



THE CHILDREN'S HOME | EDUCATION & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



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.



SUMMER | FALL 2021



THE CHILDREN'S HOME

EDUCATION & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Hello Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you enjoy the updates in this newsletter.

The summer and fall have reminded us all the reason why The Children's Home exists. Over the last few months, we welcomed our staff of educators, therapists, intervention specialists and most importantly, children, back to campus to begin the 2021-2022 school year.

The support you bring to our organization allows us to extend our life-changing services beyond our Madisonville campus. Our region's most underserved and vulnerable populations can now access our programs in 307 neighborhoods, in 127 zip codes, 70 partner schools, and across four states.

Our summer programming was an enormous success. Camp-I-Can allowed children of working parents to keep working when school was out while knowing their loved ones were in a safe, secure, nurturing and educational environment. Our summer campers enjoyed our campus pool, art activities, music, sports, and cultural activities while simultaneously benefitting from our programming that mitigates the "learning loss" some kids experience during the summer months.

Our transition services also remained in full swing. The Children's Home's transition service coordinators worked tirelessly to ensure that young adults on the autism spectrum, and with related disorders, were given the critical skill sets to have a chance at what any of us would want – meaningful employment to foster a life of independence, respect, and dignity.

The traditional end of summer saw our signature event – Rockin' at Riverfest – return with a roar! Under the theme of "reuniting," Cincinnati's most affluent leaders coalesced at our event to show their support for our 157-year continuing mission. This event, and with the advocacy and help of our 2021 Rockin' co-chairs Mark and Sara Mercurio, and Nick and Joelle Ragland, we were able to raise over \$570,000 in support of our life-changing programs.

The need for our services remains high. According to the Journal of Pediatrics, external factors like poverty levels affect the likelihood of children receiving critically needed treatment for anxiety, depression, and behavioral health problems. Together with help from our donors, supporters, volunteers, and our Board of Trustees, we are working diligently to keep addressing issues like access to care within our community.

As we continue to grow, we need passionate and dedicated people to join our team. Please let your personal and professional networks know we are seeking people who want to make a difference and who want to change lives...every day.

I'm eternally grateful for your support as we continue our advocacy to serve those with no voice. Our efforts ensure the most disadvantaged in our community are not forgotten. Thank you for being part of our continued 157-year journey.

Sincerely,

John Banchy, MBA, CNE
President and CEO



Celebrating Juneteenth

The Children's Home celebrated its inaugural Juneteenth celebration over the summer and was attended by on-campus clients and families, staff, and partners from the Cincinnati Police Department.

Keynote speakers included Board of Trustees member Tommie Lewis, president and CEO of Make it Plain Consulting, LLC and John Banchy, president and CEO of The Children's Home.

"Our Juneteenth celebration acknowledged a critical turning point in American history for an oppressed population," said Greg Payne, evaluation coordinator and member of the agency Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council. "This holiday illustrates a commitment to remember the past, while blazing a bright trail ahead for our future, and living up to the ideals our country holds dear – liberty, justice and opportunities for all."

Events included raising of the Juneteenth flag on main campus by an honor guard comprised of the Cincinnati Police Department officers, children, and staff. Asia Harris of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center spoke to the assembled guests about the history of Juneteenth and Ednekqwa Lang, Upper School educational aide, led her students in the reciting of a Juneteenth poem.

The celebration included lunch, music, poetry, art exhibits with sidewalk art, and a drive-by art show at the Heidt Center of Excellence.

For his keynote address, Lewis' subject was "What freedom means to me."

"It was a privilege to join students and staff at The Children's Home's first Juneteenth celebration," said Lewis. "I chose the theme of 'What freedom means to me' because it's very personal, and children know whether someone is speaking from the heart. Events like this recognize our past, spark dialogue in the present, and lay the foundation for a brighter future.

"I'm looking forward to next year's celebration," he said.



Pictured left to right: Asia Harris, youth programs manager for the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; Tommie Lewis, Jr., board of trustees member; Roderick Hinton, chief administrative officer; John Banchy, president and CEO.

