

Collaborative Effort to Reinforce Transition Success

# C.E.R.T.S.



## Mission

To enrich the lives of adults with multiple, severe disabilities and, in turn, their families through an active, personalized day program.

### Message from Board President Cindy Jenkins Retired IT Professional

I'm wrapping up my first year as President of the Board of Directors and reflecting on how it has been a challenging year. I hoped FY2021 would be easier than FY2020, but I was wrong!

The face covering requirement resulted in only a few participants initially returning to programming. After the vaccine was available, the mask mandate was removed for fully vaccinated folks who could not tolerate wearing one. After this, several more participants returned but many stayed home due to concern about exposure to COVID-19; however, individuals and families did express a strong desire to return as soon as safely possible.

Low attendance this fiscal year has resulted in very little reimbursement income. Knowing that our employees are our greatest asset, we concentrated on what was necessary to keep them employed. As a result, the focus moved to acquiring available funds from federal, state and local COVID-19 relief funds. I am grateful to say that this was successful and we were able to avoid layoffs and keep all staff employed and receiving benefits.

This was a difficult year, but I still have much for which to be thankful. We are aware that the Direct Support Professional (DSP) position is not an easy job. Any of you who have cared for an adult with disabilities/illnesses can surely appreciate this. The DSPs we have on staff are wonderful, skilled and truly care about our participants. I am thankful for each and every one of them.

I am grateful for the dedication of the C.E.R.T.S.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### A Story About a Dog

Do work experiences affect your personal life? Here is a story that proves they do.

A favorite of the C.E.R.T.S. program activities are the scheduled visits from Paws for People. This agency provides gentle, affectionate pets that enhance the quality of life for each person they visit at the New Castle and Kent County sites. Watching the participants react to the dogs in such a positive way provides a heart warming experience for all. But for Tanya Thornton these visits had a different impact.

Tanya is a direct support professional working at our Kent County site. She was fearful of dogs and didn't want to touch or be near them. When Janice Baldwin from Paws for People brought in her dog Arlo, Tanya stayed away. Watching Arlo's effect on the attendees, she began to understand why her daughter wanted a dog.  
*(Continued on P.2)*



*Arlo with Tanya Thornton and Tristen Rowland*

## Executive Director's Report

Vivian J. Turner, MPA



*Vivian with a bulk order delivery of PPE supplies*

Preparing to write this report, I reviewed the ups and downs of fiscal year 2021 and was gratified to realize that despite the hardships, concerns and difficulties, our greatest fears did not come to pass. We did not lose any participants or staff due to COVID-19. We were able to re-open both sites to participants in August 2020, and we did not suffer long term consequences due to the lack of program revenue. While attendance has not been anywhere near the pre-pandemic levels, by the end of the fiscal year, we had a total of ten participants attending, eight in New Castle and two in Kent. Some have returned full-time, others part-time. This represents almost 23% of our pre-pandemic census.

Despite the low amount of service reimbursement income, C.E.R.T.S. was able to avoid laying off employees and drastically cutting the budget because we applied for all available COVID relief funds. DDDS then offered "retention payments" to service providers including C.E.R.T.S. These payments were made on behalf of those participants who had not yet returned to the program and represented 75% of the typical daily rate. This allowed us to continue to pay staff, cover basic costs such as rent and utilities and remain solvent. When those funds were exhausted, "network integrity payments" were made, once again to keep DD providers in Delaware from having to close their doors due to lack of income. We are very grateful for the support of DHSS and DDDS. Because of these efforts, the benevolence of our donors, and excellent returns on our invested reserve funds, C.E.R.T.S. finished the year fiscally strong.

*(Continued on P.6)*

### President Continued from P.1

Board of Directors made up of volunteers from various walks of life, each bringing their different experiences that helps our agency fulfill its mission. Also, the management team has succeeded in maintaining operations through many complications we experienced. They were determined to solve every problem with the best solution possible and achieved success in doing so. Here's hoping COVID-19 recovery continues in FY2022 so we can finally put this pandemic behind us.

