



**Center For
Independent
Futures®**

2020 ANNUAL
REPORT



A Year Like No Other

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2020 has been a year like no other. COVID-19 isolation and stress have impacted all of us, but individuals with disabilities and their families were hit especially hard.

Participants lost jobs and volunteering opportunities while others continued working in essential jobs with a higher risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Families worried about their family members from near and far. Independent Futures' support staff faced their own personal challenges while trying to keep all participants fully supported.

But there is another story of 2020. A story that troubles me deeply. It was a year that in the United States, some state governments stated their intention to categorically deny individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities access to ventilators and other life-saving support if the state needed to ration medical resources. It was a year when individuals with disabilities were identified as one of the highest risk groups to contract the virus but were often left out of priority vaccination groups.

The pandemic has shone a light on these biases against individuals with disabilities that exist in our society. This is why our work is more important than ever. When individuals with disabilities live as integrated and included members of our society, our entire community is stronger. When we work together and live together in a community, gifts and talents are recognized while stigmas are lessened, and stereotypes fall away.

Thank you for your support and confidence over this challenging year. With your support, Independent Futures has weathered the storm, delivered our services in new ways, and expanded virtual learning opportunities. Thank you for joining us every day to end the biases against individuals with disabilities and continue to create a future where individuals with disabilities have access to all the opportunities of a full life.

Sincerely,

Ann Sickon, Executive Director

To Live and Thrive in Your Home Community

Evanston is a more vibrant place for everyone because adults with disabilities can live in their home community with the support provided by Independent Futures. Individuals who grew up here and attended Evanston schools receive services that enable them to live full lives as Evanston residents, employees, consumers, taxpayers, and volunteers.

One reason for this success is that Independent Futures collaborates closely with the talented staff at Evanston Township High School (ETHS). Sharon Purdy, Center for Independent Futures' School and Agency Consultant, works every day to support students receiving transition services.

Independent Futures' person-centered supports help students with disabilities transition to a full adult life. However, in Illinois, individuals with disabilities often wait years to secure sufficient funding for needed supports to live independently in their communities. This wait for funding limits agencies' abilities to serve individuals in their home communities after leaving the school environment.

A recent graduate faced an uncertain future after his services through the ETHS Transition House came to a close. Sharon provided support, funded by a grant from the Evanston Community Foundation, as he navigated the

complicated world of adult services. With Sharon's support over 18 months combined with the collaboration of multiple community-based agencies, this young adult has secured himself an affordable Evanston apartment and necessary support services.

"I have learned so much from working with this young adult," said Sharon. "We must be ready to be flexible with the challenging needs of students as they leave school. The process to secure safe and supported housing opened my eyes to how complicated and slow the process is, even for people in crisis."

Independent Futures' mission to bring innovative services and supports to individuals with disabilities continues to grow as we expand our ability to support individuals with diverse funding sources. Independent Futures' increased capacity to support young adults with disabilities entering adult life will expand these individuals' opportunities to thrive in their home communities.

PARTICIPANTS & FAMILIES





MY FULL LIFE

Opening New Doors when the World Closed Down

2020 was a year that challenged everyone. Here at Independent Futures, our commitment to technology has allowed us to quickly pivot and virtually deliver a comprehensive system for implementing and supporting person-centered learning, My Full Life™.

My Full Life prepares individuals with disabilities to live and reach their greatest potential, to achieve their hopes and dreams. When the pandemic hit, My Full Life made virtual learning an option for individuals with disabilities from all over the country.

For many communities, even before COVID-19, people with disabilities lacked opportunities to learn and engage in their communities due

to limitations of support staff, transportation, accessibility, and funding. COVID-19 accentuated the need to create new methods of learning and supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

As we move into 2021, My Full Life offers more than 800 unique resources and 400 hours of learning to schools and agencies from New York to Alaska. My Full Life has introduced new virtual skill certifications that provide live, instructor-led classes for individuals with disabilities to work on independent living skills remotely.