The Randal S. Bloch Family Visitation Center

On June 23, The Children’s Home officially named the supervised family visitation program the Randal S. Bloch Family Visitation Center in a ceremony held at the facility on the main campus.

“Randy Bloch was instrumental in bringing The Children’s Home’s Family Visitation Center to our community,” said John Banchy, president and CEO of the Children’s Home. “The very first family we served when we opened the FVC two years ago had a mom who, because of a variety of challenges, had not seen her little girl in 18-months. Because of Randy’s vision, we were able to fix that.”

The FVC launched in 2019 in partnership with the Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court and was made possible via a grant from the Cincinnati Bar Association. Since its inception, the FVC has established a working partnership with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court and the Clermont County Court of Domestic Relations. The center has supervised over 360 visits and served more than 50 families.

Randy was surrounded by her family and many other distinguished guests including Judge Jon Sieve of Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations, Judge Melissa Powers, Judge Kari Bloom and Judge John Williams of Hamilton County Juvenile Court, and retired Judge Sylvia Hendon of Hamilton County Juvenile Court and Hamilton County District Court of Appeals.



“ We know children need both parents. We saw the need in the community and felt The Children’s Home could meet this need. I never expected the facility to be named for me and it’s a great honor. At the end of the day, I think this illustrates the great things that happen when community partners work together. ”

— Randal S. Bloch, Attorney,
Wagner & Bloch, LLC



Pictured top to bottom: Randal Bloch and John Banchy;
Randal & Peter Bloch

Preparing Job-Seeking Candidates

As more employers seek job candidates to fill open positions, The Children's Home is preparing a pool of job-seeking candidates that might be overlooked by some organizations.

Got-Special KIDS, an online mail order service providing therapeutic, sensory-friendly, and educational products for the special-needs community, houses a job-training program for students and young adults on the autism spectrum and with related diagnoses.

"There is a solid business case for hiring individuals with 'diverse-abilities,'" said Amanda Tipkemper, vice president of education and superintendent at The Children's Home. "Our trainees gain skills that any employer would find desirable, and studies illustrate employees from this population exhibit other traits such as intense loyalty, as well as the ability to think innovatively and creatively."

The capabilities of the GSK trainees and the skills they learn were showcased during a news broadcast by Local 12. GSK Trainee Lara Pulliam and Elizabeth Wietmarschen, transition coordinator at The Children's Home, were interviewed for the story.

"I've learned a lot of determination and endurance and a lot of teamwork working with my peers," Pulliam said.

"I honestly think if you are looking to hire, definitely don't overlook the special needs population. We offer a lot of really great expertise, and these kids want to work, and they want to be active members," Wietmarschen said.

"I think some might be surprised to learn while we provide oversight and job-skills coaching our GSK trainees learn inventory, packaging, filling orders," said Jill Smith, operations director. "With our help, they've learned to ship our products to all 50 states and 48 countries."

Smith said in addition to the retail operations side of Got-Special KIDS, trainees also learn vital soft skills such as interaction with fellow employees and managers, safety, punctuality and attention to detail.



Back To School on Our Campus

Nothing says “back-to-school” more than a crisp new backpack loaded with supplies and yellow busses!

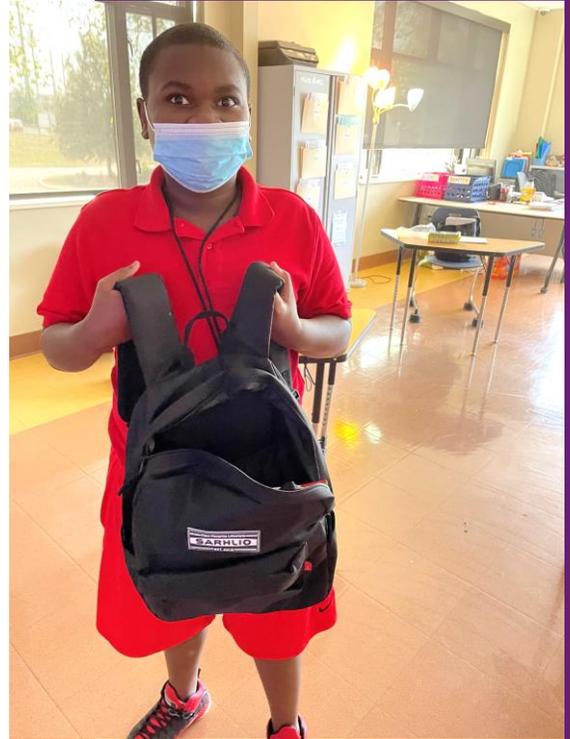
Our friends from Easy Way Products dropped off more than 160 backpacks with school supplies on our main campus! As so many of our clients live 200% or more below the poverty line, these items will fill a huge need for many of our students and families.

