



Helping Families Thrive

Hattie Larlham's in-home nursing services provide support to families caring for a loved one with disabilities.

On a bright Sunday morning in August, the Knoyer family gathered in their warm, inviting living room to speak with us about something deeply personal: their experience navigating life as parents of a child with disabilities. Their eight-year-old son, Becket, sat calmly in his wheelchair watching television and his mom, Karen, explained with a laugh that HGTV is his favorite channel.

Karen and her husband, Erik, shared that during a complicated birth, Becket sustained permanent brain damage due to a lack of oxygen. As a result, Becket was diagnosed with Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE), which has manifested in other cognitive and developmental limitations, including Spastic Quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy. Becket cannot walk or talk, but he is keenly aware of what goes on around him and expresses himself through gestures and vocalizations.

It was obvious from the start that Becket would require round-the-clock care, though the full extent of his limitations couldn't be known until he was older. The Knoyers devoted every ounce of energy they had to making sure he was as comfortable as possible. "It was a wait-and-see situation in terms of how Becket would develop as he aged," said his dad. "His doctor said 'I think he'll go to school,' and we said 'okay, that's the best news we've heard so far.'"

Though it was certainly an uphill battle, Becket's doctor was right. By the age of three, Becket was attending preschool in Coventry Township, which is where Erik and Karen first met Mackenzie Williams. Mackenzie was a nurse assigned to Becket's classroom and the Knoyers noticed her special relationship with him right away. Having been finally approved for home care through Medicaid, they were looking for an in-home nurse for Becket and they knew Mackenzie would be a perfect fit. Karen and Erik asked Mackenzie if she would consider applying for a job as a private duty nurse with Hattie Larlham so that she could come and work one-on-one with Becket in their home. Mackenzie was thrilled at the opportunity, and her talent and compassion made her an obvious fit for Hattie Larlham.

"I felt such a strong connection with Becket and I knew this was something I wanted to pursue. Hattie Larlham welcomed me with open arms," Mackenzie shared. "They offered me all of the training I would need and supported me one hundred percent."

As Karen, Erik, and Mackenzie shared their story, Becket's beloved home improvement show played softly in the background and his older brother, Dash, showed off his favorite toy. Mackenzie sat next to Becket and massaged his hands as he watched his show. Mackenzie explained that massages are something that she is almost constantly doing to help Becket.

A Message From Our Leaders

Dear Friends,

During this season of gratitude, we at Hattie Larlham are thankful for the continued support of our donors, community partners, volunteers and families who have helped us provide the highest level of comfort, joy and achievement to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As we look back on another successful year, we are humbled by everything your generosity and dedication have made possible.

We are grateful to our employees who helped Hattie Larlham receive outstanding results and a 3-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for our Employment Services programs in Northeast Ohio and Central Ohio. CARF is a renowned international accrediting organization which focuses on high-quality, outcome-driven standards. Additionally, our entire Employment Services team was recognized with the Employee of Distinction Award from Goodwill Industries for their work in providing competitive employment. Several members of our direct care team were also recently recognized for their outstanding service by the Ohio Provider Resource Association, our statewide association of service providers for their hard work and dedication of all our employees in providing the highest quality of care to those we serve.

We are also grateful for the many generous donors who helped us reach our goal to raise \$100,000, which was matched dollar-for-dollar by an extraordinary Challenge Grant from the Catherine L. and Edward A. Lozick Foundation for the purchase of critical care equipment. We are immensely thankful for our committed volunteers who gave hundreds of hours of their time to help refurbish our facilities, plant gardens, offer friendship and brighten the lives of the people we serve every day.

As we pray for your family's blessings this holiday season, we thank you for helping us do more for people with disabilities and their families. We hope you are inspired by the stories in this issue of FOCUS and will consider making a year-end gift to Hattie Larlham.

From all of us at Hattie Larlham, thank you for your continued generosity, partnership, and commitment. We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and look forward to celebrating even more achievements in 2020.

Sincerely,



Stephen Colecchi, CEO



Michael Weinhardt,
President, Board of Directors



Stephen Colecchi (left) and Michael Weinhardt (right) at the 2019 Circle of Caring.

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Stephen Colecchi and Michael Weinhardt are pleased to introduce Heather Lorenzon as the Hattie Larlham Foundation's newly-appointed chief development officer.

Mrs. Lorenzon assumed her duties on September 1 and now leads Hattie Larlham's fundraising, marketing, communication and outreach efforts and provides support in the area of advocacy. Prior to Hattie Larlham, Mrs. Lorenzon was senior director of development at Summa Health and brings more than 20 years of fundraising and communications experience to the Hattie Larlham executive team.

