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“Our TECH staff are truly the unsung heroes, and I am forever grateful for their dedication to TECH’s mission.”



Dear Friends,

2020 was a year that tried everyone. Families had to learn how to adapt to a new work and school life, businesses had to figure out how to stay open amidst some of the most challenging times and communities had to find a way to come together despite differing views. While we never anticipated the year looking like it did, our people – TECH staff and the people we serve – not only survived but thrived during some of the most difficult times of our organization’s long-standing history.

From the beginning of the pandemic, our focus here at TECH was simple; to keep the people we serve and our valued employees safe in order to continue providing the highest level of service to those we are committed to serving. While our services looked different than what we were used to, the passion to fulfill our mission remained the same.

In early 2020, COVID-19 seemed like just a topic of conversation, but we quickly realized that this was very real and would dominate much of our time for the foreseeable future. We knew that we needed to prepare for the worst while hoping for the best. On March 23rd, 2020, our executive team, with guidance from the Reno County Health Department, made the decision to shut down day services and have our residents’ shelter in place at their homes. This was no easy task and took hundreds of hours of planning, coordination, and execution by our team. I could recount numerous stories of our Direct Support Professionals who stepped up and were willing to work in high stress and sometimes, high risk environments, without hesitation. I am still in awe of the dedication and commitment we saw from our staff.

As I reflect on 2020, I think I am most proud of the TECH Team. Our staff showed resilience, carried heavy responsibility, provided resolve for those we serve and found ways to support each other during unprecedented times. While I hope that we never have to experience a pandemic like COVID-19 again, I can say with certainty that I feel confident in our team’s ability to come together and provide unwavering support and services for those we serve, as well as a safe place to be. Our TECH staff are truly the unsung heroes, and I am forever grateful for their dedication to TECH’s mission.

Inside this annual report, you will find a timeline of our responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlights our teams’ swift actions to put our COVID policies and procedures in place to keep those we serve and employ safe and healthy. We have also included stories from TECH Direct Support Professionals that will give you a glimpse into their lives over the last year. As you read their stories, I hope you appreciate their passion and dedication as much as I do.

Sincerely,

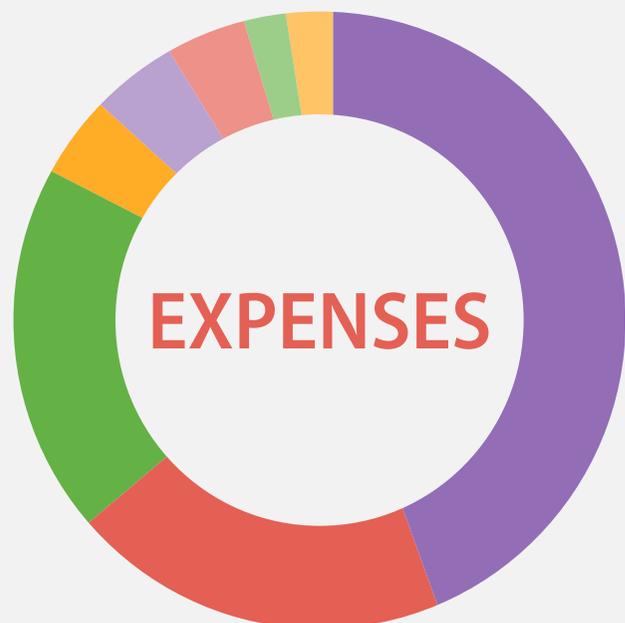
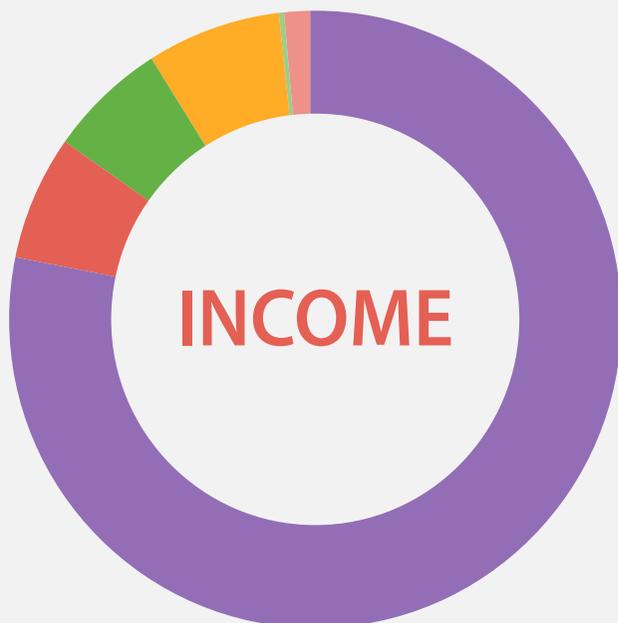
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda". The script is fluid and cursive.

