



# *Generations*

2015 • Annual Report



Dear Friends,

During the Foundation's service to the community throughout more than 25 years, we have consistently been inspired by the power of teamwork and the impact that can be achieved when organizations and individuals work together to address a community need. We know you will be touched by the stories our grantees have shared, which demonstrate just a few of the many successes that touched our hearts this year.

Today, we see the tremendous results of teamwork not only in the community, but within our own family. We enjoy the collective focus of multiple generations of our family working together to transform the lives of children by sharing their time, talents, and treasure. We feel blessed that our five children, their spouses, and our 15 grandchildren are committed to serving the needs in our community through the work of the Family Foundation into the future.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you.

MaryAnn Mathile

Clayton L. Mathile



Dear Friends,

We continue to see the generational impact of our work, not only in the Dayton community, but also within our family. Our values and our faith inform our belief that the ability to give is a blessing. While we each have our own unique perspective, we are unified in our commitment to responsibly steward the gifts God has given to us.

Throughout this leadership transition, I am constantly learning more about my parents' passions in the community, and the myriad ways our exceptional nonprofits are serving families in need with compassion and professionalism. I am honored to serve the Foundation as co-chair and president along with my mother, who remains co-chair and CEO.

You will notice we made some updates to our brand this year. While this doesn't change the heart of our work, the brand pillars "Grow, Give, and Unite" demonstrate our dedication to improving the lives of those in our community. We are steadfast in the Foundation's mission to transform the lives of children, and as a family we are committed to uniting our family forever through shared values and active participation in our efforts to make a meaningful difference in the world.

I am sincerely grateful for the confidence and encouragement that my family and the entire community have continued to offer throughout this meaningful transition.

God's blessings on all your work,

Timothy L. Mathile

"THE GREATEST  
SOCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC  
EQUALIZER IS  
EDUCATION."  
THE MATHILE FAMILY

# Agents of Change

## DAYTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

More than 290,000 young people receive care from pediatric experts at Dayton Children's each year. Their mission is to provide quality health care for children from infancy through adolescence, and to be a resource for all children in the Dayton region regardless of socioeconomic status.

[childrensdayton.org](http://childrensdayton.org)

## EAST END COMMUNITY SERVICES CORPORATION

East End Community Services is working toward holistic neighborhood transformation in East Dayton to help children and families through housing development, community building, afterschool and summer programming, educational initiatives, teen services, and services for parents, single adults and seniors.

[east-end.org](http://east-end.org)

## LEARN TO EARN DAYTON

Learn to Earn Dayton and its partners work to ensure that every young person in the Dayton region is ready to learn by kindergarten and ready to earn after graduation from college or earning a post-high school certificate. The organization focuses on six critical milestones from pre-kindergarten through college graduation.

[LearnToEarnDayton.org](http://LearnToEarnDayton.org)

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY OHIO COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM

Each year, College Promise provides a life-changing opportunity for up to 50 low-income Montgomery County students. Each student is supported throughout high school via meetings with an adult mentor and related programming. Graduates accepted to a participating university receive scholarships to attend college at little to no cost.

[mcocp.org](http://mcocp.org)

## PROJECT READ

Project READ is a coalition of more than 100 public and private organizations working together to build skilled workers, strong families, and healthy communities. Project READ builds literacy in the Miami Valley by providing adult and youth services, offering volunteer training and placement, and distributing free books to those in need.

[project-read.org](http://project-read.org)

## ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Founded as Resurrection Catholic School in 1921, St. Benedict the Moor Catholic School took its current name in 2014 following a decade of changes to better serve its West Dayton community. Today, the school welcomes students from pre-kindergarten through third grade; in coming years St. Benedict will steadily expand to serve students through eighth grade.

[stbenedictthemoorcatholicsschool.org](http://stbenedictthemoorcatholicsschool.org)

## SOUTH COMMUNITY

South Community is committed to improving the quality of life and behavioral health status of children, adults, and families in the Greater Miami Valley through behavioral health, substance abuse, and integrated care services.

[southcommunity.com](http://southcommunity.com)

## URBAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE CENTER (UCDRC)

UCDRC serves more than 1,400 children in local Catholic schools with services including health education, behavioral health counseling, staff training, violence prevention, leadership and service, and medical screening and referral programs.

[udayton.edu/education/offices\\_and\\_centers/cce/programs/ucdrc/](http://udayton.edu/education/offices_and_centers/cce/programs/ucdrc/)

## VISION

SHARING GOD'S BLESSINGS BY PERPETUATING A MULTI-GENERATIONAL FOUNDATION COMMITTED TO PHILANTHROPIC EXCELLENCE.

## MISSION

TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN.



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# THE Work OF A lifetime

*"They have fun and they're engaged, and the whole goal is that they learn to love learning, and they're excited about school."*

—Jan Lepore-Jentleson

**WHEN PREPARING FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND CAREERS, IT PAYS TO START EARLY—IDEALLY BEFORE KINDERGARTEN.**

This unusual idea is uniting a diverse group of educators, community leaders, organizations, and individuals who share an ambitious vision for the future of the Dayton region.

