We offer a warm welcome to Bernadette (Bernie) Kerrigan as our new president and CEO. She just replaced Sally Farwell who joined the agency in 1995 as vice president of programs and later became president and CEO in 2015. In July, Sally will be retiring from ACC after 26 years of leadership roles at the agency.

Our board executed a lengthy search and found an exceptional candidate, a non-profit leader who has dedicated her life and career to equality and helping children. “I was excited Bernie decided to apply for this position, as she’s someone I’ve known and respected for many years. She is a smart, warm and strategic person with many qualities that will help her excel in this role,” Sally said. “I know she will be an asset to the Achievement Centers and I’m thrilled she decided to join us!”

Bernie will be joining the Achievement Centers for Children after nearly five years of being the executive director for First Year Cleveland—a nonprofit focused on reducing infant mortality, addressing equity and working to change the structural racism impacting maternal and child health outcomes in Cuyahoga County. Prior to that, she was at The Centers for Families and Children in Cleveland for more than nine years as their chief operating officer, later becoming their chief talent officer.

Kerrigan has also held the titles of vice-president, community investment and community vision council/executive director of Geauga and Wickliffe United Way and prenatal social worker with University Hospitals. She holds a master’s of social science administration from Case Western Reserve University and a bachelor’s of social work from The Ohio State University and she maintains her licensure as an independent social worker and a senior professional in human resources, along with maintaining numerous certificates and professional affiliations.

As president and CEO, Bernie will work closely with staff and the Achievement Centers’ board to ensure the organization will continue to adapt and serve children and adults with disabilities through the ongoing pandemic and well into the future.
Want to Help?

If you are touched by the stories you read in our newsletter, you may wonder how you can support our mission. Gifts of cash are much appreciated, essential to our work and easy to make (via our secure website: achievementcenters.org/donate or the enclosed envelope).

Another way to make a difference: stock gifts, life insurance and IRA designations are just a few options. Gifts of stock help us provide our high quality services. If you have a life insurance policy that you no longer need, it may be a perfect way to donate. Designating the Achievement Centers for Children as the beneficiary of your IRA, or in your will or estate plan, is also a simple but meaningful way to impact our work.

97% of our clients with disabilities achieved, or partially achieved, their individualized goals last year. Charitable support from you can make more successes possible! To learn more about donating—or to schedule a virtual agency tour—call Deborah Osgood, Vice President of Development and Marketing, at 216-292-9700 x224.

MAX

You might recognize Max from a video we posted on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/user/AchievementCenters. He’s been coming to the Achievement Centers for Children in Westlake for physical therapy since he was 8-months old. Max has spina bifida, a spinal cord issue which affects the strength and balance in his legs. As an infant, he had trouble crawling and he still has some gross motor skill challenges that are being addressed.

Max’s mother, Katie Frohnapple, sent us a summary of how he’s doing and we wanted to share it with you:

When Max first came to the Achievement Centers, we didn’t know quite what to expect for his future. We had been told by doctors that he would reach his milestones on his own time, in his own way.

From the start, we had such excellent support from Achievement Centers, and not only through therapy for Max, but through education for us—how his body works and how we can practice the skills he’s learning in everyday life.

We celebrated each small accomplishment as they came, first him just being able to sit up on his own, then crawling, kneeling, standing and, finally, the much-anticipated walking! But, the progress didn’t stop there. We watched in amazement as he mastered walking up and down stairs, running, jumping and hopping. He continues to progress beyond what we could’ve hoped or imagined.

His physical therapist, April, has been so patient, encouraging, knowledgeable and quite simply, a friend to Max. She’s constantly adapting her approach and the way she goes about Max’s exercises to motivate him and to make sure he has fun.

We’re so thankful for April and the team at ACC for their commitment in helping every child reach their potential—we’ve certainly experienced it firsthand with Max!

Want to Help?

Outright gifts or gifts from your estate directly support programs like our Family Support services.