41 Years of Engineered Artistry

Miller's Rental and Sales has given more than four decades of expert service and support to Hattie Larlham.



Center resident Ashley sits patiently as Danny adjusts the foam padding of her new chair. Hattie Larlham Physical Therapy Assistant Noel shares insight about Ashley's typical posture to ensure her new chair will fit perfectly.

It was 1978 when the president of a local home medical supply company learned about the special equipment needs of the residents at Hattie Larlham. Therapists at area children's hospitals told John Miller that the children at Hattie Larlham needed seating solutions for their wheelchairs that would help maximize the benefits of the therapy they were receiving.

"No one was customizing seating systems that met the complex needs of these children. Hattie Larlham challenged us to do things that other companies didn't do," says John P. "Johnny" Miller, the third generation president of Miller's Rental and Sales. His father, John, came out and met the staff - including Mrs. Larlham - and became inspired to develop the custom



An older photo of Hattie Larlham resident Angela B. with Skip Rockhold (left) and Dave Gipson (right) - both of whom are still Seating/Fabrication technicians at Miller's - remains on display in the Center's therapy office.

supports and devices that the company is known for today.

Each wheelchair build is unique, requiring both science and artistry. The Miller's technician brings the chair in a pre-built state. The person using the chair is placed in it so the technician can take precise measurements and make adjustments to perfectly accommodate not only the person's weight or height but also to support favorite activities, special medical needs, and even muscle tone. Miller's uses a fleet of specially-equipped trucks that function as mobile workshops. These trucks allow the entire fitting, including adding foam, covering the chair and adding custom-built features, to take place on-site in just one day.

"Very high muscle tone in a person can break steel, so we had to create devices like foot rests or head supports with more give." Proper positioning is critical to residents' quality of life. "It's not just their wheels - it's a solution that supports everything from their skeletal and muscle systems to breathing and digestion. This is what makes it possible to enjoy recreational programs and stay engaged when they are out in the community."

The job requires someone who possesses both mechanical skills and

compassion and is not afraid to be hands-on. Some Miller's technicians have built several chairs for the same resident, creating a special bond. "It's very rewarding for the tech to see the person grow and change through the years," says Johnny.

"They really listen to the therapy staff during the fabrication process and help problem solve and make suggestions."

Deborah Conway, head of Hattie Larlham's therapy department, says her team enjoys working with Miller's. "They are friendly and really listen to the therapy staff during the fabrication process and help problem solve to address the special needs of our population."

Miller's is not only an important partner in the care Hattie Larlham provides. The company has long provided financial and in-kind support to Hattie Larlham, going beyond the compassionate, dedicated work of their technicians and helping us provide the highest quality care for the people we serve.

"I asked my father about Hattie Larlham, and he said, 'It's hard to put your finger on it. It's just a special place.' He's right. We feel very fortunate to be a part of it."

Miller's Rental and Sales is celebrating their 70th anniversary this year. Hattie Larlham looks forward to continuing our special partnership to provide new opportunities for comfort, joy and achievement to children and adults with disabilities for years to come.



A Special Ingredient

In the early morning hours before the sun is up, Carol Hartman is in the kitchen at the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities, crafting breakfast, lunch and dinner dishes for the day ahead – and usually getting a head start on the day after that. Carol is the last employee still at Hattie Larlham who was hired by our founder herself. She remembers how Mrs. Larlham would start each day by greeting each and every resident by name and made sure that Sunday dinners were a weekly treat.

“On Sundays, we had only two meals, breakfast and a Sunday supper,” Carol remembers. “She always made sweet potatoes with peanut butter. That way the kids would get a little extra protein.”

Carol has worked at Hattie Larlham for 43 years. She joined the nutrition services department in 2011 after serving for many years as a direct support professional (DSP). After losing a daughter who had a profound disability, she heard about Hattie Larlham from her nieces who both worked at the main campus. She decided to give it a try. “It was a healing thing,” she says. “I figured there was a purpose in life.”

As a DSP, Carol’s experience feeding residents sparked her interest in understanding their unique nutritional requirements. Even though the majority of residents receive their primary nutrition via tube feeding, almost everyone is offered a chance to enjoy a taste of Hattie Larlham’s made-from-scratch dishes at mealtime. To accommodate the safe swallowing needs of each person, whole cooked foods are placed in the kitchen’s powerful food processor, blended to the appropriate texture and then warmed as needed.

