



LIFE HAS CHANGED.



**TOGETHER,
WE CONTINUE TO CHANGE LIVES.**



Greater Cincinnati
**Behavioral
Health Services**
Our Work is Life Changing

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020



OUR STAFF HAS VOTED US TOP WORKPLACE FOR 11 YEARS IN A ROW!

“We give people hope and assist our clients with achieving their goals despite their circumstances.”

Executive Leadership Team

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Chief Executive Officer*

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Vision

GCBHS is a national leader in improving the mental and physical health of people throughout our ever-expanding community.

Mission

To ensure people with mental illness, addictions, and related challenges lead healthy and productive lives.

This Annual Report is a tribute to our staff, many of whom are pictured on the front/back cover and in the donor list. They represent excellence across all of our programs and services.

TO OUR PARTNERS, FRIENDS, AND FUNDERS:

Although our Annual Report typically highlights the work of our organization's entire fiscal year, much of this year's focus centers on the last four months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no way anyone could have predicted the events that happened the last quarter of fiscal year 2020.

The National Council for Behavioral Health reported that since the beginning of the pandemic, 54% of behavioral health organizations have had to close programs and 65% have rescheduled or turned away patients. Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) rose to the challenge and has remained open throughout the crisis. Our main priority has been, and continues to be, doing everything we can to ensure that our clients receive needed services while reducing their risk and exposure. It has been incredible to see our staff continue to find creative ways to collaborate together, so that we can maintain essential services to our clients in the safest manner possible. Our GCBHS staff members truly are frontline healthcare heroes and we celebrate each and every one of them and their resilience in this year's Annual Report.

Even though much of 2020 was not what was anticipated, there were notable achievements including being awarded a federal Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) grant from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. The CCBHC is a model that strengthens and transforms how behavioral health and medical care services are coordinated and provided to adults and children with mental health and substance abuse issues, and is becoming a "gold national standard" of Behavioral Healthcare excellence. It is also noteworthy that the grant process was highly competitive across the country with GCBHS being chosen as only one of two organizations awarded this grant funding in Ohio.

Although we have great hope regarding the much anticipated COVID-19 vaccines, our safety measures for staff and clients will remain key to keeping everyone safe. This will ensure that essential behavioral health services will be provided to the most vulnerable members of our community and that no one is forgotten or falls through the cracks.

GCBHS remains strong and we will continue to plan and respond accordingly to deliver quality and efficient behavioral healthcare services now and into the future. Our clinical staff continue to provide services to an increasing number of clients. The Executive Leadership Team is very proud of our staff and our clients for the resilience that they have demonstrated during this challenging year.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, we want to thank you for the support you have shown us during this very difficult time. Together we are still changing lives for the better.



Jeff O'Neil
JEFF O'NEIL
President & CEO



Nick Hahn
NICK HAHN
Board Chair

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Greater Cincinnati.

Each month an average of 700 new clients come to us looking for help.

MEET

Patti Jacobs

GCBHS Board Member

“Because I know I am part of something that is giving back to the community.”

Patti Jacobs has been a member of the Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) Board since the organization merged with the Clermont Recovery Center (CRC) in 2014. Her daughter was already involved with CRC when they announced they were looking for someone to join the Finance Committee. Patti, who has a background in accounting, jumped at the opportunity to help her community. At the time, she had gone back to school to get licensed as a massage therapist so that she could set her own hours and help babysit her grandchildren.

Patti loves the fact that being on the GCBHS Board allows her to keep her foot in the business world (she is currently Finance Chair and Treasurer of the GCBHS Board) and allows her to volunteer for something she is very passionate about. “It’s what keeps me coming back,” she says. “Because I know I am part of something that is giving back to the community.”

Patti’s passion is assisting GCBHS’ Outreach Team in Clermont County. According to Patti, “I ended up meeting people on the outreach team and learned that many of their clients had nothing. Literally nothing. They came out of jail or prison and had burned bridges with family and friends. So when they would show up for services, some hadn’t eaten in days.” This inspired Patti to start her own outreach with local businesses in the area. “I was overwhelmed by the response. People in Batavia were so generous...I like being the conduit to make that happen.”