Ultimately, Learn to Earn Dayton and its partners hope to increase the percentage of adults earning a college degree or professional credential, preparing more citizens for productive, healthy, and fulfilling lives. Achieving this goal involves working with today's college students and recent high school graduates, but it's also essential to take a broader view and intervene much earlier.



Superintendents from school districts across Montgomery County have found common cause in the Graduation Alliance program.

“The way we used to think about this in a community, you would attack the graduation problem,” said Tom Lasley, executive director of Learn to Earn. “You would put all sorts of strategies in place to address this. In the meantime, all of the problems that were contributing just kept occurring.”

For example, Lasley explained, “Third grade reading proficiency is the number one predictor of whether you’re going to graduate from high school and go to college. And we know that kindergarten readiness is linked to third grade reading proficiency.”

### I DO THINK THERE'S BEEN ALIGNMENT. PEOPLE HAVE GRAVITATED TOWARD THESE KEY POINTS IN TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

The scale of the challenge at each stage makes it natural that those striving to make a difference would focus largely on the immediate need, without considering the underlying causes or looking far ahead.

“It wasn’t that people were not working hard,” Lasley said, “but they were only seeing one little piece. It’s like being in a hospital doing triage, and people keep coming in with broken legs. You keep

fixing the broken legs, but you don’t realize that 90 percent are because people are falling into a hole on the street. Why not fix the hole?”

“We think if you approach it systemically, you’re going to be more likely to impact the numbers.”

To that end, Learn to Earn has identified key points in a young person’s life and education that are, according to data, crucial milestones on the path to success—or struggle (see infographic, page 18). The organization has shared its findings with a wide range of organizations and individuals across the region, and many have agreed on the need to intervene at these critical points in a coordinated way.

For example, many school districts in Montgomery County are participating in a program known as Graduation Alliance. From areas currently struggling with high rates of poverty and low graduation rates, to those ranked among the highest-performing in the state, these districts have agreed to take key steps to provide additional services to students who have dropped out. The goal is not only to help them graduate, but also to assist with college applications, enrollment, and successful career paths.

“It’s incredible,” Lasley said of this broad-based coalition. “That’s really unique, for all of them to stand there and say, ‘Yeah, we’re behind it.’”

Beyond the Graduation Alliance, he said, many more organizations have embraced a shared vision and are striving to ensure their efforts have a lasting impact on large scale.

“I do think there’s been alignment,” he said. “People have gravitated toward these key points in trying to make a difference.”

### CRADLE TO CLASSROOM

For the staff and volunteers of East End Community Services, taking the long view is both natural and necessary.

“We work in the cycle of multigenerational poverty because that’s what’s going on in our community,” said Jan Lepore-Jentleson, executive director.

High dropout rates leave young people unprepared for good jobs, she explained, “so those folks then end up in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, which is associated with crime, violence, and drug abuse.”

In the Twin Towers neighborhood, 63 percent of children live below the poverty line, according to Lepore-Jentleson—more than double the statewide average.

Confronting poverty and its associated challenges, she said, “fragile families are producing children who are not getting that important cognitive, social, and emotional development in their zero to five years. So they’re coming into school unprepared.”

To address this need, in 2010 East End created the Taking Off To Success program, or TOTS, for parents of preschool-age children.

“Most of the parents who in TOTS haven’t had successful lives,” said Dr. Diane Brogan-Adams, who founded and directs the program. “They’re trying to do the best they can, but they don’t have the tools... They’ll say, ‘I want my child to go to college and be successful,’ but they have no clue what that looks like.”

After working for 13 years as a parent educator in Dayton Public Schools (DPS), raising her own children, and working in a number of service organizations, Brogan-Adams had a strong sense of how to help. The core of the TOTS program is a series of weekly classes, which are offered three times per year for 12 weeks at a time. Classes cover topics such as childhood developmental stages, ways to stimulate learning, and parenting skills such as positive discipline. The program also features guest speakers from the community, including early literacy specialists and representatives of organizations such as Children’s Services and Legal Aid.

### A LOT OF THEM ALSO BECAME VERY GOOD FRIENDS. THEY'D BABYSIT FOR EACH OTHER, SUPPORT EACH OTHER. THEY BUILT THEIR OWN COMMUNITY.

The first series of classes was so successful that participants hated to see it come to an end. In fact two mothers from that inaugural group volunteered to create and lead a new program for TOTS graduates. Brogan-Adams loved the idea and helped them launch an “alumni group” with weekly sessions to learn about topics like nutrition, complete crafts or educational activities with their children, and connect with other parents.

“The programming was part of it,” Brogan-Adams said, “but a lot of them also became very good friends. They’d babysit for each other, support each other... they built their own community.”

“That social capital we’re building,” she added, “I think it has a huge impact on their lives, because a lot of our parents are isolated due to the family dynamics of living with poverty.”

Lepore-Jentleson agreed.

“Children do best when they live in safe, healthy, stable families,” she said, “and families do best

when they live in safe, caring communities. So we work in each of those areas.”

