in the Learning Pods). I am so grateful that my children have this option every day, allowing them a little school normalcy during these crazy times with such great peers and staff. ”

- Michaela Hetzler

LEARNING PODS

Every autumn is a busy and exciting time for our affiliate programs. The Jack Rua Camp for Children with Diabetes wraps up the summer season after six weeks of friendship building, diabetes education, and outdoor adventures. The SMILES Mentoring Program and Community Engagement Center prepare to support students when they return to the classroom. However, the late summer and early fall of 2020 was like no other for our Agency. Due to COVID-19, Camp Jack was unable to host campers, and SMILES and the Community Engagement Center were unable to operate in schools when the new academic year began. However, our dedicated staff knew that supporting our community's children was vital during these unprecedented times and sprang into action to help with a new challenge – remote learning.

Our staff's ability to adapt to change, combined with support from the United Way, Fall River Community Development Agency, and Fall River Public Schools, allowed for the development of the People Incorporated Virtual Learning Pod. This new program, which has continued into 2021, is designed to support Fall River Public School students in grades 1 through 5 who need remote learning space and assistance with their studies. Operating on weekdays from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm, the Learning Pod allows our team of professionals to help students with their daily coursework and provide them with recreational and creative activities. Through the program's partnership with the Fall River Public Schools, remote-learning students remain socially-distanced from others at their individual desks and enjoy free breakfast and lunch.

This amazing redirect of services on behalf of our affiliate programs was possible due to our devoted staff and our community partners' support. While we look forward to welcoming back Camp Jack campers and returning to supporting students in schools through the SMILES Mentoring Program and Community Engagement Center when safely possible, we remain committed to serving children in need through this remote learning pod. We are tremendously proud of our affiliates team for their flexibility and eagerness to provide a new form of support for our community's youth. ☺



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Joey Laureano has proven himself to be not only a great asset but also a positive role model for the individuals we serve and his coworkers since he began working with People Incorporated in September of 2015. Having always wanted a career that would positively impact others' lives, he joined the Agency as a Direct Care Professional. Joey hit the ground running and quickly exhibited strong compassion for the individuals we support. His flexible can-do attitude and upbeat personality made him an invaluable member of the team.

Over the next three years, Joey's diligence and leadership skills were widely evident, leading to his subsequent promotion to Assistant Program Operations Manager. He excelled in the role, maintaining consistency and getting things done while also guiding and supporting staff. His coworkers described him as a hard worker who treats everyone equally, making them each feel appreciated.

In January of 2020, Joey's desire to go above and beyond brought him to his current role as our Scheduling Support Specialist. This position that requires a depth of knowledge of our Residential Division positions combined with well-developed analytical skills, good judgment, and the ability to withstand intense pressure. Joey consistently rises to any challenge, working alongside the scheduling team to

get staff where they need to be to keep our homes running smoothly. His dedication to our individuals' care has led him to take on hours when we cannot find staff for particularly hard to fill shifts!

Martha Oliveira, the Residential Scheduling Coordinator at People Incorporated and Joey's direct supervisor, describes the impact Joey has on the Agency each day, saying, "Joey's drive and work ethic has been so evident in his care for the individuals we serve. He is always someone you can go to for help, and he does it with a smile. Joey goes above and beyond every chance he can to make someone else's day better."

Joey's passion, hard work, and commitment to delivering premier services led him to be named People Incorporated's 2020 Employee of the Year. Joey's positivity and humility shine as he describes his work: "I am eternally grateful to the staff and Agency for the opportunity to provide the best care we can to each individual we support. Together as a team, we make a difference in someone's life, and there is truly no better feeling than being able to achieve this every single day." ❧

Congratulations, Joey!