Brenda Maxey
President/CEO



TECH By the Numbers

- 78.25% | Federal and State
- 6.63% | Program Services
- 6.25% | Reno County Mill Levy
- 7.27% | Fundraising and Donations
- .41% | Transportation
- 1.19% | Other



- 44.46% | Residential Services
- 19.68% | Employment Services
- 18.55% | Administration
- 4.24% | Maintenance & Transportation
- 4.33% | Case Management
- 4.14% | CDDO
- 2.10% | Community Relations
- 2.50% | Depreciation

117

Day Services
Total People Served

191

Service Coordination
Total People Served

81

Residential Services
Total People Served

8

WORK Independent
Living Counselor
Total People Served

Ages of People Served

0-10 |

11-20 |

21-30 |

31-40 |

41-50 |

51-60 |

61+ |

Leading the Way During Uncertainty

In normal circumstances, working in the healthcare and social services industry can present unique challenges that require quick thinking and adaptability. This past year, COVID-19 made it especially difficult for leaders at TECH to determine the best possible way to provide services under the given healthcare and community restrictions.



Aurie Wornkey, Vice-President of Supports and Services and Aly Spradling, Director of Human Resources were front and center when it came to guiding policy and procedure for the people served by TECH and our staff. As COVID-19 became more than a topic of conversation, the TECH Executive Team found themselves meeting weekly and sometimes, even daily, to navigate the challenges that the pandemic was causing the organization to face.

“We tried to keep people as safe as possible,” says Wornkey. “We purchased large amounts of PPE, limited exposure by rethinking how we interacted in the community and paused movement between houses and day services at TECH.” While it was difficult for both people served by TECH

and TECH staff to fully grasp the necessity of the restrictions, most people understood our goal of keeping everyone safe and healthy.

As the spread of COVID began making its way through our community, staff members and their families were feeling the effects of COVID at home. “This navigation had to be one of the hardest. School and daycares were closing, yet we needed staff to show up to support the needs of the people we serve daily,” says Spradling. During the summer to early fall, TECH hunkered down, tightened every last protocol we could, provided educational materials and communications, as well as worked with health care providers and the Reno County Health Department to define best practices when dealing with staff who had tested positive or had a known exposure. The days were long, but working as a team to set high standards and maintain such standards, we got through it.

TECH employees sat on steering committees, participated in think tanks and offered any insight possible for the overall purpose of sharing information and being better equipped to mitigate as much risk as possible.

Wornkey said, “I’m most proud of how the people we serve managed the change and our staff for rising up - coming to work, knowing full well that there were risks.”



January 2020

COVID-19 hits the US and the rest of the world.

February 2020

COVID-19 becomes part of daily discussions, but the world is still learning how the virus transfers and affects humans.

March 11, 2020

The World Health Organization declares COVID-19 as a Pandemic.

March 17, 2020

Day services reduced to allowing only non-residential individuals – residential staff to remain at our group homes -- vendors are reduced to “as needed”

March 23, 2020

All offices close to the public. TECH mandates that all employees wear a mask.

April 2020

Reno County announces county-wide stay at home order. TECH is deemed an essential business and we are able to continue providing services.

April 2020

TECH implements Telemed appointments for those served. TECH also engages Reno County Health Department to ensure cohesiveness between federal, state, and local policies.

May 2020

The “look” of COVID-19 virus has changed. Shortness of breath, dry-cough, and fever are now not the only symptoms of COVID. CDC adds other flu-like symptoms to the list.

June 2020

Several client related events are canceled.

June - September 2020

COVID has hit home. TECH hunkered down, tightened every last protocol that we could, educated and worked with healthcare providers/RCHD to define best practices for dealing with COVID.

