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**2017 Quarter 3 Report  
Intellectual and Developmental Disability  
Services Supported by  
Denver Mill Levy Funding**

*Working Together for Denver*

July 1, 2017 – September 30, 2017

# Introduction

Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) provides case management and direct services to individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in Denver County and surrounding communities. RMHS has a variety of funding sources for organizational programs that utilize Mill Levy funds to increase services and access to opportunities for individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in Denver County.

**Table 1: 2017 Year-to-Date Results for Denver Mill Levy**

Indicators	2017 Quarter 1	2017 Quarter 2	2017 Quarter 3
Total Mill Levy Funds <i>(YTD: \$7.3M)</i>	\$1,845,531.33	\$2,785,379.13	\$2,702,377.46
Total number of services for individuals (individuals may be counted in more than one area)	4,942	5,966	6,724
Total number of Organizations/Persons who provided services and supports funded by Mill Levy	531	618	682

## RMHS' Role as a Community Centered Board

RMHS is the designated Community Centered Board (CCB) for the City and County of Denver. CCBs determine eligibility of I/DD individuals within respected counties, serve as the single point of entry for persons to receive services and supports under section 25.5-10, C.R.S., and provide authorized services and supports to persons either directly or under contract from other service agencies.

## 2017 Year-to-Date

During the first nine months of 2017, Mill Levy funding has been utilized by a variety of community agencies for an ever-increasing number of services to meet individual's needs. In some cases, Mill Levy funding was used to address system gaps and program service limitations of other funding sources, such as Medicaid. In a parallel effort, RMHS has been expanding its reach beyond Medicaid services by partnering with community agencies to fund new and innovative projects and services to meet individuals' needs, defined in our DHS contract as 'Special Project Funds'.

## Mill Levy Management

RMHS continues to expand its program for the distribution of Denver Mill Levy funding, striving to ensure that Mill Levy funds:

- Meet people's health and safety needs
- Support individuals' self-determination
- Provide benefits in a quantifiable way

The intended goal of Denver Mill Levy dollars is to provide for services and supports to benefit children and adults in Denver's intellectual and developmental disabilities community. RMHS recognizes the importance of tracking programmatic intent and outcomes for the success of the program's development. In all 2017 Mill Levy reports, RMHS is highlighting its efforts to design and implement an effective program as a compassionate and accountable steward of funds intended for Denver residents with I/DD. Through Mill Levy, we are Working Together for Denver.

RMHS utilizes a two-pronged approach to distribute funds for services and supports:

- **Individual Requests:** Residents of Denver with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities access supports and services by contacting their Service Coordinator or submitting a request directly through the RMHS website. **From January-September 2017, RMHS received 2,077 requests.** The average number of requests received per month continues to increase:
  - 207/month in Quarter 1
  - 227/month in Quarter 2
  - 258/month in Quarter 3
- **Community Agency Requests:** Community agencies serving Denver residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities access funds to develop, implement and manage new community projects or services. These organizations submit a proposal directly through the RMHS website or can be identified through a client's service plan. **From January-September 2017, RMHS has committed contracts or is in the process of contracting with 56 community agencies to increase capacity and access of services to Denver residents with I/DD, of those 18 have expended funds through the third quarter 2017.** See Appendix A for a complete list of current agencies and new projects.

## Individual Requests

RMHS's Mill Levy program is structured to address seven priorities, as identified by stakeholders and accepted by our stakeholder committee:

1. **Basic Needs/Environmental Supports:** Meeting individual's/family's needs such as housing, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, and furniture or clothing expenses.
2. **Behavioral/Mental health:** Improving individuals' access to quality supports.
3. **Client Education and Increasing Independence:** Providing opportunities for individuals to learn, grow and increase self-determination over their lives.
4. **Medical/Dental:** Addressing specialized needs.
5. **Social/Recreational:** Increasing opportunities and access.
6. **Training and Support:** Providing services to assist caregivers, providers, families, and the general public.
7. **System Gaps within the I/DD system and across other systems:** Addressing areas such as the transition out of foster care, provision of music therapy, testing for I/DD eligibility, and services beyond those covered by Medicaid or other funders. A primary service in this priority area is respite care.

