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**ACCESS
SERVICES**

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Who is Access Services?

For 45 years, Access Services has been developing innovative ways to provide support services to individuals with special needs. Today, we are a large non-profit organization operating in thirteen counties in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Our mission is to empower and serve people in need of specialized supports by providing innovative services that improve their ability to live fulfilling lives in the community.

Real people Real needs Real solutions

Communities challenged and connected



Community Access
August 2021



**ACCESS
SERVICES**
unlocking potential



Join with us, together we're stronger

Access Services needs your help to continue to meet the needs of people in our community. We're proud of the way our team members and communities rallied to meet needs, but the needs continue. A gift to Access Services helps us unlock potential by coming alongside individuals and families. Use the enclosed envelope or give online! accessservices.org/donate/

Needs in your community

Join us on Facebook at **Intersect Community Needs** to learn about practical and relevant needs in your own community as they arise. Requests may be for items, resources, or even volunteer help. Join today!

Troy, the recipient of a bike, helmet and other gear can now get to and from work! The generosity of the community is unlocking his potential!



See opportunities

Taking steps to enhance service

It wasn't enough to survive, at Access Services we wanted to use this time as an opportunity to advance the way we serve people and continue to excel in the support we provide.

"I was so proud of our teams as I watched them create opportunities in the midst of challenging circumstances, moving forward with courage as they focused on serving those in our care." - Sue Steege, CEO

Creative learning

When faced with in-person closures, our employment and day services in our Intellectual Disability and Autism service line saw opportunities to expand the technology skills of those they served. With some quick thinking and creativity, the team integrated this essential skillset and adapted their lessons and activities. Through a virtual forum they exercised, played games, cooked, did crafts and even toured museums and farms. In one program, clients helped do the shopping for their cooking lesson through an in-store video call! Relationships continued to grow and thrive through these virtual connections and our clients are now even better equipped for the virtual world in which we live.

Open doors

"The pandemic led people to see that mental health was something that they needed to take into account" said Dave Eckert, Intersect Director. "People reached out to Access Services to help, and because of technology, we were able to speak not only to people in our communities, but people across the country and even outside the country!" Access team members shared important messages through trainings including creating healthy boundaries, mental health awareness, suicide prevention, and connecting your faith practices to mental health.

Communities challenged and connected

No one needs to be told that the past year created very real challenges and needs for our communities. However, it also created opportunities that enhance the way we care for people going forward.

Access Services sees needs and pours into lives every day. As the pandemic grew, community members weren't just asking for our help, they were asking how they could help. By involving our community, the work grows and extends its reach, creating lasting systemic change in our own neighborhoods.

Being innovative in a time of challenge is essential to staying mission focused. Mark Boorse, Director of Program Development, gave 3 challenges as he spoke to organizations and individuals during the pandemic.

- 1. Remember your why**
- 2. Make friends**
- 3. See opportunities**

Keep reading to see how Access Services has lived this out throughout the pandemic.

Remember your why

Staying mission focused in uncertainty

In times of stress and change, it's essential to remember your "why." Why do you do what you do? Why is it valuable? By maintaining this focus, you stay mission focused regardless of the challenge.

unlocking potential

This is our why. In every service, we strive to unlock the potential in the individual and family we serve. As programs adapted to keep those we serve and our employees safe, we sought solutions that kept us focused on the unique individual we were serving.



Always ready

Remembering their why, Our Mobile Crisis team in Montgomery County never stopped. They refused to let the pandemic prevent them from being present in moments of crisis. "Our team had to pivot often" said Director Moira Tumelty. "We had to get creative in how we were present, but not showing up wasn't an option. More than ever, people were in crisis and

needed access to help." The team never wavered in their commitment to quality. They grew in their ability to connect over the phone, met with people outside and adapted in any way necessary to best help the individual. Mobile Crisis is anticipating continued need for care. Many people are still dealing with repercussions of what they've experienced over the past 18 months.



Make friends

We truly believe that we're stronger together

Over the past 18 months we've watched communities care for one another in amazing ways. Gaps in systems were highlighted. "The shared suffering of the pandemic allowed people, in their own helplessness, to look at those around them who had even less resources" said Colleen MacNamara, Director of Homeless Outreach. "The outpouring of support was amazing as people wanted to find meaningful ways to help."

People and groups who had previously been operating independently in their own communities, came together, leveraging and strengthening their efforts. Last fall, Access Services anticipated a crisis coming with freezing weather approaching and a lack of space in shelters. We rallied the community to start a conversation. These "Frequent Friday" calls allowed an opportunity for relationships and partnerships to be built which directly impacted the lives of people in the community. Not only was the crisis mitigated, but the connection of this group continues as they work toward new initiatives.