



2023 Annual Report
**Building for
the Future**



**ACCESS
SERVICES**
unlocking potential



Building a Strong Foundation

A Message from President and CEO, Sue Steege

Access Services has undergone significant expansion in terms of geography, services offered and our workforce in the last decade. This growth enables us to make a more profound impact on the lives and communities we serve. This is why we do the work we do. The stories in this report represent just a glimpse of the remarkable work that happened at Access Services this year. I wish I could sit down with you and a cup of coffee and share about the thousands of lives touched by our dedicated staff members.

Growth is great. It's something we strive for and work towards. However, growth brings the need to continually check our foundation. Like any organization without a solid foundation, nothing will endure the test of time. Through changing systems, industry landscapes, community challenges and development, a strong foundation is crucial to see us through the future. We are an organization of visionary leaders who desire to meet the needs of our communities' most vulnerable people. They are creative, collaborative and challenge the status quo. However, without a foundation built with the future in mind, we'll fall short on our impact.

A New Service Line

One exciting addition to Access Services was the addition of a fourth service line. The Housing and Homeless Service Line was created to address the growing crisis we see in our communities. Housing instability is a mounting issue across all our program areas. With this addition, we can help meet that need.

Investment in Data

We've had a strategic goal of becoming more data driven as an organization. We know that stronger data allows us to make wiser choices, see growing needs, and better advocate for our communities. As we anticipate a value-based care system, this data will be essential. On the ground today, our integrated health team is already utilizing data to shape their services, allowing for strong community partnerships and more meaningful service to individuals. Our multi-year plan aims to enhance our ability to be data informed through improved systems and tools. Each step we're taking further solidifies our foundation, ensuring we are ready to care for individuals, families and communities for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Sue Steege

Our Mission

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.

Board of Directors

Percell Berry, Jr.
Chairperson

Cindy Bergvall
Secretary Treasurer

Tom Miorelli

Kelvin Pittman
Vice Chairperson

George Zauflik

Sue Steege

Leading into the Future

A Look at Newly Appointed Leadership



In 2023, Access Services underwent notable leadership changes and strategic realignments. **Jess Fenchel**, an integral part of Access Services for over ten years, was promoted to our Senior Vice President and COO. For the past six years, Jess served as the Vice President of our Behavioral

Health service line. During her time at Access Services, she has played a key role in the startup of innovative initiatives across multiple service spaces including crisis, forensics, schools, and housing support. Jess actively invests in leadership development in our organization to help prepare and grow the leaders of the future. Her own commitment to being trauma-informed and valuing diversity has challenged us as an organization to continue to push forward in significant ways.

Another key position to fill this year was our Chief Financial Officer. This is an important role that requires someone dedicated to the values of an organization with the innovation and foresight to set the course for an organization's financial future. After a long search process, we were



pleased to bring **Lisa Auerbach** on board as our new CFO. She is leading the initiative to create and rebuild our financial infrastructure to support our move into value-based care and align with our integrated health goals. In 2020, Lisa was recognized as one of twenty-five top CFOs in the Philadelphia region by the Philadelphia Business Journal.



With Jess Fenchel moving from Vice President of Behavioral Health to COO, there was a gap that needed to be filled. This allowed for restructuring that would create a foundation to build upon in the behavioral health space as well as

in the housing space. Our housing programs were moved out of the Behavioral Health service line into their own brand-new Housing & Homeless service line to be led by **Deb Curtin**. Deb previously served as a Senior Director for Behavioral Health. She is championing the goal to see these programs grow into a robust resource for all the people we serve.



Jess Halpin, another Senior Director for Behavioral Health and previous director of the Starting Point program, stepped into the role of Vice President of the Behavioral Health service line, leading these programs to the next level of true person-centered care.

Other additions to our leadership team include the creation of our Grants Manager role which will lead our agency strategy to build unique funding streams and diversify our financial foundation. **Rachelle**



Martinez, a visionary leader in the grants, international development and cross sector nonprofit spaces, accepted this role in October.



Sarah Ziegler, our long-time Director of Learning and Development, retired this year. **Cordiero Cotton**, an integral part of bringing the DSP Credentialing program to Access Services this past year, stepped into the role of Director of Learning and Development. He has many ideas and dreams for growing

the pathways to career development for all Access staff. We are excited for how these leaders will continue to align us with our goal to build a strong foundation on which to serve our communities.

Lasting Care

Collaborations Changing the Way We Serve

What happens when a person we serve leaves jail with a probation requirement to stay on their mental health medication, but they're only given three days' supply worth of medication?

