



**THE CHILDREN'S  
HOME** | **EDUCATION &  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



**BEST POINT  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
BY THE CHILDREN'S HOME



**COSTARS**  
BY THE CHILDREN'S HOME



**HEIDT**  
**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**  
BY THE CHILDREN'S HOME



**Got-Special  
KIDS**  
BY THE CHILDREN'S HOME

# Seasons of Transformation

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHILDREN'S HOME



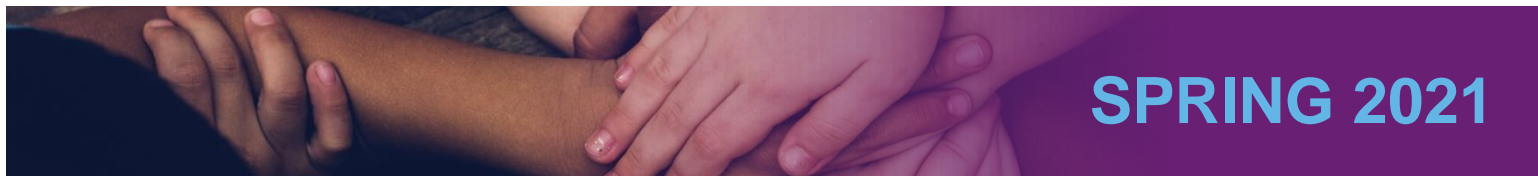
## OUR MISSION

*Creating lasting results that strengthen families and our community by guiding individuals – from infancy to independence – through comprehensive education, behavioral, and health services.*



## OUR VISION

*We are the leader in offering hope, help, and healing through a continuum of health and education services and partnerships.*



**SPRING 2021**



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Hello Friends,

I owe you a huge gratitude of thanks for supporting our community's most vulnerable population – the underserved children and families of Greater Cincinnati. Because of your help, we've served more than 14,000 children and families during unprecedented times.

Saying I'm proud of The Children's Home's reaction to national-level issues such as COVID-19 and the topic of social injustice is a vast understatement. We quickly recognized the COVID threat and began to modify our operations to mitigate the risk posed by this pandemic. The Children's Home, thanks to the guidance and leadership of our Board of Trustees, as well as the agility and quick thinking of our staff, has remained open.

Our unwavering commitment to social justice and equality remains part of our identity. Our support for minority communities, who predominantly represent the clients we serve, will never falter. I'm honored that The Children's Home was recognized with a Cincinnati Lifts Inclusion and Minority Business (CLIMB) Award in the *Modeling Opportunities for All* category. This is a living testament to our pledge to continue fighting for a reality where inclusion and justice are part of everyday life in Cincinnati.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID, I am pleased to share we had our most successful Giving Tuesday and Help Us Give Smiles (HUGS) program to date! We leveraged our media relationships while strategizing a conscious and deliberate effort to tell real stories, about real people, with real impacts. The Cincinnati community responded in typical fashion whenever there is a neighbor in need. Over 450 HUGS packages were distributed this year to children who would have otherwise had no holiday season at all and more than \$30,000 was received in donations.

Much work remains. I'm asking for your continued partnership with The Children's Home.

The need for our services remains at an all-time high. According to the CDC, youth suicide rates, attempts, and suicidal ideation are rising at alarming rates.

Most of our clients live substantially below the poverty line – as much as 200% below in many cases. Scholars call these circumstances “food insecurities.” Our kids simply call it “being hungry.”

Our friends and community allies are an integral component in our life-changing and life-saving work. Today, thanks to our friends, neighbors, and partners we serve more people than ever, and in more places than ever.

I'm beyond grateful for your help. The Children's Home and our mission of service has been a beacon of hope for more than 157 years and we will remain so for those who would be forgotten without us. I'm grateful you are with us as we continue our journey.

Sincerely,

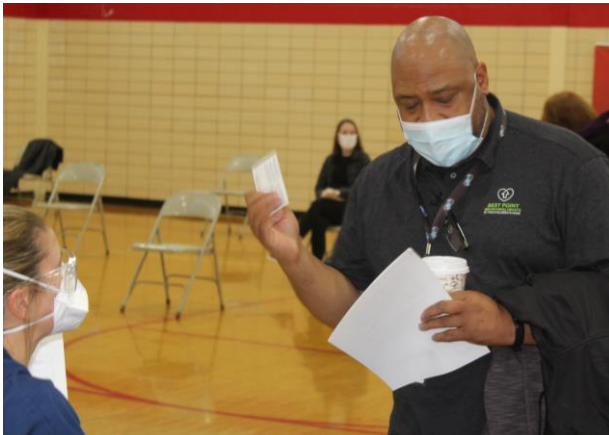
John Banchy, MBA, CNE  
President and CEO



*Debbie Gingrich, vice president of behavioral health*



*Dr. Joe Rieman, medical director*



*Randall Bridgeman, early childhood care coordinator*

## COVID-19 Vaccinations Administered

Staff members who normally interface with clients on a near daily basis were among the first employees at The Children's Home to receive the first round of the COVID-19 vaccination on January 8, 2021, and their second round of vaccinations are now complete. Vaccines for additional personnel will be scheduled as soon as supplies allow.