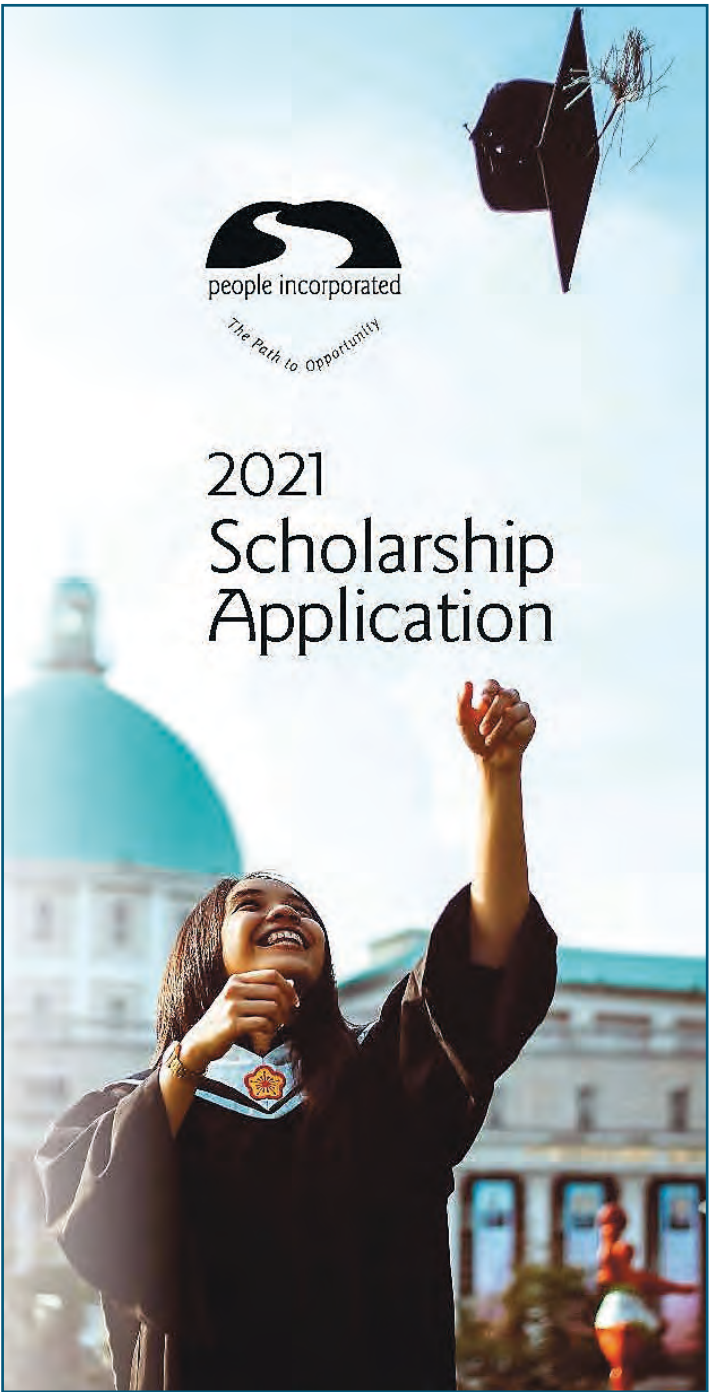




In June, People Incorporated once again participated in a City of Fall River beautification project. A team including representatives from People Incorporated, the City of Fall River, and private volunteers planted the hydrangeas around Government Center to help make our city a nicer place.

Above, Mayor Paul E. Coogan proclaimed Thursday, June 25, 2020 as **Hydrangea Day** in the City of Fall River. ☞

SCHOLARSHIPS



People Incorporated announced the 2021 scholarship awards to ten of its employees. The Agency encourages its staff members to continually build their skillset and pursue additional education as lifelong learners. “People Incorporated is proud to be able to offer this opportunity to our employees, and I am glad to see many take advantage of it,” said Megan Stirk, President & CEO. “I want to congratulate all our winners this year – not only on their award but also on their desire to pursue further education.”

People Incorporated offers five memorial scholarships in the name of significant members of the People Incorporated community. The Agency also provides presidential scholarships to successful applicants.

Mildred Midura Scholarship – \$1,500
Kasey Andrade

Dennis Hurley Scholarship – \$1,000
Karla Souza

Clayton Oliver Scholarship – \$500
Natalia Arraiol

Fernando Garcia Scholarship – \$500
Nina Maria Krueger

Robert Mahoney Scholarship – \$500
Nicole Vickery

Presidential Scholarships – \$500
Maire Kate Daley
Cassandra McCalla
Kayla Niewola
Diana DeSouza
Erin Sullivan

VIRTUAL GIFTS TO GIVE

Each holiday season, People Incorporated is proud to offer extra support to the families in our programs, which traditionally takes the form of distributing Thanksgiving turkey baskets to those in need and collecting gifts for children through our Agency’s “Giving Tree” program. Despite the challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic requiring us to make some modifications to these giving programs, we stayed true to our annual commitment to help make the holidays a special time for those we serve.