There are many questions like these that have a negative ending without bridging breakdowns in our community systems. There is not a single program that can answer every question here at Access Services or in the broader community. Collaboration is where we find strength. As a company, Access Services embraced the concept of integrated health long before it had a formal name. Our mission from the beginning was to treat everyone we served with care and meet their unique needs through connection to resources and closing gaps that exist.

Integrated Health allows us to view the people we serve holistically. It creates a focus on teamwork around providing the best care to meet all the needs

that a person is facing. Our shift into integrated health, first in the Behavioral Health service line, allowed for partnered programs to develop based on the needs of our communities such as MCORT (Montgomery County Overdose Response Team) and Street Medicine. By recognizing the failures in the systems, we can partner with other service providers, government programs, faith communities, health systems and others to create answers to questions, and solutions to longstanding problems. This creates stronger, healthier communities. But that's just a theory if there's no data to prove it.

Our Behavioral Health services use an integrated health assessment screening tool to better serve people holistically and build goals around their needs. These solutions can be short or long-term given the needs of the individual and the program serving them. Currently the integrated health assessment that is being used works relatively well, but the dream is to create

something better that has improved data and works more cohesively when it comes to all the social determinants of health.

Our Integrated Health Director, Hailey Davis, has partnered with our Behavioral Health, Housing & Homeless and Child & Family teams to start developing a new health assessment tool that would be unified across the service lines. This would lead to all our programs utilizing a tool that prompts them to think more whole person-centered. It would challenge each of us to ask, "Who can help serve this person to create lasting outcomes for their wellness?" Maybe it would be another Access Services program. Maybe it would be a community or county program. Maybe it would be a faith community or a health network.

As an organization, we are beginning to track this data in some of our partnered programs. We chose to work with BI Collaborative to build a tool that can transform our data from this health assessment in a





“Who can help serve this person to create lasting outcomes for their wellness?”

way that we can extract good data about what the collaborative relationships that we currently have do for the people that we serve. This data can help us to form other partnerships, develop new positions and find spaces within those partnerships where we can put those integrated health positions such as our Emergency Department Navigator. Street Medicine has been on the forefront of this, using a team data-sharing environment in a HIPAA compliant technology to better collaborate on patients being served by multiple partners.

Our Intellectual Disability & Autism service line is historically more clinical. There are more regulations attached to health information in the intellectual disability and autism space. This makes their services easier to integrate into the physical health system. These programs are already operating in a more integrative space around physical health. The goal will be to bring them on board to use the assessment to focus more on the social services and environmental aspects in assessing the areas of wellness for those served with intellectual disability and autism.

Once all our programs are using a unified health screening tool and educated on how to serve people within an integrated health model, there will be a lot of collaboration and different perspectives brought together in our staff.

The nature of the different people and populations that we serve across service lines will allow us to broaden our viewpoints and improve our service reach and quality.

We are seeing these cross-program collaborations with our Behavioral Health and Housing & Homeless service lines already. We want to continue to cultivate this goal within our organization as well as demonstrate and lead in our community. We must strengthen communities to create supportive environments where every member can heal and grow. This is where long-term answers for meeting community needs comes from – strengthening communities to help communities.



Hear Hailey Davis, Director of Integrated Health, and Cristina Mejia, Director of Justice Related Services, discuss their programs' collaborative success.





Looking Beyond the Diagnosis

Trauma-Informed, Integrated Care within our Educational Experience

In our last report, we briefly introduced you to our brand-new school, Access Learning Academy (ALA). This year, we spoke with the leaders of ALA to learn more about how this distinctive school serves the community.

Serving children well means looking beyond diagnosis to who they are, their families, their environments, the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects that may contribute to their experience. When you shift your approach to be trauma-informed and person-centered, you form a foundation that can be built upon.

At the Access Learning Academy, our teachers, counselors and staff care deeply for meeting all the needs of the children they serve. What they have learned in providing the therapeutic piece alongside the educational piece is that, many times, a child's been treated for their diagnosis and deficits when there are much deeper needs to be met through trauma-informed, integrated care. And this approach is making a difference.

When their team comes to staff meetings and share different pieces of the children's stories, it's amazing what can develop from this coordination to create strategies to help the student, their family, their district and more. The end goal is to have their students integrate back to their home district or graduate and move on to higher education. Successful collaborative relationships with the families and districts allows for planning for the needs of the child to be met within their community and school environment. It's not about who is doing it better but rather how will this child best be served by the plans they are able to put together as a team.



“Working hand in hand with districts to get the students successfully back into their home districts is pretty exciting!”