Carol begins her day at 5 a.m. by preparing breakfast for that morning. She then makes the fruit dish that will be served for the day, prepares lunch and dinner items, and then begins work on breakfast for the next day – all before 10 a.m. In addition to serving as head cook, Carol works with her colleagues to create menu items - one of her favorite things about the job. “I love that I have freedom to try new things for the kids. We made a shepherd’s pie with sweet potatoes and the children loved it. They also love spinach!”

Kim Monegan, nutrition services supervisor, says it is a pleasure to work with Carol. “Carol always advocates for the residents and proves this through the care and creativity in



Despite the early hour, Carol is all smiles and warmth as she prepares the day’s meals for Center residents.

“She goes above and beyond to ensure that the residents are well taken care of at Hattie Larlham.”

her cooking. Instead of just making muffins, she frequently buys ingredients on her own to make them unique. She has come up with several new menu ideas. She is also great at training others in our department to cook. She goes above and beyond to ensure that the residents are well taken care of at Hattie Larlham.”

Elaine Yehle Bowen, nutrition services manager at Hattie Larlham for more than ten years, couldn’t agree more. Elaine says, “There’s Carol love in that food.”

Thank you, Carol for all you do to make meal times special at Hattie Larlham, and for always adding that special ingredient – love.

We're Hiring!

**Are you passionate about helping others?
We'd love to have you on our team.**

Explore the wide variety of opportunities available at Hattie Larlham!

Visit www.hattielarlham.org

Let's Get To Work.

For the fourth year, Hattie Larlham celebrated October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month with its "I Am Able" campaign. This campaign emphasizes the abilities of people with disabilities and what they can accomplish in the workplace. The "I Am Able" campaign encourages local companies to explore how they can collaborate with Hattie Larlham to make their workforce more inclusive by hiring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are skilled, ready and able to work in their community.

"The 'I Am Able' campaign has been a great channel to get the word out about the value of an inclusive workforce," said Hattie Larlham Director of Employment Services Laura Walker. "Hattie Larlham has partnered with more than 50 companies in Northeast Ohio to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities."

We know every journey is different.



Lauryn utilized employment services to help her prepare for and find her first job in the community. She is now a food service worker for Aramark at The University of Akron. She's stationed at the Chick-fil-A in the Polsky building. Lauryn's Hattie Larlham job developer said, "Lauryn has a sweet personality and is a hard worker. Lauryn acclimated to her job very quickly and is doing great. She's so happy to have a job!"



Lawrence "Mike" first used employment services as a participant at a Hattie Larlham work training site. We then helped him find community employment at a fast food restaurant. Later on, Mike made the decision that his job wasn't the best fit for him, so he used our services to find something different. Mike's job developer said he's excelling at his new job in the dairy department of a supermarket and is glad to have very supportive coworkers.

"Working as a team we determine how to best meet the needs of the employer while helping each job seeker reach their professional goals," continued Walker. Hattie Larlham's Employment Services are individualized and tailored to meet the unique needs and employment goals of each job seeker. Our dedicated team works directly with each person to ensure that they find opportunities that complement their abilities and interests.

Services Hattie Larlham offers include: Summer Youth Work Experience, Transition to Work, Discovery & Exploration, Work Trials, Work Training, Benefits Analysis, and Job Coaching & Retention.

For more information about Hattie Larlham's Employment Services in Northeast Ohio, please contact Laura Walker at 330-620-9341 or visit iamable.hattielarlham.org.



Colin enjoyed learning blacksmithing techniques at Macabee Metals.

Hattie Larlham's Transition to Work (TTW) summer program provides students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to explore careers in a variety of areas throughout Franklin County, Ohio.

"What makes the program stand out is the effort put into really getting to know the students," said Laura Gregory, Addventures quality manager and TTW program coordinator. "The program staff talk with the students' support teams, visit their homes and neighborhoods, and spend time with the families. It is through these steps that we are able to create a career exploration schedule that is unique to each student's goals."

In 2019, 48 students from the Columbus area had the opportunity to work and learn at a wide variety of local employers, including: TJ Maxx, Lucky's Market, Fresh Thyme, Donatos, Columbus Parks and Recreation Nature Department, Vertical Adventures, Macabee Metals, and Habitat for Humanity.

"TTW helps students discover that the things they enjoy as hobbies or interests can translate to job opportunities," Laura continued. "Prior to the program, most students we work with are not sure what a career would look like for themselves. We help to change that perception by connecting them to work experiences that highlight their strengths and build their confidence."

For more information about TTW, contact Laura Gregory at 614-259-0201.

I AM ABLE.

Let's Get To Work.