In addition to helping parents prepare children for kindergarten, East End supports students once they enter school. The Miracle Makers program serves some 180 students in kindergarten through sixth grade, offering three hours of tutoring, learning, and enrichment activities after school every day, as well as sessions throughout the summer.

Programming is offered in Ruskin Elementary School, so students are in a familiar environment and parents know they’re safe. This also allows for deep alignment and integration between the program and the school, with afternoon work building on the day’s lessons and preparing students for tomorrow’s classes.

The program also offers students enrichment opportunities they might not receive otherwise.

“Everybody gets a good opportunity to get reinforced academically,” Lepore-Jentleson said, “and then engage in what we call Sparks.”

Two or three times per week, students can elect to spend 90 minutes in specialized activities. Examples include playing piano or violin, learning sign language, taking tae kwon do or dance classes, or completing community service projects.

“They have fun and they’re engaged,” Lepore-Jentleson said, “and the whole goal is that they learn to love learning, and they’re excited about school.”

Based on the positive responses from students and parents, East End staff and volunteers have no doubt their effort is paying off. They also have data reflecting their success, including regular surveys to assess children’s developmental progress, as well as academic test scores.

“Our third grade reading scores are up to about 73 percent now,” Lepore-Jentleson said, “compared to about 59 at DPS.”

Having served in the neighborhood since East End was founded nearly 20 years ago, Lepore-Jentleson can also speak to the organization’s longer-term impact.

“In 1997, seven percent of the fourth graders took the math proficiency test and passed,” she said. “High school graduation rates were under 50 percent. The neighborhood was just doing so poorly back then.”

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**THEY HAVE FUN AND THEY’RE ENGAGED. THE WHOLE GOAL IS THAT THEY LEARN TO LOVE LEARNING, AND THEY’RE EXCITED ABOUT SCHOOL.**

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When asked about areas of need, leaders in the community sounded a note of despair, she recalled. “They said ‘Our children have no dreams. Help our kids be successful.’”

Today, Lepore-Jentleson sees students she first met as young children, often facing significant challenges, now leading successful lives. In some cases, people who grew up in the neighborhood have remained there as adults and are working hard to help others in turn.

One graduate of Miracle Makers now serves on the East End board of directors. Another, who completed college and earned two master’s degrees, works as a case manager for East End, helping high school students stay on track to graduate and prepare for college.

To Lepore-Jentleson, this is the ultimate sign of success. “That’s the goal,” she said. “We want them to go to college, get a good job, and come back and help us rebuild the physical fabric of the community.”

### READ TO SUCCEED

Laura Mlazovsky knows her work has far-reaching implications. As executive director of Project READ, Mlazovsky oversees efforts by an alliance



### READY TO READ

Early literacy skills are one of the most important factors to prepare students for long-term academic success.

of more than 100 community organizations, companies, and schools to promote youth and adult literacy. Working with students in and before third grade is a major focus for Project READ, for reasons that go far beyond mandatory state testing.

“Students are four times less likely to graduate from high school if they’re not reading at grade level by third grade,” Mlazovsky explained. “If they’re in poverty, it’s 12 times less likely. You can also use third grade reading scores as predictors for college admission and college completion.”

To address this critical point in a child’s educational development, Project READ recruits, trains, and places volunteer tutors in schools throughout the Dayton region.

“We now work with about 50 schools,” Mlazovsky said. “We try to provide the one-on-one help and extra support children need in order to improve their reading skills.

“We’ll work with any school,” she added, “but we do try to focus especially on the high-poverty schools.”

The program is effective for a variety of reasons, including the quality training tutors receive, the ability for schools to tailor tutoring to specific curricula and student needs, and an emphasis on personal attention and strong relationships.

“When we recruit a volunteer, we ask them to give an hour a week for a school semester,” said Holly Elkins-Lopez, education programs and outreach coordinator. “Almost all of them stay for a second semester. Once you get hooked, you really want to see that child grow and learn, and you build a relationship there.”

“Teachers in today’s classrooms unfortunately don’t have the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with a child, or even a small group,” Mlazovsky added. “They’ve got too many responsibilities. To have that volunteer go in and spend time and invest in them is so huge.”



In addition to tutoring, Project READ distributes free books to encourage reading outside the classroom.

“We give away thousands of books every year,” Mlazovsky said. “Statistics say 61 percent of inner-city homes have no books or reading material at all, so we are trying very hard to get books out into the community.”

This is crucial, she added, because individuals “need reading skills not just in school, but when they get into their careers, and even as parents. Parents are a child’s first teachers, and they need to be able to model those skills.”

In the schools, teachers and administrators are experiencing the impact on families as well.

The third-grade reading guarantee “has been the ultimate game-changer for these parents,” said Marianne Pitts, principal of St. Benedict the Moor, a small Catholic school serving an inner-city West Dayton neighborhood.

“Parents now see this is for real, and their child cannot go on to fourth grade unless they pass this test.”

Similar to the Project READ approach, St. Benedict relies on volunteers to work closely with students. Volunteers from the University of Dayton and local parishes tutor students of all ages who need support to build literacy skills.

