

THE KENNEDY CENTER 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



P A R E N T S & F R I E N D S

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE



Martin D. Schwartz, President & CEO

As we welcome this long awaited Spring with a renewed sense of promise and hope, we also reflect upon this past year and the many accomplishments that we have achieved. Our nationally accredited, non-profit rehabilitation organization has grown a great deal over the past twelve months, as we continue to embrace our mission and turn challenges into opportunities.

Since we were founded over 60 years ago, we have broadened our scope of services to meet the ever changing needs of our community. We provide essential rehabilitative, vocational, recreational and residential services to people with disabilities and special needs of all ages, ranging from birth through senior years. Although we have achieved tremendous growth over the years, we define our success not by growth alone, but rather, by the positive impact we have had on those we proudly serve.

Our programs have created positive changes in our clients' personal and professional lives, helping them to become contributing, productive members of our communities. Some of our significant accomplishments include: increasing the number of children in our Birth to Three program who have mainstreamed into classrooms; placing individuals in competitive employment to become taxpayers rather than tax users; providing a diverse array of residential supports and group home opportunities so folks with disabilities can remain active participating members of the cities and towns in which they live; and, through the generosity of The Fairfield Christmas Tree Festival and other enthusiastic donors, opening the Maggie Daly Art's Cooperative (MDAC) in downtown Bridgeport's Art District, embracing and encouraging the creation of art among talented people with and without disabilities.

In total, during 2014, we provided crucial support services to over 2,300 individuals in 99 towns throughout Connecticut and employed over 750 professionals. However, this year we are facing our greatest fiscal challenge ever. Costs for services are escalating, the number of people seeking programs steadily increases and state funding continues to diminish dramatically.

As William Frederick Halsey, Jr., an American Fleet Admiral in the US Navy noted, "There are no great people in the world, only great challenges which ordinary people rise to meet."

This quote reminds me of all of our Kennedy Center clients and wonderful supporters. I am grateful for all of your heartfelt contributions in making our community a better place to live and work. All of you have made a difference, no matter what your level of involvement. Your dedication to The Kennedy Center, no matter what the challenge unites us all. Thank you for partnering with us as we embrace the future and the very significant challenges that lie ahead.

CHALLENGES
LIKE MOUNTAINS AHEAD
LOOK UP AT THEM
NOT DOWN
LOOK FORWARD
NOT BACK
LEAN IN
GO SLOW
BUT GO.

WRITTEN WITH PURE INTENTIONS
BY A GROUP OF KENNEDY CENTER MDAC ARTISTS AND COLLABORATORS

KENNEDY INDUSTRIES



Challenges: We Can Dance Up Them or Paint Them

In preparing to write this year's Annual Report, the theme of "Embracing Challenge" was presented to a group of diverse artists that presently create art and conversation within the inspired and magical walls of The Maggie Daly Art's Cooperative (MDAC) in Bridgeport, Ct. Over the course of three days, they were led in discussion, art viewing and art making to experiment, dissect, and converse about the subject of "challenge". Along the way, they traveled to the Bushnell Theatre in Hartford to experience the "Ode to Joy", a Chihuly glass sculpture that resides within the theatre. The awe and inspiration in seeing the installation, then served as a catalyst to learn about Dale Chihuly, and his journey as an artist and a person with a disability.

This little experiment can be conveyed to Kennedy Industries as a whole and the many challenges individually and cooperatively we face everyday. Whether it is about funding, resources, creative thinking and/or weather limitations, over the past twelve months the staff of Kennedy Industries has shown a resilience and aptitude to push through any barriers that they have faced with grace and veracity.

On many occasions, staff have responded in the moment and allowed for incidental teaching. One recent event involved a kind stranger and her young child offering to pay for dessert at a local eatery for a group of ten individuals. As the young child was introduced to each person, one gentleman from the group responded to the child's gracious gift with a "thank you" using sign language. With a smile on her face, staff introduced the concept of sign language to a three year old in the most simple and natural way possible. Pay forward occurred; bellies were full and two human beings had converged and related.

