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## A Message from the Executive Director

There is so much to say, but let me begin with happy spring! At this time, Community Services Foundation (CSF) and CTF ILLINOIS (CTF) are dedicated to focusing on the positive and the good that is yet to come. Our newsletter is filled with the good things in life: our happiest of moments over the past year and the fun we are looking forward to. I just may be in this mood since I am now meeting with the CTF leadership team to discuss the future instead of triaging the past week. Maybe my good mood is tied to the fact that 98% of CTF residents are vaccinated. All are looking forward to being one step closer to return to their jobs and day programs. No matter the reason, it just feels good to be on this side of a pandemic.

We have so much to be grateful for. We are heading into our 11th Annual Jerry Meyer Golf Classic at Midlothian County Club on June 25th. We are celebrating all the wonderful people that make CTF such a great organization: people like Nick and Rochelle, our Employees of the Year, Judge John J. and Laura Mahoney for their incredible support of our Honored Society Program, Franklin Eziye, our hard-working, Community Employment Person of the Year, and more. We are looking forward to adding on new supports: ACCESS, our South Holland location, is applying to become a substance abuse disorder clinic, and we have remodeled our 17th Street building in Charleston to add mental health services and supports for children with Autism and their families. We are also grateful at the response of our contributors as we are celebrating our most successful Make A Match Campaign year to date. Further, we continue to see foundations and funders that afford us new grant opportunities. It is truly humbling that, even through the pandemic, we still have seen so much community support and belief in our mission.

Most of all, we are extremely grateful that most of the people we support will be back and will be back very soon! I simply cannot wait for the day that I can actually see everyone back, doing what they love and getting back to our new normal. Until then, stay safe and be healthy.

Mary Pat Ambrosino

Executive Director

## 2020 Make A Match Campaign Success



Since 2002, Community Services Foundation's (CSF) Annual Make A Match Campaign has served as an impactful and collaborative way to support our member agency, CTF ILLINOIS. Every year, we are humbled by the generosity of our community supporters. Thanks to your contributions to this annual campaign, you have helped us raise over \$400,000.00 to date for people with disabilities.

We are also grateful that, for the fifth year in a row, CTF ILLINOIS was selected to participate in The Coleman Foundation's Matching Grants Program, which ran concurrently with Make A Match. Through this partnership, any donation of \$125.00 or greater received by CTF ILLINOIS for the month of November was matched not only by CSF, but partially matched by the Coleman Foundation. Thanks to your contributions, CSF's matching dollars, and the Coleman Foundation's grant, our 2020 campaign was a huge success, with \$50,920.00 raised to support programs of CTF ILLINOIS.

The Make A Match Campaign allows community supporters, families, and friends of CTF ILLINOIS to see their contributions doubled every year between November 1 and December 31. This tradition of matching contributions allows you to see, first-hand, the impact of your gift multiplied. From all of us at CSF and CTF ILLINOIS, we extend our deepest gratitude to every supporter who helped improve the lives of people with disabilities by donating to our 2020 campaign. We look forward to continuing this tradition with another successful campaign in 2021.

### **Thank you to those whose gifts were not only doubled by CSF, but also qualified for The Coleman Foundation Matching Grants Program:**

Peter and Mary Pat Ambrosino  
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# #CTFSTRONG

Since the onset of COVID-19, we have followed all CDC guidelines. We were able to accommodate staff who needed time off due to family members having medical conditions that put them more at risk. We worked to accommodate as many staff as possible with flexible schedules to allow them to be home for their children's at-home learning needs. We provided onsite testing, held vaccine clinics, and worked tirelessly with the local health departments to assure our staff and the people we support had a place in line for county vaccine administration.

## Vaccinations

To date, we are proud to say 177 residents of CTF ILLINOIS (CTF) CILA homes have received full vaccinations. Additionally, 145 staff members of CTF and Community Services Foundation (CSF) have been fully vaccinated. As an organization that was deemed as 1A status in Illinois, we believe it is imperative that both the people we support and staff become fully vaccinated.

In order to make this happen, we were able to offer two on-site vaccination clinics at our south suburban facility. For our more rural locations, we formed partnerships with local health departments and hospitals in order to schedule vaccinations for staff and residents. Says Nicki Fidler-Lawrence, Director of Nursing: "We must work together with other local pro-



viders and agencies to assist in meeting the needs of those we serve and our staff." By forming local partnerships, we are able to ensure vaccinations are readily available to all staff members and people we support.

All staff that received a full vaccine status received an extra day off and a CTF #ThisIsOurShot t-shirt to commemorate their valor!