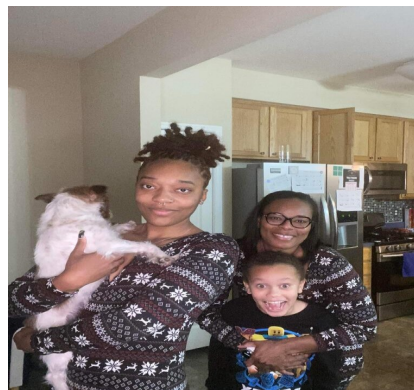
*C.E.R.T.S. said goodbye to it's first bus in FY2021 and awaits a new van awarded through a proposal to DelDOT.*



### A Story About a Dog, Continued from P. 1

One day, a parent of one of our participants stated that she was looking for a home for a dog. Tanya saw this as an opportunity and offered to take the dog. When Tanya called her daughter to tell her the news, she cried with joy.

So Zane is now a resident of the Thornton household. He also accomplished what Tanya wanted him to do. He has become the center of attention. Tanya is even considering buying him a personal dog size sofa so he has become very special to her. Zane senses that Tanya doesn't like touching him so he shows that he loves her in other ways such as standing guard at her bedroom door or next to her when she is standing or sitting.



*Tanya's family with Zane*

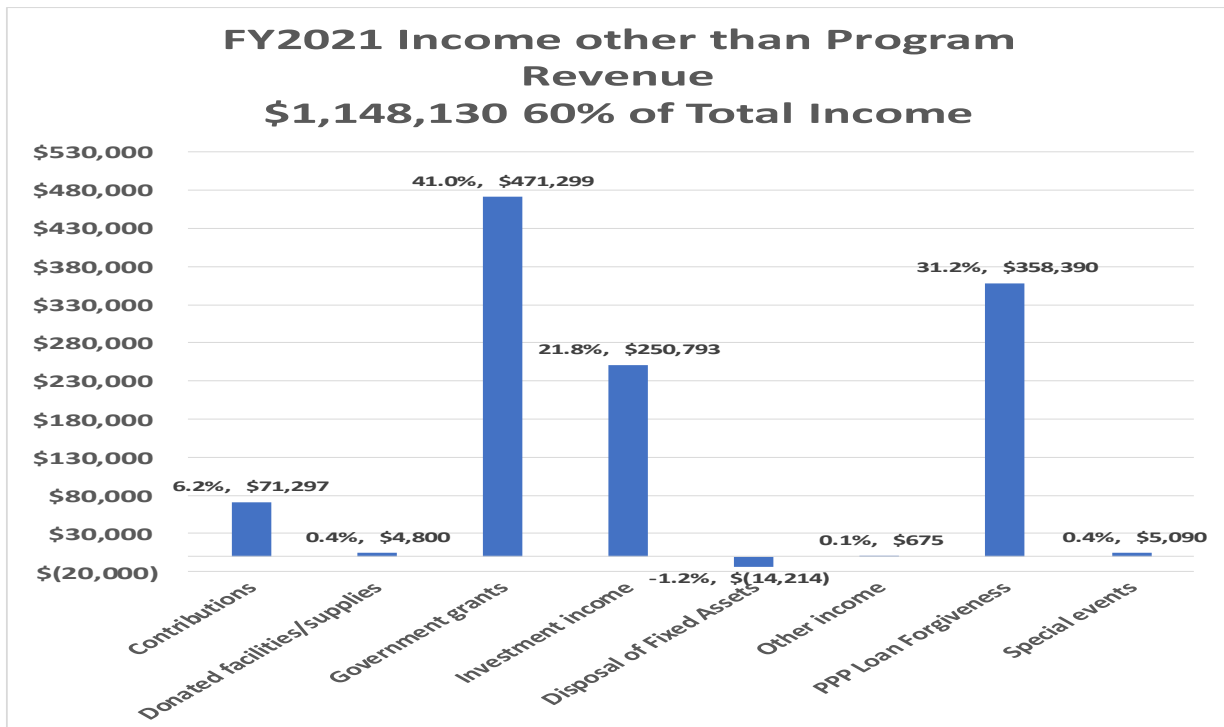
Meeting Arlo was a life changing experience for Tanya that positively impacted her life. Her C.E.R.T.S. employment has taught her many lessons as working with people with disabilities will do but for Tanya it has also expanded her family.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

<b>ASSETS</b>		<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Cash & cash equivalents	\$598,883	Accounts payable	-
Restricted cash	9,290	Accrued compensation	\$40,528
Accounts receivable	15,492	Refundable advances	14,214
Investments	975,299	Prepaid expenses	-
Property & equipment		Total liabilities	54,742
Net of accumulated depreciation	338,054	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
Security deposits	<u>21,717</u>	Without donor restrictions	1,894,703
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$1,958,735</u></b>	With donor restrictions	9,290
		Total net assets	<u>1,903,993</u>
		<b>TOTAL LIAB. &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$1,958,735</u></b>

