



**There is more to me
than my disability.**
Community Connections

34 years supporting people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



*Cathy Sykes, Community Connections' Board Member and
Lifeguard, City of Durango Community Recreation Center*



Connect With Us!

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communityconnectionscolorado.org

2019

Annual Report

Our Leadership



Tara Kiene
President/CEO

Dear Friends of Community Connections,

As I write this letter, we all find ourselves living in a very different world than we were in this time last year. Knowing how uncertain the future might be, it is even more important for us to reflect upon and celebrate the successes of the past.

We entered 2019 with a new strategic plan, stable leadership, and a growing and engaged board of directors. Our goal to achieve social integration for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) has led us to focus on several important strategies:

- Ensuring families have access to the resources needed to effectively nurture and support children and adults with IDD in their own homes if they choose
- Improving community employment for people with IDD
- Increasing the representation of people with IDD in our own leadership and workforce
- Re-envisioning how we support socially engaging children and adults with IDD
- Facilitating ways for people with IDD to tell their stories

A worldwide pandemic does not diminish the value and necessity of these priorities, but it will certainly impact our approach to them. We hope that you will take some time to peruse these pages, reflect on our successes and stay connected with us in the coming year to help us continue to forge the path to true inclusion and belonging together.

2019-20 Board of Directors

Bob Conrad
Durango

Jim Denier
Durango

George Glass
Durango

Sarah Kahn
Durango

Janice Moen
Cortez

Prissilla Rippee
Durango

Alexandra Rodriguez
Durango

Cynthia Sadler
Cortez

Kicki Searfus, MD
Durango

Richard Siegele
Durango

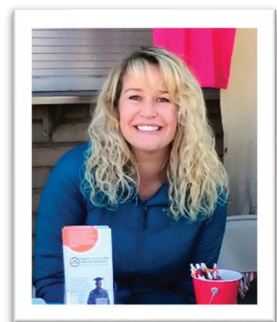
Cathy Sykes
Durango

To our wonderful communities,

It is with a full heart that I am writing to our community and system partners to say "thank you" for all your support during this challenging time.

When I reflect on this past year with Community Connections, I can say with certainty that we are encouraged not only by the growth we have seen among the clients, families and staff we have had the honor of serving and working with, but within the support we have witnessed from our communities.

Successful events like Festival of Trees and the Pumpkin Patch are only made possible because of all of you! As we weather this storm ahead, you can be confident that we are doing all we can do to keep up the quality of care and services that make Community Connections so special. I am proud of our accomplishments reflected in these pages. I hope you are too. It is our honor to serve!



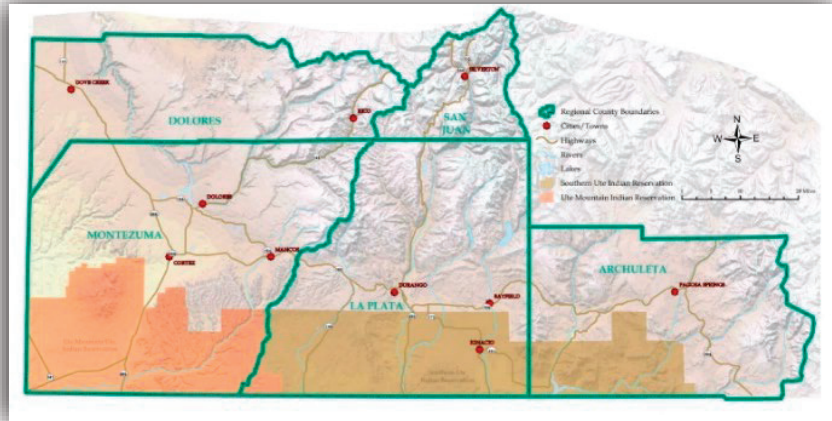
Sarah Kahn, MA.,
LPCC, Board Chair

Our Purpose

BACKGROUND:

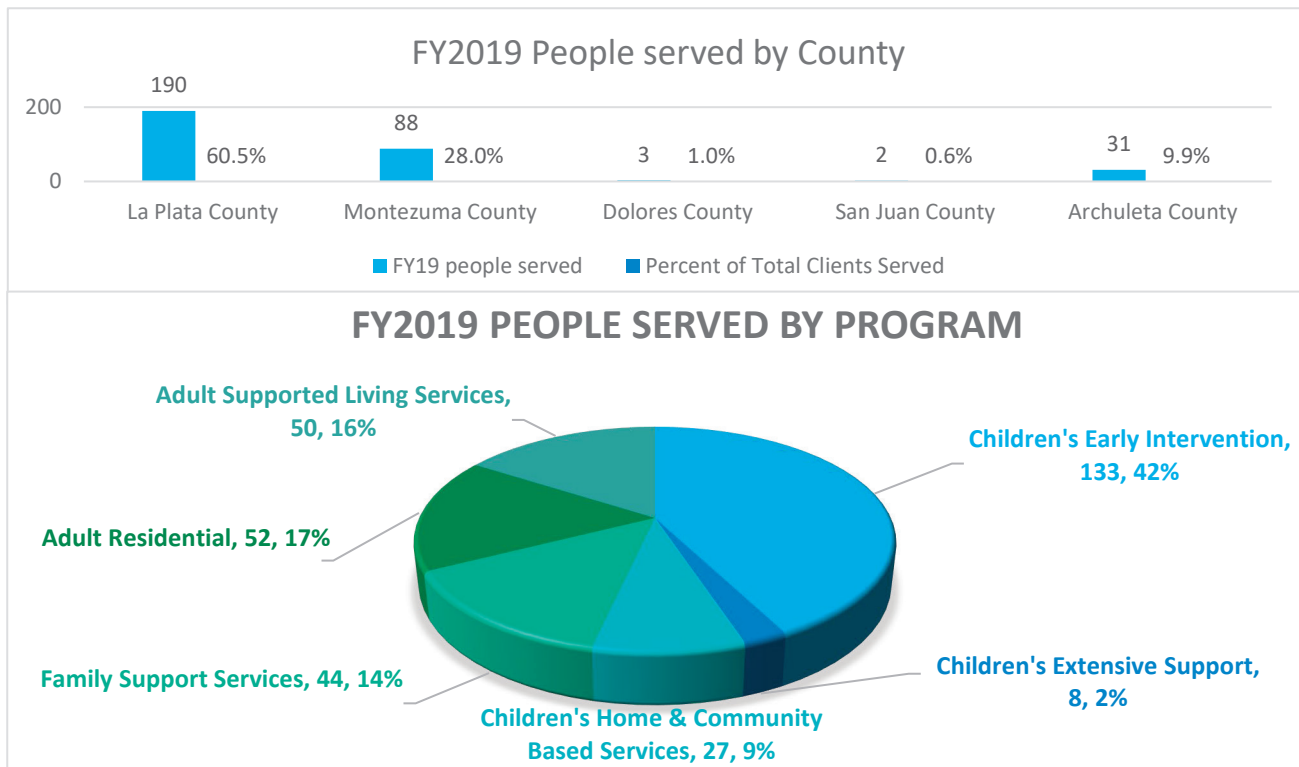
Community Connections, Inc. (CCI) was founded in 1985 as the Community Centered Board serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in southwest Colorado (Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan Counties).

The de-institutionalization movement was still in its infancy even then, and many individuals were not moved from the Regional Centers back into their communities until the 1990's. The families and caregivers who founded Community Connections had a vision of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in regular homes, working and playing in the community, leading typical lives. CCI has remained true to its vision and continues to provide services in the least-restrictive environments possible. It is our commitment to see children are being served in their family home or childcare setting, and adults live and work in the community rather than being in segregated sheltered workshops and group homes.



MISSION: Community Connections' mission is to create opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives within our community.

VISION: Our vision is a community where all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the same opportunities as other community members.



Our Principal Programs

Adult Services



Sherry Slater says she loves her job at Nature's Oasis helping people.

In 2019, Adults Services programs (Residential and Supported Living Services) served a combined total of 102 adults across our 5-county region. Our Residential Program supports participants like **Sherry Slater**, left, to access typical daily activities within community life, including employment.

Jason Mitchell, Sherry's supervisor, hired Sherry in 2017. He believes the job has helped Sherry gain self-confidence and greater ease with the public. "No one looks at Sherry as being different," said Mitchell, "She is part of the family, a great person and model employee who shows up on time and does her job."

Supported Living Services (SLS) participants like **Cathy Sykes**, front cover, often live independently, with housemates or with family. The SLS program supports clients in meeting their daily living and safety needs. Cathy credits Community Connections staff with providing her the support she needed to become a lifeguard, something she never thought she could be. Experience Cathy's story at bit.ly/CCLadultservices.