Our partners at the Cincinnati Health Department administered the vaccines in the gymnasium located on our campus. Staff were scheduled at specific intervals to ensure a smooth progression from check-in, screening, vaccination, and observation, while maintaining social distancing guidelines.

Dr. Joe Rieman, medical director of The Children's Home, offered his perspective as a medical doctor on why he personally opted to get the vaccine in a Facebook Live video aired the same day. In the video, available for viewing on The Children's Home's Facebook page, Dr. Rieman said he believed the efficacy of the vaccine warranted receiving the injection.

Whether or not to receive the vaccination is currently up to the individual employee.

## Family Visitation Center Preserves Familial Bonds

**“I wanted to tell you how much I appreciated you through the last few months,” said Bonnie D., a parent using services provided by the Family Visitation Center at The Children’s Home. “It takes a special person to see the situations you do and be as passionate and kind as you are. My babies were always at ease when we came for visits and that is all thanks to you.”**

These words came from a mother after her children’s first supervised visit with their father at the Family Visitation Center (FVC). Parents can use the FVC when a judge or magistrate from the court orders supervised parenting time.

“Children need both parents,” says Randal S. Bloch, attorney at Wagner & Bloch, LLC in Cincinnati and an instrumental partner in establishing the FVC in 2018. “Unfortunately, there are times when parents may need assistance in seeing their children. As safety is a primary concern for parents, the Family Visitation Center at The Children’s Home meets this need. The FVC is a warm, safe, secure, and nurturing environment where moms, dads and their children can be together and share the best of themselves,” Bloch said. “They play, they talk, and they ‘break bread’ – just like any family.”

Activities that take place at the FVC are as varied as the clients who use the space, said Karen McCann, family visitation supervisor. “Over the last few months, the FVC has hosted several birthday celebrations, pizza parties, parents learning to play ‘Uno’ for the first time, puppet shows, and dunking contests on the basketball court,” she said.

“We opened the FVC after seeing a gap in the community for these kinds of services,” said John Banchy, president and CEO of The Children’s Home. “Kids are often forced to endure the collateral damage of being separated from one, or both parents, when courts get involved in adult matters. The FVC helps mitigate those circumstances.”

“The child/parent relationship is crucial for the optimal development in a young person,” said Dr. Joe Rieman, medical director of The Children’s Home. “Children who have healthy, strong ties to parents are overwhelmingly better positioned to become successful students, and eventual adults, who are able to secure healthy and productive social bonds with others. The services offered at the FVC are more than a nicety for the community,” said Dr. Rieman. “They’re absolutely critical for children and families who need the specialized support provided by The Children’s Home staff at the FVC.”



*Pam McKie, chief operating officer; Randal Bloch, attorney; John Banchy, president & CEO*

**“[The FVC] made such a difficult time for the three of us so much easier,” said Bonnie D., speaking of her experience and that of her two young children. “The way my babies lit up when they knew we were coming to see you and the way they squealed when you walked up to the car made it so much easier on me as a mother and them during this time of transition. Thank you for who you are, your passion for all of these kids, and your kindness. We will never forget you.”**



**BEST POINT  
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## Navigating the Traumas of Racism

"In our school-based day treatment program, we've had many discussions with our young clients, ranging from kindergarten to high school age, when they share negative experiences regarding racism," said Kate Barnes, school-based day treatment manager at Best Point Behavioral Health by The Children's Home. "Racism is a traumatic experience for all ages. These experiences can cause anger, anxiety, depression, and self-hatred."



*These buttons, worn by our providers, show their support of the black and brown community, as well as the ongoing fight against racism.*

"What some may not realize is that systemic racism is more than just a social or moral issue," said Debbie Gingrich, vice president of Best Point Behavioral Health. "The data within the medical community illustrate racism has a very real, and very profound, effect on already vulnerable youth populations." The mental health counselors and therapists at Best Point are actively addressing this issue within the vulnerable populations served by the agency. One of the first things to do, Gingrich says, is to ensure the mental health community incorporates culturally competent and responsive practices.