Michelle Altringer, Director of ALA



“This is a great place! Learning wasn’t fun before, now it is.” - Mason, ALA Student

This approach extends to the collaborative relationships they are forming with other programs within Access Services as well. The Montgomery County Mobile Crisis team will come in and help deescalate students when needed. They have also started to build a bridge with the IBHS team to help with some students that may need extra care beyond the daily therapeutic education.

One of the BCBA's that lives locally to the school would come complete observations and give the team suggestions of ways that things can be tailored even more to the child's needs. This could extend to support some of their students who may have an intellectual disability. The students with intellectual disabilities benefit from the therapeutic approach of the school, but then the transition into adulthood may require new supports. Partnering with our employment services team in the future can help to create pathways for this transition.

This spring, the team is thrilled to have a bunch of students graduating and quite a few students transitioning back to their home district schools. On the day we checked in with them to talk about the work being done at the ALA, one of their students was on his very first day of college classes. “I would have never thought this time last year that this young man would have rolled out and gone into Montco today.” - Michelle Altringer



Hear staff and students share their experiences at Access Learning Academy.



Forging Career Pathways

DSPs Take Advantage of New Training Programming to Better their Services

Part of creating better outcomes for those we serve is creating better pathways for career development and the future of our employees. Last year we launched our DSP credentialing program with this in mind. As front line staff, our direct support professionals are essential to the services we provide to those we serve. Investing in them is investing in our community. In March 2023, twenty-two employees embarked as a cohort to complete the credentialing program. As of January 2024, eleven have reached varying levels of credentialing within the three tiers of the program with six completing all three tiers of the DSP credentialing. The first person to graduate from the program, Ashlee McCuen, shared her story of how it has contributed to her career pathway at Access Services.

When Ashlee first started with Access Services in October of 2022, she had some experience within the intellectual disability and autism field. The one thing that drove her above all was her passion for helping others. After meeting different clients and other employees at Access Services, she quickly fell in love with her job and decided she wanted to make this her career. This challenged her to find ways to grow in her position at Access Services. Around the same time, the announcement was made about the DSP credentialing program. Ashlee's supervisor persuaded her to apply. Ashlee knew that it would be a challenge in a lot of ways. She was working full-time, raising her two children, and decided to start pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work in June of 2023. Ashlee was accepted to the program along with twenty-two other Access Services employees.

The DSP Credentialing Program cohort launched in March of 2023. Ashlee had twelve months to earn fifty badges through the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), which included completing one hundred hours of Relias training and writing forty-two testimonials according to the requirements. Ashlee was determined to complete the credentialing program before her college classes started in June. She ended up getting all three tiers of the credentialing program, DSP I, DSP II, and DSP III, completed in just over two months. She was pleasantly surprised to find out that she was the first member of the cohort to complete the entire program. She had achieved her goal!



“Completing the DSP Credentialing program not only helped me to better myself as a DSP for the individuals I support, but it also helped me to realize that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to.”

Ashlee McCuen, Access Services' first DSP Credentialing Program graduate



After Ashlee's one-year anniversary of working at Access Services, a new Assistant Supervisor position opened within the In-Home Supports office in Orwigsburg. Ashlee's supervisor brought the position to her attention and encouraged her to apply. Ashlee applied and interviewed for the job. She hoped to be chosen but knew there were ten other applicants. To her surprise, she was offered the job and immediately accepted. The hiring manager said that her completing the DSP credentialing program was part of this decision.

“I am so appreciative and grateful for all of the friendships, working relationships, opportunities to further my career, networking, experiences, and support from everyone at Access Services. I never thought I would find a company that cared about its employees as much as they do, and employees who are so friendly and accepting. I am enthusiastic to continue my career with Access Services and work with all of the individuals that are supported by Access Services!” - Ashlee McCuen



Hear Cordiero Cotton, Director of Learning & Development, share about the DSP credentialing program and his passion for career development at Access Services.





Welcoming Housing and Homeless Services

Answering a Crisis Takes Community Intervention

As of January 1st, 2024, four of our programs are officially functioning under the Housing & Homeless service line: Street Outreach, Street Medicine, Rapid Rehousing, and Community Based Care Management. For a long time, we believed that it was our job to provide support to people in our communities and the housing world would provide the spaces for them to live. Then housing costs skyrocketed over the last decade and the availability of housing diminished greatly. This growing awareness of the need for housing in our community led to the formation of our new service line. This will provide a foundation to build on to try to address this deep community need.

Those we serve cannot work on their healing if they are struggling to survive. Instability of housing is a traumatizing experience. One that keeps the person experiencing homelessness in a state of constant overwhelm. It limits the ability to process and function in even simple tasks. How can we ask people to create goals for their lives when they cannot see beyond simply surviving the day?

