



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

**There's More to
Us...**

**A year at
Community
Connections**



Connect With Us!

(970) 259-2464 | cci@cci-colorado.org

www.communityconnectionsco.org

2017

Annual Report

More to Us...Our Leadership

Dear Friends,

2017 held its usual challenges for us, including serious threats to Medicaid funding, developing plans to separate case management from direct services to comply with federal mandates, and saying good-bye to friends and colleagues who have moved on to new adventures. It was also a great year of celebrations. A couple of the individuals who participated in our programs shared their success on pages 3-4, and these are just a sample of the many personal achievements we've witnessed. We have celebrated great accomplishments as an agency as well, including:



- Implementing Go4It initiative to improve functional outcomes for early intervention families
- Restructuring family support to allocate funds for a respite recruiter and family networking events
- Enrolling 7 new clients into adult services and facilitating support services for 3 clients experiencing emergency situations
- Improving our onboarding process for new employees
- Implementing an Employee Assistance Program to support our team's well-being
- Establishing an internal trainer for Person-Centered Thinking and beginning to implement PCT tools throughout the company
- Receiving Runner-Up for Nonprofit of the Year from readers of the Durango Herald
- Recognized for Excellence in Principles and Practices by the Colorado Nonprofit Association

We owe all of our success to our hard-working staff, our 250 program participants, and our supportive communities. Thanks, Southwest Colorado!

Tara Kiene, President/CEO

To Our Communities:

Client safety, support and self-determination continue as the main focus of staff and board members at Community Connections, Inc. These do not change from year to year, but achieving them, meeting our funding needs and complying with voluminous regulations present new challenges each year.

During the past year our organization expanded our clients' immersion into their communities, met our goal of having a two month reserve of operating funds and increased our clients' ability to make their own life choices.

Community Connections, Inc. is in the unique situation of being a rural Community Centered Board and operating in an area where living expenses are very high. Community Connections, Inc. has an excellent team of direct support professionals working with our clients and an excellent management team stretching our dollars for maximum usage.

Community Connections, Inc. enjoys good relations with our local, state, and federal officials and appreciates their mandate to protect our funding.

Speaking for the Board of Directors, it is our privilege to serve and interact with our clients and staff. We are all genuinely committed to keeping Community Connections, Inc. successful.