And that begins with listening. "My job is to listen," says Brandi Sauerwein, behavioral health therapist at Best Point. "When a client says they're hurting, I listen. My job is not to dismiss their pain, but to hear them and validate their reality, not my own. There is healing in this process."

Best Point's staff have undergone a series of trainings designed to increase cultural competencies at all levels of care within the agency. The trainings include subjects like racial injustice, navigating the trauma of racism, and racial inequalities in access to health care, mental health, education, and support resources. These trainings also help bridge the chasm of understanding that can exist between different communities. More than half of the 14,000+ individuals served by The Children's Home each year are African-American and 85% are living in poverty. These factors create a need for therapists to learn more about specific issues impacting these populations.

"Racism is violence," says Rachel Mousie, behavioral health therapist at Best Point. "Living under the constant threat of discrimination, bodily harm, daily micro-aggressions, and lack of representation in media and culture has been proven to have negative effects on mental health." A recent study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, and conducted by the Public Library of Science, concluded that racism is twice as likely to affect mental health than physical health and people who experience racism also experience mental health issues like depression, stress, emotional distress, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts.

"Our clients are vulnerable, and many have experienced numerous traumas," said Alexis Rieck, behavioral health therapist at Best Point. "Racism is often one of them. We can't really help our clients without acknowledging the systems they live in and working to make changes to the systems that harm them. If I turned a blind eye to racism, I'd be telling my clients, 'That's your problem; not mine.'"

Best Point therapists are in 66 partner schools in the Greater Cincinnati region, work with children representing more than 400 area schools and serve clients in 150+ other community locations.

## Job Training Program for Young Adults

When Got-Special KIDS was gifted to The Children's Home in 2019 by founder Tamara Andersson, the operation was modified to incorporate a training program for young adults on the autism spectrum and other related diagnoses.

The global, online retail business offers a wide range of products that support educational, sensory, and therapy needs for kids, families, and educators. These products are sent to 46 countries and are filled, packed, and shipped by the trainees in the job training program.

The training program is for 18- to 22-year-olds who have opted to continue their education and learn marketable skills to aid in a successful transition into the workforce. "We continue to be amazed seeing the progression of our trainees," said Shayla Becze, retail operations senior manager at Got-Special KIDS.

Becze said trainees learn the importance of skills such as job safety, interactions with supervisors and coworkers, showing up on time, and specific online retail skills like pulling orders from shelves, packing and labeling the orders, and maintaining product inventory.

No matter what the trainee is capable of, the GSK job coaches can accommodate to their abilities. "One thing remains consistent with all our trainees, regardless of their abilities," said Becze. "They all have a desire to learn the skills necessary to be successful here at Got-Special KIDS. We know the job skills they learn with us will prepare and assist them in their future professional goals of gainful employment."

The program allows trainees to get future-ready by working and seeing how a business runs from start to finish. Got-Special KIDS continues its work for the special needs' community, by the special needs' community.



*Job coaches work with GSK trainees*



**COSTARS**  
BY THE CHILDREN'S HOME

## Kindergarten Readiness & Services for Working Parents

A child who is kindergarten ready has, according to educational studies, a more than 80 percent chance of mastering basic skills by the time they're 11. The difference is vast – only 45 percent who are not kindergarten ready will master the same skills at an identical age.

The right preschool, like CoStars Preschool by The Children's Home, can be instrumental in ensuring a young learner is poised to do well in school. "Our program is staffed by degreed and highly experienced educators who excel at ensuring our kids are ready for kindergarten," said Carolyn Brinkmann, director, early childhood and school age services. "We work closely with parents to develop a tailored early learning plan with the hope of preparing their child for future academic success."

Brinkmann's colleagues will often hear her say parents are children's first and most important teacher. "This is why," says Beth Wiseman, early care and education manager at CoStars, "the environment in their preschool classrooms mirror best practices for a home learning environment. It's probably not surprising that evidenced-based studies illustrate a language-rich setting, feelings of nurturing, and a welcoming of curiosity as critical factors for supporting young, developing minds. CoStars classrooms are specifically designed to incorporate these elements."

Recognizing a need in the community it serves, CoStars quickly adjusted its day-to-day operations to offer support for working parents of school-age children when COVID forced many schools to shut their doors. "It was really not a hard decision to make," Brinkmann said. "We have a history of tailoring services to address the changing need of the community. By freeing up some classrooms we were able to provide quality services to working families who needed it the most."

CoStars Preschool is open until 6 p.m. to better support parents who work and need a safe and secure environment for their young learners. The program accepts private pay, childcare vouchers, and Cincinnati Preschool Promise.