Homelessness is deeply stigmatized and even criminalized. At Access Services, we believe that housing is a human right, but unfortunately this is not a reality yet. In Montgomery County where our programs currently serve there are little to no legal places for people to live outside. People are driven into hiding which further separates them from their community when they need them the most. While some may ask why people don't just use shelters, the fact is that the only year-round shelters for Montgomery County were closed in 2021. Faith communities have stepped up to help with Code Blue shelters from November through March, but no other plans for long-term shelters have been approved in the county. People are living one paycheck away from losing their housing in many cases. A slight drop in hours, a cut in pay and suddenly they are faced with eviction. Montgomery County has the fourth highest eviction rate in the state of Pennsylvania.

This was the situation that Anne and Jeanette found themselves in when our Street Outreach team made contact with them. They were living in a park in a tent and an ordinance was passed that they could not live in the park. They moved to a bike path and then were told they had to leave there as well. Jeanette and Anne tried to maintain housing in hotels previously but struggled to give the hotels the money a week in advance before pay day. Their hours being cut also limited how much they could pay upfront. Through the generosity of donors, Street Outreach was able to help Anne and Jeanette get into permanent housing. But there are hundreds more just like them, hiding in plain sight, facing no options in the near future.

This housing crisis did not form overnight. It has been a slow burn over the last decade. This crisis will not be solved by one organization or one government agency or one faith community. It is a community issue that requires community intervention and collaboration. It will require our communities working together and thinking creatively, outside of the usual methods. We are looking forward to a time when all our unhoused neighbors can have a place to call home. A place to heal and re-connect with their community. Creating healed, strong communities will build a brighter future.



Hear Mark Boorse, Director of Program Development, talk about the impact of Street Outreach and serving Anne and Jeanette.



Be a part of creating **STRONG** communities!

Your contribution allows us to continue the important work that we are doing each and every day at Access Services.



Community Needs Group

This group functions as a care portal for faith communities and others who are looking to meet local needs in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Needs specific to the individuals supported by Access Services are posted as they arise. These may include requests for relational support, material resources, and/or monetary donations.



Amazon Wish List

As you read in our story about Anne and Jeanette, the options for those experiencing homelessness are limited. Our Street Outreach team does what they can to ensure that those they served are supported where they are until they can get into long-term housing. Examples of this include: providing sleeping bags, tents, clothing, and hygiene products.

