Because of you ...
Founded in 1940 as the Society for Crippled Children, we serve children and adults with a broad range of disabilities and special needs including physical, developmental, neurological and emotional challenges.

Our unique service model weaves together education and autism services; therapy and the Intensive Therapy Clinic; recreation, camp and sports programs; adult services, and family support/social work services to meet the needs of the entire family and provide the best outcomes.

We provide services on-site at three locations, in homes, to students in schools and on-line via telehealth and remote learning.

OUR MISSION

We empower children and adults with disabilities and their families to achieve their greatest potential.

OUR VISION

A future where individuals with varying abilities have opportunities across the lifespan to live life to the fullest. Everyone will reach their highest potential at home, school and in the community as a result of the family-focused and integrated services our staff so competently and passionately provides.
Dear Friends,

This past year taught us to embrace change. We supported our clients as they changed from in-person visits to tele-health and back again—and we learned that both approaches offer powerful tools to help clients reach their goals. We also worked with changes in how we hold special events, again learning that we can succeed with new approaches and new venues. In addition, we embraced change in Achievement Centers’ leadership as we celebrated a successful past and looked optimistically to the future.

One thing that hasn’t changed at the Achievement Centers is the generosity of those who understand and appreciate our mission and the good works we do. While everyone across our nation felt the economic impact of COVID-19, our donors stepped up to make sure that our clients could continue to receive the best care possible.

To this end, we have dedicated this annual report to highlighting how all your contributions, combined with the time and energy of our supporters, board members, associate board members, staff, volunteers and community partners help children walk, talk, play, learn and live their lives to their fullest potential. We are grateful for all of you. Because of you, they succeed.

Sincerely,

Bernadette (Bernie) Kerrigan, MSSA, LISW, SPHR
President and CEO

Sally Farwell, MEd
President and CEO (Retired 2021)

James Kacic
Chairman, Board of Directors

“Never underestimate the valuable and important difference you make in every life you touch for the impact you make today has a powerful rippling effect on every tomorrow”

— LEON BROWN
Because of you...

Jior and his mother, Shawna, have a quiet moment outside the agency before he starts his therapy session. That day, Jior searched the room for specific-colored objects, shared toys with therapists and finished the day racing a toy car across the room.
Jior is an energetic, three-and-a-half-year-old boy who was wearing an Incredible Hulk sticker when he walked through the Achievement Centers doors for his most recent appointment. Not long ago, a liver transplant put him in the hospital. His mother, Shawna, felt that their focus on his physical health may have affected his development, including his ability to speak and to pay attention. When he was evaluated at ACC, early in 2021, he was barely using words and was unable to focus on tasks for more than a minute. Shawna knew the level of quality ACC offered, as she had successfully used our services for another son who has autism. Occupational therapist Cara Brown and speech therapist Stephanie Downing worked with Jior on a weekly basis, using a variety of therapies to keep his attention and to bolster communication.

