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August 2020

## A Message from our CEO

As I prepare this introductory letter for our latest newsletter, so many thoughts are going through my head. The first one is of gratitude. The staff and Board of Directors of Greenleaf Family Center have been nothing short of spectacular through these past few months as we deal with COVID-19. Funders and foundations and grantors have supported the non-profit community generously and I would be remiss not to give them a huge shout out as well.

Starting with the staff, whose caring and concern for our clients has been paramount, I need to publicly thank them for their steadfast dedication and commitment to the work they have done and continue to do. Greenleaf staff have worked through many incredibly difficult challenges to be able to provide all of our services through whatever service delivery we can offer to keep staff and clients safe. They continue to provide the highest quality services without complaint and often have come back asking “what else can I do”! This includes providing counseling services telephonically, initially, until the State passed an emergency order allowing flexibility for telehealth/telecounseling options, juggling schedules to ensure HIPAA protection when working from home, and staggering work schedules to accommodate not only the needs of our clients, but also to ensure safety when coming to the office to work to name just a few!

As an essential service provider we did not miss ONE day of services to this community and staff were (and continue to be) eager to ensure we are serving our clients!

In the middle of all of this, we also had previously scheduled our annual all staff training on June 11. Without missing a beat, we jumped feet first into our first Microsoft Teams training (more than 60 people together on Teams)! Thank you to Liz Foster from Summit County Public Health for teaching us about social determinants of health and how racism creeps its way into health care delivery. This training topic was scheduled months ago but couldn't be more timely as we learned about why social determinants of health have contributed to the high number of African

## Community Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Celebrates 40 Years with a Pennies from Heaven Fundraiser!

In 1979, Family Services of Summit County (FSS), now known as Greenleaf Family Center, invited members of Akron's Deaf community to an Advisory committee meeting. FSS was interested in operating Community Services for the Deaf (CSD) under their service delivery model. At the first meeting, a total of 25 deaf individuals were present. FSS decided to continue its goal by establishing a CSD and began educating FSS staff about Deaf community needs. The first step was to add their first TTY (Teletypewriter) to the office to receive phone calls from the Deaf community.

On April 29, 1980, Anita Salyer became the first program director of CSD. CSD began operations and continued to add staff throughout 1980. CSD received their first funding through the generosity of the Rehabilitative Services Center (RSC). RSC is now known as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). During the first decade, CSD ran as an information and cultural conduit for Deaf needs, education, interpreting, and case management. We have continued to expand our services under the direction of Samantha Taylor.

2020 officially marks our 40th year of service for Greenleaf Family Center's CSD. Due to grant funding limitations as a result of COVID-19, CSD is celebrating our rich 40 year history by hosting a **Pennies from Heaven** fundraiser!

Beginning August 1 and ending Dec. 31, 2020, CSD will be collecting pennies and other loose change you may have around your house as donations to support CSD

American community members who have COVID-19 and why this must stop!

Thank you too to Michelle Kreidler, one of our very own Behavioral Health Team members for reminding us and teaching us how to exercise vital self-care during this crisis. Those who provide social services and counseling services often are so busy taking care of others, they forget to give themselves the vital time needed for self-care! Again, timely for all of us!

A special thank you to our own Mark Byrd, MSW, Advocacy & Support Service Coordinator, for our Community Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program. Mark shared vital information about HIV/AIDs in the deaf community. Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing individuals are twice as likely to contract HIV than their hearing counterparts yet no AIDS organizations for the deaf exist in this country. We learned how imperative it is to make sure that important health information is available in American Sign Language to help prevent unnecessary misunderstanding and death in the deaf community.

Service to the deaf and deaf/blind community have been incredibly challenging with the onset of COVID-19. Lead by a strong department leader with incredibly innovative ideas for serving the community, this department has met head on all of the challenges our deaf and deaf/blind community are facing, the least of which is communication and the timely receipt of vital information for safety!

Thanks to my father, Don Glenny, who immediately die cut clear plexiglass face shields for our CSD Department staff, especially for the interpreters, so they could provide interpreting services to our deaf community. Thanks also to Sue Pierson, our President Elect for providing face masks with clear covering for our interpreters and deaf community members! Can you imagine what it would be like going through this crisis being deaf or deaf/blind and not having access to information? And thank you to Governor Dewine for providing ASL interpreters at each and every press conference so our deaf and deaf/blind have timely access to vital information during this health crisis.

