

PUBLISHED SINCE 1963
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COPING with COVID

Dear Friends of Envision...

Tough times reveal the true character and hearts of people.

I marvel at the strong leadership of Envision’s CEO, Jim Steffey – and the dedication, flexibility and creativity of his team as they continue to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

I’m humbled by the kindness of strangers who have unexpectedly dropped off bags of masks they’ve sewn by hand, and the generosity of donors and corporate sponsors who have mailed checks because they know this agency, like so many others, has been struggling with unanticipated financial hardship.

I’m grateful for our direct support professionals (DSP’s) who realize it’s impossible to keep six feet away from the vulnerable people they work with and are willing to risk their own health in providing personal care – including assistance with toileting and bathing.

But more than anything, I’m impressed by attitudes of the people with developmental disabilities served by Envision. Despite the challenges and unpredictability of the last several months, they are getting through this and even having some fun along the way.

If you find yourself inspired by what you see within these pages, please consider becoming an early supporter of our Annual Year-End Fundraising Campaign. We want to raise \$50,000 by December 31 for our new Day Program (which you can read more about on page 6). Restrictions on public gatherings forced us to cancel our “Walk for Envision,” so this campaign is more important than ever.

Wishing you and your family good health.

Sincerely,

Sara Neyer
Board Chair

“If you find yourself inspired by what you see within these pages, please consider becoming an early supporter of our Annual Year-End Fundraising Campaign.”

– Sara Neyer
Envision Board Chair

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LAST CHANCE!

2020 Hot Cars Raffle

GRAND PRIZE DRAWING OCTOBER 30, 2020

Proceeds will benefit kids and adults with disabilities served by Envision

ONLY 1,500 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD!

ENVISION YOURSELF BEHIND THE WHEEL OF ONE OF THESE HOT CARS!



2020 Mercedes-Benz
C-300 4-MATIC



2020 Ford Mustang GT
Premium Convertible



2020 Porsche
Macan SUV

...OR WIN UP TO \$50,000 IN CASH!

\$100

PER TICKET

**BUY TICKETS
ONLINE**

www.envisionohio.org

**ONLY 1,500
TICKETS WILL
BE SOLD!**

The Odds of Winning
a Hot Car or \$50K Cash

1 in 1,500

The Odds of Winning
the Powerball Lottery

1 in 262,000,000



HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

An interview with Envision's HR Director Katie Pursifull

Describe the unique challenges the HR Department has faced this year dealing with COVID-19.

The major challenges we faced in HR was the amount of information coming out from multiple government agencies regarding the virus and how often that information changed – sometimes within hours. Being able to navigate and communicate those changes to Envision staff continues to be difficult for our team.

How have these challenges disrupted the normal routine in HR?

HR has had major changes in their routine. We have had to create COVID specific policies and procedures that are time intensive, and they have the potential to change every day. The Directors and I have been working with the local health departments to navigate the best steps for positive cases and this continues to be a learning experience. We have had to communicate with staff differently. We are accustomed to inviting staff to campus or visiting group homes for trainings or staff appreciation. Initially we noticed an increase in staff applying for our open positions because they had been laid off from their jobs. But now that businesses are back open, unemployment benefits have been increased and parents are at home with young children in school; we are struggling to find staff.

How has HR adapted to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 crisis?

We've done a lot of things to keep the wheels turning while protecting our staff and the individuals we serve. For example, our HR Assistant has been working from home since March in an attempt to keep her and her family safe. The Staff Development Coordinator is offering virtual trainings and small group in person trainings to accommodate everyone. We are also focusing a lot on keeping staff morale high during this stressful time. Each week, we send them treats and messages of appreciation, such as:

"Thanks a Bunt'ch" (mini Bundt cakes from Nothing Bundt Cakes for our Community Living staff)

"I donut know what we would do without AWESOME employees like you" (a dozen donuts to each Group Home)

"Thank you for Bee-ing a Great Employee, You're the Balm!" (Burt's Bee's lip balm for Family Supports staff)

"Just popping by to say thanks" (gourmet popcorn for all staff)

\$10 gift card from Kroger for all staff

"You're all that and a bag of chips" (chips for all staff)

"Muffin to do but appreciate you" (muffins for all staff)



Are there any inspiring HR stories that emerged during this difficult time?