## On Site Testing

At the height of the pandemic, the wait for testing was two to three weeks. It was in the best interest to our staff and the people we support to know right away if anyone with symptoms was positive for the virus. While there was an immediate need for results, the wait times for testing made it difficult to navigate potential cases of COVID-19.

For the purpose of COVID-19 testing, CTF applied for and received a CILA waiver. The CILA certificate of waiver is a registration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that allows physicians or medical office personnel to collect a sample and perform a laboratory test within their office.

Receiving this waiver allowed us to test staff and the people we support for the COVID-19 virus. Our nursing staff received certification to administer these tests. Once CTF received the waiver, we were able to receive the BinaxNOW Rapid test through the assistance of Coles and Cook County. On-site testing at locations in Tinley Park and Charleston are now readily available for staff and those we support. Thanks to these testing sites, CTF was able to catch positive tests earlier, decreasing the spread of COVID-19.

*The COVID-19 Pandemic has forced all of us to navigate unprecedented times. As a human services organization, we know it is our job to help flatten the curve and provide resources to both people we support and staff members alike. Together, we will persevere and come out stronger on the other side.*

# CTF Program Highlight: Behavior Support Services

Did you know CTF ILLINOIS (CTF) offers behavior support services? These supports are led by a team of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Level II Behavior Therapists. The team consists of individuals who have passionately provided services to diverse populations for the last 20 years. Behavior support staff work to provide various proactive and reactive strategies to help meet a person's goals and upmost independency. Behavior supports include a five-step service plan centered on:



- Interviews and Observations
- Assessments and Plan Development
- Training and Implementation
- Data Tracking, Gathering, and Monitoring
- Continual Support and Adjustments as needed to ensure success

Since the development of CTF's own behavior support department in 2017, CTF has seen a decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations, OIG allegations, and targeted behaviors. Additional benefits have been an increase of skill acquisition for people who are served and improvement of staff ability to respond to difficult situations. Behavior supports are available throughout the CTF service regions and eligible through the Medicaid Waiver. Additionally, we provide practicum opportunities for students and/or staff that qualify to become Behavior Therapists or BCBA. In fact, two CTF staff members have taken advantage of this opportunity and have been able to transition to the Behavior Department. If you are interested in behavior support services or if you are interested in a practicum opportunity, please reach out to Jillian O'Sullivan, Director of Support Services, at [jillianosullivan@ctfillinois.org](mailto:jillianosullivan@ctfillinois.org) or (708) 429-1260, ext. 3640.

## CTF Staff Spotlight: Mike Brown



This year's staff spotlight belongs to Mike Brown, who has worked for CTF ILLINOIS (CTF) for over twenty-five years. Mike is not only dedicated to CTF, but, more importantly, to each person who comes to CTF for support, striving to meet every unique need and goal.

**Q: What is the title of your position?**

A: Recently, I accepted a new role, Director of Project Coordination and Innovation.

**Q: Tell us about your background with CTF.**

A: When CTF originally started up, I was one of the first employees and helped organize the opening of 8 CILAs in Charleston when we downsized Heritage House. Originally, I served as the CILA Administrator for all homes. Since then, I have been involved with running CILA and CDS operations in all regions as well as starting Home-based Supports and Intermittent CILA services.

**Q: What are your proudest accomplishments and favorite memories?**

A: I wrote our original TAP grant which has resulted in nearly \$1 million for autism services in Central Illinois over the years and have been instrumental in writing IDOT grants that have resulted in over half a million dollars' worth of vehicles for CTF. Some of the people we serve in Charleston, I have been working with for 20 years. I downsized our community day services in Charleston and started a Craft Program, Art Program, and Advocacy Program which were expanded into other areas of CTF. I am happy mostly that I have worked with Trisha Story, Reagan Carey, Tammy Stephens, and Tracy Wavering for over 20 years and many others for over 10 years.

**Q: What are your expectations in your new role?**

A: My immediate expectation is to spend some extra time maximizing capacity for our CILA program. There are other projects that we have discussed for years that we may finally be able to get off the ground such as mental health services in Charleston and Supportive Housing. We have so many options for maximizing revenue for the agency and I aim to explore all those options. It is important that if we want to diversify revenue streams that we commit additional resources towards being successful rather than try to piece together resources from an already stressed system.

### MISSION STATEMENT

To develop and create opportunities for individuals with disabilities that will support and inspire independence.