Family Support Services

The Family Support Services Program (FSSP) relieves pressure on families who care for a loved one with IDD in their home, helping to avoid costly and distressing out-of-home placements. Families receive a monthly reimbursement for disability-related expenses like respite care, transportation to medical specialists, special equipment and medical treatments not covered by insurance.

In 2019, 44 families and kids like Cole Perez, right, have benefitted from FSSP. Through family and community supports, Cole has become a socially engaged young man who takes pride in his own unique contributions to the Durango community. Besides school-based activities like cheerleading and other peer-related happenings, he is a regular fixture volunteering at the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Mercy Regional Medical Center, the Durango Community Recreation Center and the Durango Fire Department. He even performed in a featured role in a western movie that was filmed in Durango.



Cole Perez whips up the crowd for the Skyhawks.

Cole's self-confidence, outgoing personality, genuine interest and caring for all people mutually benefits him and those with whom he works and plays. As is consistent with Community Connections' community inclusion goal, integrated communities, especially classrooms, help kids, parents and whole communities be kinder, more compassionate and supportive so everyone may realize their full potential.

Our Principal Programs • Staff Recognition

Early Intervention



Aria Yazzie's foster mom credits EI therapy with helping Aria grow into a social and empathetic little girl.

The Early Intervention (EI) program serves families with children under three experiencing development delays. Therapists work directly with family members or other caregivers on an ongoing basis to equip them with the skills to support their child's development.

EI has consistently been shown to reduce or eliminate gaps in development and significantly decrease the need for more costly services later in life. Since children graduate from Early Intervention frequently (either by aging out at 3 or by reaching their developmental goals), the number in services fluctuates.

In 2019, the program served 133 kids. For Miriam and Daniel Morgan, **Aria Yazzie's** foster parents, the program was vital to her development. Miriam said, "Aria went from being a child needing a significant amount of support just for daily living to one that is

independent, sassy and emotionally intelligent. Her future is bright. She has reached so many milestones. She won't require further services when she goes to pre-school; her physical, social and emotional abilities are all amazing." Miriam says she will miss the people who have been instrumental in Aria's care and progress -- and so glad they no longer will have to be. Listen to other EI success stories from parents at bit.ly/CCIEarlyChildhoodSupport.

Going above and beyond

"I love my work. I love helping people. It really has changed me for the better. It's not easy, but it's really rewarding work." – Bret Herrmann

Community Connections benefits daily from the thoughtful and dedicated engagement of 40 Direct Support Professionals (DSP) across our service area. DSPs like **Bret Herrmann**, a DSP of 10 years from Lewis, regularly goes above and beyond to ensure people with IDD can live the lives they choose.

Sondra Cordova, Adult Services Program Manager, describes Bret as "great at gaining clients' trust, never giving up, always being ready with a smile and something positive to offer everyone. He's amazing to work with – is happy to do whatever is asked of him -- and an advocate for all." DSPs give guidance and coaching, assist with daily living tasks, and advocate for inclusion throughout our communities. We could not do what we do without them!



Bret Herrmann, Direct Support Professional, Cortez

Connecting in the Community



Mollie Hanson, right, accepts La Plata County's proclamation from Chair Julie Westendorff.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Advocating for what she believes in is important to Mollie Hanson. On March 26, Mollie delivered a speech encouraging the La Plata County Commissioners to support Developmental Disability Awareness Month to enhance understanding and public awareness of community members living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Advocacy efforts like Mollie's and Marcie's resulted in La Plata, Montezuma and Archuleta

counties adopting proclamations, along with Durango, Ignacio, Bayfield, Cortez, Mancos and Pagosa Springs. The proclamations urge all citizens to support efforts to enable people with developmental disabilities to live full and productive lives of inclusion in our communities.



Marcie Fitzgerald, with daughter Dixie, at Mancos Town Hall.



Brian Bartlett, General Manager, Baymont by Wyndham of Cortez with his new bear friend.

16th Annual Festival of Trees

Thanks to over 60 sponsors, donors, volunteers and almost 1,000 visitors to our 3-day holiday event, the 2019 Festival of Trees raised \$35,000 that will support our community inclusion goal.

Enormous thanks to the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory that has donated a 3-foot bear and chocolate santa for two years running, and to *all* of our sponsors and raffle prize donors for helping to incentive public participation.

We know supporting our mission is what matters most but sweet gifts are nice "Thank You's" for people like Brian who employs people with disabilities and won this year's bear and santa.



Alexandra Rodriguez, CCI Board Member, awards Karen Harris Volunteer of the Year.