Every individual request is reviewed by RMHS staff in accordance with the contract to ensure appropriateness to an individual's needs before the facilitation of any payment. Requests have been denied for reasons such as the individual not residing in Denver or the availability of other resources to fund the service or item (such as Medicaid or private insurance). Some highlights include:

- 98% of Individual Requests have been approved YTD
- Request approvals are conducted within 2 business day

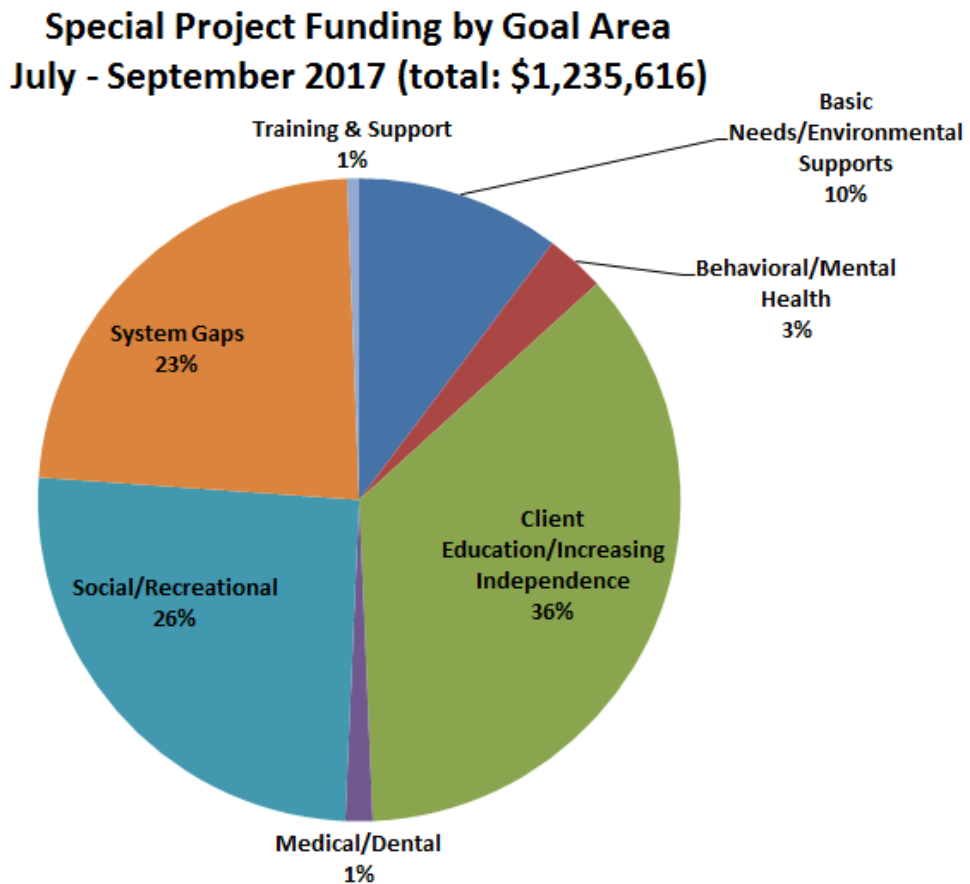
During this reporting period, RMHS received 774 individual requests for a multitude of services, see Table 2 for additional detail regarding the specific services and supports that were funded utilizing Mill Levy Funds.

## Table 2: Individual Request Distribution by Priority

July – September 2017 Special Project Funds

Priority	Number of providers/family members/ organizations paid	Transaction Amounts
<b>Basic Needs/Environmental Supports</b>		
Assistive Technology	16	\$35,763.10
Rent/Housing Stability	14	\$14,793.94
Client Utilities	4	\$1,615.29
Home Accessibility Adaptations	11	\$34,898.62
Medical & Client Care Supplies	20	\$16,844.55
Other/Other Professional Services	4	\$3,007.00
Specialized Med Equip/Wheelchair	3	\$5,372.98
Transportation	12	\$14,630.60
<b>Behavioral/Mental Health</b>		
Behavioral Services (All)	4	\$17,081.07
Other/Other Professional Services	15	\$18,816.00
<b>Client Education/Increasing Independence</b>		
Behavioral Services (All)	1	\$6,000.00
Vocational Services	7	\$75,883.31
Medical & Client Care Supplies	4	\$2,631.93
Other/Other Professional Services	49	\$360,970.70
Recreational Activities	1	\$225.00
<b>Medical/Dental</b>		
Dental	3	\$7,826.00
Medical & Client Care Supplies	5	\$1,953.64
Medical Care	14	\$6,954.90
Specialized Med Equip/Wheelchair	1	\$159.99
<b>Social/Recreational</b>		
Other/Other Professional Services	4	\$14,068.00
Other Event Expenses	3	\$5,700.90
Recreational Activities	111	\$292,798.95
<b>System Gaps</b>		
Music Therapy	1	\$1,198.52
Other/Other Professional Services	32	\$24,919.00
Respite	334	\$263,994.28
<b>Training &amp; Support</b>		
Interpretation Services	1	\$399.00
Other/Other Professional Services	2	\$217.50
Other Event Expenses	1	\$5,000.00
Parent Ed/Support	6	\$1,891.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>\$1,235,615.77</b>

The following pie chart illustrates the percentage distribution of Mill Levy Special Projects funds by priority.