Jim DeNior, Board Chair

More to Us...Our Purpose

Background

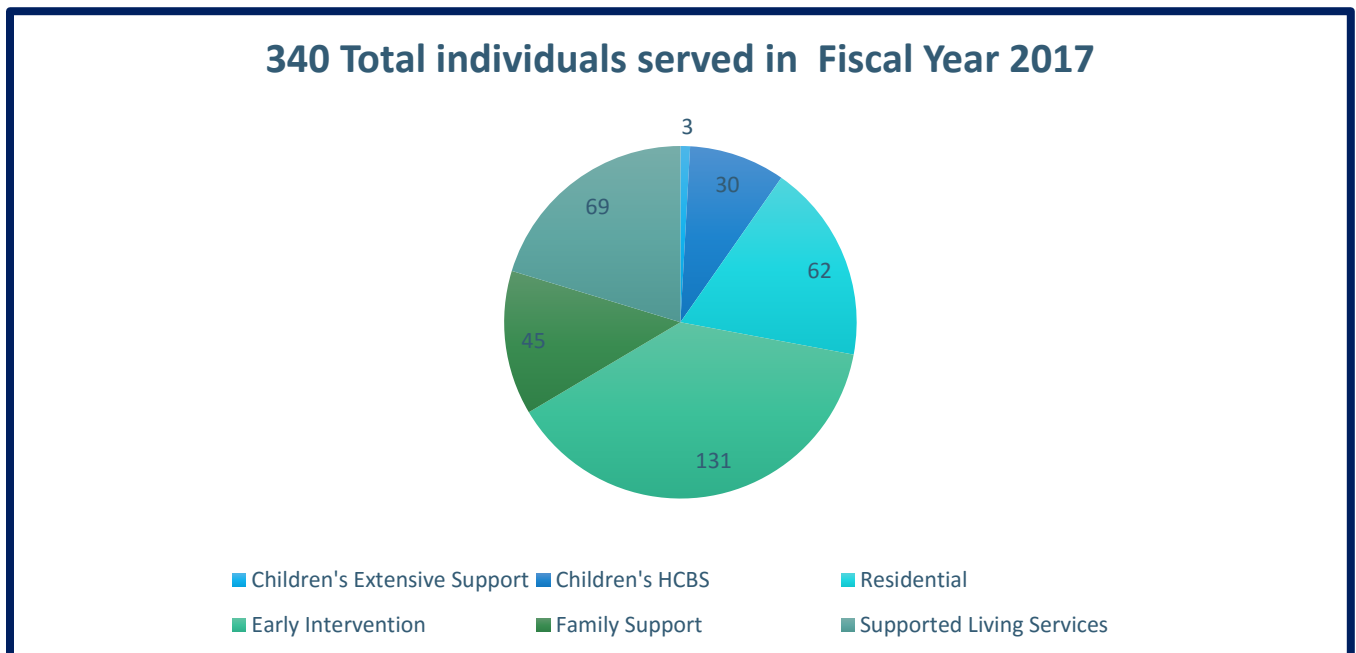
Community Connections, Inc. (CCI) was founded in 1985 as the Community Centered Board serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in southwest Colorado (Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan Counties). The de-institutionalization movement was still in its infancy even then, and many individuals were not moved from the Regional Centers back into their communities until the 1990's. The families, caregivers and committed professionals who started 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 our 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 child care setting, and adults live and work in the community rather than being in segregated sheltered workshops and group homes.

Mission

The mission of Community Connections, Inc. 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 developmental disabilities have the same opportunities as other community members.

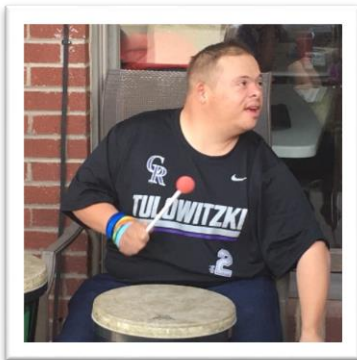


More to Us...Our Programs



Adult Services (Residential and Supported Living Services)

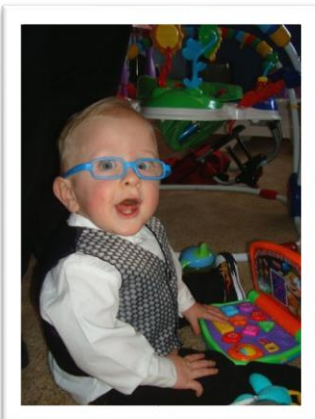
These programs serve a combined total of 130 individuals across the five county region served by CCI. Participants in residential services have access to 24-hour supports either in their own home or in the home of a paid provider. SLS participants often live independently or with family, but need some of the other supports available through IDD services: money management, grocery shopping, cooking meals, help with hygiene, support at their jobs, mentorship, community engagement, respite and assistive technology.



Family Support

The goal of the family support program is to relieve some of the pressures on families who are caring for a loved one with IDD in their homes, thereby avoiding costly and distressing out-of-home placements. Families receive a monthly reimbursement for expenses associated with the disability. Families access Family Support for things like respite, transportation to medical specialists, special equipment, medical treatments and supplements not covered by insurance, and the costs to attend workshops and conferences to

learn more about their child's disability. In 2017, 100% of individuals with disabilities participating in the program stayed in their family home. Approximately 35 families utilize Family Support.