This year in particular, it seems appropriate to acknowledge the challenges faced by those departments and staff that are often the underpinnings or foundation for many of our established programs. Areas such as Nursing, Behavioral Supports, Transportation, Office Supports, Health and Safety and Building Maintenance are never the highlights, but often the underlying glue that allows us to create and partner with persons with abilities and disabilities. They help us take down those mountains that are often perceived barriers. Returning to MDAC, on the third day, the MDAC group convened to once again discuss challenges and shared fears that they each have struggled with, embraced and/or conquered. One artist stated "challenges are like mountains". They all agreed. This was soon followed by another artist stating "we can dance up them or paint them". Ultimately, the group cooperatively constructed a poem. Here it is in its simplicity and wisdom. Need we say more?

Challenges

Like Mountains Ahead
Look up at them
Not down
Look forward
Not back
Lean in
Go slow
But go.

Written with pure intentions by a group of MDAC artists and collaborators

DEVELOPMENT



The Development Department had a particularly busy year, as it added the Fairfield Christmas Tree Festival to its annual event calendar. The money raised from this spectacular event helped to establish The Kennedy Center's innovative Artist Cooperative, where local individuals with intellectual disabilities learn, create and benefit from all forms of art. The Cooperative opened in May 2014, and was named the Maggie Daly Artist Cooperative (MDAC), after a long-time Kennedy Center patron and champion of the arts for people with disabilities.

Development's event staff worked collaboratively with Fairfield Christmas Tree Festival volunteers to produce three remarkable events for the fundraiser: The Snowflake Preview Gala; the festive Christmas Island Party; and a special family event PJ's, Penguins & Pancake Breakfast that included an appearance from Santa.

Throughout the year, the Development team remained committed to obtaining funding for The Kennedy Center's various programs. As state funding continued to decrease and the need for services increased, development was constantly challenged to identify new and creative relationships that supported the agency's ever growing funding needs.

The Development Department remains grateful for the hard work of our volunteers and the support from our sponsors that made the year's events a success. Likewise, our gratitude extends to staunch supporters like the Norma F. Pfriem Foundation, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Newman's Own, United Way Milford, Noble Trust and People's United Bank for their continuous support and generous donations. We also thank our various community partners like the Town of Fairfield, City of Bridgeport, Probud Club, County Assemblies, GE, Trumbull Rotary, and Fairfield Rotary who regularly support The Kennedy Center.

REHABILITATION



Embracing the Challenge...of finding employment for persons with disabilities

A main tenet of the Rehabilitation Division is finding well matched employment for individuals who also happen to have a disability. The word disability is a broad term: a person with an intellectual disability, a person recovering from a brain injury, a person with depression, a person with autism, a person who has fragile diabetes, a person with severe arthritis, a person with a back injury, etc.. Often the term can have many negative connotations associated with it when the reality is, it is just a descriptor used to afford someone services, support or treatment.

A majority of the general population hears the word disability and automatically develops reasons, barriers, and other obstacles as to why a person cannot work. Every human being has a limitation. Every human being has some type of "disability." Not every person can speak in front of a crowd, be a sales person, fix a car, or cook a well-balanced meal. We all have limitations; but we are also fortunate enough to be able to work around, compensate for those limitations. The Kennedy Center embraces the challenge of helping the general work environment see the potential (and often the hidden talents) of the persons who seek our services. The beauty of our programs and services is that we assist individuals in obtaining and maintaining employment; to demonstrate their abilities and skills and be reliable members of the workforce.

The Rehabilitation Division is comprised of four areas, three of which focus aggressively on helping individuals get meaningful jobs and advance in employment in the general workforce. Our main challenge is to get employers to see the potential of the individuals we represent.