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

<b>REVENUE, GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORTS</b>		<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Contributions	\$71,297	Program services	\$1,022,276
Government grants	471,299	Management & general	278,240
Donated facilities/supplies	4,800	Fundraising	40,765
Program revenue	762,245	Total expenses	\$1,341,281
Special events	5,090	Change in net assets	569,094
Other income	675	Net assets beginning of year	1,334,899
Debt forgiveness - PPP loan	358,399		
Investment income	250,793		
Net assets released from restrictions	-		
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	(14,214)		
<b>TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORTS</b>	<b><u>\$1,910,375</u></b>	<b>NET ASSETS-END OF YEAR</b>	<b><u>\$1,903,993</u></b>



Financial statements provided were prepared by Wheeler, Wolfenden & Dwares Public Accountants

## Donors

*Please let us know if your donation is not properly reflected below.*

### Champion Circle - \$5,000 and up

BHA Foundation Fund  
Delaware Division of the Arts  
Discover Brighter Futures Fund  
Grant-in-Aid  
HHS Stimulus Cares Act– Provider Relief Fund

### Visionary Circle - \$2,000 to \$4,999

Delaware Non-Profit Support Fund  
DFRC  
Milton & Hattie Kutz Foundation

### Honor Circle - \$1,000 to \$1,999

Bassett, Dawson & Foy, Inc.  
Kent County Levy Court  
James Matlack  
Ivan & Ruthann Turner

### Advocate - \$500 to \$999

Delaware Electric Cooperative  
DuPont Specialty Products  
Gene & Sue New  
Jeff & Chrissy Smith  
TEK Electronics, LLC  
Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor

### Benefactor - \$100 to \$499

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Christmas Shoppe Foundation  
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Rich & Shelley Dudek

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Paul Maloney  
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Gregg McCauley  
Mid-Del Foundation  
Brian Nuss  
PayUSA  
Ray Schoonmaker  
Alan Sheppard  
Vivian Turner  
Wilmington University  
Laura Wolfe  
WSFS  
Elijah Young

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John & Deborah Nuss  
William & Mildred Prettyman

### Friend - up to \$49

Acme Give Back Program  
Rosemary Allen  
Amazon Smile  
Elizabeth Bundick  
Geraldine Caliri  
Pasquale Canterino  
Adeline Cheyson  
Tina Curtis  
Leonard Earl  
Marv & Reenie Horner  
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Marguerite Saville  
Elizabeth Schwartz  
David Sipko  
Debbie Starobynski-Jezyk  
Tracy Wilhelm

### In Kind Donations

Sophie Williamson  
Lotus Cheng-Brown

## Thoughts from a Parent

COVID-19 provided one very clear and valuable benefit to our family. It allowed us to see the difference in our daughter when she has important social interaction that is consistently available versus the effects of when she was isolated. Her reaction to her return to C.E.R.T.S. and getting acclimated to being back with her peers and staff caregivers has been priceless! Although she doesn't use words, her excitement and appreciation were abundantly apparent. We consider ourselves lucky and blessed. -Brian Nuss

## Thoughts from a Parent

During C.E.R.T.S. closure, Mathew was extremely unhappy being isolated from his peers. His social and motor skills declined dramatically, and there was an increase in his seizure activity. Being able to return to the C.E.R.T.S. program was a blessing for Mathew. It is his greatest joy and we are seeing him make big improvements in his mood and movement. -Elijah Young