Early Intervention

EI serves families of children under three who are experiencing delays in development. Therapists work directly with family members or other caregivers on a regular, ongoing basis to give them the skills to support their child's development. Nationally, early intervention 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 EI frequently (either by aging out at 3 or by reaching their developmental goals), the number in services fluctuates, but the program averages over 100 kids per year. Evaluations from families applaud the

program's ability to help parents understand their rights, communicate their children's needs and help their children develop and learn.

More to Us...Our Stories



I am a Writer

Life Changes

by Carol, Service Participant since 2015

My name is Carol Cannistra. I'm outgoing, funny, and caring. I like to be sure everyone is taken care of. I like to be fair to others and it feels good when it's done to me. I can do anything I put my mind to.

I live with Kathy, my host home provider through Community Connections, and my friends Clara and Wyatt. I live in a two story house. In the summer I love to sit outside and watch the birds and butterflies. This will be my second Christmas with Kathy.

I'm making plastic canvas boxes. One has an eagle on all four sides with clouds, houses and pink borders. One has a toy store display window with a teddy bear and a Christmas tree. I'm putting them on my plastic book case in my room so it will be neat and decorative.

I'm learning how to use my computer. I write journals and stories. I like to sew. I'm embroidering quilt squares. My friend Dixon is helping sew it together. I'm going to put it on my canopy bed.

I made angels out of Popsicle sticks. I saw the pattern on my phone. I can answer my phone and take pictures. My host home provider Kathy got me Google so I can get on the internet.

I like to paint things. Before I got my canopy bed I painted my head board white. When I moved into a bigger room Kathy's son Matt put my bed and all my white furniture together. I brought it all when I moved here from California. I purchased it and painted it myself. I also bought a table and drapes.

I work at *Moose and More*. I make hard recipes and everything turns out great. I make cookies, pies, and cakes. I have a job coach who takes me to work and brings me home. She helps me cut the hard butter and weighs it for me.

I took care of my mom and dad. Mom has Alzheimer's and now she lives in an assisted living facility. They also live in Colorado. They are very well taken care of.

I named my parakeets after my mom. Elaine turned out to be male! My other parakeet, Dalbey is still too young to tell. I laugh and say he might turn out being female and laying eggs! Kathy bought me Dalbey and a bigger cage.

I celebrated my sixty birthday. The theme was the fifties. I made records out of plastic canvas. I wore a pink poodle skirt. When I danced with Dalbey my skirt twirled. I'm a good dancer and enjoy it. Kathy bought me a fifties-themed cake and Dalbey blew up balloons. I invited my friends from Pine Street.

Kathy brought home a puppy. His name is Brutus. The puppy goes everywhere with us. Today he's going to be with Dalbey. He belongs to Dalbey but when Dalbey is on the road trucking Brutus stays with us.

I came to Colorado to say my last name correctly. John told me it means basket weaver. My dad is Italian and pronounced it the American way. He thought people thought he had ties with the Mafia. Crazy, right? Uff Dah! (which means, "good grief!")

More to Us...Our Stories

Arlo's story

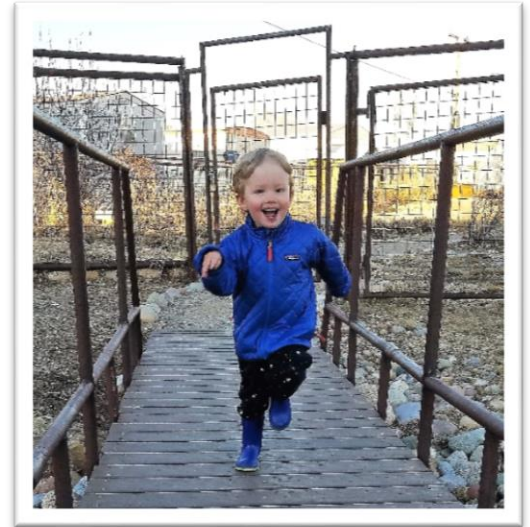
My birth was exciting! I was born breech after a healthy pregnancy. At my 6-week well child checkup, my pediatrician suggested an ultrasound. This scan discovered a shallow hip connection, which means my thighbone didn't connect well in my hip socket. I wasn't crawling at 9 months, and my doctor referred us to the early intervention program at Community Connections.