October 2020

The buzz of a vaccine starts to spread. Reno County opens several testing clinics.

Special pay is offered to locations that are caring for individuals with COVID. TECH reopens day services.

TECH has it’s first positive COVID-19 case.

November 2020

A surge of Active Positive Cases and the COVID death toll show an uptick.

November 6 - TECH closes Day Services again. Communication is increased about wearing masks.

December 2020

The holiday bustle looked a bit different as Santa left treats on door steps and didn’t accept hugs but TECH did what we could to boost spirits.

The first shipments of COVID vaccines were sent out to the United States.



Adapting isn't always easy but became a way of life for Desiree Antle, Team Lead at the 12th street Residential House for TECH. As staff and those served by the agency started to realize the grim reality of COVID and how it would impact day to day activities, Desiree and others in the house had to quickly learn to adapt to the ever changing world around them.

"It was a struggle to explain to the people we serve what was going on. They had a hard time understanding that we were taking precautions and staying in for their safety, not to limit them," says Antle. When COVID hit in early 2020, the leadership at TECH worked fast and furious to develop a plan to keep both the people served by TECH and staff safe. One of the first steps in the plan was to have residential housing 'shelter in place' in an effort to limit exposure.

Antle, who was promoted to a Team Leader mid-pandemic, focused on following TECH protocols to keep everyone safe. This included wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, and checking temperatures regularly.

"I have a son who has an immune deficiency disorder, and I was working with staff and people we serve who had COVID. I didn't want to take COVID home to him so I'm grateful that the protocol such as wearing masks worked," says Antle.

While Desiree's house had people served contract COVID, they looked at ways they could limit the spread. "We were able to keep two people from getting sick by making changes to how we had our meals," says Antle. What may seem like a small change to anyone from the outside looking in, made all the difference in the world for residents at the 12th Street House. "Everyone ate breakfast as they woke up in the morning but during lunch and dinner, we spaced clients out, sanitized, and set up additional seating areas."

When people in the house found themselves frustrated with being cooped up, Antle got creative! They played cornhole, found activities to do outside, and played 'Garbage' – a card game that was not only highly entertaining for the group but also helped with cognitive skills. They also called on help from the Adult Life Skills team who were doing some adapting of their own.

The ALS program traditionally is a day service program that people served would attend daily and return home in the afternoon. As part of the shutdown, the ALS program was closed and TECH worked furiously to figure out ways to utilize the ALS and continue providing some of the same services, just delivering in a different manner. "The ALS was awesome," says Desiree. "They came to the house and jumped

"I'm really proud of how the clients handled the challenges that we were faced with."

right in, bringing games, putting together fun parties, taking folks for bus drives and helping to get us out of the house, in a safe manner, as much as possible. We celebrated Christmas and Birthdays every chance we had. This helped keep the spirits up!"

While adapting was challenging at times,

Desiree was quick to reflect on the growth she witnessed in the last year. "The teamwork between staff at the ALS and our house is something I'm really proud of.

We didn't really have a lot of interaction before, but they were there to help and spend time in our house. They jumped right in, even helping with laundry," jokes Antle. "I'm really proud of how the clients handled the challenges that we were faced with. Even though they were frustrated at times, they each have grown immensely from this experience." She went on to say, "It's been a long year. I can't believe it has only been a year – it seems like a lot longer. I never thought I would say I had fun during COVID, but I really did."

One Day at a Time

As a Direct Support Professional, hugs are a favorite part of the job. They are one of the things that Michelle Doan, DSP for TECH, looks forward to daily. When COVID-19 started to escalate in early 2020 and TECH began implementing policies to help keep people served and the staff safe, one of the hardest adjustments was not being able to give or receive hugs in the houses. "Learning how to not be in each other's space and no longer giving hugs, but fist bumps only, was one of the hardest things in our house," says Michelle.

In March 2020, TECH made the decision to have the residents and staff at each home 'shelter in place' as a precautionary measure. "I was nervous," says Michelle. "I had a daughter that I pulled out of school due to heart problems and while I feared COVID and the possibility of taking it home to my daughter, I was also scared of the thought of not being able to see the clients that I had bonded with. I wanted to be able to check in on them, see them and make sure they were alright." Michelle was one of the many front-line heroes of TECH that stepped up and agreed to work at a residential house that had been exposed to COVID, which came with its own set of challenges.