## Fundraising In Action

### The 11th Annual Jerry Meyer Golf Classic

Every year, Community Services Foundation (CSF) is proud to host the Jerry Meyer Golf Classic. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we were unable to host last year's outing. This year, however, we are excited this prestigious event will be back on Friday, June 25th! Named for one of CSF's first donors and lifelong supporters, the golf classic raises funds for CSF's member agency, CTF ILLINOIS, while continuing the Meyer family's legacy of service. This year's outing will, once again, be held at Midlothian Country Club's beautiful, challenging course, where golfers can test their skills in games like the Chip-In Challenge and Longest Drive as well as the chance to win a car at the Hole-In-One Challenge. Lunch will be provided on the course and we plan to continue our 19th Hole Partee tradition and Awards Ceremony with new safety measures.

There's a new way to play this year: Unable to join us on the course this year? Feel safer staying home? You can still play - and support our cause! Purchase Fantasy Golf Scratch Off Cards for a chance to split the pot with CSF. Purchase cards by June 15th and submit your score by June 22nd to [info@csfil.org](mailto:info@csfil.org). Lowest score wins! The winning score and prize amount\* will be posted on our website and Facebook page by June 25th at 5:00pm, with the winner being notified by Monday, June 28th. Be sure to keep your card as the winning score card must be mailed in to claim your prize!

\*This is a split the pot raffle. The winner will receive 50% of the total sales. If you are interested in registering to golf, purchasing Fantasy Golf Scratch Off Cards, or in sponsoring the event, please visit us at [www.csfil.org](http://www.csfil.org).



## Grants Awarded to CTF ILLINOIS



As part of our collaboration with member agency CTF ILLINOIS (CTF), Community Services Foundation (CSF) provides annual grant awards to CTF. This past year, CSF provided two grants to CTF to cover the salary for a new position, Director of Project Coordination and Innovation, and for the purchase of StationMD for CTF's residential program. The Director of Project Coordination and Innovation is a newly formed position, meant to maximize both support options and revenue streams while continually working to improve upon and enhance programming across CTF. StationMD is a Telehealth program that allows residents to connect with doctors in the comfort of their homes. Using tools like a tablet and stethoscopes with Bluetooth technology, StationMD helps people get medical care quickly and easily.

In addition to grant awards from CSF, we also offer grant-writing supports to benefit CTF. Over the past fiscal year, CTF was awarded over \$300,000.00 in grant funding thanks to grant-writing supports from CSF. Thanks to this funding, CTF was able to continue to provide Group Respite support through the Department of Human Services as well as receive continued support from the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Regional Transit Authority, and United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. CTF was also able to secure new funding for supports directly affected by COVID-19, including grants from First Midwest Bank Charitable Foundation and The Fred J. Brunner Foundation for enhancements to virtual supports. Most recently, CTF received funding for mental health supports through partnerships with Chicago Community Trust and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. Without these collaborations, CTF would not be able to provide high quality services to those we support. We are so grateful for all of our partnerships, both continued and new!

## Honored Society Spotlight: Judge John J. and Laura Mahoney

A few years ago, Laura Mahoney was helping out her niece with landscape work at CTF's Cedar CILA home. What Laura didn't know was this good deed would transform into a lasting relationship with the gentlemen who live there. After meeting the guys, Laura knew she wanted to do more. In March of 2019, she and her husband, Judge John J. Mahoney, decided to officially join Honored Society as a sponsor for Cedar home. Since becoming their sponsor, Judge John J. and Laura Mahoney have gifted the gentlemen with updated furniture, a new television, home decorations, and so much more. Prior to the pandemic, they were able to treat the gentlemen to a baseball game, a barbecue and swim party, and hosted them for Christmas dinner.

While they love being able to help out in any way they can, the best part of the sponsorship opportunity is the relationship they've formed with the guys at the house. "This has turned into a friendship more than anything," Laura says. They are all looking forward to a time in the near future when they can get together safely. We cannot thank Judge John J. and Laura Mahoney enough for, not only their sponsorship, but for embracing the intent of this program by forming a lasting relationship with the home.





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Foundation Focus  
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a nonprofit corporation.  
Its mission is to develop and create  
opportunities for individuals with  
disabilities that will support and  
inspire independence.

## Community Employment Person of the Year

This year's Community Employment Person of the Year has been awarded to Franklin Ezife, a young man who works at Amazon Warehouse. CTF's Community Employment program assisted Franklin in finding the perfect employment opportunity for him and Franklin loves his job. Not only is he able to earn money, but he's also had the opportunity to meet many people and make new friends. Franklin has met the demands of his job at Amazon head on. He has taken advantage of the tools given to him through Community Employment Services to learn financial management skills in order to save money and work toward independence.

Franklin is grateful to be employed at Amazon and he continues to strive toward excellence at work. In his spare time, Franklin enjoys spending time with family. Franklin is very gifted; he loves to draw as well as play the saxophone and French Horn. Franklin, thank you for all you do and for your dedication to yourself on your path to independence through employment. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.



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