

WE ARE WHAT SPECIAL NEEDS

FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER



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From Our CEO

Dear Friends,

I hope that Fall finds you well as we continue to meet the many challenges facing us, as each day seems to bring news of another COVID-related warning and corresponding response. The resulting stress and anxiety are hard on all of us, but particularly children with special needs and their families.

In the face of such adversity, we are proud to say that the nonprofit Detroit Institute for Children (DIC) continues to be dynamic in responding to such unprecedented challenges while maintaining and adapting our services to the needs of those we so proudly serve.

For example, our staff members are on track to provide more than **60,000** hours of Speech, Occupational, and Behavioral Therapy services both in-person and remotely to children enrolled at more than **180** public and charter K-12 schools, Head Starts, and Early Childhood programs across Detroit, Southeast, and West Michigan. Detroit and Wayne County are home to **150** of these locations (including 90 Head Start locations), with **77%** of our K-12 students in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb eligible for free or reduced lunch programs.

Simultaneously, we have seen the need to provide additional supports to children with special needs beyond normal school hours. Much has been written about COVID's impact on the mental health of children in general, but over the past 18 months, we have noticed a very significant increase in anxiety and behavioral issues among a great number of the children we serve.

In response to this need, this past summer we launched our year-round LEAP (Learning, Enrichment, and Achievement Programs) initiative designed to help underserved children

with special needs "catch up and keep up" with their peers. Utilizing a mix of in-person and remote approaches, the summer component helped more than **80** underserved children with special needs renew and maintain their IEP progress at locations in Detroit, Southfield, and Muskegon over five weeks during July-August.

In October, we launched the afterschool component of LEAP at our location on the campus of The Marygrove Conservancy. In addition to therapeutic enrichment activities, DIC staff is teaching foundational learning skills such as problem-solving, memory skills, flexible thinking, image visualizing, and more to help the **125** participating children be successful both in school and out.

I know the entire DIC Board joins me in thanking you, our donors and stakeholders, for your generous support that allows us to launch critical programs like LEAP, which is offered without charge and funded entirely by donations. We hope that you will visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate or consider responding to our upcoming Fall Appeal to make a gift in support of our important work.

Your generous donation will help us to continue doing what we do best: Celebrate and serve children with special needs!

With all best wishes,



Roxanne

Summer

LEAP

LEARNING, ENRICHMENT, & ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMS

After being cooped up during the pandemic and switching to teletherapy in summer 2020, the thought of returning to in-person summer enrichment this year – for kids to run around outside, make new friends, learn new skills – was exciting. However, with the ongoing daily uncertainty regarding COVID-19, we established contingency plans to ensure the successful launch of the first summer component of our new LEAP (Learning, Enrichment, and Achievement Programs) initiative.

With safety measures in place, we were able to operate in-person at Bradford Academy in Southfield, our new location at The Marygrove Conservancy in Detroit, and Three Oaks Preparatory Academy in Muskegon. We also provided screenings to Matrix Head Start students in Detroit and offered teletherapy to students in their homes.

Each in-person location operated two days/week for five weeks, with students participating in teletherapy receiving two hours of speech and/or occupational therapy each week. At the end of the summer, we were thrilled to learn that LEAP provided speech, occupational, and special needs services to 88 students in the Metro Detroit area!

To learn more, call us at 248-963-1224.



What our partners are saying...

"Viewpoint Psychology and Wellness is a leading provider of mental health services. We are pleased to partner with DIC on initiatives to support the community. Moreover, we utilize DIC as a qualified provider and source for patients having special needs and/or requiring early intervention programs."

-Glen Schwartz, Director of Operations

TRAUMASmart®

DIC Trauma Smart Partner

In 2021, DIC completed 18 months of training and certification with Trauma Smart, a national program of the Crittendon Children's Center at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, MO.

As a National Partner of Trauma Smart, we are able to use a model that will help us to better address the mental health needs of the children in our programs. Through connections with families and caregivers, we are now able to also help families understand the needs of the child and the impact of trauma in their everyday lives.

About Us

The nonprofit Detroit Institute for Children (DIC) has been providing specialized diagnostic, rehabilitative, and therapeutic services to children since 1920.

Today, the organization's focus has evolved in response to changing treatment priorities to include care that also addresses children's neurological, developmental, emotional, and behavioral special needs. Visit www.detroitchildren.org to learn more.



DIC Partners with the Treesgiving Foundation

This year, DIC has been selected to be a partner with the Treesgiving Foundation in distributing 300 decorated small Christmas Trees to members of our community who need a little cheer.

DIC will work with several schools in distributing the custom decorated trees to underserved children and their families who might not otherwise have one. Treesgiving was founded by Andrea Jenkinson of Waterford and her son, Jacob, who wanted to know how he could give trees to kids who didn't have them.

Meet Our Team:

Megan Evans, CCC-SLP

Joined DIC: 2017

Credentials: Master of Arts – Speech-Language Pathology (Wayne State University)



Why Speech-Language Pathology?