School busses bring students to our campus for our education and day treatment programs from 39 school districts in five Ohio counties.

All of our education programs are made possible by our highly trained staff of licensed intervention specialists, teachers, educational aides, and therapists – each dedicated to helping children overcome their behavioral difficulties and learning challenges and succeed in their homes, schools and communities.

Last school year, 482 students attended our campus programs. Following strict CDC guidelines, students and staff safely navigated the classrooms, gymnasiums, and outdoor spaces on our campuses.

Our students advanced an average of 1.2 grade levels in math and 1.2 grade levels in reading last academic year, as measured by Star Math® and Star Reading®. Twenty-six of 29 of our seniors earned the credits necessary for graduation.



Back To School in the Community

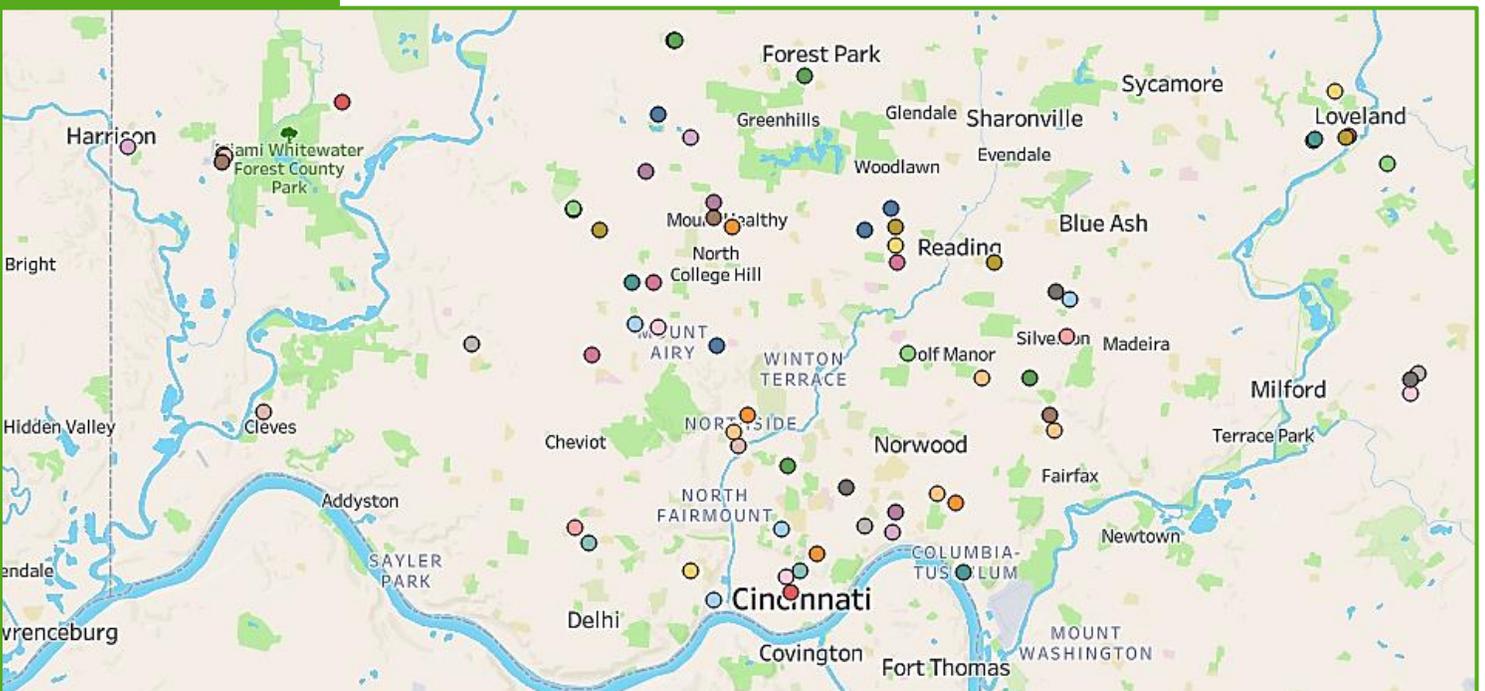
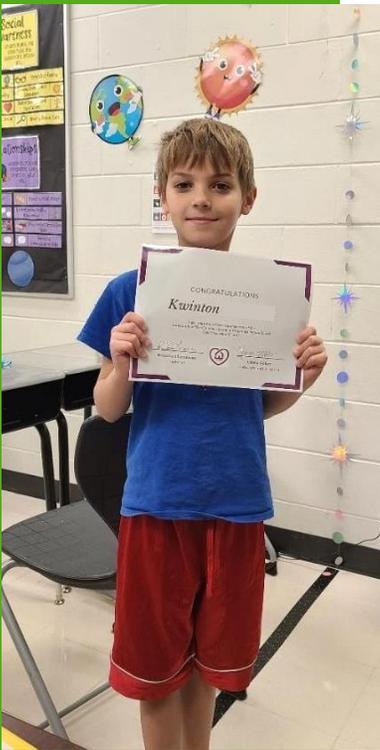
Our Best Point Behavioral Health by The Children's Home therapists, care coordinators, and day treatment group leaders headed back into area schools this fall to continue providing behavioral and mental health services to nearly 6,000 children and their families. While services don't stop in the summer, access to care improves when children can receive services in their school.