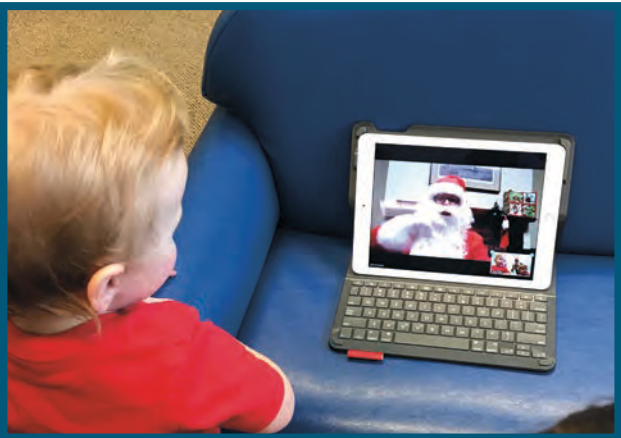
For Thanksgiving, we provided 263 families with a gift card to Market Basket. These families represented participants from a diverse array of our programs, including the Preschool, Children’s Center, Community Engagement Center, Family Support Center, Early Intervention, Adult Foster Care, Healthy Families, and Welcome Family. Families were able to use their \$30 Market Basket gift card to purchase a turkey and traditional Thanksgiving sides – all of the contents typically found in our Thanksgiving baskets. We were pleased to offer this gift, allowing families to prepare and enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving meal with their loved ones.

Changes to our Giving Tree made the program virtual for 2020. Rather than offering employees, our board, and community members a chance to take an ornament that contains a child’s Christmas wish, we created a designated donation page on our website that allowed individuals to contribute to a fund. Through the virtual Giving Tree fund, members of the People Incorporated team and supporters of our organization were still able to engage in the joyful act of giving. Based on

their generosity and an additional contribution from our Agency, we were able to offer 123 families served by our Early Intervention and Healthy Families programs a \$20 Walmart gift card to purchase cherished holiday gifts. Early Intervention Director Robin Jones commented on the gratitude recipients felt for this support, saying, “All of the families greatly appreciated the help.”

Meanwhile, our Children’s Center team rallied together to provide extra support for families with the greatest need. The program offered gifts to approximately ten families. The Center held an additional collection to assist a particular family facing increased hardships during this challenging year. The Children’s Center staff provided a \$50 Market Basket gift card, Walmart gift cards, and some extra financial support for the holidays. Children’s Center Director Karen Lacroix remarked that the family was “so appreciative of this gift and thanked us numerous times.”

In addition to our monetary giving efforts, our Preschool and Children’s Center wanted to help the kids in their care make unforgettable holiday memories. The highlight was a Zoom call with Santa and his elves. Usually, Santa visits these locations in person every year, but this year’s virtual visit topped the rest – the children enjoyed reading the books Santa sent ahead of time, and the preschoolers were especially thrilled when Santa spoke about the Elf on a Shelf from their classroom. With events like Santa’s virtual visit and the continuation of our giving programs, our caring and dedicated staff led our Agency to provide the children and families we serve with another happy holiday season. ❄️