"We had to be diligent about keeping those who were exposed to and/or infected with COVID separated from those who hadn't had COVID," says Michelle. This may sound like an easy task but as one of the few and sometimes only person working in the house, it was difficult at times. Michelle frequently had to come up with activities to stay busy, to stay separated, scheduling mealtime in shifts that started as early as 10:00AM and having to find ways to be social from a distance. They painted, did arts and crafts, went outside as much as possible, played a lot of games and watched as many scary movies (a house favorite) that they could fit in! If someone had an idea – Michelle tried it!

Even though it was challenging at times, Michelle looks back on the last year and realizes there are a lot of positives that came out of their time in quarantine. "Our house has bonded and become so much closer because of our time cooped up together. I feel like everyone here is part of my family," said Michelle.

While Michelle worked in a COVID exposed house, she said she was amazed that she never actually got COVID as it had been through the house a few times. "I am now more aware of my surroundings," says Michelle. She jokes, "I am sort of a germ freak now." While she hopes that the house does not have to experience the 'shelter in place' like they did previously, she is grateful for her time at Landon and all of the steps that TECH took to keep both the people served and staff as safe as possible during a time of great uncertainty. "We had a good team of people working together and our priority was being here for the clients. I made a lot of good friends during my time here."





“What job lets you have wild crazy hair, nails and outfits, and instead of being judged - loving you?”

From her crazy socks to her brightly colored hair, Carie Arheart, Direct Support Professional for TECH, is all about having fun! While COVID-19 has at times been a struggle for her, she says, she has worked hard to keep the spirits of the people served by TECH and herself up during the last year. “I clearly remember that we shut down on Saint Patrick’s Day because I wore one of my crazy outfits for the holiday and I was sad because only 12th Street got to see it,” says Arheart. For the DSP team and clients, it was hard to go from seeing each other around town, at other houses and in the community to being confined at one location during the pandemic. Arheart and the other staff had to work hard to keep the spirits up.

She would frequently find ways to get everyone out of the house, safely, taking van rides around town and stopping at the park to feed the ducks. While everyone enjoyed this, their favorite activity was driving by the fire station that her husband worked at. “He is a driver for the fire department and if he was on duty, we would drive by and he would flash the lights on the truck. My son is also a firefighter and would always come out and wave if we were making rounds by his station,” said Arheart.

Fire trucks are hard to beat but Carrie would keep it fun with her ‘Crazy Carie Outfits’ and

‘Crazy Carie Actions.’ She would make paper towel hats, let clients scare her throughout the day and crack jokes to keep people laughing. Many days were spent playing board games and talking. Carie said that she saw the communication and listening skills grow immensely within the house during their time together.

Carie and the rest of the TECH team had to work diligently to keep everyone safe during the pandemic. “They (TECH) took drastic measures before ordered by the governor. We shut down about two weeks prior to the state ordered shut down and I think that helped nip it right away,” says Carie. Even in challenging times, TECH staff and those served rose to the occasion. Carie said she is proud of how the clients handled the situation. There were times they were upset and frustrated, but she simply reassured them that everyone was working hard to keep them safe.

As she looks back on the last year, Carie said she is ready to move past COVID but is thankful for her job at TECH during that time, especially when many others were out of work. She said, “What job lets you have wild crazy hair, nails, and outfits and instead of being judged - loving you?”

TECH Legacy Society

The TECH Foundation Legacy Society is a group of people passionate about ensuring services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They believe that everyone deserves a full and happy life, and truly live by the four pillars of the organization; Independence, Creativity, Self-Worth, and Connection. This elite group of donors have generously given at least \$5,000 to the Foundation in their lifetime.

If you would like to join the TECH Legacy Society, please contact us so we may fully understand your goals and intentions. Benefits of membership include:

- **Honorary piece of art created by a TECH artist, complete with name plaque and induction year.**
- **Name displayed on the TECH Foundation Legacy Society wall, located at the TECH offices.**
- **Name listed in the TECH Annual Report as a member of the TECH Foundation Legacy Society**
- **Invitation to the annual Legacy Society recognition night.**

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

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