When asked what her favorite thing about being a GCBHS Board member is, Patti replies, “The thing that means the most to me is how the clients come first. It’s never ‘what’s our bottom line’ or ‘how are we going to pay for something’...it’s more about, ‘Hey we got a grant. How can we best use this to serve our clients?’ I love that we meet people where they are.”



Patti lives in Clermont County with her husband Mike. They have a combined family of two girls, two boys, and five grandchildren with one on the way. Patti also enjoys volunteering for Clermont Senior Services and she considers herself a “bookaholic!” She loves to crochet and wants to eventually spend the cold Ohio winters in Florida.



In fiscal 2020 we provided permanent supportive housing for

29

recovery clients

in Clermont County.

GCBHS opened East Fork River House, a second recovery house, on September 3rd 2019.



Pictured are staff and board members painting the property's fences. Board member Patti Jacobs is pictured volunteering to paint (on page 3).

2020 Board of Directors

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Finding a Home in the Midst of a Pandemic

The GCBHS Homelink program partners with community housing resources to find permanent homes for those in need.

MEET Rhonda

Rhonda came to Cincinnati from Middletown. She came because her daughter was in the ICU. Her heart and lungs had been damaged from drug use and she had a blood infection. Rhonda, who was also addicted to drugs, stopped using so she could be at her daughter's bedside. "I didn't just get up one day and say that I was going to stop using drugs." But being at the hospital led to sobriety and her daughter's passing in January of this year was reason enough for her not to start again. "When my daughter passed away, she knew I chose her over drugs. She told people she was so happy that I stayed with her and I stayed clean. To have that time with her was precious."

However, Rhonda didn't want to move back to Middletown for fear that she might start using again. "I couldn't go back. I was trying to get away from that." Rhonda went to live at the local women's shelter where she talked to a Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) care manager who arranged both medical and mental health evaluations for her. Then COVID-19 happened. She was supposed to be at the temporary shelter for three months but the pandemic cut that short. The GCBHS team went into action to find Rhonda and several other women places to live, which in the middle of a pandemic was not an easy task. In the first few months, many housing facilities were closed. Rhonda's care manager was determined to find her a supervised living situation because Rhonda has severe arthritis in a hip which needed to be replaced. The surgery, originally scheduled for April of 2020, was postponed and Rhonda does not believe that it will be re-scheduled anytime soon.



Rhonda was also dealing with the fact that her mother had to move to a nursing home. She hasn't seen her since she's been sober. "She always told me", says Rhonda, "that it doesn't matter how you got here – it's how you get out."

Tender Mercies is an organization that GCBHS partners with. They opened a new 57 unit housing complex called 821 Flats which seemed to be the perfect situation for Rhonda. And best of all, says Rhonda, "is that GCBHS offers care management there. They make sure you're okay. If I have an appointment, I know Alison will make sure I don't miss it or take me if I don't have a ride."

The Alison she's referring to is Care Manager Alison Fortman. "I am here to support Rhonda's sobriety. We work with clients no matter what phase of recovery they are in. However in Rhonda's case, she's very motivated!"

Rhonda is very philosophical about her recovery. "What people don't realize with sobriety is that **not** using the drug is a very small part of it. So much of it is about the damage you did and the issues you have to take care of...but learning to take care of yourself? That has opened up a whole new world. It's a second chance. I've overdosed before and I could be dead. I think about that. I'm so happy to be here. I often wondered if I would ever laugh again. It's nice that I found out I could."

MEET Denver

Denver spent most of his life as a long haul truck driver – and he was a really good one. Denver was in an elite category of driving excellence – over two million miles without an accident. Only 1 in 100 drivers achieve this record. But in 2012 something terrible happened. He lost his vision. It started slowly and then one day he says, “I woke up and by the end of the day it was complete darkness.”

This dramatic change led to a dark depression which was brought on by his wife’s worsening health. She eventually had a stroke and was moved to a full-time care facility. Meanwhile, Denver had no one to help him with his house. He had no job and he was blind.