When children experience social, emotional or interpersonal difficulties, it affects their behavior and interferes with their daily lives, as well as their ability to learn. Our dedicated school-based staff, in tandem with teachers and other school personnel, are perfectly positioned to help ensure positive outcomes for the children we serve.

Best Point's School Based Day Treatment program takes place in a structured, therapeutic group environment right in the school building. Our day treatment groups are offered in 14 schools in seven districts. The goal of the program is to return clients to their full day academic settings ready to learn. Over the summer break, we brought nearly 60 clients who needed intense therapy to our main campus to continue treatment. We introduced new students to our groups to prepare them for the school year while continuing to build skills for our ongoing clients. Thirteen students graduated from SBDT this summer.

Kwinton is one of those proud graduates. With daily structured activities, individual and family therapy, and support from his home school's team of teachers, counselors, and administrators, Kwinton's care team successfully transitioned him back to his full-day classroom. Additionally, this team ensures he receives ongoing aftercare, including counseling and care coordination.

Every day we strive to meet children and families where they are on their journeys to help them reach the best point for living productive, meaningful, and happier lives.



The Children's Home is the lead behavioral and mental health provider in 70 schools in 13 districts in Hamilton and Clermont Counties.

Heidt Center Minecraft Club

The Heidt Center of Excellence founded their Esports Minecraft Club, which is designed to facilitate learning, team building, and collaboration exercises for students on the autism spectrum in an electronic environment.

The club was folded into the curriculum at the Heidt Center for interested students.

Caitlyn Lynch, autism intervention specialist at the Heidt Center, developed the lesson plans for her students participating in Minecraft Club. She said the student's immersion in detailed the detailed Minecraft environment rewards skillsets and attributes like critical thinking and dynamic planning.

"Minecraft contains a very exacting and deliberate digital ecosystem," she said. "This space is very conducive for stimulating higher cognitive functions in developing minds," she said.

The format may look like a typical video game environment to the casual observer. But the learning, teamwork, cooperation, and strategic components lend the platform to serve as a unique training tool.

"This is a group of young learners working together in an emergent gameplay scenario where they are collaborating to reach a common goal," explains David Schmidt, autism educational aide at the Heidt Center. "This is not unlike what you'd find from a team-oriented sport associated with any school."