THANK YOU
to our generous sponsors for the Adapted Sports Program Sponsors

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A Successful Ryder

LOGAN RYDER is an eleven-year-old with ADHD, a sensory processing disorder and an appropriate name; as he loves riding horses. He’s been riding with our Therapeutic Horsemanship program at Camp Cheerful for seven years and has shown great improvement.

“Some of the positive aspects of the riding program have been on the sensory integration side,” said his mother, Susanne, as she sat outside the riding arena on a warm, spring evening. “He’s learned he has to control his body movements better, if he wants the horse to listen to him.”

Logan is so serious about horses, in past years, he has put on his bow tie and attended the Hunter Jumper Classic at the Polo Fields in Chagrin Falls. There, he garnered attention from attendees who loved seeing his smiling face as he rode around the paddock.

“He’s progressed tremendously, just in terms of having a release for the fidgeting and the energy he has in his body—having something to focus on and goals to work toward,” Susanne continued, “The staff has been tremendous at challenging him and knowing when he could go further. I attribute a lot of his growth and development to his time at the Achievement Centers.”

When he’s not riding, Logan enjoys attending our Camp Cheerful’s Day Camp program and participating in adapted sports. Susanne feels that the combination of therapies—from physical to speech to horsemanship, combined with the Achievement Centers’ recreation programs, has dramatically helped Logan, who added, “It’s really fun, I really like it. You get to do trail rides and you get to ride through Camp Cheerful. I definitely look forward to enjoying this a lot more.”

His mother also looks forward to the future, “Everything we’ve done with the Achievement Centers has been fantastic. Seeing where he’s at today, compared to where we started … it’s tremendous. I highly recommend it.”

To learn more about our therapeutic horsemanship program, contact Cory Ramsey, Manager of Equine Programs at 440-238-6200 x225 or cory.ramsey@achievementctrs.org. To volunteer to work with horses and riders, contact Hannah Hayes, Therapeutic Riding Volunteer Coordinator at 440-238-6200 x242 or hannah.hayes@achievementctrs.org.

Having a Ball

IF you have a child who is participating in the Achievement Centers’ Adapted Sports program, you may have already met Ryan Holesko, our new Manager of Adapted Sports.

Ryan has already expanded our sports programs by adding additional times for soccer and weekday skills practices for football. In addition, he has added a new division to our 2021 Cleveland Browns Adapted Football league, the NFL Flag Football division, which is for our more experienced players who are looking to take their skills to the next level. We’re now working with the Cleveland Indians and will be powered by their PlayBall! CLE initiative for our upcoming Adapted Baseball League starting up in August.

Please “Like” Achievement Centers Adapted Sports Programs on Facebook to keep an eye on how we’re playing! Your support helps ACC provide baseball, soccer, football and basketball to children with disabilities. It also allows us to expand our offerings and to explore new opportunities for our players.
**Thanks to you!**

On June 7, Camp Cheerful enrollment quickly filled up for day campers. We’re happy to say that our horses once again have their riders, the campfires are ready for cooking s’mores and campers are keeping busy with activities like swimming, nature study, arts and crafts, canoeing and more.

All of this is happening because of donations from people like you. Your gifts help give individuals with disabilities an outdoor experience they will always remember. When you make a donation, you’re giving kids time in the pool, secrets whispered to their favorite horses, adventures down the Sensory Trail, the opportunity to try make new friends and challenge themselves. You are also giving parents and care-givers a much-needed respite and an opportunity to “re-charge” while their child is at camp.

Your generous gifts continue to make a difference far beyond the camping season and long after the last s’more is adored. You can help create memories that will last a lifetime. To donate, you can use the envelope included with this newsletter or go to: achievementcenters.org/donate.

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**Work at Camp**

Meaningful summer employment is hard to find. It’s often more difficult to find summer jobs where you can make a difference in the lives of others. Our Camp Cheerful in Strongsville is still hiring some summer camp positions. If you know someone who enjoys working with people, please send them our way for a summer they will always remember: AchievementCenters.org/about/employment/

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**Help Wanted**

On June 7, Camp Cheerful enrollment quickly filled up for day campers. We’re happy to say that our horses once again have their riders, the campfires are ready for cooking s’mores and campers are keeping busy with activities like swimming, nature study, arts and crafts, canoeing and more.