“It’s not just a third-grade thing,” Pitts said. “It’s a kindergarten and a pre-K thing. We’ve got to get them reading then, so when they get to third grade, they’re already there.”

### FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Even when students do well in school, often overcoming significant challenges and long odds to achieve academic success, college enrollment may seem impossible. Among other factors, the high cost of tuition places college out of reach for many youth in poverty-stricken communities.

To address this problem, Montgomery County Ohio College Promise created a program to make college completion possible for high-achieving

students affected by poverty. Each year, the program selects 50 eighth grade students, who are paired with a trained mentor for weekly one-on-one support. Students who complete the program successfully—maintaining strong attendance, academic performance, and community involvement, among other requirements—are eligible to receive scholarships to attend college at little or no cost.

Gary Smiga, executive director of the organization, sees the mentoring as a crucial element of the program.

“What we know about low-income kids is they lack support, and obviously they lack the money to make college a reality,” Smiga said. To provide that support, College Promise recruits and trains volunteers to “encourage them, keep their eye on the goal, be a resource for them, and walk alongside them as they go through high school.”

Sandy Williams decided to become a mentor after hearing Smiga describe the program during a community event. Currently an insurance agent, Williams taught at the University of Dayton for



Sophomore Danielle Gau meets with a mentor weekly for advice and encouragement as part of the College Promise program.



10 years, giving her an appreciation for both the importance of a college education and the challenges some young people face in pursuing one. She can also relate to the program's goals on a very personal level.

As the oldest of four children, Williams found her own path to college strongly affected by her family's financial situation. Williams earned a full-ride scholarship that made it possible for her to complete college without eliminating that possibility for her siblings.

"I'm very empathetic with the notion of somebody needing the money to go to college," she said. "I think this program is simply extraordinary. It just opens the most amazing door of opportunity for young people."

Her personal background allows Williams to relate well to the student she's mentoring. Danielle Gau,

a sophomore at Northmont, is a dedicated student and talented athlete, but she comes from a large family without abundant resources.

"My parents are divorced," Gau said, and with "stepparents and step-siblings, in my dad's house there are 10 of us living there on only two incomes, and they're pretty low."

Assuming she completes the program and enrolls in a participating college, such as founding partners Sinclair Community College and Wright State University, Gau will have a chance to be the first person in her family to earn a college degree. She currently maintains a 3.8 GPA, plays varsity soccer, is a member of the group Students Against Destructive Decisions, and is taking multiple advanced placement classes. She attributes her choices in large part to Williams' guidance.

"I wouldn't be taking the advanced classes without her motivation," Gau explained.

For her part, Williams is quick to direct the credit right back to Gau.

"I'm really just delighted at every step she takes," Williams said. "She makes very, very good decisions."

"We do talk about long-term goals. Danielle is very focused on what needs to be done right here and right now, and doing the best you can every single day. In addition, we talk about her schedule, and making sure classes will be helpful to her in getting into college."

The mentoring arrangement works so well because Gau and Williams have formed a strong relationship. In some ways, Williams has become part of the family.

"Her family jokingly calls me Aunt Sandy," she said.

Williams appreciates everything Gau's parents do to encourage and support her, even while working hard to make ends meet and provide for a large, blended family.

"I can't tell you how impressed I am with her and her parents," Williams said. Gau's drive and talent have always been apparent, but with her efforts in recent months, "she's really blossomed into serious achievement here."

If Gau is working harder and reaching higher than ever before, she knows there's a clear reason why.

"I feel like now I have an opportunity," she said, "and I get to work towards it." ■

*The Mathile Family Foundation has provided support for Learn to Earn Dayton, East End's TOTS and Miracle Makers programs, Project READ, St. Benedict, and College Promise.*

**MARIANNE PITTS,  
PRINCIPAL OF ST. BENEDICT  
THE MOOR CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL, IS NO STRANGER  
TO THE LONG ROAD.**

“It took me 25 years in my career to really know purpose,” she said. “I always knew that what I did as an educator and music minister was important, but now it’s just a purpose at the deepest level for me.”

Pitts’ perspective makes her ideally suited to her current role, serving in a struggling urban neighborhood and leading an ambitious transformation effort following years of upheaval.

“In the past five years we’ve had four principal administrators, so we’ve been through a lot of changes,” she said.

Not least among those changes, the 2015-16 academic year saw the school shrink from serving grades pre-K through 8 to ending at third grade. Scaling down allowed the school to offer smaller class sizes, strengthen family engagement, and emphasize innovative programs to complement traditional classroom work.

“It’s easier to restructure with a smaller group, when your nucleus is tight,” Pitts explained. “We needed to prune.”

Each year the school will add another grade level, rebuilding to serve a larger student population with the same innovation and

dedication now focused on the younger grades.

“I know we’re going in the right direction,” Pitts said, “but it takes a little longer. It’s a process. I just pray that we have time to see this vision come to fruition.”

The long view is important given the challenges confronting St. Benedict families—and the life-changing opportunities Pitts and her colleagues want to provide.

“We have families and kids who come to us broken,” Pitts said. “We have families operating in crisis mode, and we want to get

them out of that. We’re trying to get these kids to break that cycle. Parents may be parents, but I believe children can be the ones to lead.”