RMHS anticipates the Individual Requests component of Mill Levy funds will continue to significantly expand over the coming months and years, increasing the amount and variety of services available to individuals with I/DD in Denver. Beginning in August 2017, as an individual's needs are assessed on a periodic basis by their Service Coordinator, Mill Levy funded services will be utilized, when appropriate, to meet their needs. Moreover, individuals not currently served by RMHS can access Mill-Levy-funded services through our website at: <https://www.rmhumanservices.org/individualsfamilies>.

## Community Agency Requests

During this reporting period, RMHS distributed Mill Levy funds to 24 community agencies. Community agencies access mill levy funding by completing an application through the RMHS website at: <https://www.rmhumanservices.org/community-partners>, or can be identified through an individual's service plan. Every community agency's proposal is evaluated by Mill Levy Management staff in accordance with the contract with DDHS to ensure appropriateness in accordance with the contract with DHS before proposals are accepted, contracts are signed, and any payment is made. There are many required components of a proposal for Mill Levy Funds, including:

- Proposed program serves Denver residents with I/DD
- Proposed program's Need Statement is clear—the proposed program and its intent is fully understood
- The proposed program's goals align with one or more of the seven identified goal areas

- The proposal lists clear, realistic, measurable objectives that address an identified community need directly impacting Denver’s Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities community
- The proposal describes implementation steps
- The proposal clearly identifies how the items in the budget will be used to further the project goals
- The proposal includes distinct means to evaluate the difference between outputs and outcomes, to measure and demonstrate the effectiveness of funded projects

Community agencies have been approved once their program proposal adequately addresses these components, and as of September 30, 2017 RMHS has approved 97% of program proposals. RMHS’s Mill Levy program is structured to address seven priorities, as identified through stakeholders and approved by our stakeholder committee.

## Barriers

### Community Agencies

RMHS received 14 new inquiries from community agencies in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2017. Six of those chose to submit proposals while the remaining eight have elected to wait until a contract commitment can be made past December 31<sup>st</sup>. A significant barrier to issuing funding to more community agencies has been the lack of an executed contract. RMHS currently does not have the authorization to commit funding past December 31, 2017.

### Transportation

Transportation is a known barrier for people with I/DD in Denver limiting access not only typical I/DD services, but new Mill Levy-funded services and other community resources in general. This issue limits the independence and quality of life for people with I/DD in Denver. RMHS has received multiple requests from community agencies for funding to purchase wheelchair accessible vehicles to help in addressing the transportation barriers many individuals face. Through September 2017, RMHS has received nine such requests. Due to legal and liability details that need to be worked out between RMHS and DDHS, van requests are not able to be approved at this time. Nevertheless, RMHS continues to pursue solutions to transportation barriers for individuals.

### Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health

Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health services includes a wide variety of health-related services to ensure the health and well-being of individuals with I/DD. Combined, approximately 4% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been utilized toward these two project areas. RMHS stakeholders cited these types of services as a significant need, and the number of requests to date has not shown the demand for these services expected based on stakeholder feedback. RMHS is continuing to work with the Community Advisory Council and other community stakeholders to refocus outreach efforts to ensure the community’s needs are being met in this area.

## Program Outcomes

In 2017 RMHS has implemented systems to provide Mill Levy funding directly to individuals, families, and caregivers who support Denver residents. These services are as diverse and unique as necessary to meet the individual’s needs. RMHS is committed to meeting the unique individualized needs as requested by

individuals, families, others and to community agencies to deliver services and/or increase capacity of community agencies to support the Denver residents with I/DD.

With seven areas of priority and more than 6700 services delivered in 2017, Denver residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities have benefited in new services, new opportunities, and improved supports because of the transformation in the way that RMHS manages Mill Levy funding. Under each priority area there are specific outcomes that have been achieved by services delivered. For more detailed information on outcomes by priority, please see Appendix B.