## Autism Spectrum Disorders in Pop Culture

RAYMOND: My boxer shorts have my name and it says Raymond.

CHARLIE: All right, when we pass the store, we'll pick you up a pair of boxer shorts.

RAYMOND: I get my boxer shorts at K-Mart in Cincinnati.

CHARLIE: We're not going back to Cincinnati, Ray, so don't even start with that.

The above dialogue is etched in cinematic history.

*Rain Man*, the highest grossing film in 1988 tells the story of actor Tom Cruise's character, Charlie, and his road trip adventure with his autistic savant brother, Raymond, played by Dustin Hoffman. The film went on to win four Oscars and thrust autism into mainstream pop culture in the United States. "I think *Rain Man* does a great job in calling attention to autism and humanizing the diagnosis," said Amanda Tipkemper, education and autism services director at The Children's Home. "It was a springboard for making it part of the national vernacular, but it also created a stereotype that all people with autism are savants, which is not the case at all."

An autistic savant is defined by Dr. Darold A. Treffert of the University of Wisconsin Medical School, Madison, as someone with "...a rare, but extraordinary, condition" in which persons with autism have what Dr. Treffert refers to as "some 'island of genius,'" which remarkably stands out in a very specific area. These may include, but are not limited to, subjects in music, art, calendar calculating, math, and others. Raymond in *Rain Man* was based on a man named Kim Peek, who was a real-life savant and who had several traits emulated by Hoffman in the film.

Since *Rain Man*, autism has maintained a presence in movies, TV, and other mediums in the United States. "I think pop culture is doing an admirable job in broadcasting autism as something that's real and should not be shied away from," Tipkemper said. "But there's also a danger of lumping all people on the spectrum together. The reality is that no two people with ASD are alike. There really is no singular way to depict someone with autism."

One current TV show that does a great job in depicting autism in a specific character is *Sesame Street*, says Melissa Grondin, lead associate principal at the Heidt Center of Excellence. "The show has identified Julia as a character with autism right away and up front," she said. "While they illustrate some traits that are common to autism, like communication challenges and reacting adversely to unexpected stimuli, they also demonstrate she is unique and that she has positive interactions with her friends."

Grondin said she would like to see an increase of actors with autism portray characters with the diagnosis. "Characters depicted by people with autism gives a breath of authenticity to the story," she said. "As talented as any actor might be, there's no substitution for not being able to 'turn off' autism if you live with it every day."

Tipkemper agreed. "I'd like to see characters in movies or on TV that truly show the width and breadth of autism," she said. "Most people with autism are not the brilliant teen trauma surgeon. Not everyone is the troubled youth who bangs his head against the wall so hard he causes repeated concussions either. Good, authentic depictions of autism can be a catalyst for increasing awareness, improving understanding, and creating empathy for people on the spectrum, their caregivers, and their educators who live with ASD daily."



Melissa Grondin (left) works with two Heidt Center of Excellence students

# Cincinnati Leaders Coalesce Others to Benefit Vulnerable Children

*By Roderick Hinton, Chief Administrative Officer, The Children's Home*

Author Ken Blanchard once said, "The greatest leaders mobilize others by coalescing people around a shared vision."

Rockin' at Riverfest 2020 was co-chaired by Jeff March and his wife Jeanette, as well as J.B. Buse and his wife, Leigh. When these selfless volunteers agreed to lend their considerable talents to our signature event, no one could have imagined the scheduled festivities held at Smale Riverfront Park would be cancelled by a global epidemic. The fireworks, gala, entertainment, live and silent auction, and fellowship, part of what is known as the Tri-State region's "Largest Party for a Cause," were shelved as the world went into quarantine.

The 2020 event, with a goal of \$500,000, was beyond crucial to the children and families who rely on The Children's Home. Without fuel to sustain these life-changing programs, Cincinnati's most vulnerable would suffer. The March's and Buse's refused to let that happen. Our event co-chairs immediately reimaged the physical event and transformed it into an online auction held in a virtual space. They were instrumental in leveraging their networks and personal contacts to benefit those we serve.

The holiday season did not pause for the worldwide crisis. Many of the kids we serve live 200% below the poverty line. Even more children than ever before were in danger of the holiday season passing them by. While the holidays are not officially part of Rockin', our co-chairs established their own precedence as leaders. They continued their advocacy for our agency, the children and families entrusted to us.

Our donors, sponsors, and supporters indeed "coalesced around the shared vision" of Jeff and Jeanette March, and J.B. and Leigh Buse. We owe a debt of gratitude to our 2020 Rockin' at Riverfest co-chairs – they helped exceed our goals and raised more than \$600,000 in support of kids and families who need The Children's Home more than ever.