I've been most inspired by CITE staff who offered to fill open positions in Community Living. The transition really requires stepping out of your comfort zone, because working with children in a home-based environment (CITE) is very different from providing personal care (assistance with toileting and bathing) to adults in the Community Living program. I'm proud of these staff members who demonstrated dedication to Envision's most pressing needs.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Restrictions on social gatherings have profound effect on Envision's programs

CITE

The hugs and high-fives came to an abrupt halt when COVID-19 came knocking.

"CITE is a highly-personalized program. Our strength is the face-to-face support we provide children and their families," said Jennifer Esterkamp, CITE director.

Here's how it's supposed to work: CITE staff visit the homes of children with developmental disabilities to help them and their families learn effective strategies for navigating milestones like toilet training and reducing challenging behaviors. During the early days of the quarantine, all home visits ended and Jennifer and her team were forced to quickly pivot to an online alternative. Technology is great, but it doesn't replace the human connection established during a face-to-face visit. Some families didn't have access to technology, or weren't comfortable with it as a replacement. Consequently, many families chose to put their child's treatment plan on hold.



Online sessions became the norm after COVID.



More demands on foster care providers takes time away from their own self-care.

Family Living

The children and adults enrolled in this fostering model are living in the homes of people they warmly regard as "family" – so being with people who understand their needs, and how to support them through the early unknowns made it a lot easier to ride out the COVID-19 storm. Many of our children and adults we support attend school, participate in day programs, or work outside the home during the day. At the same time, many of our care providers also work outside the home while the children or adults attend school, day program or work. Family Living's greatest challenge throughout COVID-19 has been the impact on our care providers lives as they, too, had to make the adjustment of "working from home" when their jobs allowed for it, and meet the additional demands of keeping those living with them safe and engaged.

"It's been no easy feat of our care providers who've made significant shifts in their lives to remain present and supportive to those in their care, while working or establishing plans for support from fellow care providers to help when needed. Fostering someone within your home requires your constant attention, and there's been minimal relief for our providers to receive a break from juggling their caregiving role and outside work to receive their own personal self-care," said Kristie Hirsch, Envision's Director of Family Living.

“It’s been a difficult year for Envision with program cutbacks, staff reductions, cancelled fundraisers, and reduced revenue. But it’s also been a time of discovering what Envision is really made of. I’m amazed at the dedication and resiliency of our staff and the individuals we support. They have adapted to countless changes and when this COVID-19 crisis is over, I think we will emerge a stronger Envision because of this experience. The lessons we learned will serve us well into the future,” said Jim Steffey, President & CEO.

Supported Living

Director Anne Rule and her team have been facing the biggest challenges. Maintaining a distance of six feet is impossible when you’re providing personal care (including assistance with toileting and bathing) to group home residents. Not every DSP (direct support professional) was comfortable with the inherent risk to their own health, so their departures created immediate openings that had to be filled. The closing of local day programs made matters worse because it required extra staff coverage during hours when residents would typically be attending them. There were other concerns, too:

“A shortage of masks, gloves and hand sanitizers during the early weeks of the pandemic put all of us on edge about the possibility of someone – staff or resident – catching the virus. All of Envision rallied to get us supplies and we were fortunate to have received many donations. Our staff are trained on necessary precautions for assuring that they and the people they support stay healthy. We can’t let down our guard,” said Anne Rule, Director of Supported Living.



All masked up and no where to go during COVID shutdowns.



For some, loneliness and anxiety increased post-COVID when access to Mental Health services was cut off.

Mental Health Services

We’re all feeling a bit lonely being cut off from loved ones during this pandemic. Imagine wrestling with that when you have a diagnosed mental illness and a developmental disability – and you can’t see your therapist in person because of restrictions related to COVID-19.

“We are making do with online counseling sessions whenever possible to keep our clients and ourselves safe from the coronavirus, but it is no substitute for the real interaction that occurs in a face-to-face session,” said David Levine, Envision’s Director of Mental Health Services.

Effective therapy relies on good communication. Many of our clients have communication challenges and our therapists are trained to pick up on non-verbal cues. Picking up on those non-verbal cues is more difficult in a virtual session. This, along with lack of technology, made virtual sessions impractical for many of our clients who were left without a vital lifeline during the increased isolation brought about by COVID-19.