Knights Measure Up



From left: Joanne and Mike Sweeney; Cassie McMinn, Hattie Larlham Community Integration Coordinator; Nancy Pizzino, City of Kent Recreation Supervisor; Heather Lorenzon, Hattie Larlham Chief Development Officer; John Albaneze, member of Knights of Columbus Council #4571.

In addition to special fundraising projects, the Knights of Columbus provides a large share of proceeds from its annual "Measure Up" campaign to Hattie Larlham.

When Mike Sweeney, treasurer of the Knights of Columbus Kent Council, learned about Hattie's Creative Arts program, he was inspired to help showcase the program. The council rented a booth at the Art in the Park festival in Kent, Ohio on September 7 and 8 and collaborated with our recreation department to display paintings and art projects created by residents at the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities. The booth, staffed by Knights of Columbus volunteers, was extremely well received and the artwork collection earned one of only four honorable mentions out of more than 100 different vendors. After the festival, the Streetsboro Council took some of the art pieces to display and sell after church services. Together, sales of the items from these events raised \$1,500 for Hattie Larlham.

"Art in the Park is a great opportunity for the Knights of Columbus to help support the work of Hattie Larlham," said Sweeney. "Many of our parishioners here in Kent have been impacted by Hattie Larlham in some way through the years."

Hattie Larlham is grateful for the support and friendship of groups like the Knights of Columbus, who not only raise funds to help the people we serve, but also reach out to educate others about our mission.

If your organization would like to learn more about how to host a third-party event to benefit Hattie Larlham, contact Kairsten Nitsch at 330-840-6842.

When Mr. and Mrs. Larlham first opened their farmhouse to care for babies and young children born with developmental disabilities, volunteers from churches and other community organizations helped in many different ways, from providing care to cleaning and shopping to fundraising. Today, community groups still make a tremendous difference by volunteering, educating others about what we do, and raising funds to support Hattie Larlham.

The Knights of Columbus is one organization that has a commendable history of supporting Hattie Larlham through fundraising and advocacy. Through the years, 19 different councils have raised nearly \$140,000 for Hattie Larlham.

Together, we're helping them breathe easy



Thanks to more than 30 generous donors, our recent **48-hour Flash Fund raised \$8,100** to help Hattie Larlham purchase additional Airvo 2 machines for our Respiratory Therapy department.

The Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities is home to the most medically fragile babies, children and adults Hattie Larlham serves and respiratory issues, such as airway blockages, are the number one danger to those in our care, which is why the Airvo machines are so critical.

Airvo 2 machines are used for nearly every Center resident with a tracheostomy. They can also be used to help any resident suffering from respiratory illness. These machines connect directly to the tracheostomy tube or through nasal prongs to deliver warm, moistened air into the airway, acting as a 3-in-1 machine that regulates humidity, oxygen, and airflow. They help prevent the drying out of mucus which in turn prevents blockages that can result in fatal infections.

Hattie Larlham is grateful for the compassionate network of donors who contributed to this campaign. Thank you for helping our residents breathe easy!

If you would like to make a donation to support respiratory services at Hattie Larlham, please visit www.hattielarlham.org or text 'HATTIE' to 41444.

Helping Families Thrive

(continued)

“We do different stretches and physical therapies to help his muscles,” she said. “Becket used to be extremely high tone, to the point that the only position he was comfortable in was lying flat on his back.” Mackenzie explained that part of the reason Becket’s limbs were so stiff was that he was having extremely painful digestive issues, so she helped the Knoyers find remedies for his indigestion. Over time, those remedies, combined with frequent massages and physical therapies, worked and Becket’s muscles began to relax.

“Mackenzie knows her stuff backward and forward. I would never even think about doubting anything that she says,” said Karen. Erik agreed, adding that Mackenzie has even saved Becket from several hospital stays. “Becket has had some lung issues that Mackenzie caught before we did. If she hadn’t, it certainly would have developed into pneumonia or something worse.”

For families like the Knoyers, in-home nursing care is an absolute lifeline. “The amount of therapies Becket needs on a daily basis is literally impossible for us to do on our own,” Karen said. “We both work so we can put food on the table, so we are grateful to be able to have Mackenzie here and to know that he’s getting the care he needs. It certainly makes life do-able.”

“Our program gives the families we serve peace of mind that their loved one is cared for by the same staff person who is trained to the specific needs of each family. Other programs do not provide this consistency of care,” shared Kiehl, RN, director of Hattie Larlham’s private duty home care program. “The families we serve always praise our program and the Hattie Larlham staff on how friendly and professional they are no matter what the situation is.”