Taking on so much isn’t easy, Pitts admitted. Undaunted and undeterred, however, she insists the effort is worthwhile.

“We’re going to do it. We’re going to move forward,” she said. “This school is a beacon in the neighborhood. It’s the anchor. It’s this bright star... There’s just a spirit here. I really believe that we’re going to do this. ■



*“This school is a beacon in the neighborhood.  
It’s the anchor. It’s this bright star.”*

—Marianne Pitts

*Snapshot:*  
MARIANNE PITTS

# THE LONG, STEADY ROAD TO SUCCESS



## GOAL

KEY POINTS IN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

## COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

IN 2014, MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

### PRESCHOOL

**READY** to enter kindergarten



**2,400** 4-year olds were **NOT ENROLLED** in preschool

### K-3



Proficient in **READING** in grade 3

**344** third graders were **HELD BACK** under Ohio's "third grade reading guarantee"

### 4-9

Proficient in **MATH** in grade 4



**27%** of fourth graders were **NOT PROFICIENT** in math

### 10-12



**GRADUATE** from high school

**20%** of high school seniors **DID NOT GRADUATE**

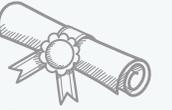
### COLLEGE / CREDENTIAL



**ENROLL** within 2 years after high school

**50%** of school districts **ENROLLED FEWER STUDENTS** in college

### CAREER



**EARN** a degree or credential within 6 years after high school

**62%** of college students had **NOT EARNED A DEGREE** within 6 years (HS class of 2008)

Preparing students effectively for academic and career success is a process that spans decades. At critical stages in a young person's life, from preschool through early career experiences, targeted support can make a profound difference. Providing this kind of support on a large scale requires a vast network of partners with a shared long-term vision—and doing so can benefit our entire region for generations to come.



# A light IN THE dark

*"We just meet them where they are.  
We don't have any expectations."*

—Rhonda Mercs

**FOR RHONDA MERCS, REALIZATION CAME IN THE FORM OF A SEVENTH GRADER'S QUESTION.** Mercs was leading a school group discussion on self-esteem, and one of the girls innocently asked, "Miss Rhonda, how long was your husband in jail?"

When she explained that her husband had never been incarcerated, "they were all shocked," Mercs said.

She immediately changed the direction of the session, focusing on ways to help students envision a better future and make positive changes in their lives.

As director of the Urban Child Development Resource Center (UCDRC), Mercs oversees a team of counselors and social workers providing services



in urban Catholic schools. Working in communities ravaged by some of the region's highest rates of poverty, crime, and substance abuse, Mercs and her colleagues have to be creative and understanding in order to reach those most in need.

"We just meet them where they are," Mercs said. "We don't have any expectations."

Since its founding in 2002, UCDRC has evolved to serve more than 1,400 children in six local schools today. The organization offers everything from observation, consultation, screenings, and referrals, to proactive programs focused on violence prevention, personal safety, emotional and leadership skills, and staff training. UCDRC team members can also provide individual, group, and family counseling, as well as crisis intervention.

"One of our biggest goals is to eliminate these non-academic barriers to learning and education," said Amy Theodor, a counselor with UCDRC. "Maybe you'll see a single mom with four kids who's trying to keep it together, keep a job, keep a roof over her head and food on the table."

When parents and guardians are doing all they can to provide basic necessities, a child's struggles with mental health may not stand out. Even if children are diagnosed, the situation can seem overwhelming, and getting treatment may be difficult.

"We eliminate that barrier," Theodor said, "because we provide that right here in the school."

Counselors in the schools see the students every week, spend time in the classrooms, and communicate regularly with teachers, making it much less likely that issues students are experiencing will go unnoticed. For students who need support, UCDRC staff can provide it quickly, and from a trusted, familiar source. When outside services are required, team members know what resources are available in the community and can help connect families to them.

Reaching these children in need is vitally important, given the challenges confronting them.

"A lot of it is related to trauma or neglect, or they've seen or heard violence," Theodor said. "Who wouldn't be on edge the majority of the time if they fear for their safety?"

Theodor recalled a student she observed whom the teacher suspected of having ADHD.

"Come to find out, Dad recently got out of prison," she said. "It was for drug charges and domestic violence, and (the boy) saw some really scary things. Coincidentally, this same kid, his uncle was in the news recently after being killed. So trauma upon trauma."

When she worked in the schools, Mercs said, "I would do a lot of grief groups because a lot of the children have experienced so much loss."

Parents are in a similar situation, confronting many of the same pressures and sometimes

battling mental health issues of their own that may be undiagnosed and untreated.

"A lot of these things do get passed on," Theodor said, "it's biological, some of it: genetic. Some of it's based on lifestyle and neighborhood. And it does go generation to generation."

In addition to appreciating the depth and complexity of the issues so many families are facing, Mercs and Theodor understand that their work may take years or decades to reveal its full impact. Even so, there are many success stories and bright moments to celebrate amid all the difficult work.