The team at Community Connections identified delays in the development of my gross (big) muscles and sensory issues. They brought to our attention several things that my mom and pediatrician did not notice. I started working with two experts in early intervention, Susan and Maggie. My team worked with me to do practical exercises through play. They taught my mom and me how to continue these exercises at home. I love both practices and look forward to each visit. They make everything so much fun!

The whole crew was amazing. They are so nice and kind. They took extra time to answer all the questions my mom had. Susan and Maggie guided my family and friends so they could participate in supporting me in my development. My mom loves the whole family approach and all the resources they shared with us. I love that they were fun, and I learned how to do cool stuff.

Now I'm almost three and I've graduated out of early intervention. Because of my progress, I do not qualify for services anymore. Thanks to this program, I am up to speed. My favorite things are to be read to, pretend play, trains, painting, playing with my buddy Wyatt, and being active outdoors.

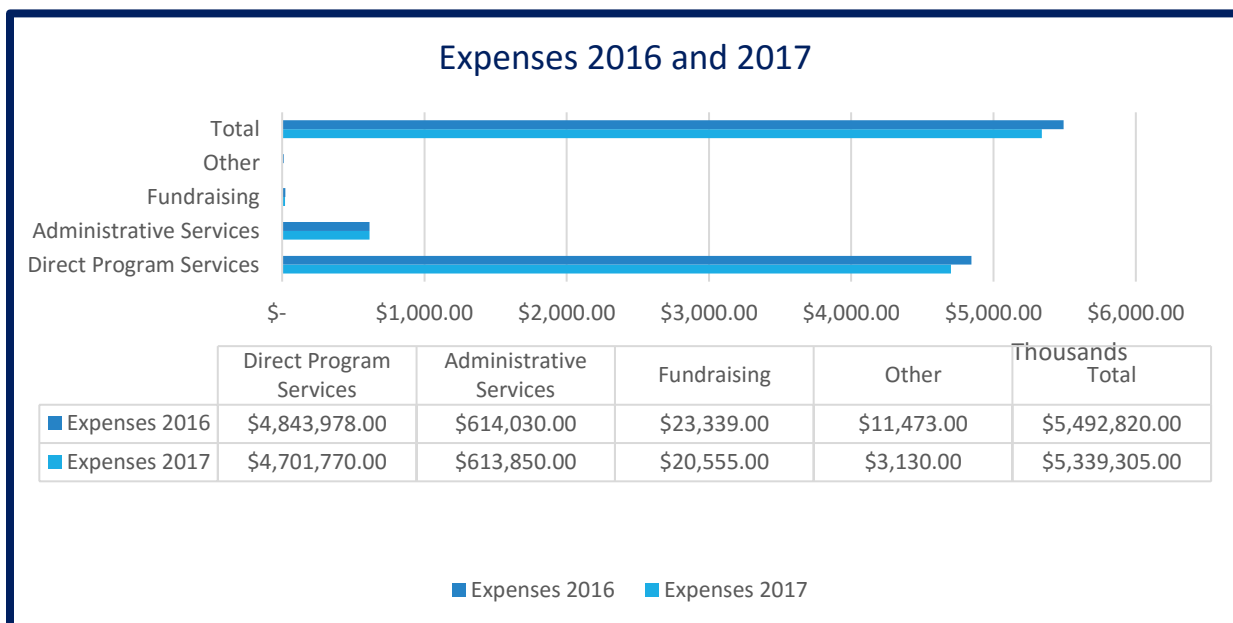
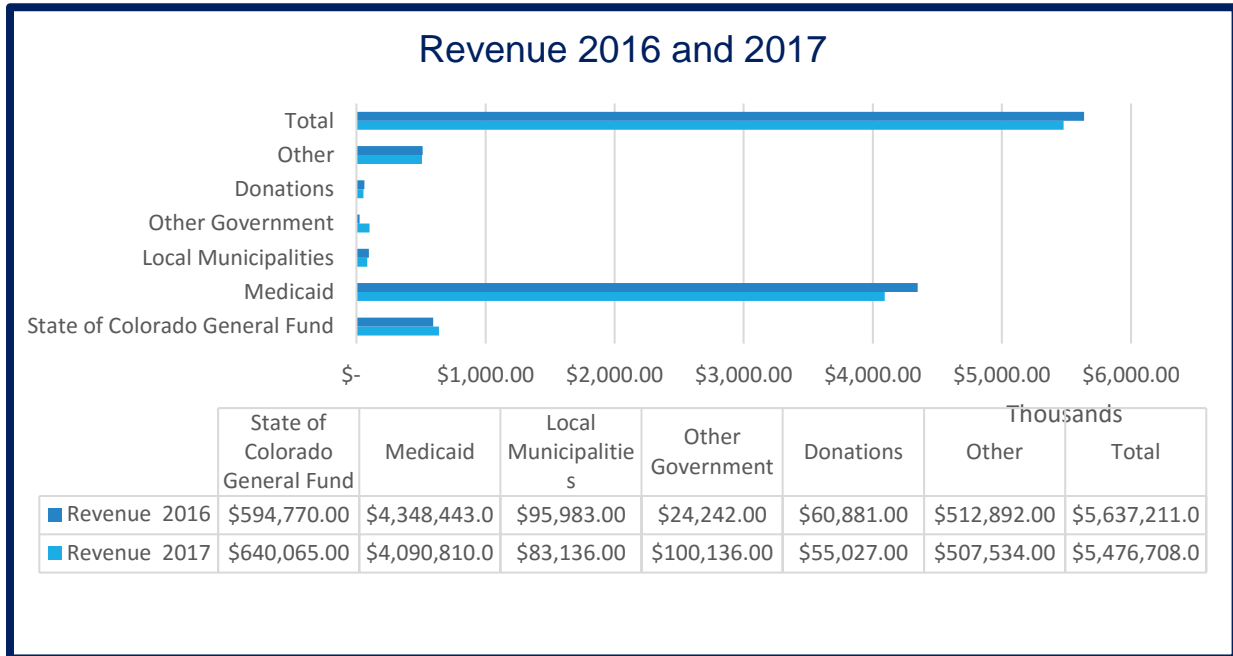
A very special thank you to my mom, Susan and Maggie for encouraging me and supporting my success!