He reached a breaking point and contemplated suicide when a police officer he knew suggested he get help. “He gave me an ultimatum,” says Denver. “I was depressed, miserable, and didn’t want to go on living.” Denver was referred to Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS). He says GCBHS went above and beyond what social workers should have to do for anyone. His care manager would visit him weekly and talk with him about improving his life. GCBHS also arranged for visiting nurses to see him but eventually the house and the bills were just too much for him and he faced foreclosure.

So Denver’s care manager connected him to the GCBHS Homelink program. Homelink specializes in working with clients to find housing and furniture, fill out paperwork, and teach them how to pay bills. Unfortunately, events in Denver’s past created barriers to qualify for Federal Subsidized Housing and the pandemic didn’t help. Leasing offices were closed to the public from March till June which made finding people

safe places to live even more difficult. But the Homelink team did not give up. Says Homelink Transitional Support Specialist Keefer Kaneshiro, “I told Denver we needed to approach things in a different way. Instead of waiting for them to receive the background check results, why not tell them what they’re going to find out right from the start. And lo and behold, it worked!”

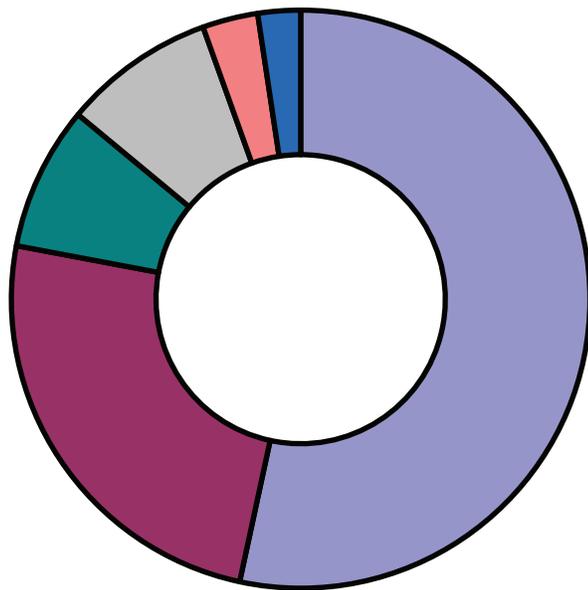
“What a novel approach,” Denver jokes. “Who would have ever thought about being open and honest!” So he told the manager at the assisted living facility that he wasn’t perfect but was definitely a different person from all those years ago. When the reports came in, the living facility manager, “went to bat for me. The approach of full disclosure allows you to control the narrative. This is how I’ve changed. This is who I am now.”

So what does life look like now for Denver? His time with the Homelink team has come to an end but Keefer says he’ll continue to check in for a while to make sure Denver gets settled in his new apartment and that he feels safe and comfortable. Says Denver, “That shows the people at GCBHS go above and beyond when they can.”



OVER 96%
of clients surveyed said they have a high overall satisfaction with GCBHS services

How We Are Funded



REVENUE FY 20

- 53% Medicaid/Medicare
- 25% County Boards
- 8% Grants, Fundraising & Other
- 9% Partnerships & Contracts
- 3% State & Local
- 2% Fees for Service

TOTAL: \$ 46,169,900

GCBHS Awarded a Two-Year Grant from SAMHSA

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) was chosen as only one of two behavioral healthcare providers in Ohio to be awarded a federal grant for a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion (CCBHC). The clinic will be based out of our current Amelia location and will strengthen and transform how services are provided to children and adults by providing fully integrated holistic care.

The grant will allow us to improve access to services in Clermont County and will provide comprehensive services to adults who have serious mental illness (SMI) or substance use disorders (SUD); children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance (SED); and to adults who have co-occurring mental health and substance disorders (COD).

To provide the needed services GCBHS will collaborate with The HealthCare Connection, a Federally Qualified Health Center and Child Focus, Inc., a licensed crisis services provider. According to Jeff O’Neil, GCBHS President & CEO, “This grant will allow us to further build on our pioneering successes with integrating holistic care. Most importantly, it will enable us to improve the coordination of behavioral and medical services to persons in our community who face some of the most severe and complex health challenges related to severe mental illness, addiction, trauma and other health disparities.”

Accreditations:

CARF International (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities).

Licensed, certified, and funded by Ohio Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Licensed by Commonwealth of Ky. Cabinet for Health and Family Services.