Mercs remembers a "young man who was very talented. His uncle was trying to teach him how to cut crack to make money. He knew he had talent, but it was a lot of work to go to college. Well, he's playing basketball in a well-known university right now."

In some cases, UCDRC staff may not realize what a difference they are making. Theodor cited the example of a student she worked with for weeks and months, feeling unable to reach or help him despite her continued effort.

"In the end," she said, "he wrote and said, 'Thank you for being the light in my dark.' We're the only stable things they have going sometimes."

That's why the team continues to do everything they do, come what may, Mercs said.

"Our goal is to help as many kids and families as we can."

### IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

When young people can't access mental health services through their schools, or they need support outside of school, a community of caregivers is working to help.

For 42 years, South Community has provided behavioral health services in Montgomery County and surrounding areas.

"We focus on mental health, substance abuse and physical health," said Lisa Carter, COO. "We believe in whole-person care and take an integrated approach across our services."

While the organization does serve adults, much of its work focuses on children and families.

"We're seeing a lot of trauma-based issues with children," said Jeni Sand, Marketing Manager. "A lot of children with neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse."

The need for general mental health services is also great, she added.



“It might be short-term therapy for minor behavioral issues in the school, family issues, grief, loss. We’re also linked in with the juvenile court and provide home-based services for youth identified as high-risk.”

The need for specialized programs to serve youth is persistent and increasing, according to CEO Carol Smerz.

“We see a lot more trauma at two levels,” Smerz said, “for the individual person, as well as community trauma. I think people are experiencing much more now than they have in the past. Issues with violence and with drug use have definitely increased.

In addition, Smerz said, “I think the struggles are starting younger.”

South Community is rising to the challenge in a couple of key ways. First, their integrated model enables close coordination of a wide variety of vital services, greatly reducing the need for patients and families to visit multiple sites, learn disparate systems, and attempt to forge relationships with varied care providers.

“They can get many services across their lifespan here, so that’s a comfort,” Smerz said. “That’s a big deal for parents who have issues with transportation or their neighborhoods, or who can’t count on their family members.”

Secondly, South Community fills important gaps to ensure continuity of care and better outcomes.

For example, said Janet Day, program manager, “There’s programming in the schools, but in the summer there’s a lack of programming for youth with mental health issues and behavioral issues.”

To address this need, South Community started the HERO Project program, which now serves 175 children.

“We have programming every day of the week during the summer for seven weeks,” said Day.



“These are at-risk youth, which means they’re having trouble at home, at school, and in the community.”

The opportunity to have positive, productive experiences in a safe, supportive environment can make a profound difference, she said.

“I can’t underscore that enough because otherwise you could have an increase of hospitalizations. And we really see great outcomes with the program.”

Based on pre- and post-camp behavioral surveys, overall improvement rates for the summer surpass 80 percent, a remarkable success rate. In conjunction with other services, that kind of support can be life-changing.

“One of the first clients I had here was a young lady who came from a history of trauma, a lot of abuse in the family,” said Cindy Sherman, special projects/volunteer coordinator.

After living with different relatives, the young woman and her siblings ended up in the foster care system.

“The thing that impressed me was her resilience,” Sherman said. “She was in our HERO Project program for many years, and involved with our therapists. She went to Stivers (School for the Arts) and was given scholarships for her art ability, and went on to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. She served at the state level on youth programs to help

give back to the community. And I recently heard that she got her master's, so I'm very proud of her."

In contrast, Smerz explained, without organizations like South Community, more youth would likely enter the juvenile court system, require care in a residential setting, or be hospitalized. These scenarios are far from ideal, but South Community can provide care and assistance in these cases as well.

"Our whole intention in the agency," Smerz said, "is to help them enjoy the highest quality of life they can based on their individual needs."

### AN ALLIANCE OF EXPERTS

According to national studies by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 13 and 20 percent of children aged 3-17 experience mental disorders in a given year. Despite this tremendous need, significant barriers make it difficult for many families to access quality mental health care.

Recognizing this difficulty, the leadership at Dayton Children's Hospital decided to take action.

"When Debbie Feldman joined a few years ago (as CEO), she made mental health a priority for this hospital," said Gregory Ramey, Ph.D., executive director of the hospital's Center for Pediatric Mental Health Resources. Feldman created a strategic plan for mental health, launched the center Ramey currently directs, and undertook intensive campaigns of community outreach and nationwide recruiting.

"Our first focus was developing a child psychiatry program," Ramey said. This allowed the hospital to offer badly needed services, as well as retaining promising medical students who received training at Dayton Children's.

"Priority two was our Autism Center," Ramey continued.

As recently as a year ago, parents who suspected their children may be showing signs of an autism



spectrum disorder would need to wait 220 days for a consultation. Today, most families can see a specialist within a single day of requesting an appointment.

Following these two initiatives, Ramey said, "we started what is, in all due modesty, one of the most successful programs, according to the pediatricians, that we have ever started here: the Mental Health Resource Connection."