I am absolute vitality!

More to Us... Our Resources

75% of Community Connections funding comes from Medicaid programs. Our Medicaid funding benefits us because we don't have to raise the \$4 million locally. However, our use of Medicaid funding has disadvantages as well, including the limited ability to be flexible in serving our local communities and the inability to set rates for services to support us to be a competitive employer. Local and private funds and donations help us provide more person-centered services and be more responsive to the needs of the communities of Southwest Colorado.



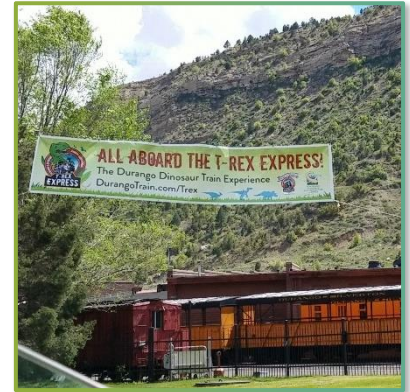
Full audited financials are available on our website at www.communityconnectionsco.org

More to Us...Our Supporters

Our ability to respond to the needs of our local communities relies on the support of donors like you! Donations are easy to make online through our website at www.communityconnectionsco.org or [here](#).

Donate by mail: *Community Connections, 281 Sawyer Dr., Ste 200, Durango, CO 81303*

Thanks to the companies and individuals who supported our mission this year.



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