**Table 3: 2017 Third Quarter Results for Denver Mill Levy**

Indicators	2017 Quarter 3
Total Mill Levy Funds <i>(YTD: \$7.3M)</i>	\$2,702,377.46
Total number of services for individuals (individuals may be counted in more than one area)	6,724
Total number of Organizations/Persons who provided services funded by Mill Levy	682

Through three quarters of 2017, Denver County Mill Levy funding has made considerable progress in demonstrating positive outcomes in three primary areas for individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities:

1. Building Capacity of New Programs and Services
2. Improved Quality of Life
3. Increased Independence

### **Building Capacity of New Programs and Services**

Mill Levy funding for the first three quarters of 2017 has been committed for the implementation of 35 new programs and services through community agencies. As a result, the services provided by community agencies is expanding to meet the wholistic needs of Denver residents with I/DD. On one end of the spectrum, homelessness affects individuals from all walks of life. On the other end, employment and enrichment opportunities have not always existed or been available to meet the needs of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Mill levy funding has directly contributed to building the capacity of service agencies in Denver to meet this wide variety of needs. Several outcomes to highlight includes:

1. **Implementation of program to address homelessness in the I/DD population.** The Homelessness Project, a collaboration of Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities, and Mission Supports began a new program to locate individuals with or suspected to have intellectual/developmental disabilities that are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. The program made the transition from development to implementation phase, and two individuals have been served in the first month of operation. It is also expected that this program will produce future information about the scope of the homelessness resources required to end homelessness in this community.
2. **42 individuals received trade skill training and employment opportunities.** Two different community organizations have used Mill Levy funding to focus on increasing employment opportunities. T.A.C.T-Teaching the Autism Community Trades moved from program and curriculum development to

implementation in August 2017. Five students from Denver are enrolled in one of three for credit classes: Computer Science, Carpenter’s apprentice and Automotive Service Technology. The Possibility Pool is a collaboration of Goodwill, Jewish Family Services, and The Rhythm Within to fill in gaps in employment services in a more accessible and comprehensive way specific to the needs of individuals living in the City and County of Denver. The program focuses on hands-on curriculum, soft skills, and job readiness training for individuals, families and caregivers, in a holistic manner than what has been traditionally government or small agency jobs. 38 individuals have benefitted from this the early development of this project in the third quarter of 2017.

3. **Implementation and expansion of a yoga program to benefit the health and well-being of 40 individuals with I/DD.** As a new project added during the third quarter, Guided by Humanity Yoga was created to provide inclusive and accessible yoga opportunities for the Denver residents with I/DD. They have hosted classes four times a week, with 40 participants during the reporting period. They have also collaborated with other yoga studios to provide integrated yoga classes to support inclusivity of I/DD individuals, as well has partnered to host a panel discussing inclusivity in the yoga community. The program manager is developing a survey mechanism to measure the short and long-term outcomes to individuals who participant in yoga.

## Improved Quality of Life

Mill Levy funding for the first three quarters of 2017 has been utilized in a significant way to improve the quality of life of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Many of the individuals served by Rocky Mountain Human Services receive funding and assistance with their needs through Medicaid. Medicaid funding often comes with restrictions and limitations, and many times does not meet an individual’s holistic needs. Stakeholder feedback to Rocky Mountain Human Services has indicated that there are gaps in current systems and programs supporting people with I/DD related to recreational opportunities, health and fitness, and community integration. Mill Levy funding has been a significant resource to fill in the gaps and provide tangible services that improve quality of life. Many outcomes to highlight includes:

1. **334 individuals received respite care services, which benefits the caregivers and family members of individuals receiving services.** There is significant literature available that demonstrates the positive effects that respite care brings to the life of a caregiver. Over time, without relief and assistance, caregiving can take a mental and physical toll. The Family Caregiver Alliance reports that 40 to 70 percent of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression. The Center on Aging Society adds that 1 in 10 family caregivers report that their responsibilities have caused their physical health to worsen<sup>1</sup>.

This quarter, RMHS sent out a survey to the caregivers who had received funds for respite, receiving more than 40% of the anonymous surveys (more than 130) in return.

Nearly half (49%) of survey respondents indicated they spend more than 12 waking hours per day caring for their family member. The importance of respite care in managing the stress of caregiving was reinforced by the survey responses. Caregivers were asked to rate 5 items on a scale of 1-4.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.comfortkeepers.com/home/info-center/respite-care/importance-of-respite-relief-for-family-caregivers>



Respite services funded by Mill Levy were overwhelmingly viewed as positive and helpful by caregivers. For four measures, survey respondents voiced an average response score of 3.65. For the first four measures, caregivers responded that Mill Levy respite was closer to being categorized as extremely helpful in:

1. Managing their emotional or physical stress
2. Feeling less financial hardship
3. Finding more time for themselves
4. Improving relationships with family/friends

A fifth measure received a slightly lower average response score of 3.4, categorizing respite care as closer to moderately helpful in:

5. Missing less time at work and/or managing work stress.

This last measure was an important piece of information to learn. It tells RMHS that respite care is being primarily used by caregivers as a break from their caregiving duties to maintain their health and well-being, and not as much to continue balancing work and caregiving burdens. RMHS will incorporate this knowledge in pursuing Mill Levy Respite Providers who have increased capacity to serve the community on nights and weekends.

