

WE ARE WHAT SPECIAL NEEDS

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER



From Our CEO

Dear Friends,

With all that 2020 has brought forth, the need to be resilient in the face of such unprecedented challenges is essential. For the Board and staff of the Detroit Institute for Children (DIC), this has translated into the essential need to remain true to our mission of serving children with special needs while finding new ways of delivering “compassionate, expert care.”

This children-first approach has driven our work since 1920. DIC’s team provides services that address an array of neurological, developmental, emotional, and behavioral needs associated with conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder.

As a result of COVID-19’s impact on schools, our children-first approach is evident through adopting and embracing teletherapy to provide services. Rather than our normal in-person format for our annual summer program, this year’s program utilized a remote teletherapy model to provide each participating child with speech and occupational therapy.

The use of teletherapy resources has also carried over into the new school year, with DIC’s therapists working hand-in-hand with our partner schools to serve students both online and in-person.

Looking ahead, our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will serve as a framework for fulfilling our century-long mission. By developing and identifying new programs and revenue streams, engaging and growing a diverse and equitable team, and building the DIC brand to increase fundraising opportunities, our impact will be profound.

In This Issue

- New Summer Program a Success
- “Month of Giving” Supports the Detroit Institute for Children
- Trauma Smart Update
- Meet Our Team
- A Personal Reflection on 100 Years of Service

As always, all of our achievements -- past, present, and future -- depend on the generous support of our donors in helping us to realize our mission and keep children first. This year, in support of our 100th birthday, I am asking that you join me in making a gift to the “100 for 100 Campaign” to help us reach our \$400,000 annual campaign goal.

Please visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate or consider responding to our upcoming Fall Appeal by giving a gift of \$100 (or any multiple thereof) or increasing your last gift by \$100. Your generous donation will help us to continue to do what we do best: Celebrate and serve children with special needs and their families!

With all best wishes as our communities continue the process of reopening,

Roxanne



New Summer Program a Success

Since 2017, DIC has offered underserved children with special needs an enriching summer program that children love and parents trust. This past summer was no different, as DIC remained committed to offering an engaging and meaningful program even though our therapists and participating children could not be physically together.

The free 2020 Summer Enrichment Program provided virtual speech and occupational therapy over five weeks from July through August to support students underserved. Specially designed "Enrichment Kits" containing materials around themes such as animals, sports, and art were also provided to assist in achieving the child's speech and occupational goals.

Nearly 70 students in grades K-4 registered for the program, with 61 completing all five weeks of therapeutic sessions and activities that were conducted by our therapists. Students with speech goals used a collection of tongue twisters to practice speech sounds and have fun at the same time; and students with occupational goals received fun activities and tools to develop and promote fine motor, visual motor, and sensory processing skills.

The Summer Enrichment Program's impact can be seen in the evaluations we received from parents – 100% of who expressed satisfaction with the program and a desire to have their child participate again in the future!



Parent Testimonial

"This program really helped LaMichael a lot! He has been in speech therapy since he was two years old, and it kept him from falling behind this summer. The staff was very professional and patient with my son, which helped him learn a lot. This was one of the best programs that LaMichael has had the opportunity to participate in for quite some time."

-LaMichael's Mother

Trauma Smart Update

With the effects of COVID-19, DIC's work in Trauma Smart (TS) has now become critical in assisting the large number of children who have been adversely impacted by this pandemic. This year, DIC staff members received training on trauma and child development from Trauma Smart, a nationally recognized program of Crittenton Children's Center at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City. Our goal in becoming a Trauma Smart partner is to share this knowledge and skill on a larger scale and build trauma-informed communities throughout Southeast and West Michigan.

Upon formal completion of our program later this year, we will incorporate Trauma Smart into comprehensive "Trauma-Informed Care" trainings not only for teachers, staff, and families at our partner schools, but also for our own professional field staff. Building Trauma Smart principles and concepts into DIC's Trauma-Informed Care trainings will help everyone understand how to help improve an affected child's life, including the ability to learn, grow, and thrive.