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**Our New Poet Laureate**

The Achievement Centers’ staff were impressed by one of our speech therapy client’s desire to write poetry—and by the artistry with which she writes. This is why we have named Ella Hanley our 2021 Poet Laureate.

To develop communication skills, our speech language therapists sometimes encourage their clients to write poems. Ella Hanley, who has been working with ACC speech language pathologist Steve McDermott for more than a decade, recently started sharing her work with us and now, we’d like to share some of her prose with you:

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**Love is a Challenge by Ella Hanley**

There is a difficult feeling when love becomes a challenge
Growing in different directions
Leads to challenges even though we have love at our side
It should always be an open discussion

When we have that feeling in our hearts
When we have love it can grow in different directions
We know it can still be an open discussion
Love is a challenge and it can always be hard
Dear Friends,

For 26 years, I have lived my passion working at the Achievement Centers for Children (ACC). Assuring that individuals with disabilities and their families can achieve their greatest potential has been a career-long personal journey for me because my sister had disabilities and my family, like so many, needed support. I have been privileged to do work I love for an agency that promotes excellence and achievement.

There are many who help make ACC special: staff with tremendous expertise who are passionate, caring, and committed to excellence; the Board of Directors who embrace the mission and are engaged and committed to the success of the agency; and the community which has been generous and supportive, helping to provide the resources necessary to assure service to all who need it.

Nonprofits always face challenges but, the Achievement Centers has shown time and time again the ability to find opportunity within the difficulties of challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic has been no different and our staff and the Board of Directors rose to the occasion allowing the Achievement Centers to continue to provide needed services and to innovate. ACC has a legacy of innovation and building on opportunities and that legacy will move to the capable hands of the new President and CEO Bernadette Kerrigan, who I have collaborated with throughout my 26 years. She will lead the Achievement Centers into the future.

I retire with gratitude that I was able to spend my life doing such meaningful work that brought me so much joy. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing.

Sincerely,

Sally Farwell, M.Ed.
President & CEO, Retired

“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Hello New Friends,

I am honored to have been selected to succeed Sally Farwell as the president and CEO of Achievement Centers for Children, a stellar agency that I have always admired. The way Sally, the clients and their families, the entire ACC staff and the ACC Board navigated the pandemic is to be commended.

Under Sally’s extraordinary 26 years of leadership, she has led unprecedented expansion. Sally has dedicated decades to making our community a better place. She has led highly effective, and impactful, internal and external teams and has surrounded the Achievement Centers with an extraordinary, talented staff and Board who have served and acted at the highest level, in order for our children and adults with disabilities and their families to reach their shining star.

I am humbled by the big shoes I am filling and am counting on each of you to assist me as we continue to serve together with joy and impact. I am eager to listen and learn from you, with an eye on serving and fulfilling our mission for many years to come.

I chose a career and a life that has a foundation of kindness, humor, empathy, resilience, joy, and fearless action to make this world a more just and fairer place. I am eager to learn and collectively act for the betterment of our children and adults with disabilities and their families. I follow the fundamental principle of “Nothing about us, without us.” To me, this means that nothing should be decided, designed, or executed for the people we serve without their active presence and engagement at the decision-making table.

Personally, I am so grateful to be part of the everyday adventures of raising two, adopted teen daughters of color and a one-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog. I enjoy hiking and scuba diving. I look forward to hearing from you by emailing me at Bernadette.Kerrigan@AchievementCtrs.org or 216-292-9700 x308.

With gratitude,

Bernadette Kerrigan, MSSW, LISW, SPHR
President & CEO

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Thank you to all of those who supported A Most Excellent Race at Camp Cheerful on June 27! We’re successful because of people like you!
AchievementCenters.org/race
You can still donate at: achievementcenters.org/donate

BLUE CHIP BLUE TEE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, August 2, 2021
Kirtland Country Club
Contact Kathy Lipcsik for details:
Kathy.Lipcsik@achievementctrs.org