Shawna says that Jior can now, “express himself more and communicate with others better.” As for his attention span, he is now able to focus on tasks for ten minutes or longer and will now take turns with others. Shawna expressed her thanks to every company and foundation that supports the Achievement Centers, as she realizes the importance of community support and the impact ACC has on a child’s life and future.
When she turned 19, Grace was ready to experience a bit of independence, so her mother, Wendy, moved her into a group home in a lovely neighborhood. Unfortunately, her new living situation offered no structure and Grace began exhibiting all the signs of depression, only coming out of her room when Wendy visited. After the pandemic hit, Wendy no longer had to work from the office, so she immediately moved Grace, who recently turned 22, back home. Grace is developmentally delayed and Wendy felt that structure, stimulation and meaningful activities throughout the day were important. Grace had attended Camp Cheerful in the past, so Wendy was familiar with our River Rock Adult Day program which is located at camp. Grace loved camp and frequently talked about the fun she had there. Wendy reached out and soon received a call saying that Grace was welcome to join River Rock. As it is sometimes the case, it took a while for Grace to get into the groove of attending the program. But, now, Grace wakes up every morning with the excitement of knowing that a day with her River Rock friends is ahead of her. She is motivated to wash, dress, prepare a lunch and get out the door. Her attendance has been so good, she earned her River Rock friends a pizza party after a full month of perfect attendance. Wendy looked over at Grace with a smile when she said, “God bless the Achievement Centers . . . I’m very grateful to both River Rock and Camp Cheerful.” It’s because of moms like Wendy and the staff at River Rock that Grace’s life has taken a whole new direction.
Mason’s parents, Lakissa and Pattassio, came to the Achievement Centers through a recommendation from Help Me Grow when Mason needed speech therapy. He was non-verbal and frustrated that he couldn’t communicate his wants and needs. Mason’s speech therapist recognized that he was exhibiting signs of autism and, as he was entering first grade, it was agreed that it would benefit him to become a student at the Achievement Center’s Autism School, where he proved to be a math whiz. Mason’s parents bought him a calculator and were thrilled at how quickly he embraced the academic challenges ACC teachers put in front of him. He liked it so much, he would frequently protest going home! His teachers and parents decided he was ready to return to his local school. “I loved the way they didn’t just let him go,” Lakissa said, “They actually incorporated both schools and he had both schools together to make him feel comfortable before he moved on from the Achievement Centers. They did everything they could to make sure that he was comfortable in the setting of the public school.” Lakissa was thrilled at Mason’s smooth transition from the Achievement Centers back to his former school, as teaching assistants Cassandra Cash and Lindsay Young worked with instructors at Mason’s home school and therapists Kim Hayes and Ellie Woodford continued to work with him. Mason is happy, articulate and still carrying his calculator everywhere he goes. His parents are thrilled that he’s back in their school district and the Achievement Centers is happy that Richmond Heights teachers worked so well with us to help Mason return to the broader community of his home school district.
Karen and Stan found their way to the Achievement Centers when their oldest child, Nick, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at six months of age, shortly after his adoption. Mark, their biological son, who was born just three months after Nick’s adoption, started working with the Achievement Centers when he was two, even though he wasn’t diagnosed with autism until he turned three. Both boys flourished under the agency’s occupational, physical and speech therapy programs. Stan tells this story, with a warm tone that expresses his love, care and concern for the boys. You can hear the joy in his voice, as he mentions our camp, saying, “They’ve gone to Camp Cheerful every summer up until the pandemic … and they love every minute of it and look forward to it (and, it was a nice break for us)!” Their first contact at ACC, (now retired) therapist, Jean Gillet, introduced the family to A Most Excellent Race when the boys were four. The family decided to do some fundraising for the race, raising $900 their first year. Karen smiled as she said, “I thought, ‘that wasn’t so hard!’” That year, another participant raised $1,000 and Karen said, “I know we can beat that!” So, from 1995 on, their family has been the top fundraiser for A Most Excellent Race, raising more than $10,000 each year for the last four years. Karen is quick to point out that their success is because of, “our Christmas card list.” She continued, “This year was the big one. We never hit this big of a total as this year’s $14,000-plus!” Stan adds, “We can’t say enough about the Achievement Centers. They have been just fabulous from the beginning, empathized with us and all the parents, and always kept in mind that the most important people are the kids.” Karen, Stan, Nick and Mark: because of your caring, support and dedication to fundraising, more kids can enjoy camp and recreational programs than ever before. Thank you!
On a sunny day at the Achievement Centers’ Westlake offices, Hayley and Matt sat at a picnic table to talk about their son, Camden, who fidgeted on the wooden seat. Sitting was short-lived for them as they took turns following their ginger-haired ball of energy around the playground—a serious temptation for any three-and-a-half-year-old. When Camden was just four months old, his parents noticed that his eyes were crossed and that he was having trouble sitting up and rolling over. After visits to their pediatrician and an ophthalmologist, they were referred to a neurologist. With her heart on her sleeve, Hayley explained, “it was really scary to hear that your infant needs to go see a neurologist. You’re thinking the worst—it was a really challenging time for us.” After a year of mixed results with another therapy program, Camden’s grandparents suggested that Camden take advantage of the Achievement Centers. They had supported our agency in the past, as they had seen ACC’s successes and believed in its mission. Camden became a client for speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. “He’s just really thrived. We’ve seen a tremendous improvement in his development overall,” said Hayley, “We started therapy with a baby who wasn’t reaching milestones and, naively thinking it was a quick fix . . . once we received a formal diagnosis, we started to understand what we might be up against, we realized this was going to be part of Camden’s life forever.” While that may be the case, Hayley and Matt have seen him roll over, crawl, sit up unassisted, walk, run, jump, navigate stairs and develop fine motor movements. “We’ve been so grateful for all of the support that we’ve received as a family and we celebrate every one of Camden’s milestones,” said Hayley. Because of the therapists at the Achievement Centers for Children, April Nesbit and Ashley Gomez (PT), Lindsay Vrtovsnik (OT) and Lora Grove (SP), Camden is set to hit his milestones well into the future.