The concept of the MHRC is remarkably simple, yet equally powerful. Rather than leaving families

to determine whether and what kind of care may be needed—and attempt to find an appropriate provider—the MHRC allows those in need to complete a detailed phone evaluation with an experienced social worker and receive referrals to relevant resources. From request to referral, the entire process typically takes less than 24 hours.

To build on these efforts, Feldman, Ramey, and their colleagues also focused on outreach and recruiting. First, they wanted to ensure pediatricians and family care physicians in the

community were aware of the many resources available through Dayton Children's, enabling them to confidently refer families for consultations. Secondly, they needed to attract and retain skilled specialists to provide care unavailable anywhere else.

With the completion of current hiring plans, Ramey said, "we will have a department of 15," 10 times more than when he joined the hospital 36 years ago.

Ramey is proud of these accomplishments, but he acknowledges that much remains to do.

"While we've done some good things," he said, "the needs are still so overwhelming."

For example, he would like to see the community offer additional treatment options and better care coordination for children confronting acute mental illness. He also hopes to continue reducing wait times to see a psychologist or psychiatrist through the hospital's care clinic.

In addition, Ramey recognizes that attitudes toward mental and behavioral health issues remains a very real barrier for many families.

"We need to continue to work toward getting rid of that stigma," he said, changing the perception "that it's a sign of weakness to bring your child for help, when really it's a sign of strength.

"If this reaches a few families and they hear this message—help is available, and help can be effective," Ramey said, "that, to me, is everything." ■

*The Mathile Family Foundation has provided support for UCDCRC programs; South Community's HERO Project program; and the Dayton Children's MHRC and other initiatives.*





Dayton Children's Hospital

# A Soaring VISION

THE NEW, EIGHT-STORY  
PATIENT CARE TOWER  
RISING STEADILY ABOVE  
DAYTON CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL IS JUST THE  
TIP OF THE ICEBERG.

**THE 260,000-SQUARE-FOOT FACILITY, SLATED TO OPEN IN SPRING 2017, IS MERELY THE MOST VISIBLE SYMBOL OF A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION THAT SOARS MUCH HIGHER, AND EXTENDS FAR BEYOND THE HOSPITAL CAMPUS.**

“We are on our way to Destination 2020,” said Deborah Feldman, President and CEO, “which is a future state for Dayton Children’s that continues our tradition of providing outstanding, world-class pediatric care for the children in our region.”

The strategic plan encompasses extensive facility upgrades like the addition of the patient tower and integration of new medical technology, as well as initiatives to improve the patient experience, align with other care providers and organizations in the community, and enhance care quality and access for families throughout the region.

One important focus is ensuring that primary care pediatricians can refer their patients for pediatric specialty care with minimal delay. Patients used to have to wait weeks or months to see some specialists, which is far too long when anxious families are confronting unexpected, often frightening health concerns.

“We have worked extremely hard to get that time to get

an appointment here down,” Feldman said. “It’s now under three days. In some cases, we can get the child in on the same day.”

This acceleration is due in large part to the hospital’s efforts to recruit exceptional pediatric specialists to practice in Dayton.

“They’re hard to come by,” Feldman admitted. “There are fewer than 500 in the whole country. We have been incredibly successful in the past few years and recruited over 30.”

The promise of practicing in a world-class facility and using state-of-the-art technology is an important element of the recruitment effort, but Feldman believes the appeal of joining Dayton Children’s goes deeper.

“We’re able to say to these very, very talented, specialized physicians, ‘We have leadership in this community that puts kids first,’” she said.

Feldman believes that the support of donors like the Mathile Family Foundation, which supported the hospital’s capital campaign with a crucial early gift, is an important demonstration of that commitment.

“We’re getting calls from physicians weekly saying ‘We hear something very special and exciting is happening in Dayton, and we want to be part of your team.’”

While the new patient care tower is only part of the solution, it will

**WHILE THE NEW PATIENT CARE TOWER IS ONLY PART OF THE SOLUTION, IT WILL MAKE A PROFOUND DIFFERENCE FOR THE PHYSICIANS, PATIENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO SPEND TIME THERE.**



make a profound difference for the physicians, patients, families, and community members who spend time there. In addition to enabling the use of new, life-saving technology, as in the hospital’s Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, the tower is being designed from top to bottom with children and families in mind.

For example, all patient rooms will be private. This is important because unlike adult patients, children typically have a family member stay with them all night. The first floor of the tower will feature a pharmacy, since many families live in areas with few or none, making it difficult to fill prescriptions. An integrated facility will combine all components of

cancer care, including inpatient, outpatient, labs, recreation, and therapy, so families can spend less time traveling, get better-coordinated care, and build stronger relationships with caregivers. The cafeteria will feature healthy food options and support nutritional programs to help address childhood obesity, a major cause of health problems among today’s youth.

Feldman and her team know a great deal about what children and families need, but they also made sure to ask the experts. Child and family input has guided everything from furniture choice, room layouts, and amenities to the design of the tower’s three-story entrance atrium.

“We have a children’s advisory committee and a parents’ advisory committee,” Feldman said. “They’ve been integrally involved in planning.”