## Consider a Planned Giving Donation to C.E.R.T.S.

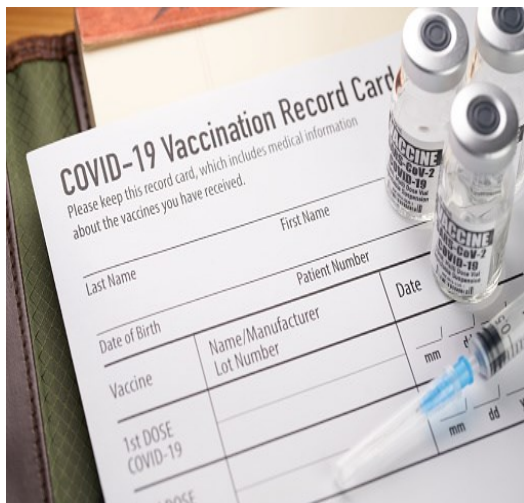


Since 2006, C.E.R.T.S. has served individuals with multiple, severe disabilities, many of whom are not able to attend other programs due to their complex medical needs. As we look toward the future, our goal is to ensure the supports provided continue to be available to those men and women attending the Adult Action Centers as well as those yet to need our services. Your help can preserve our future programming by including C.E.R.T.S. as a planned giving option, now or as part of your estate. Listed below are some options to consider:



1. **Direct Gifts & Bequests** – A gift of cash, property or other assets to C.E.R.T.S. from your estate.
2. **Charitable Gift Annuities** – With this option C.E.R.T.S. receives money, securities or real estate in return for agreeing to pay you a defined payment for life. This is a good option if you want to donate substantial assets, minimize taxes and retain consistent income flow throughout your lifetime.
3. **Charitable Lead Trust** – This occurs when you choose to contribute the assets of a trust for a defined period of time to benefit C.E.R.T.S.
4. **Charitable Remainder Trust** – In this scenario, the remainder of a trust is donated to C.E.R.T.S. after you receive the assets for a specified period or the rest of your life.

**As you plan with a financial advisor, please consider a gift to C.E.R.T.S.  
Doing so will help secure that future programming remains available  
for this vulnerable population.**



## Vaccinated or Unvaccinated

As the rest of the world struggles with vaccinated and unvaccinated employees, so does C.E.R.T.S. In an effort to respect personal choice and beliefs, we have not mandated vaccinations and neither has our funding source, Delaware Division of Disability Services (DDDS). Efforts to educate, dispel myths and answer any questions has been the method of choice in navigating this issue. As of June 2021, 62% of our staff and 70% of participants were vaccinated. C.E.R.T.S. now administers Rapid Antigen Tests on-site at both locations. Senior staff and agency nurses have been trained in conducting them. Staff attendees who are vaccinated, receive testing at a minimum monthly while those who are unvaccinated, at a minimum weekly.

### Thoughts from a Parent

Joseph gets energized by simply being around people. He really feeds off the noise and the interactions of other people. During COVID, he missed these interactions being with just his parents and some Zoom activities. He learned to just go through the motions of life with low energy. It was a blessing for Joseph to return to C.E.R.T.S. His level of activity as well as his overall energy has returned also due to his interactions with staff and participants.

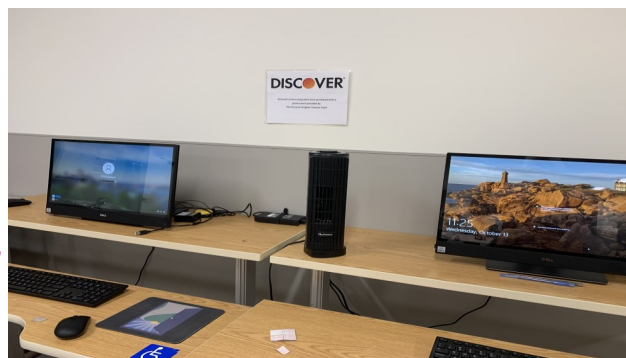
—Gene & Sue New



C.E.R.T.S. received an award from the Discover Brighter Futures Fund in FY2021. This initiative is a thank you from Discover for an organization's many contributions to their local communities and in achieving a brighter financial future. Discover, through their philanthropic efforts, works to improve financial education, promote economic development and offer support programs that make communities better places to live. C.E.R.T.S. submitted a proposal that listed items to enhance program activities for both our New Castle and Kent County sites. With acquired funds, six touch screen monitors were purchased and various sensory items to establish specified areas at each site for this unique activity. Items included were an infinity mirror, various touch lights, bubble tubes and an interactive music system. C.E.R.T.S. is grateful to Discover as this award has enabled the purchase of products that provide comfort to participants at times when they are struggling and also stimulus through touch and feel. Without this grant, we would not have been able to purchase these amazing items. **Thank you Discover!**



*Sensory devices are on the left and touch screen computers are on the right.*



### Message from the Executive Director, Continued from P.2

Looking to the future, C.E.R.T.S. is working on a strategic plan for 2022-2024. Among other things, initiatives include moving the Kent County site to a larger location more central in Kent County, ensuring a professionally satisfying employee experience, board development, program assessment and undertaking a comprehensive marketing and rebranding effort that includes a name change. I will be happy to share the progress as we move along the process.