“We’ve tried several other agencies for nursing care in the past, but Hattie Larlham is by far the best,” said Karen. “The communication, the quality of care - they really came through for us. And Mackenzie, well, we just love her. She’s absolutely family to us.”

Mackenzie’s supervisor, Lynn Salamon, said, “Mackenzie has been the Knoyers’ nurse for about 5 years. She knows Becket so well and catches changes in his health very quickly. She has become an extended part of their family and they even attended her wedding in the summer.”



Becket is now in the third grade at Kent City Schools, where his parents say he absolutely thrives. “Everyone loves Becket. They all want to be his friend,” his mom said. “It’s such a wonderfully inclusive environment and he gets to spend time in classrooms with kids who don’t necessarily have disabilities.” Dash is in the fifth grade at the same school and said that he likes getting to see his brother throughout the day.

“We weren’t sure Becket would ever have the quality of life that he does now, and we owe so much of that to the work that Mackenzie does. He’s really come so far from where he was five years ago and we’re thankful for that every day.”

19th Annual Circle of Caring Raises Over \$193,000

Hattie Larlham extends sincere gratitude to the hundreds of individuals and organizations that supported the 19th Annual Circle of Caring honoring Judge Joseph Giulitto on October 19. The funds raised at this event will directly support the critical programs and services at Hattie Larlham. Your generosity allows us to continue to provide the highest quality of care to the 1,600 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who rely on us every day. *Thank you.*



2019 Circle of Caring Honoree Judge Giulitto is pictured here with his family, from left: Mike Giulitto, Carol Giulitto, Emily Giulitto, Judge Joseph Giulitto, Jessica Giulitto, Judge Paula Giulitto, and Ted Vynalek.



“It’s not about me, it’s about the children,” Judge Joseph Giulitto remarked as he graciously accepted his award and thanked guests, including fellow founding members of the Sugar Bush Golf Classic.

Challenge Met for Critical Equipment Matching Grant



Funds from the Challenge Grant will support the purchase of critical equipment at Hattie Larlham, such as the lift PTA Noel is using to safely move Ashley from one wheelchair to another.

Hattie Larlham is fortunate to have a network of donors who have gone the distance for decades to ensure that our long history of service in the community continues.

The Catherine L. and Edward A. Lozick Foundation has supported Hattie Larlham's mission of comfort, joy and achievement for more than 40 years. In 2018, the Lozick Foundation issued a "Challenge Grant" to help Hattie Larlham purchase critical equipment we use every day. If Hattie Larlham could raise \$100,000 in two years, the Lozick Foundation would match it dollar-for-dollar, so that every donor's gift would go twice as far.

Inspired by the generosity of the Lozick Foundation, many donors stepped up to help Hattie Larlham raise the funds to meet the challenge a year early. Members of the Hattie Larlham Board of Directors raised more than \$20,000, and generous grants were received from the Elizabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation, The Lubrizol Foundation, the O'Neill Brothers Foundation, and Ravenna United Fund, Inc.

"Hattie's mission has never been an easy one," says Christopher Hitchcock, who serves as executive director of the Catherine L. and Edward A. Lozick Foundation. "The people who work there each and every day are some of the most dedicated anywhere!"

In addition to matching the new gifts, the Foundation also provided an additional immediate grant of \$50,000 to offset costs of replacing equipment this year.

"As a parent of someone who has been lovingly cared for at the Center for Children with Disabilities for many years, I was deeply moved by the incredibly generous response to this Challenge," said Hattie Larlham Foundation Board President Bruce Hearey. "These gifts directly impact the quality of life for the people at our Center for Children with Disabilities and our group homes."

Hattie Larlham would not have reached its goal without the many donors who responded to this worthy challenge with contributions of every size. We are deeply grateful for their generosity, which helped us raise \$200,000, and we thank the Catherine L. and Edward A. Lozick Foundation for their continued support.

Click. Share. Give.

SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

GIVING TUESDAY IS DECEMBER 3.

GIVE ONLINE :
WWW.HATTIELARLHAM.ORG

GIVE FROM YOUR PHONE:
TEXT 'HATTIE' TO 41444.

THANK YOU

Thank you to our donors and supporters for creating opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Donations to Hattie Larlham can be made using the secure form on our website, by texting HATTIE to 41444, or by sending a check to the Hattie Larlham Foundation: Hattie Larlham, 9772 Diagonal Road, Mantua Ohio 44255.



ABOUT THE AGENCY: Hattie Larlham is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating opportunities, advancing the community and influencing change for nearly 1,600 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Your contributions allow Hattie Larlham to provide medical, recreational, work training and residential services to children and adults with developmental disabilities in Northeast and Central Ohio.

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