Minecraft Club also aids in areas like peer-to-peer dialogue, which is sometimes a challenge for students on the autism spectrum in the best of times. COVID made developing these skills even harder.

"Some of our students have been at home with little socialization among their peers since the onset of the pandemic," Schmidt said. "An Esport environment fosters teamwork, socialization and dialogue. Some of our students have challenges with interpersonal communication so a familiar environment like Minecraft helps hone these life-skills."

Lynch said many students on the autism spectrum are extremely comfortable in Esports, or other electronic space, and tend to have natural inclinations toward these skills. Minecraft is another tool she and other educators can use to reach these students when communication or traditional learning methods are challenging.

"The digital world allows us to reach young minds in a place where they are thriving," she said. "As an educator and therapist, it's up to me to find ways to reach my students. If this requires navigating cube-shaped zombies and pigs made from digital blocks, then I'll do that!"



Caitlyn Lynch, associate principal - transition

CoStars Summer Fun

CoStars by The Children's Home had a summer packed full of activities geared toward enriching the lives of the agency's youngest learners.

CoStars Preschool began their summer months with a Father's Day tailgate party – giving our early learners and staff a chance to celebrate and honor the important role dad's play in the lives of their children. The afternoon event featured games and snacks outside while Dads (and some Moms!) joined their children for the fun. The parking lot was roped off to ensure safety and to give plenty of room for gross motor activities including hula-hooping, frisbee, a ball toss, and giant games including tic-tac-toe and connect four.

"Dads and Dad-figures can play a key role in the development of a young learner," said Carolyn Brinkmann, vice president, early childhood and school-age services. "Children learn through play and exploration, so we dedicated some time and space for our Dads to support motor coordination, turn taking and creative play."

A unique, once-in-a-preschool lifetime event also happened this summer. The cicada arrival of 2021 gave our young learners a chance to experience a phenomenon that will not happen for every preschooler.

"We knew our kids would not be able to stay indoors for over a month," said Beth Wiseman, early care and education manager. "We didn't want them to be afraid of the cicadas either. So, our teachers came up with innovative teaching tools to introduce life cycles and develop an interest around cicadas."

Before the cicadas arrived, Wiseman said the preschool classrooms studied butterflies. The students observed and cared for the insects as they studied the butterfly life cycle in their classrooms. The preschoolers concluded the study by releasing their butterflies after saying their goodbyes and providing orange juice to them.

The plan worked! The children continued playing outside when the cicadas were buzzing in the trees nearby. "What we didn't anticipate," says Wiseman, "is such a high comfort level that the kids became near-professional cicada catchers!"

Another important event this summer was celebrating the preschool graduates who were on their way to kindergarten in the fall! CoStars Preschool provides a safe and nurturing environment designed to prepare children ages three to five to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Studies show that a child who is kindergarten ready has a more than 80 percent chance of mastering basic skills before starting middle school and going on to graduate high school. CoStars Preschool is positioned to best support parents who work and want peace-of-mind knowing their children are being cared for and are learning.



Party for a Cause



The tri-state's largest "Party for a Cause" was held alongside the resurrected Labor Day fireworks on the Ohio River September 5.

Rockin' at Riverfest is the largest annual fundraiser for The Children's Home. It fuels the more than 30 programs provided by the organization that serves nearly 15,000 children and families each year. The event consists of a gala, live and silent auction, premiere fireworks viewing and live entertainment held at Anderson Pavilion in Smale Park.

"We were blessed to have some amazing co-chairs who tirelessly advocated for the children and families who depend on us," said John Banchy, president and CEO of The Children's Home. "Their help was instrumental in convening many of Cincinnati's leaders at our event who remain committed to the future of our Queen City. Together, we raised over \$570,000 that will support Cincinnati's most vulnerable populations."

The event has increased in popularity every year and consistently sells out sponsorships from community partners and business organizations that support children and families. This year, nearly 400 attended one of the largest events of its kind since the onset of COVID.

"We knew planning an event of this magnitude would be a challenge, especially since COVID has become part of the global vernacular," Banchy said. "But we also know our supporters, friends, and leaders in the community remain devoted to our mission of service. This event is a huge part of fueling our programs as well as showcasing our work to fellow community leaders."