Over the past year:

The Placement Department helped 144 individuals obtain work experiences leading towards competitive employment in sites across Fairfield, New Haven, and Middlesex Counties. These individuals are referred by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to find employment using a "Working Interview" model where employers are able to try-out the candidate before offering employment.

The Work Services Program served over 100 individuals in recovery in advancing their vocational skills and 49 into new jobs. Additionally, the team was involved in a number of projects: disability awareness/sensitivity trainings; Hearing Voices trainings; and client-centered events to celebrate individual's successes and advancements towards employment.

The Counseling Services Department supports persons with an intellectual disability in developing marketable skills to advance in employment. The department has seen growth with ten new individuals referred to the department and a total of 172 individuals receiving support services. Kennedy Employment Services develops employment opportunities for persons who seek our services. They contacted over 800 employers across Fairfield, New Haven and Middlesex Counties. Working collaboratively with the area Chambers of Commerce and local businesses, they are able to overcome the challenge and find individuals employment!

RESIDENTIAL



In the Residential Department, the goal remains the same, to collectively work with individuals to achieve their greatest outcomes and to maximize community resources to meet their needs. Our services are varied and include supporting individuals living within the community in group home settings, to individuals living independently in their own apartments and to families living together in their home who require The Kennedy Center's support. These services combined have touched the lives of more than 100 people over the last year. The hours of weekly service range anywhere from a few hours a week to 24-7 round-the-clock supports. The ages of our participants vary greatly as well, from people in their late 20's to those in their 80's. These supports take place in numerous towns throughout the state.

Our challenges can be as varied as our services, ranging from acquiring funding to support the daily needs of residents, to unforeseen medical and physical plant emergencies and even providing education to the community for those the agency serves. Thankfully the self-determination of individuals, the commitment of our staff, and the advocacy efforts of loved ones make those challenges attainable.

The residential department finds that the success and the rewards that come with accomplishment have proven, over and over, to be a challenge worth embracing. Through regular goal-setting with staff and consumers along with tapping into the myriad of resources from parents and friends, the individuals within the residential program maintain a steady and progressive course. We'll continue in coming years as we have in years past to confidently manage obstacles and relish in the success of each individual's progress.

HUMAN RESOURCES



2014 STATISTICS

Clients Served
 2,371
Employees
 764
Volunteers
 258
Number of QT Towns Served
 99
Group Homes
 16
Day Support Program Sites
 26

During 2014, the agency continued the expansion of services to people with disabilities which resulted in the posting of 100 new positions and an employee base of 750+ people. Our employees are highly trained, participating in almost 1000 hours of orientation, required core trainings, general in-services and leadership development. During 2014, 25 staff members were promoted and 25 employees took advantage of career opportunities.

While turnover of staff remained below national standards, retention of employees is amazingly high due to our family-like culture. Currently there are three people who have been employed with us for 35 plus years; three people who have been here between 30-34 years; 16 people between 25-29 years; eight people between 20-24 years; 24 people between 15-19 years; 51 people between 10-14 years; 132 people between 5-9 years and 529 people between 0-4 years.

It's not all work for our employees at the Kennedy Center! Staff appreciation and diversity is an important facet of the culture here. In June, the Human Resources department and the Appreciate Diversity! Committee sponsored a picnic for all employees at a local park which included door prizes, great food and team building contests. It was a very hot day, even in the shade, but everyone had a wonderful time. Thank you to all of our staff for their continued commitment and dedication to the people we serve.

FINANCIALS

REVENUES - \$32,269,043

Government Grants and Contracts
 \$23,108,245
Non-Government Grants, Contracts and Fees
 \$7,588,490
Contributions
 \$996,382
Fundraising Events and Other Income
 \$555,370
United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and Milford
 \$20,556

EXPENSES - \$32,493,191

Employee Compensation and Payroll
 \$22,995,008
Occupancy Costs
 \$3,225,238
Transportation
 \$1,387,414
Supplies and Food
 \$972,459
Consumer Wages and Benefits
 \$724,329
Depreciation
 \$667,975

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