Annual Meeting & Community Celebration

Approximately 80 clients, staff and community partners enjoyed great company and home cooking prepared by Cortez staff at the 2019 annual meeting held August 28th in Cortez.

Karen Harris, who has volunteered for over 10 years teaching art classes to Cortez clients and curates an annual client art show at the Cortez Recreation Center, was among those recognized. Karen's class members love taking her classes. They give them a chance to express themselves through art and experience the many health benefits that creating art provides. Thanks for your years of dedication, Karen!

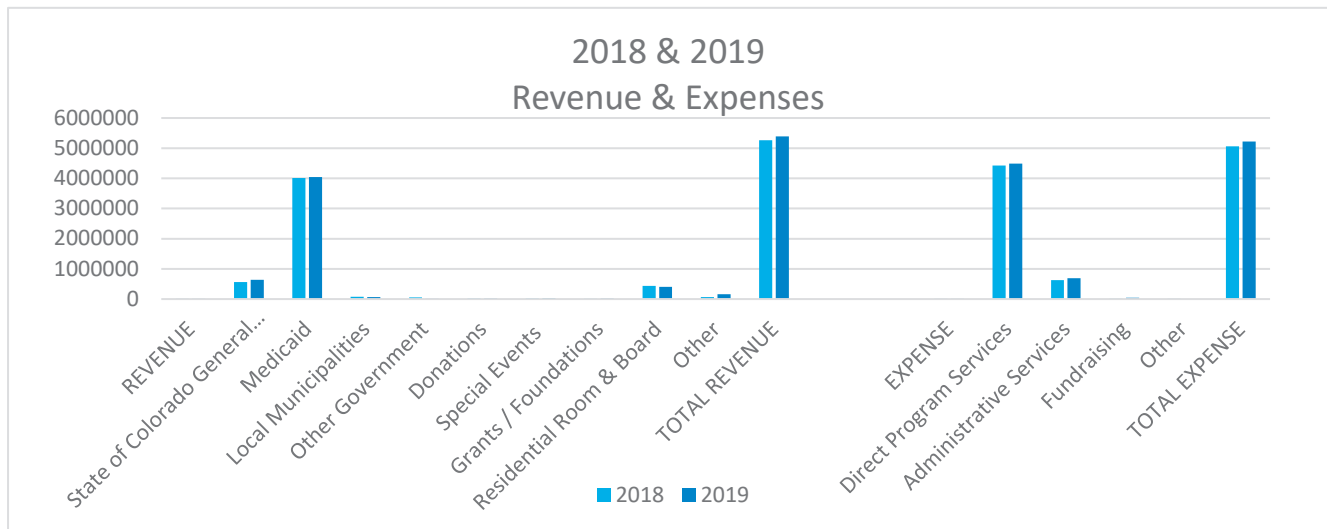
Our Resources

Almost 90% of Community Connections' funding comes from Medicaid and State of Colorado-funded programs that are important revenue for programs supporting the health and safety of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our communities.

As one of the largest not-for-profit organizations serving Southwest Colorado, Community Connections is proud to draw these financial resources to our region. We invest over \$4 million in state funding annually across five counties. In 2019, we employed an average of 85 staff.

Having this state funding means we do not have to raise \$4 million locally. Yet, it also has disadvantages, including the limited ability to help clients meet their social integration goals and the inability to fully cover our costs and to allow us to be a more competitive employer.

Government, private foundation, corporate and individual donations remain vital to our capacity to provide more person-centered services and be most responsive to the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our region.



REVENUE	2018	2019	% Total Revenue (2019)	EXPENSE	2018	2019	% Total Expense (2019)
State of Colorado General Fund	\$559,290.00	\$637,583.00	11.83%	Direct Program Services	\$ 4,424,555.00	\$ 4,493,629.00	86.01%
Medicaid	\$4,013,347.00	\$4,040,477.00	74.96%	Administrative Services	\$ 625,047.00	\$ 690,984.00	13.23%
Local Municipalities	\$73,000.00	\$67,950.00	1.26%	Fundraising	\$ 12,005.00	\$ 40,199.00	0.77%
Other Government	\$51,532.00	\$14,257.00	0.26%	Other	\$ 3,993.00	\$ -	
Donations	\$20,460.00	\$18,310.00	0.34%				
Special Events	\$26,162.00	\$36,056.00	0.67%				
Grants / Foundations	\$13,361.00	\$17,850.00	0.33%				
Residential Room & Board	\$434,079.00	\$399,964.00	7.42%				
Other	\$68,319.00	\$157,757.00	2.93%				
TOTAL REVENUE	\$5,259,550.00	\$5,390,204.00	100.00%	TOTAL EXPENSE	\$5,065,600.00	\$5,224,812.00	100.00%

Community Connections is a large, yet efficient, and nimble organization with 86% of our expenses spent on Direct Program Services, 13% on Administrative Services and 1% on Fundraising. Fully audited financial statements are available at communityconnectionsco.org.