I continue to be amazed every day by the ingenuity this amazing team of employees comes up with! We are and will continue to be a safe place for our clients and staff to come to each day and we will continue to adapt and stay strong as we weather this latest storm together.

And finally, to the Board of Directors. It's hard to put into words the significance a strong Board provides to a CEO, especially during a difficult time such as this. Starting in mid-March I talked to the Board members and Executive Committee members almost daily for several weeks to ensure we were making the best collective decisions for the agency. I will be eternally

services. Just drop off your change in the coin jar in our upstairs main office or donate through our secure link:

## Pennies from Heaven

With YOUR help, it is our hope to sustain the vital services offered at the CSD for another 40 years!

Feel free to share our flyer with your friends and family!

## Pennies from Heaven Flyer

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## Our Appreciation



During this unprecedented time and the challenges we now face because of the Coronavirus, we are grateful for the foundations who have supported us through their emergency grant funds.

Our thanks to the **Akron Community Foundation** for their generous \$5,000 Community Response Fund for NonProfits grant to support technology for our telehealth services and to purchase personal protective equipment for our clients and staff. We are grateful for their support during this unprecedented time.

Our appreciation to **Barberton Community Foundation** for their \$2,000 grant from their Emergency Response Fund. These funds will be used to support our programs impacting students and staff in the Barberton school district.

In addition, we are thankful for funding we received for our Adolescent Suicide Prevention Program. This project is supported by a grant from **The Hudson Community Foundation**.

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## Greenleaf Welcomes New Board Members

Greenleaf is pleased to welcome the following individuals to our Board of

grateful for their advice and support and will continue to seek their advice and assistance as we all weather this together.

In safety,

*Dawn*

Directors. We look forward to their service, valuable insight and leadership in the coming years.

- Christian Duckworth
- Julie Falter
- Elisa Hill
- Cindy Mitchell
- Jennifer Oberg
- Kevin Youngblood

## New YouTube Videos Focus on Mental Health and Wellness for Our Youth

During the global pandemic and the uncertainty we all face, our Prevention staff wanted to find a way to engage our local students since there was no way to reach them in the school setting. We knew that isolation, online learning and social distancing had the potential to increase anxiety and depression in our youth already suffering or could cause these new feelings in children as a result of increased stressors.

Our creative team developed a series of YouTube videos focused on mental health and wellness for students in grades 4 - 12. Our videos include topics on coping skills, healthy relationships, healthy eating, self esteem, rules and consequences, making good choices, talking to a counselor, and how to reach out with concerns for yourself or a friend. These videos are also helpful for parents and caregivers who are looking for resources to support their children.

Learn more and watch our helpful videos!

**Click Here**



## Our 2019 Annual Report is Available

Greenleaf Family Center finished 2019 in a strong financial position. An outside independent audit of our 2019 books did not identify any findings, something the agency is incredibly proud of. To view our annual report, **click here**.

We are unwavering in our commitment to our community to strengthen families!

**Our clients need our help now more than ever. Your gift today will help Greenleaf overcome the hurdles we face due to the pandemic so that our**

clients receive the services they depend on.

Your gift will support Greenleaf's upgraded Telehealth platform – the lifeline our clients need for anxiety, depression and addiction during the pandemic. Our deaf consumers will have access to critical sign language interpreting services through our new video interpreting service. And, as we move into our new normal, your gift will also help to keep our clients and staff safe in our building through the purchase of facial masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, disinfecting wipes and cleaning supplies.

Help us by supporting our mission and the critical programs we provide.

[Donate Now](#)



LEVEL 3

Keep  
Calm  
and  
Follow the  
Guidelines

TO REDUCE THE SPREAD  
of COVID-19

## **Level 3 recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19**

- daily health/symptoms self-evaluations and stay home if symptomatic**
- maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from non-household members**
- consider necessary travel only**
- good hygiene:**
  - wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**
  - use hand sanitizer frequently**
  - avoid touching the face**
  - cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or elbow**
- decrease in-person interactions with others**
- limit attending gatherings of any number**
- seek medical care as needed**
- avoid unnecessary visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and residential care facilities to see others as much as possible**

**Greenleaf Family Center  
wants our clients,  
employees, and  
community to stay  
healthy and safe**