Camden improves every day.
At six years of age, Daylin, who has autism spectrum disorder, has been through more trauma than most children. Yet he now frequently flashes a toothy grin and bursts with delight. He gets this charm from his mother, Ameena, a woman with a positive energy and nothing but wonderful things to say about the Achievement Centers for Children. When she was asked to talk about our agency, she said, “Anything regarding the Achievement Centers’ services is my happy place.” Ameena and Daylin have not always been in a happy place. Before they came to the Achievement Centers for Children, some dark moments had shaken Daylin’s trust. Because of his speech delays, he was recommended to us. Ameena was reluctant to add another agency to her life, as her previous experiences with other programs had been lacking. But, a social worker recommended our Early Childhood Mental Health program (ECMH) so highly, Ameena decided to give it a try. After meeting her ECMH social worker, Katrina Spohn, she was hooked. “Katrina was a breath of fresh air, she really cared about us and, even though we were at a low point in our life, she didn’t take pity on me—she helped me like a friend.” Ameena can’t praise the program, and Katrina, enough, “She’s an awesome person and the reason things are going so well. I wouldn’t trade her. I gotta have my Katrina!” Through frequent Zoom sessions, Ameena learned how to validate her son’s emotions, build trust and add stability into his life. The results have been heartwarming. One day, when Ameena picked up Daylin from daycare, he blurted out, “I love you Mommy!” Those were words Ameena had waited six years to hear. Because of our program’s solid reputation for quality care, and because of dedicated social workers like Katrina, children and parents, like Daylin and Ameena, are finding new hope in life and in their futures.
Madeline is a charming, soft spoken 13-year-old with a love for horses and for her little sister, Emma. Her parents, Mary Ann and Kevin, call her, “Maddie.” She has receptive-expressive language disorder, which can delay her response time as she processes language. She was also born with epilepsy and scoliosis—though she now sits straight as an arrow, thanks to metal rods in her spine. When Maddie was about five, one of Mary Ann’s co-workers recommended our therapeutic horsemanship program. Mary Ann was concerned for Maddie’s safety because of her epilepsy. So when Maddie started riding, she had three volunteers by her side. “The volunteers and everyone on staff have become family to us,” said Mary Ann. Kevin added, “We actually made good friends with the families and volunteers we ride with—and, when she had her surgery, they gave us so many different things to help.” A volunteer even made a beautiful photo album filled with pictures of all the program’s horses and of Maddie on horseback. Mary Ann and Kevin say they have seen her become stronger and more independent. The core strength she has developed has helped her with her spine and working with the program’s large animals has helped her confidence and communication. Maddie reflected on the program saying, “I really like horse riding.” As time approached for riding to begin, volunteers began to arrive and warm greetings were exchanged. “We’re amazed by everybody who has affected her and her growth,” Mary Ann said. The family appreciates the volunteers so much that they too donate time to the program when they can. Because of families like these, volunteers who care and staff who are competent and compassionate, hundreds of children, like Maddie, are helped every year.
NORTH COAST THERAPY ASSOCIATES, LLC (NCTA)
A subsidiary of ACC
In school year 2020–21, North Coast Therapy Associates provided 31,351 hours of occupational and physical therapy services to its 1,064 students in ten school districts, in spite of the pandemic. Refusing to let COVID-19 deter them, NCTA’s dedicated therapists provided 2,601 more service hours than last year!

SPECIAL EVENTS/ FUND DEVELOPMENT
Despite the pandemic, we were able to hold three special events last year. Through all our special events, online and print appeals and other fundraising; individual, corporate and foundation donors contributed more than $1.8 million to further our mission. For more information on how to contribute, visit AchievementCenters.org/donate.

Blue Chip, Blue Tee, our annual golf tournament, drove home more than $84,000 to bolster Achievement Centers programs and services.