“

The My Full Life platform has been a game-changer here at New Horizons. The quality of the material, the ease of its use, the assessment tools, and the brilliant staff have all helped move our agency two giant steps forward. We're proud to showcase the great work happening here, and much of that is in thanks to the Independent Futures team!

”

- John Brauer, New Horizons

Build a place to call home.

Since 2003, Independent Futures has helped individuals and their families create housing solutions through the New Futures Initiative™. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we expanded the New Futures Initiative training and curriculum to a new virtual format. Virtual learning allows families anywhere in the country to benefit from our extensive experience in developing housing for independent living.

Members of the Milwaukee Community Housing Task Force and staff and families from the Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin agreed to pilot the new online training. Moving our 4-day in-person training online was challenging. This new training presented opportunities to create new content and expand the resources we provide

to trainees. The pilot group has appreciated the ability to access the training from wherever they are and at times that fit with their schedules.

With our virtual New Futures Initiative training, Independent Futures is ready to enter a post-pandemic world where we can offer more opportunities to individuals and families from all over the country. With innovative technology, we are poised to provide people with disabilities and their families more opportunities to live full lives.

NEW FUTURES INITIATIVE



“

We are excited to become certified through the New Futures Initiative to train families on how to envision and create long-term housing solutions for their loved ones. Our partnership with Center for Independent Futures will allow us to provide wrap-around, person-centered supports that focus on individuals' hopes and dreams to guide their journeys.

”

Dawn Nuoffer, Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin

FINANCIAL DATA

Sources of Support

\$1,444,131



Grants
\$ 307,661

Special Events
\$ 123,013

Contributions
Temporarily Restricted
\$ 755

Contributions
Unrestricted
\$ 349,569

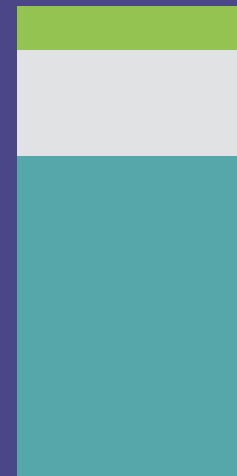
Consultation & Training
\$ 111,068

Interest Income
\$ 4,310

Service & Support
\$ 547,755

Program Allocation

\$1,362,426



Fundraising & Marketing
\$ 119,893

Administration & Management
\$ 307,908

Service & Support
\$ 934,624

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020* |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue | | | |
| Service & Support | \$ 586,380 | \$ 601,013 | \$ 547,755 |
| Training | \$ 133,753 | \$ 150,585 | \$ 111,068 |
| Contributions - Unrestricted | \$ 149,627 | \$ 529,570 | \$349,569 |
| Contributions - Temporarily Restricted | \$ 390,912 | \$ 50,945 | \$ 755 |
| Special Events | \$ 196,259 | \$ 197,320 | \$ 123,013 |
| Grants | \$ 202,875 | \$ 102,703 | \$ 307,661 |
| Interest Income | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 4,310 |
| Total | \$ 1,659,806 | \$ 1,632,136 | \$ 1,444,131 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Service & Support | \$ 1,058,618 | \$1,092,295 | \$934,624 |
| Administration & Management | \$ 209,207 | \$359,660 | \$307,908 |
| Fundraising & Marketing | \$ 233,658 | \$147,450 | \$119,893 |
| Total | \$ 1,501,483 | \$1,599,405 | \$1,362,426 |
| Net Income | \$ 158,323 | \$ 32,731 | \$ 81,705 |

Our Supporters

The generosity of our donors, funders, and partners has enabled us to uphold a vision for the future where individuals with disabilities have access to all opportunities of a full life. We sincerely appreciate your support.

The following is a list of contributions received from January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019. Every effort is made to list donors accurately. Please let us know if you notice any errors or omissions.

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THANK YOU

FOR WALKING THIS PATH WITH US,
EACH STEP OF THE WAY.

**YOUR GIFTS SUSTAIN OUR WORK
AS INDEPENDENT FUTURES
RECOVERS, REIMAGINES, AND
REBUILDS STRONG INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES.**

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