C.E.R.T.S. is nothing without the people who make things happen. I am so grateful for the Program Associates who show up every day ready to work directly with the participants to meet their goals. The senior staff are a group of dedicated professionals willing to do whatever it takes to make the operation run smoothly. The board of directors has been so involved this year; we had no less than six extra meetings to discuss how to proceed in this uncharted territory. Their input and counsel was invaluable. And for you reading this now – thank you for your interest in the program and your continued support of it.

2021 Virtual Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

**\$1,000 Gold Sponsors**



Silver Sponsor - \$500  
Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP  
Delaware Electric Co-operative

Bronze Sponsors - \$250  
Wilmington University  
WSFS

The Highmark Walk was virtual in 2021. We are grateful to be invited to be part of this event that is successful due to those who continue to support this fundraising opportunity. With \$5,535 donated, all funds will be used to support participant activities. C.E.R.T.S. looks forward to being part of the 2022 Walk that will hopefully be in person.

**Thank you for your support in FY2021!**



C.E.R.T.S. received funding for operating expenses from the **BHA Foundation Fund**, **DFRC** and **Grant-in Aid**. Awards from the **Mid-Del Foundation** and **Kent County Levy Court** were granted but to be used specifically for the Kent County site. In support of the agency art therapy program, we deferred awards from FY2020 from the **Delaware Division of the Arts** and the **Kent County Fund for the Arts** to be used in FY2022 due to our low attendance in FY2021. Funding received from **The Milton & Hattie Kutz Foundation** and the **Discover Brighter Futures Fund** was used to purchase specific items as stated in the proposal. Through the **HHS Stimulus Cares Act**, the **Delaware Non-Profit Support Fund** and the **DHSS Coronavirus Relief Fund**, operating funds necessary to meet budget demands were secured.

**We are grateful for all of our generous donors and for the availability of the COVID-19 Support Funds to the non-profit community.**



Main Office: 52 Reads Way, New Castle, DE 19720  
 Kent County Site: 699 S. Carter Rd., Suite 1, Smyrna, DE 19977

**C.E.R.T.S. Employees**

**Administrative Staff**

Vivian Turner, MPA - Executive Director  
 Terry Cipolla - Assistant Executive Director  
 Erin Chandler, BSN, RN - Director of Nursing  
 Michelle Shorter, SHRM-CP - Operations & HR Manager  
 Melissa MacCord, MS - Program Manager, New Castle  
 Colleen Clark, LPN - Program Coordinator/Nurse, Kent  
 Jessica Paynter, LPN, Program Nurse, New Castle  
 Sharuanda Robinson, Assistant Program Manager, New Castle

**Program Associates**

<u>New Castle</u>		<u>Kent</u>
Jessica Childress	Janes Patterson	Sherry Hopkins
Chelsey Delgado	Katherine Smith	Teetee Juah
Kelly McCann		Tanya Thornton

**Tribute to Jim Clarke**

Jim Clarke was a true advocate for C.E.R.T.S. and the disability community. He and his wife Patty testified several times before the Delaware Joint Finance Committee in support of increased funding for disability programs and salaries for direct support workers. He served on the C.E.R.T.S. Board of Directors for almost four years including two years as Treasurer. Jim was very attentive to the needs of his daughter, Amanda, who is a program attendee. In a final act of generosity, donations were designated to C.E.R.T.S. in his memory.

*Rest in Peace Jim and thank you!*

**GuideStar Platinum Award**

For the third year in a row, C.E.R.T.S. has been awarded the Platinum Seal of Transparency. GuideStar USA's mission is to revolutionize nonprofit and philanthropy practice by offering information that advances agency transparency, enables users to make better decisions and encourages a charitable giving atmosphere.



**FY2021 Board Members**

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**E-Mail:**  
**vtturner@certsinc.org**

**WEBSITE:**  
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**C.E.R.T.S. is a recognized**  
**nonprofit**  
**under IRS Tax Code**  
**Section 501(c) 3**

**EIN#: 01-0592853**

**Gifts can be**  
**designated through:**  
**United Way #9618**  
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**Charitable Campaign**  
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