The Children's Home is Cincinnati's most prolific nonprofit specializing in education, behavioral, and therapeutic health services, and autism services for vulnerable and at-risk youth. Our entire Cincinnati community is certainly blessed to have a group of leaders gifted at "coalescing others."



J.B. Buse serves as chairman and CEO of LOTH, Inc. and Leigh Buse is a CPA and corporate secretary/assistant treasurer for Corporex. J.B. is in partnership with REDI Cincinnati, serves on the advisory boards at Xavier University's The Williams College of Business and the Economics Center at the University of Cincinnati. Leigh Buse is actively involved in philanthropic efforts benefitting the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation and the Morgan Judd Memorial Foundation.

Jeff March is a member of the Board of Trustees at The Children's Home and was one of the founders of BRG Realty Group, where he now serves as CEO. Over many years, Jeff and his wife Jeanette have generously donated their talents to various educational and housing initiatives along with other charitable endeavors to enhance the lives of those in our community.

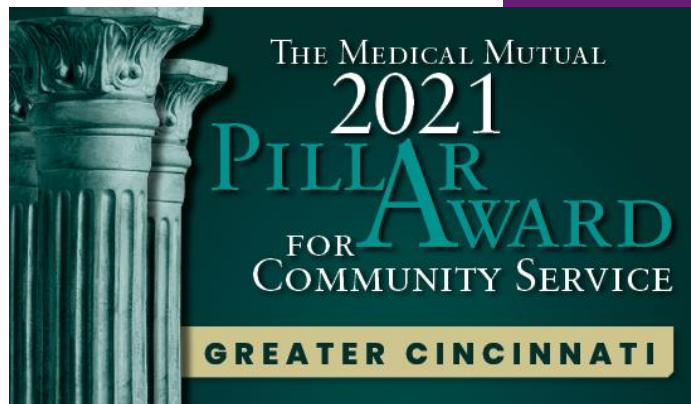


*Pictured from left: J.B. Buse, Leigh Buse, Roderick Hinton, Jeanette March, and Jeff March*

# Kudos Well Deserved!



The Children's Home received a 2020 CLIMB Award (Cincinnati Lifts Inclusion and Minority Business) in the Modeling Opportunities for All category. The CLIMB Awards, presented by the *Cincinnati Business Courier* in partnership with the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, celebrate those companies and organizations that help our region achieve greater heights of success through building a diverse workforce, championing equitable policies and practices, and developing inclusive cultures. President & CEO John Banchy and Chief Administrative Officer Rod Hinton were featured in an article by the *Cincinnati Business Courier* and appeared in the awards ceremony broadcast on WSTR Star 64 on December 17, 2020.



John Banchy, President & CEO, was recognized as one of only three area nonprofit leaders in the Greater Cincinnati Area as 2020 Nonprofit Executive Director of the Year with a Medical Mutual Pillar Award for Community Service. The Pillar Awards, presented by Medical Mutual and *Smart Business* magazine, honors organizations and individuals making a difference in their communities – those that give back in so many ways through volunteering, charitable giving, pro bono support, and more. Our honorees prove that business leaders can spark positive change. John, and other local honorees, were recognized at a virtual gala held January 28, 2021.



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city of  
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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**The Levine Family Health Center  
enables The Children's Home to  
be a leader in improving the  
physical, mental, and social  
health of children.**

Learn more at [www.tchcincy.org](http://www.tchcincy.org)

FEBRUARY 2020: 0  
TELEHEALTH SESSIONS

MARCH 2020: 4,188  
TELEHEALTH SESSIONS

APRIL 2020: 10,204  
TELEHEALTH SESSIONS

IN 2020, WE HAD 59,232  
LIFE-CHANGING  
TELEHEALTH SESSIONS.

ADAPTING WHEN OUR  
COMMUNITY NEEDS US  
MOST.



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**The Olympus Center offers  
complete and comprehensive  
diagnostic services for children  
and adults to assess for learning  
disorders that influence a person's  
ability to perform academically.**



Learn more at [www.tchcincy.org](http://www.tchcincy.org)

## Board of Trustees

Our board members are business and community leaders from all walks of life and are responsible for the governance, strategic direction and fiscal oversight of The Children's Home. The board oversees the formation of policy directed toward the development and operation of the organization.

### **Joe Dominiak, Chair**

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## Ambassador Board

Our Ambassador Board is an engaged group of supporters who increase awareness of our mission and assist program staff with their work. Members offer professional knowledge and skills, while gaining valuable volunteer and leadership experience.

### **Graham Vollmer, Chair**

*Foundation Risk Partners*

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