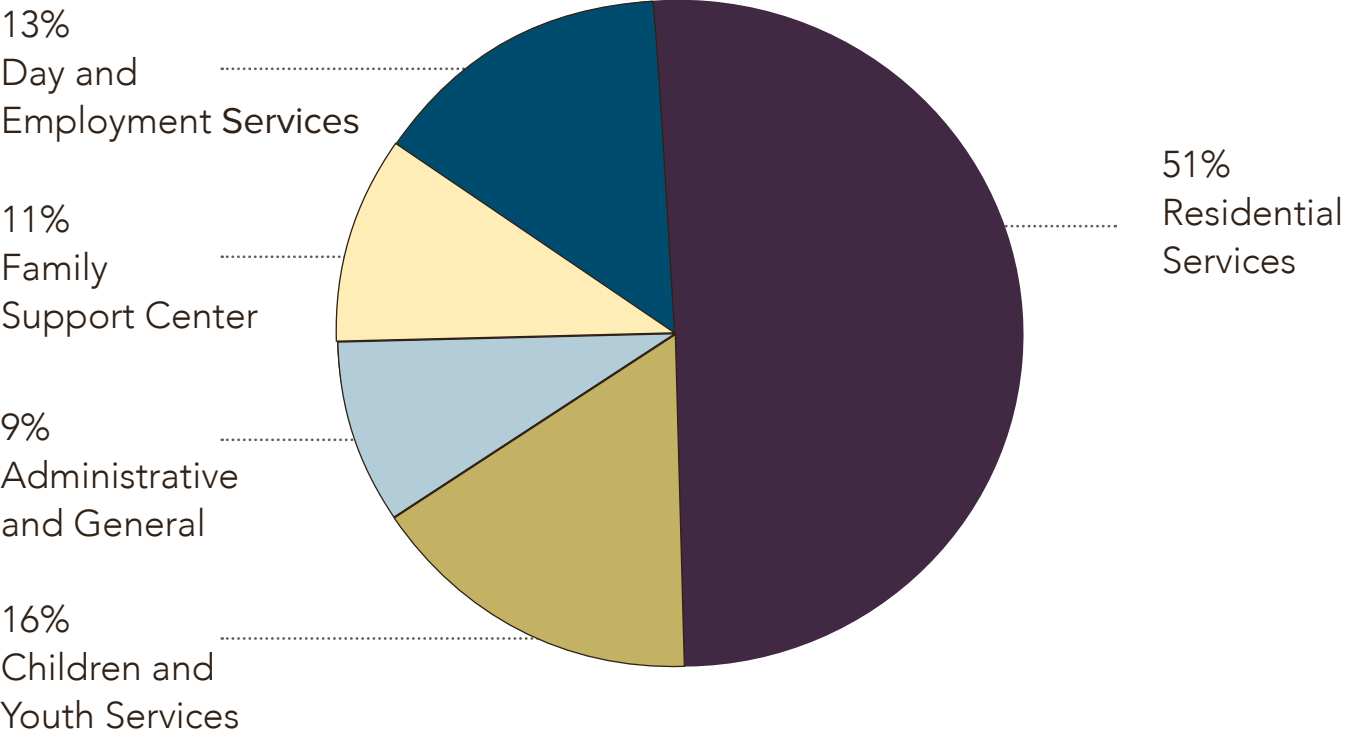


Stone artwork created by individuals receiving residential services

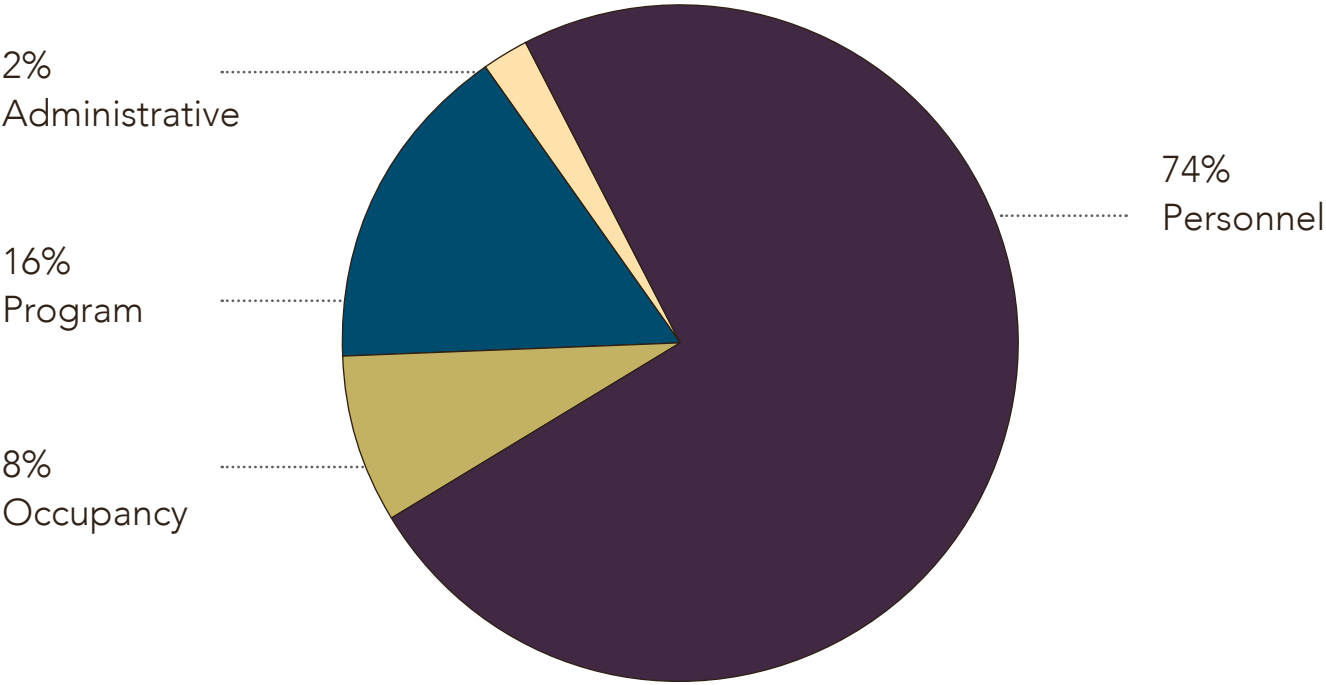


Artwork created by individuals receiving residential services

OPERATING EXPENSES BY DIVISION (\$43 MILLION)



OPERATING EXPENSES BY CATEGORY (\$43 MILLION)





Our mission is to strengthen our community for each of its members by providing premier services for children and adults of all abilities in a collaborative and creative environment.

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