COMING SOON!

ENVISION DAY

A NEW DAY PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

VISIT COOL PLACES IN THE COMMUNITY OR HANG OUT AT OUR BEAUTIFUL 32-ACRE CAMPUS LEARNING NEW SKILLS, MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND HAVING A WHOLE LOT OF FUN!

OUR MULTI-ACTIVITY PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- * ART
- * MUSIC
- * DRAMA
- * GARDENING
- * COOKING
- * GAMES
- * SENSORY ACTIVITIES
- * LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

- AND SO MUCH MORE!



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.ENVISIONOHIO.ORG (513) 619-2945

Year-End Giving Campaign Will Support New Day Program

Sustaining Partners Being Sought for Monthly Donations

One of the most valuable lessons the COVID-19 crisis taught is the importance of being prepared for a season of unexpected adversity. Squirrels excel at this. They gather nuts during months of sunshine and abundance to carry them through periods of darkness and scarcity.

Nonprofits like Envision need to be more like squirrels. The individuals we serve depend on our ability to gather and store the necessary resources to provide a reliable stream of essential services and other quality-of-life-programs like the new Envision Day. The latter is the primary focus of the 2020 Year-End Giving Campaign, but the former – essential services – remains at the very top of our ongoing concerns.

Ensuring Envision's ability to always be there for people who need it the most requires partners – people whose lives have been deeply touched by Envision's mission. Are you one of those people? **Do you have a family member who in the past, or currently, has benefited from one or more of Envision's programs? Do you see the difference Envision has made in the life of your loved one? If so, do you feel grateful for the impact?**

Envision exists today, nearly 60 years after its founding, because a small group of families locked arms in solidarity to build something better than what society at the time was offering their kids with developmental disabilities. They were being encouraged to put their newborn babies in state-run institutions – an option that seems preposterous now. Their vision, sacrifice and hard work played a major role in changing attitudes about the value of people with disabilities.

Are you willing to play a major role today in sustaining Envision and helping us maintain a healthy financial position to serve children and adults with developmental disabilities? "We need families to lock arms with us now as 'Sustaining Envision Partners.' It will help us get our Envision Day program off the ground and 'squirrel away' vital resources for a strong healthy 2021," said Susan Hosler, Envision's Director of Development & Marketing.

"We need families to lock arms with us now as 'Sustaining Envision Partners.' It will help us get our Envision Day program off the ground and 'squirrel away' vital resources to ensure a strong 2021."

– Susan Hosler, Director of Development

Support Envision Today with a Planned Gift or a Donation to our Year-End Campaign

MAKE A
\$25

donation before 12/31/2020 and commit to making a monthly gift of \$25 throughout 2021

MAKE A
\$50

donation before 12/31/2020 and commit to making a monthly gift of \$50 throughout 2021

MAKE A
\$100

donation before 12/31/2020 and commit to making a monthly gift of \$100 throughout 2021

3030 West Fork Road
Cincinnati, OH 45211

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OCTOBER 21 “WALK FOR ENVISION” CANCELLED

Restrictions related to COVID-19
behind decision

Like so many other nonprofits this year, Envision was forced to make the difficult decision to cancel a key fundraising event. “Walk for Envision – Go the Extra Mile” was scheduled for October 21st at Winton Woods, but state-mandated restrictions on social gatherings made it impossible to move forward.

“Virtually all charity walk events were cancelled in 2020, so we’re certainly not alone in feeling the pain. Still, it’s a tough pill to swallow when you’re counting on that revenue stream to fund key program needs,” said Susan Hosler, Envision’s Director of Development & Marketing.

Last year was the official launch of Envision’s walk event. Turnout was strong and net revenue from corporate sponsorships, peer-to-peer fundraising, and the sale of raffle tickets exceeded what was being raised by previous fundraisers.

“We had – and still have – very high hopes for our ‘Walk for Envision’ event. It’s a good fit for our agency and one that we hope can raise critical funds and be a fun annual gathering of the families we serve now and in the past,” said Susan.

Thank you to the companies who committed sponsorship dollars to this year’s “Walk for Envision.”