ACC’s 80th Anniversary Celebration combined our camp and gala events into a single, virtual event with four days of online programming, the lighting of Cleveland’s Terminal Tower in ACC colors, an auction and barnyard bingo. The celebration raised more than $293,000 to benefit our mission.

A Most Excellent Race was held as both an in-person and virtual event. Runners competed and raised more than $110,000 to benefit Camp Cheerful.

RECREATION
Respite Camp We held weekend day camps in place of traditional respites, and held a smaller version of our Cheerful Day camp.

Therapeutic Horsemanship
The program appreciated the 4,363 hours donated by its volunteers. Even through the pandemic, our program’s volunteer count increased, with 201 people helping our horses and our child and adult riders.

Adapted Sports had an increase in participation in soccer, Cleveland Browns adapted football and baseball, thanks to our new Manager of Adapted Sports, Ryan Holesko. He is expanding our sports offerings and increasing participation for our athletes and their families. Our Cavs Junior Wheelchair basketball team is proud to have player Elijah Yoder accept a basketball scholarship to Edinboro University.
RIVER ROCK ADULT DAY SERVICES
River Rock had 20 participants when programming returned after we temporarily closed because of the pandemic. The program now has more than 40 participants. We also passed our Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities audit with no citations! Participants have furthered their development through a variety of activities, including talent shows, gardening, swimming, nature hikes, learning labs and more!

EDUCATION AND AUTISM SCHOOL
The Autism School established, and re-established, partnerships with several school districts, including: Brecksville Broadview Heights, North Ridgeville, Richmond Heights, South Euclid/Lyndhurst and Midview. We also maintained instruction for all students as we moved fluidly in and out of virtual and in-person learning. Through this, we further honed the use of technology for the purpose of instruction and for professional development. We also hired two staff members with credentials in behavior analysis.

THERAPY SERVICES
Our therapists resumed on-site services five days per week and continued to use tele-therapy for clients who chose to receive therapy services at home. Our biggest focus regarding tele-therapy was the innovative blending with in-person visits. Using a hybrid of two intervention modes (face-to-face therapy and tele-therapy) provided options for clients and therapists to fill gaps that had been issues in previous years and allowed for families to choose their preferred method of service delivery week-to-week. Tele-therapy also has proved to be helpful for providing therapy to out-of-town clients as we created ways to virtually support home programs and on-site treatments. We also published two articles highlighting our expertise in Network, the official publication of the Neuro-Developmental Treatment Association. One of the articles was written by a team of our occupational, physical and speech therapists, and the other by a client collaborating with one of our speech therapists.

Every year, organizations and companies volunteer their time and skills to help improve our facilities.
Last fall, a team from Numerator (top) spent a full day painting cabins at our Camp Cheerful.
This spring, a crew from Metro Health (bottom) volunteered their time to spread new mulch on our Westlake playground.
FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

Behavioral Health had a successful transition to telehealth services, as well as a transition back to some onsite services. To better meet client needs, the staff completed Mental Health Aid Training last summer.

In May 2021, our program added another full-time employee at Highland Hills.

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)

Because continuing education is so important, our staff participated in a variety of professional development programs and trainings, including topics such as; Secondary Traumatic Stress, Infant Massage, Motivational Interviewing, Telehealth Strategies for Early Intervention and Mental Health Aid Training.

Monthly financial allocations from the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services board were adjusted to positively address changes with services delivery within ECMH amid COVID-19. ECMH also expanded by hiring a former ACC social work intern as an ECMH Clinician and added three other social workers to meet the needs of our clients.

ACC BUSINESS

ACC came through the beginning of the pandemic amazingly well. This past year has been one of significant change at the Achievement Centers for Children. Not only have we seen our therapists, teachers and social workers embrace new technologies, we have seen changes in our agency leadership. This year, Achievement Centers’ president and CEO, Sally Farwell retired after 26 years of service to travel and spend time with her family. Our chief financial officer, Scott Peplin, also retired with plans to do exactly the same. We wish them much luck and happiness in their new chapters of life. In their place, Bernadette (Bernie) Kerrigan has stepped into the position of president and CEO, while Betsey Saffar has been named chief financial officer.