About Us

The Detroit Institute for Children (DIC) has been providing specialized diagnostic, rehabilitative, and therapeutic services to children since 1920. As medical care became more advanced and the clinic grew, it became apparent that Detroit's children needed more than just orthopedic care and the clinic was re-christened the Detroit Institute for Children in the 1970s.

Today, the organization's focus has evolved in response to changing treatment priorities among school-age children to include care that also addresses neurological, developmental, emotional, and behavioral special needs.

Visit www.detroitchildren.org to learn more.

Meet Our Team:

Erica Prime

Joined DIC: 1999

Role: Lead Psychologist

Credentials: M.A. Clinical and Educational Psychology (Wayne State University)



Why School Psychology?

For as long as I can remember I have wanted to work with children. However, after majoring in psychology and communications as an undergraduate, I took a detour and found myself employed in the field of advertising and public relations. Feeling unfulfilled, I returned to school to obtain M.A.'s in Clinical and Educational Psychology. I discovered a love for working with students in academic settings to help them identify barriers to success and generate solutions that lead to academic and social-emotional growth.

Role at DIC

DIC has given me the opportunity to gain a great deal of experience working with students, parents, and school staff; as well as gain knowledge in special education procedure and protocol.

As Lead Psychologist, I have the opportunity to share that knowledge and experience with the DIC psychologists, I am beyond grateful to have had the opportunity to help numerous students improve their educational experiences and performance for more than 20 years with DIC.

Personal Life

My husband Fred and I will celebrate our 25th anniversary this December. Now "pseudo" empty nesters, our two sons ages 20 and 22, have continued the "maize and blue" tradition. Our oldest son graduated from UM this May, and our youngest son began his junior year there.

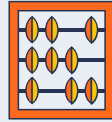
We spoil our two "fur babies", and we love to entertain, spend time with family and friends, exercise, and travel.

Erica's Tips for Working with Your Child at Home



Set a designated learning space

Though not everyone has a designated room for learning, the kitchen table, a room corner, or even a folding dinner tray can provide an appropriate learning environment. With the right learning materials (pencils, paper, handouts), a quiet space that is distraction-free (toys, television, video games, cell phones) can provide the space a child needs.



Addressing your child's individual needs

In school, children with special needs have access to special tools and targeted methods of learning. Teachers can be helpful in assisting parents in replicating some of the accommodations given at school, including methods on breaking work into smaller chunks, rewarding accomplishments, or using technology such as read aloud, text-to-speech, and speech-to-text.



Help kids stay in touch with their friends

In addition to learning, school is also a place for kids to socialize. Allowing children to interact with their friends online might help with feelings of isolation and allow for some connectivity. Organizing a daily video chat with friends and using school discussion boards may help children continue to gain the important social interaction that they need.



Allow breaks

Online learning can be frustrating, so it's important to slow the pace and give children a break to allow more time for thinking and processing when they are feeling overwhelmed. Giving kids the time to get up and walk around, get some fresh air, and take movement breaks between learning can reduce stress and prevent anxiety.

Support DIC and Keep Children First

We know these are difficult times and we appreciate any gift you can provide in support of the work we do. This election season, cast your vote for DIC by helping us reach our \$400,000 fundraising goal. Use the enclosed envelope or visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate to make your contribution today!



“Month of Giving”

Supports the Detroit Institute for Children

Due to COVID-19, the Sigma Gamma Association was unable to hold its annual Fireworks Picnic to benefit the Detroit Institute for Children (DIC) this past June. In response, the Event Chairs and Sigma Gamma Board quickly got to work and came up with an alternative, the Sigma Gamma “Month of Giving.”

Held throughout the month of July, this virtual event was a huge success, allowing the Association to present DIC with much-needed funds for an urgently needed teletherapy program, a reimagined summer experience for children with special needs, and a variety of other essential needs.

Particularly with this being DIC’s 100th year, the administration, board, and staff wish to sincerely thank the Sigma Gamma Association (our founders) and all the volunteers, patron underwriters, corporate sponsors, and donors who made the “Month of Giving” possible. Your hard work and generosity during challenging times and throughout our 100-year history have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of countless children with special needs.