Clients of Social Security Study find Recovery Through Work

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) was invited to participate in a study funded by the Social Security Administration. The Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) study was commissioned to examine how employment services, provided along with integrated behavioral health and social services, can help people experiencing mental illness get a good job.

To participate in the program, clients had to be denied Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and have listed a mental health concern among their reasons for applying. Eighty clients were assigned to GCBHS to work with one of two teams of

Care Managers, and Employment Specialists. According to SED Team Lead Emily Hampp, “The key to the program’s success is the integrated treatment team. This allows a focused group of direct service staff to work together on the same caseload to address a person’s physical and mental health needs.”

The Care Managers focus on independent living skills, including access to housing, food, etc. while the Employment Specialists assist clients in finding and maintaining employment in the community. A Nurse Care Coordinator works with 40 of the 80 participants in medication management and accessing mental and physical healthcare. “Most of the clients had never had access to Care

Management, Employment Services, or adequate healthcare to address their mental health and physical issues together,” says James Snow, a team Employment Specialist who has been with the program since its launch in 2017. The GCBHS SED team took care of their wellness needs, and taught clients how to create a resume and develop job interviewing skills.

“The important thing about employment,” says James, “is asking yourself, ‘what’s a good fit?’ Find out what they are good at. What do they enjoy? Because if they like what they do, chances are they will stick with it.” [Learn about two of James’ clients on the following pages.](#)

CONNECT WITH US

If your business has open positions and would like to work with our Employment Services department, please email employmentservices@gcbhs.com or call **513-947-7227**.

MEET

David

“There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be where I am today and there’s a good chance I would be homeless or even dead if it weren’t for what GCBHS has done for me. And that’s not an exaggeration.”

David was one of the first participants when the Social Security Administration’s Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) study kicked off in 2017. Before enrolling in the program, David was hospitalized with spinal meningitis. After treatment saved his life, he ended up with severe hearing loss which made it impossible for him to sustain a job. He applied for Social Security benefits but was instead offered a spot in the SED study.

During his first year in the program, the team focused on getting David’s body to heal. The program paid for hearing aids which made a tremendous difference but it didn’t fix everything. Says David, “I thought once I had the hearing aids, everything would magically go back to normal – that nothing else was wrong. Until you admit you need help, you can’t get help.”

Employment Specialist James Snow remembers, “The first year was overwhelming. It took a year or so to get him healthy enough to prepare him to get a job.” The second year, David faced big changes when the team helped him address his mental health issues. David refers to this as “his year of growth.” He had to come to terms with his mental and physical issues and accept that things would not “go back” to the way they were before he got sick. Additionally, he had to find a new place to live. David says the team showed that they could and would help and support him. Once he believed them, he was “all in.”

These days, David is the Team Lead at a retail coffee company. He does the schedule, trains employees, and is in charge of customer service. He is also the liaison between staff and upper management. David has a new

place to live and he bought a car. He’s come a long way. “I was going to check out of life,” says David. “I had given up. They (the team) said, ‘We’re going to get you better and get you a job.’ I just wanted to be happy. It was the most amazing thing that could have happened. You (GCBHS) have changed my life.” James interjects, “We did it together.”

When COVID-19 hit, David’s store was shut down. He was sent home for 13 weeks, but unlike so many people who struggled financially when their workplaces had to shut down, David was lucky – his company paid him for the entire time he worked from home. “There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be where I am today and there’s a good chance I would be homeless or dead if it weren’t for what GCBHS has done for me. And that’s not an exaggeration.”





Insert something about Doretha. Non nōsed eōssinim lat. Lupta nobis qui ut arum estrum ipsam ditium rem ut

MEET

Doretha

Doretha worked at a local hospital in the insurance benefits department until the pandemic began. Her job, along with 12 other people, was to complete insurance paperwork for upcoming surgeries. When a co-worker tested positive for COVID-19, everyone was sent to work from home. Her hours were cut in half to 20 a week. Eventually the hospital laid off numerous positions including Doretha's.