All Aboard

Community Connections' ability to support the children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our region relies on the generosity of our donors.

In 2019, we are grateful to the following individuals, businesses, foundations and local governments:

\$10,000 and above

- City of Durango
- La Plata County
- Montezuma County
- Morehart Murphy Subaru/Subaru of America
- Summit Church (formerly First United Methodist Church)

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- United Way of Southwest Colorado

\$3000 - \$4999

- Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
- Kroegers Ace Hardware
- La Plata Electric Association Round Up Foundation
- Onward! A Legacy Foundation

\$1000 - \$2999

- Alpine Bank
- Archuleta County/Collaborative Management Program
- City of Cortez
- Cynthia and Dickerman Sadler
- David Rightley/Cross Canyon Engineering
- Empire Electric Association
- Jim and Chris Denier/Denbro Inc.
- John and Angie Wolgamott
- Richard Siegele
- Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory
- Town of Bayfield
- Town of Ignacio
- Town of Mancos
- Town of Pagosa Springs

\$500 - \$999

- 1st Southwest Bank
- Anonymous
- Boone Fund/Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
- Botanical Concepts
- Fasttrack Communications
- Janice and Keith Moen
- Pat and Janice Murphy
- Kelly Alsum
- Keyah Grande
- La Plata Electric Association
- Ming & Jerry Adams/Canyon of the Ancients Guest Ranch
- The Payroll Department
- Pediatric Associates of Durango

Up to \$499

- 1st Southwest Bank
- Alexandra Rodriguez
- Amazon Smiles
- The Alley House
- American General Media
- Andrea and Andy Reynolds
- Anne Kernan
- The ARC of Southwest Colorado
- Bartig-Small Family Fund/Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
- The Black Family
- Bob and Nancy Conrad
- Botanical Concepts
- Brand Central Station
- Bread Bakery
- Brookie Architecture & Planning
- Chapter FX P.E.O 01
- Chelsea Farmer



The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad supports Community Connections' Festival of Trees. "It is one of the most fantastic events of the entire holiday season," says Al Harper, Owner & CEO, Learn more about the people the event benefits at bit.ly/CCIFOT.

- Christa Bricker
- CJs Diner
- Coca Cola of Durango
- Colorado Gives/Community First Foundation
- CO West Insurance
- Creature Comforts
- Courtney Harshberger
- Dance in the Rockies
- David Kramer
- David and Terry Clark
- Deanne Lee
- Deb Gorrell
- Denise and Christy Sadler
- Derailed Pour House
- Dominos
- Durango Autoworks
- Durango Furniture & Mattress
- Durango Joes
- Fast Signs
- Four Corners Broadcasting
- Four Corners TRAVEL HOST Magazine
- FredrickZink & Associates
- Furda-Lynch Family
- Glass & Glass Bodywork
- Grenadier Financial
- Hillary Dosch
- Home Depot
- James Mills
- Jessica Rollins
- The Juniper School
- Jo Bob & Abbi/The Wells Group
- Kicki Searfus
- Kirk Coy
- Kiva Montessori School
- The Kroger Company
- Leeder Construction
- Lone Spur Café - Durango
- Lou and Gay Kiene
- The Mail Room's Copy Center
- Massage Intervention
- Maynes, Bradford, Shipp and Sheffel
- Overlook Hot Springs
- Pathfinder Chiropractic
- RiverGate Lofts
- Roger and Marjorie Wolf
- Sachs Construction
- Salye Stein
- San Juan Angler
- San Juan Basin Public Health Department
- San Juan County Historical Society
- Sarah and Cory Kahn
- Scapegoat Landscaping
- Seasons Rotisserie & Grill
- SKA Brewing Company
- Soundtraxx
- Starbucks Coffee Company
- Star Liquors
- Stonefish Sushi
- Susie Herb
- Sutcliffe Vineyards
- Tim and Susan Kroes
- TRIAD EAP
- Vectra Bank
- Yusef Ben-Masaud
- Worldpay
- Zuberfizz