We’re already looking forward to celebrating with you in 2021, when together we launch our second century of service!



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Thank You Special Program Donors!

Thank you to the following major donors who helped make possible this year’s special Summer Enrichment Program:

Detroit Auto Dealers Association Charitable Fund
Detroit Industrial School
Helen L. Kay Charitable Trust
Patrick & Christie Scoggin Family Foundation
Sigma Gamma Association
Sigma Gamma Foundation
The Children’s Foundation
United Way for Southeastern Michigan



A Personal Reflection on 100 Years of Service

Editor's Note: While the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the postponement of DIC's 100th Anniversary celebration events until 2021 - when we launch our second century of service - it has provided time to reflect on our resiliency and impact since the organization's founding. Putting "children first" has always been a hallmark of our approach to care throughout our history, beginning with "brick-and-mortar" clinical settings through today as we provide services in schools and at other locations in the community.

The letter below from a past client serves as a snapshot of DIC's "children first" impact. While the services we provide and their locations may change over time, the overall philosophy and approach to the care we provide children remains constant.

We first encountered the Detroit Institute for Children as parents. Michaela, our beloved eldest child, had spastic cerebral palsy, and despite constant intensive physical therapy, her muscles contracted involuntarily. The tightness prevented her from achieving fluid motion, and countless doctors had told us she would never walk or be able to express her intelligence through typical play or the independent use of an assistive device - she simply could not consistently demonstrate mastery of flipping switches or tapping keys.

We had heard that Botox might help Michaela to relax her muscles and improve her range of motion, and it was suggested to us that we try it in her upper extremities. At the suggestion of another parent whose child was under the care of Dr. Eileen Donovan, the Institute's former medical director, we made an appointment to consult with her about its use in a toddler.

We were immediately taken by the way Dr. Donovan addressed Michaela as a whole person, and not a sum of inadequate limbs, as we had been made to feel time and again by other clinicians. A mother of a grown child of her own who had special needs, Dr. Donovan spoke to us with sensitivity, acknowledging the difficulty of raising a child with a disability but also reminding us to enjoy our child wholeheartedly, and that she was a gift to us - and to the world.

Dr. Donovan spoke about Michaela as though she would grow up to be an adult with a full life in whatever shape it would ultimately form, and she earned our trust. We went forward with the Botox injections a few times, with Dr. Donovan herself gently and carefully injecting Michaela's arms.

Sadly, Michaela passed away unexpectedly on May 23, 2009. At the time she was no longer under the Institute's care, but we will never forget, and are forever indebted to, Dr. Donovan and the entire DIC staff who cared for her and countless other children in the greater Detroit area.

In addition to our role as parents, we became involved in DIC in other ways. Adam became a dedicated Board Member and was involved in many important projects, including developing a long-term strategic plan for the organization, CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) accreditation, and the recruitment of a new CEO.

The Detroit Institute for Children has played an important role in our family's lives for many years, and we look forward to staying involved with the organization for many years to come. Congratulations on achieving this incredible milestone of 100 years of service to the children in our community.

With love and admiration,
Adam Kaplan and Gabriella Burman



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We know these are difficult times and we appreciate any gift you can provide in support of the work we do. This election season, cast your vote for DIC by using the enclosed envelope or visiting www.detroitchildren.org/donate to make your contribution today!



Register at smile.amazon.com to have 0.5% of eligible purchases donated to DIC.



Shop at Kroger? Register your Kroger Rewards Card to Donate a percentage of your transaction to DIC (and get great coupon deals while you're on their website!).
Our Organization Number is IM321.
Re-enroll every April!

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Mike Rhoads
Vice President of Special Needs
Programs & Services

Ara M. Hachigian
Director of Operations &
Special Needs Services

Jan Shimshock
Director of Development

Niki Beebani
Director of Program Development &
Quality

Stacey Seltzer
Employment & Recruitment Specialist

Desiree Beardsley
Executive Administrative Assistant

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