My professional interests turned to speech-language pathology after job shadowing with a speech-language pathologist (SLP). I had the opportunity to work with a young emotionally impaired child who had very little expression of emotion and wouldn't respond in the same way other children would. When we worked together, he turned to look at me and he smiled at me so big that it lit a fire in me. The impact I knew I had on him changed the course of my career, and I now am constantly seeking those big smiles in every child I see.

Role at DIC

I've really enjoyed working at DIC. DIC has given me flexibility in the environments and contexts in which I practice. In addition to working in schools, I've also started seeing kids at DIC's brand new speech center in Commerce Township. Since treating children from birth to three years old is my passion, I'm so excited about this new opportunity. As a mother and SLP, I want to see kids succeed and be independent, and DIC is a great place to help me do that.

Personal Life

At home, my husband Doug and I are kept very busy by our two young children. We love taking them to the park by our house where they can play and climb, showing their bravery and independence—these kids aren't scared of anything! We are also very involved in our church and serving the community through church. A perfect day for us is a long day exploring at the Detroit Institute of Arts, catching a Tigers game, or getting great food at a local brewery or restaurant.

Sigma Gamma Association

"Picnic to Go"

Supports the Detroit Institute for Children

For the second year in a row, COVID-19 prevented the Sigma Gamma Association from hosting the traditional Fireworks Picnic to benefit the Detroit Institute for Children (DIC). Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Sigma Gamma event chairs and membership rolled up their sleeves and came up with yet another giving opportunity: "Picnic to Go".

So, on June 21st, 464 cans of lemonade, 464 bottles of water, 180 cookies, 154 "Cheese to Please" boxes, 28 charcuterie trays, 108 bags of chips, 108 sandwiches, 108 pieces of fruit, silverware, napkins, cups, ice packs, lemons, sparklers, and glowsticks were assembled into 135 "Picnic to Go" orders. Volunteers then spent the afternoon delivering these magnificent picnics, all in the name of supporting DIC!

A smashing success, "Picnic to Go" generated much-needed funds to support this year's summer LEAP program. DIC wishes to thank the Sigma Gamma Association and the many volunteers, corporate sponsors, patron underwriters, and donors who made this event so successful. We are truly fortunate to have such tremendous support throughout our over 100-year history, and in particular through this challenging time.

THANK YOU!

Firecracker Sponsor



Sparklers Sponsors

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Kercheval Financial Group



Mary Wilson

LEAPing Forward

This fall, we are excited to begin the school-year component of our new LEAP (Learning, Enrichment, and Achievement Programs) initiative working with children, families, and partners.

Taking place at our Marygrove Conservancy center, the day program will consist of parent-child interaction groups that encourage the child's social development, ease the transition to school, and improve overall health while also providing educational, social, and health support to parents. We will also be providing afterschool support to students with special needs with enrichment activities and tutoring in reading and math.

In addition, the center includes a dedicated space for parents to accommodate training, information, and resources to assist them in the process of championing their child's needs on topics ranging from quality early education to understanding IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) and special needs services.

Of course, in 2022 our Marygrove center will once again host the summer component of LEAP, which consists of both in-person and at-home enrichment activities and services that address difficulties related to speech communication, motor skill development, and behavioral issues based on a child's IEP developed by their school.

From the dedicated space for parents and toddlers to the brightly colored materials used in the Marygrove center's design, we are very excited to have a brand-new community gathering place that the entire Fitzgerald community can enjoy for years to come.

To learn more, call us at 248-963-1224.



New DIC Therapy Center Opens

Last summer, we began searching for a new office location that would fulfill our vision of a “one-stop shop” for all supports and services that a child with special needs might need when struggling with speech or occupational therapy. In our search, it just so happened that such a space opened at the front of our current business office complex.

When our team first entered the space, we could see the vision come alive in our heads. Opened this fall, our new therapy center helps children ages 18 months+ to reach developmental milestones, achieve school readiness, and reduce their need for special education.

DIC's staff of therapeutic professionals conducts comprehensive evaluations that assess a child's development in seven areas: receptive and expressive communication, fine and gross motor skills, and adaptive, cognitive, and social-emotional needs. If a child qualifies for special services by exhibiting a measurable delay in comparison to same-aged peers in one or more of those seven areas, DIC then supports the child and family through therapy and/or educational services that best fit that child's needs.

We are very excited to now serve families outside of school and know that children will love our new space! To learn more, call us at 248-963-1224.





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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. Please help us reach our \$500,000 fundraising goal by using the enclosed envelope or visiting www.detroitchildren.org/donate to make your contribution today!



Register at smile.amazon.com to view our Wish List of needed items and have 0.5% of all 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!

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Roxanne Brinkerhoff
Chief Executive Officer

Mike Rhoads
Chief Operating Officer

Ara M. Hachigian
Vice President of Operations

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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