This year's event was co-chaired by Nick and Joelle Ragland (Nick is co-chair of the Board of Directors for The Gorilla Glue Company. Joelle is the owner of Cecitino Home, an interior design company), and Mark and Sara Mercurio (Mark is president and CEO of The Gorilla Glue Company. Sara is an assistant teacher at Montgomery Community Church's preschool program).

The event featured a short film showcasing the story of Jeremiah Phillips and the impact The Children's Home has made on the young man and his family. At its conclusion, the room exploded in applause.

"Jeremiah and his family were gracious in sharing their Children's Home story with our attendees," said Roderick Hinton, chief administrative officer of The Children's Home. "The standing ovation and well-wishes he received at the film's conclusion illustrates the impact of our mission firsthand. Our programs change lives and Rockin' at Riverfest is the signature event that fuels our programs. I'm grateful to everyone who attended or supported us online."

Rockin' at Riverfest was co-hosted by Steve Raleigh and Tanya O'Rourke from WCPO 9 On Your Side.

The Servant's Heart Award, awarded in honor of the late Tad Lawrence, was presented to Dr. Robert Heidt and Julia Scripps Heidt.

"The Children's Home has been woven into the fabric of Cincinnati since 1864," said Hinton. "This event, and supporters like our co-chairs, our Board of Trustees, our gracious hosts from WCPO, and the other Cincinnati leaders at Rockin' demonstrate the best qualities of the tri-state – neighbors coming together to serve one another when it's needed most."

Next year's event is scheduled for September 4, 2022.



Pictured top to bottom: Rockin' at Riverfest co-chairs Mark & Sara Mercurio and Joelle & Nick Ragland; Servant's Heart Award Recipients Dr. Robert Heidt and Julia Scripps Heidt; co-hosts Tanya O'Rourke and Steve Raleigh, WCPO; Garrett Ollish, Director/Co-Founder & Cody Timmerman, Director, Storycity, filmmakers for Jeremiah's story.

JOIN our amazing team and change lives!

We have openings for licensed therapists (LPC, LSW, MFT). We are currently offering a \$5,000 signing bonus for licensed therapists and relocation assistance up to \$6,000. Join us and be a part of our 157-year story of service and securing bright futures for the most vulnerable in our community.

Visit the “Careers” page on our website at tchcincy.org



I really enjoy working here because I truly believe in the mission and vision of the agency, and I get to work with awesome people who truly are dedicated and committed to the mission. I am convinced that there is not a better group of staff anywhere – I get to work everyday with incredibly talented people who just do phenomenal work. I also get to work with an incredible leadership team who lead with such integrity that I am proud to work alongside them



— Jenny Carman,
Behavioral Health Services Supervisor



I value the work we do because many of the clients who we serve spend much of their lives being told by the world that there is something wrong with them, or they are not as valued as others. When I show up to work each day, I am given the opportunity to show our clients that they are loved, that they belong, and they deserve quality mental health care. It is an incredible privilege to earn the trust of my clients, and I am grateful for this career.



— Beth Beischel,
Behavioral Health
Counselor



I enjoy working with kids and families from all different backgrounds. Not only do I get to help them grow and find what works for them, but I learn so much along the way. It's a rewarding process to get to see these children blossom and being a part of that journey with them.



— Alexis Strakowski, Behavioral Health Counselor

SUPPORT our amazing team and change lives!

VOLUNTEER

We appreciate those who give their time and talent to our mission. Various volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year. For information about individual and group volunteer opportunities, contact us at volunteer@tchcincy.org.

DONATE

There are many ways to support the important programs and services of The Children's Home. Our mission of helping children and families cannot happen without the generous contributions of individuals who care.



U.S. Bank volunteers prepared our garden so that students on campus during the summer could tend to the plants and harvest the produce.

2021-2022 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.

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VP Counsel, North American Properties, Inc.

Karen Bankston, PhD, Vice Chair

*President/CEO, KDB and Associates Consulting Services
Professor, adjunct, University of Cincinnati College of Nursing*

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2021-2022 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.

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Tim Kerdolff, Immediate Past Chair

Fifth Third Private Bank

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