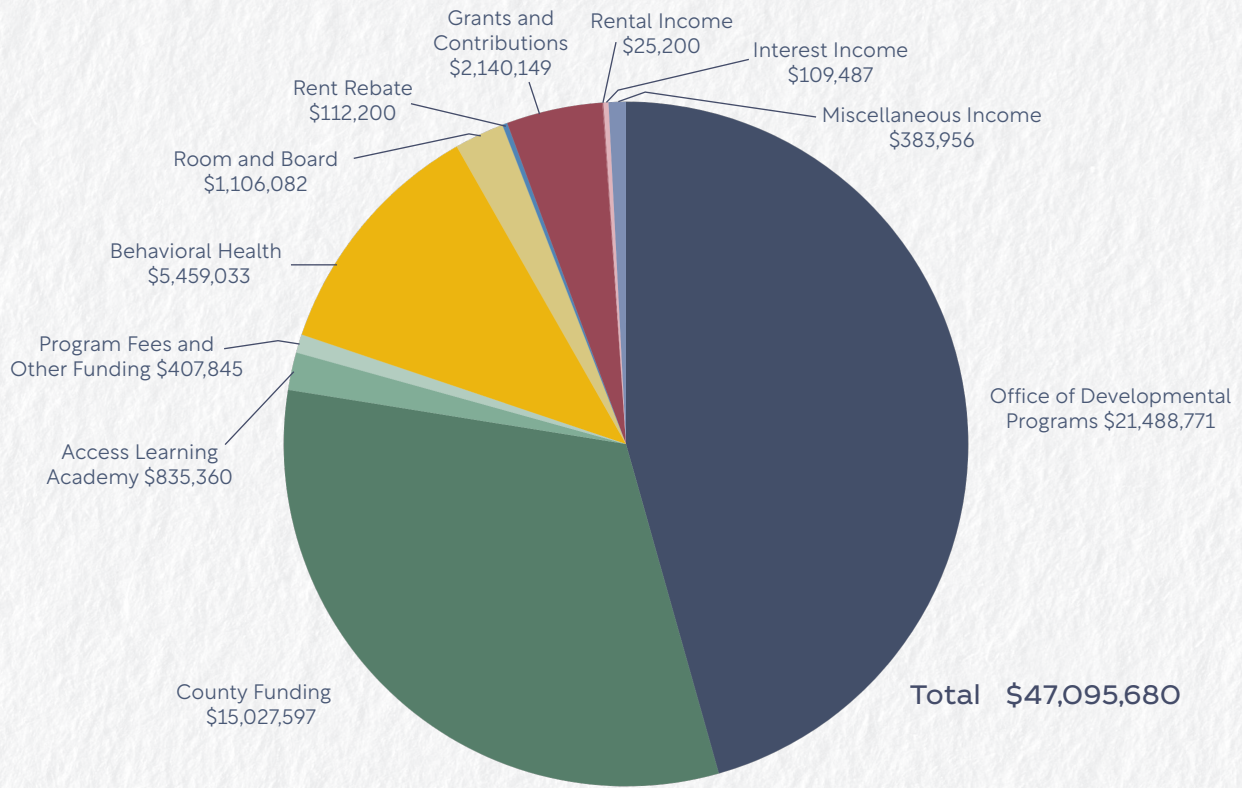


Areas of Greatest Need

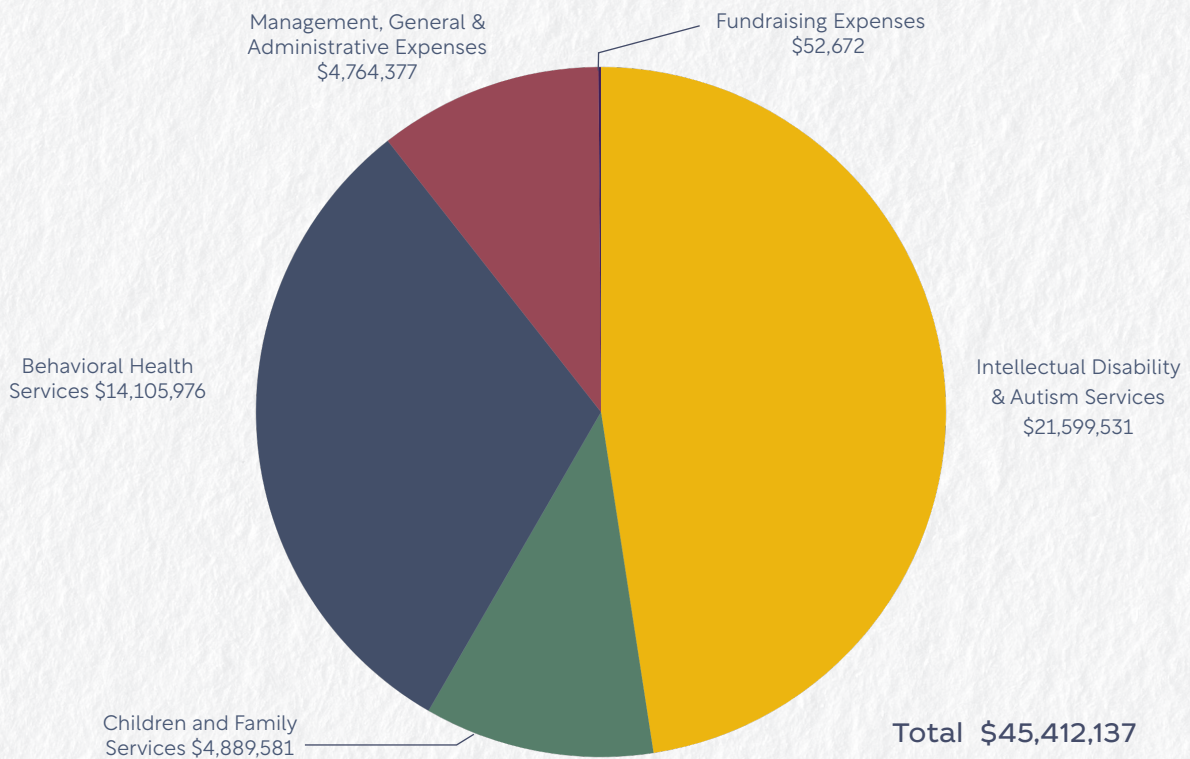
There are always ways to help! By giving to the area of greatest need you can support things like: training around suicide and mental health in the community, enhancements to our support of those with intellectual disabilities and autism and equipping young people as they transition to independence.



Fiscal Year 2023 Support and Revenue



Fiscal Year 2023 Expenses



Follow us on social media.

 Access Services, Inc.

 accessservespa

 company/access-services

 AccessServesPA

 @accessservices



www.accessservices.org