...MORE HIGHLIGHTS

New CFO, Betsey Saffar (left) and recently retired president and CEO, Sally Farwell (above)
2020–2021 Consolidated Financials

INCOME
Service Fees $ 6,502,957
Contributions 2,544,500
United Way 48,484
Government Grants 278,602
Miscellaneous 1,806,895
TOTAL $ 11,181,440
Endowment Investment Gain/Loss $ 3,272,936
Trust Gain/Loss $ 149,279

EXPENSES
Therapy $ 3,045,956
Education 1,935,369
Camp 1,731,527
Family Support 1,598,360
Transportation 16,468
Management 1,232,898
Development 658,186
TOTAL $ 10,218,764
Depreciation/Amortization $ 542,181

*Preliminary Audit Report

2020–2021 Strategic Outcomes

- Provided a total of 100,548 service hours to children, adults and their families.
- Received a client satisfaction rate of 98% through family surveys received.
- Raised over $1.8 million in charitable support from the community.
- 94% of clients receiving services at the Achievement Centers for Children achieved or partially
  achieved their individualized goals, including improved functional skills (crawling, walking, talking),
  increased academic achievement, and improved social/emotional development (interacting with
  peers, managing stress, coping with a disability).

In Fiscal Year 2020–2021, many of the clients served by the Achievement Centers participated in, or received, multiple
programs and services. Over the past year, the agency provided 4,374 programs and services (duplicated) to 2,820 individuals
and their families (unduplicated). These numbers include North Coast Therapy Associates, LLC.
OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR DONATED
82¢ DIRECTLY BENEFITS OUR CLIENTS AND FURTHERS OUR MISSION

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2,820
TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

1,627
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The Achievement Centers for Children gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their financial contributions over $100 within the past fiscal year, July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021.

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Achievement Centers for Children is proud to contract and/or collaborate with:

Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS)
Aluminum Cans for Burned Children
Autism Community Collaborative
Autism Society of Cleveland
Baldwin Wallace University
Berea—City Department of Recreation
Bright Beginnings
Business Volunteers Unlimited (BVU)
Case Western Reserve University—MSASS
Catholic Charities Head Start
The Centers for Families & Children
Cleveland Browns Foundation
Cleveland Cavaliers
Cleveland Clinic Children’s Hospital
Cleveland Indians
Cleveland International Film Festival
Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Cleveland Metroparks
Cleveland State University
Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland
Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County
Fresh Air Camp
Groundwork Ohio
iCan Bike/iCan Shine, Inc.
Invest in Children
Kent State University
Medicaid, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities
MetroHealth
Milestones Autism Resources
NE Ohio Infant Mental Health
Neuro-Developmental Treatment Association (NDTA)
Ohio Center for Low Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI)
Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD)
Ohio Contractors Association
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Ohio Guidestone
Ohio Occupational Therapy Association
Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)
Ohio State University
Pre4CLE
Starting Point
State Support Team PBIS Region 3 Networking Group
St. Augustine Manor
United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Cleveland
United Way of Greater Cleveland
University Hospitals
University of Akron
Ursuline College
Voices for Ohio’s Children

Accreditation and Licensure

Achievement Centers for Children programs and services are licensed and accredited by:

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
The American Camp Association (ACA)
Healthy Families America
The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.)
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Medicaid
Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Ohio Department of Health
The Achievement Centers for Children is proud to be a United Way partner agency
The Achievement Centers earned a 4-star rating by Charity Navigator, the highest rating possible.
OUR CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Holistic
applying an integrated and interdisciplinary approach focused on the whole person

Family-focused
compassionately involving families of all income levels as true partners

Results-Driven
providing exceptional programs and services based on proven practices

Diverse
promoting diverse representation in direct service and agency governance

Employer of Choice
attracting and retaining outstanding and professional staff who demonstrate mutual respect, honesty, professional growth, teamwork and excellence

Strong Stewards
ethically and effectively managing all resources and accounting for client outcomes and organizational results
Highland Hills
4255 Northfield Road
Highland Hills, Ohio 44128
Phone 216-292-9700
Fax 216-292-9721

Westlake
2421 Center Ridge Road
Westlake, Ohio 44145
Phone 440-250-2520
Fax 440-250-2530

Camp Cheerful
15000 Cheerful Lane
Strongsville, Ohio 44136
Phone 440-238-6200
Fax 440-238-1858

Information
216-292-9700

www.achievementcenters.org