All of this effort—both in creating and realizing the vision of Destination 2020, and in ensuring that the hospital addresses the needs of community members—is well worthwhile, Feldman believes. Not only will it allow Dayton to continue to be home to one of just 40 standalone pediatric hospitals in the nation, but it will also enable dedicated caregivers to keep delivering the best possible outcomes and exceptional patient experiences for the children of our region for decades to come. ■

## MATHILE FAMILY FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

MaryAnn Mathile	Co-Chair & CEO
Timothy Mathile	Co-Chair & President
Clayton L. Mathile	Treasurer
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## MATHILE FAMILY FOUNDATION STAFF

Donna Beeson	Executive Assistant to the Chair & CEO
Allison Craig	Program Officer
Emily Hughes	Grantmaking & Operations Manager
Brooke Katinsky Tsalikova	Managing Director
Kippy Ungerleider King	Managing Director
Kris Lancaster	Administrative Assistant
Mary Lynn Naughton	Managing Director
Nina DiGuardi Vasiliu	Senior Program Officer
Emily Wolf	Senior Program Officer

# APPLICATION GUIDELINES

## 1. REVIEW ELIGIBILITY AND GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

### ELIGIBILITY

Only organizations that are tax-exempt under the IRS Code Section 501(c)(3) are eligible for grant funding from the Mathile Family Foundation. The Foundation supports projects that align with its mission.

### MISSION

Transforming the lives of children.

### GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITY

We give highest priority to eligible organizations who serve children in the Greater Dayton area. Organizations who fall outside this geographic scope are considered only under special circumstances.

### GRANT AWARDS

The Foundation considers applications for grant amounts of \$1,000 and higher. Multi-year funding requests may be considered for up to three years. The size of the request should be no more than 10% of the total project's/program's budget.

### REQUESTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED FOR:

- Endowment funds
- Mass funding appeals
- Sponsorships (except under special circumstances)
- Advertising for fundraising events tickets
- Grants or loans to individuals
- Political campaigns or activities
- Organizations outside the United States (except in very few special cases)

It is the policy of the Mathile Family Foundation to accept only one application per year (i.e. four quarters following the date of the last application) from any organization, except in extreme cases. In addition, all Foundation staff requirements, including the receipt of a final report, must be fulfilled before an organization will be considered for any further funding. If you have multiple programs for which you are seeking funding, then you must complete a single application to cover them and submit it for consideration.

## 2. SUBMIT A GRANT INQUIRY FORM

### GRANT INQUIRY FORM

Prior to submitting a full grant application, the Mathile Family Foundation recommends that organizations who have never received funding, or past grantees who are requesting funds for a new project, should submit a Grant Inquiry Form through the Foundation's website. Although the Foundation does not prevent any organization from submitting a full grant application, submitting the Grant Inquiry Form may save your organization time and resources. Grant Inquiry Forms will be reviewed quarterly and our staff will indicate whether your program is within the mission and funding priorities of the Mathile Family Foundation.

## 3. APPLY FOR A GRANT

### APPLICATION FORMAT

The Mathile Family Foundation requires applicants to submit applications online.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

- February 1
- August 1
- May 1
- November 1

All applicants will be notified by e-mail when their applications are received. The entire grant process can take up to 100 days from the application deadline each quarter.

### THE APPLICATION CONTAINS QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING:

#### ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION:

- Vision and mission statements
- History and purpose
- Brief description of services provided and service area
- Tax filing information in compliance with IRS regulations

#### PROJECT/PROGRAM EVALUATION:

- A plan to measure whether the project met its goals and outcomes, specifying tools and/or methods for measuring progress and success
- How the organization defines the success of the project
- Use of project evaluation results

#### TAX COMPLIANCE INFORMATION:

- Audit and tax preparation
- Public charity status of the organization
- Public Support Test from Form 990
- Investable assets information (if applicable)

#### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- One-page cover letter, signed by the chief executive officer, that summarizes the project and states the requested amount
- Board of Trustees list
- Copy of IRS determination letter verifying tax-exempt status
- List of major financial contributors to the organization
- Line-item budget for the project/program
- Organizational budget for current year
- Organizational budget vs. actual for preceding year
- Current financial statements, including balance sheet, income statement, and statement of cash flows
- Most recent audited financial statements
- Most recent annual report
- Strategic plan
- Form 1023
- Self-change IRS acceptance/acknowledgement letter (only necessary if changes are made to your organization's charitable purpose that were reviewed by the IRS)
- Most recently filed Form 990

#### PROJECT/PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

- Project/program description for requested funding
- Statement of need for project/program and problems it will help address in the community
- Profile of population served
- Project/program goals with specific measurable outcomes and indicators of success (priority placed on projects presenting clear and measurable outcomes)
- Timeline of activities to meet project/program objectives
- Total dollar amount requested, along with a line-item project/program budget
- List of collaborating partners in the project/program and their roles
- List of amounts pending and committed by other funders to the project/program
- Project sustainability beyond the period of requested funding
- Projected number of children and/or families the project will serve



To learn more about the efforts of the Mathile Family Foundation,  
please visit us at: [mathilefamilyfoundation.org](http://mathilefamilyfoundation.org).

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