Because working in an insurance benefits department was all she knew, Doretha continued to apply for similar positions but because of COVID-19, those were few and far between. Through the Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) study, her Employment Specialist, James, showed her that she had transferrable skills. She says having the GCBHS team (which includes James, plus a Care Manager and a Nurse Coordinator) helped her to take better care of herself and boosted her confidence as well as her self esteem. Says Doretha, "It was good to have someone to talk to when things got rough. With their help I learned how to re-focus, re-brand and renew myself!"

Doretha had to learn how to apply for jobs again and update her resume. "It was something I hadn't done in a very long time. James asked me questions – things I hadn't thought about." She applied for a full-time

position at Amazon and within a few months she even received a promotion. Doretha is now a Safety Coordinator – a position she had to interview for and because of her work with the team, she knew she had the confidence she needed. "I did well," she says.

This is Doretha's last year in the SED study and James says the focus is on stability. "Now that she knows how to get a job, the goal is to build a career within an organization." He checks in to find out how she's doing and helps walk her through any issues or concerns. Doretha explains, "I have been able to make good decisions with his (James') support. We talk about any work or any anxiety I may have. They are an extension of my family." James adds, "We look at what we have to do to make each person successful. In Doretha's case, she's now more independent so I basically motivate and encourage her. It's about maintaining communication and building relationships."

Why does Doretha think the SED study has worked for her? "The key," she says, "is the program's personal touch. The nurse called to make sure I was taking my medicine and going to my medical appointments. That's my team – they make sure I'm doing the things I need to do. "

Partners in Our Mission

The following individuals, corporations, businesses and foundations gave financial contributions to GCBHS between **July 1, 2019** and **June 30, 2020**. We offer our sincere thanks for their generosity in support of our mission. Every attempt has been made to list donor names correctly. We apologize for any omissions or errors. Please call us at 513-354-7054 for corrections.

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Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services would like to thank the following Foundations for their support of our work during the COVID-19 pandemic:

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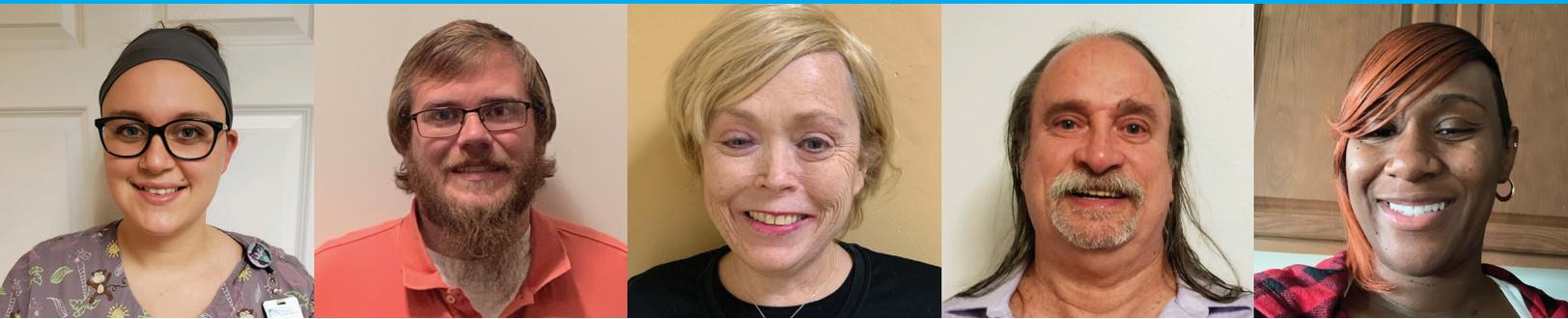
Can you help us during this time of crisis? While we greatly appreciate any and all gifts, please consider becoming a Keeper of Hope. As a Keeper of Hope your monthly contribution is an investment in our community and in the lives of people living with mental illness and addiction.

By joining us as a Keeper of Hope you are demonstrating your commitment to the work we do at Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services. Your monthly gift ensures steady, continuous support for the individuals and families we serve.

You can become a Keeper of Hope by signing up on our website: www.gcbhs.com. For questions about monthly giving or becoming a Keeper of Hope, please contact Ron Cropper at 513-354-7054.



We believe that when people get the help they need,
their lives improve, they fully participate in our community,
and our world is a better place.



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