2. **708 individuals benefited from local recreational/social and artistic opportunities.** This includes Denver Parks and Recreation Center Annual Memberships, and local classes and trips with Activity Options, Active Community Access, Arts & Community Exploration and other community agencies. Participants of recreational and social opportunities have benefitted from increased inclusion, independence, social skills and quality of life.
3. **21 individuals benefited from travel opportunities.** Both StellarCare and the Wayfaring Band have focused on longer-term travel itineraries to increase inclusion and life experience opportunities. Follow-up surveys from participants report:
  - An increase in life experiences, increase in socialization and a decrease in stress levels after having returned home.
  - Increased choice-making and independence
  - Opportunities to feel challenged and stimulated
  - Increased sense of belonging
  - Increased understanding of and opportunities to practice independent living skills
  - Place-based learning opportunities

## Increased Independence

Mill Levy funding for the first three quarters of 2017 has been utilized for community agency programs and services that are aimed at increasing the independence of Denver residents with I/DD. This can take multiple forms, from training and education to the use of technology and tools. The basic nature of increasing independence is similar to an investment. The skills developed and confidence gained has a much longer pay back for the individual, including less reliance on formal support systems. Mill levy funding has promoted outcomes in increasing independence through the follow highlights:

1. **115 individuals received a tablet computer to utilize technology.** AbleLink Technologies has designed applications for Denver residents with I/DD to increase independence with skills like

cooking, budgeting, personal hygiene, safely navigating the community, and making a schedule. Nine training and equipment deployment sessions were held in the third quarter. Initial reactions from participants and accompanying caregivers have been overwhelmingly positive. RMHS Staff are working with AbleLink Technologies to implement a survey instrument that will obtain information on participant outcomes from using the assistive technology applications.

2. **70 individuals participated in training to improve their ability to understand and manage finances.** Financial Health Institute (FHI) is focused on providing an individual with the skills to improve their financial health. In the third quarter, FHI developed program curriculum, marketing materials and hosted a series of educational trainings on how to manage finances on a limited income.
  - Program participants were tracking with a positive on-task participation rates.
  - Feedback from trainings included participants expressing their interest in participating in more classes and staff at the host agencies reporting that customers were engaged and that staff appreciated the opportunity for customers to attend.
  - FHI is implementing outcome measures for customers and their support systems to measure their development of increased financial health and decreased financial stress.
  
3. **40 individuals participated in entrepreneurial education to explore their business ideas and plans.** Celebrate EDU provides curriculum on how to create and implement a business plan. Celebrate EDU is shifting perceptions of family members, service providers, and staff providers about the possibilities that entrepreneurship provides for people with I/DD. During this quarter, 40 individuals with I/DD were impacted through the projects. Survey results that we received from the program's attendees reported:
  - 83% say that it shifted their perception about the viability of entrepreneurship for individuals with I/DD
  - 89% report that their clients will benefit from entrepreneurial education

# Mill Levy Expenditures

The remainder of funds is utilized by RMHS to provide direct services that are not otherwise reimbursable by other funding streams. RMHS delivers services through multiple programs serving individuals of Denver residents with I/DD in different capacities. Mill Levy expenditures by program area are detailed in Table 4 and described below.

**Table 4: 2017 Mill Levy Expenditures by Quarter<sup>2</sup>**

Mill Levy Program Areas	Q1 2017 Expenditures	Q2 2017 Expenditures	Q3 2017 Expenditures	2017 Year to Date Total
Early Intervention	\$172,422.16	\$138,319.62	\$190,877.28	\$501,619.06
Family Support and Respite Care	\$178,096.86	\$165,208.11	\$191,858.72	\$535,163.69
Life Essentials Provider Network	\$169,844.66	\$256,430.39	\$138,831.32	\$565,106.37
Comprehensive Residential Services	\$56,437.13	\$132,397.95	\$25,539.71	\$214,374.79
Service Coordination	\$301,283.47	\$385,022.89	\$353,479.21	\$1,039,785.57
Assessment and Consultation Team	\$168,359.40	\$471,311.96	\$300,554.67	\$940,226.03
Behavioral Health	\$189,039.44	\$108,752.79	\$117,446.50	\$415,238.73
Community Outreach and Communications	\$43,852.25	\$55,357.26	\$13,029.57	\$112,239.08
Special Project Funds	\$566,195.96	\$1,072,578.16	\$1,370,760.48	\$3,009,534.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,845,531.33</b>	<b>\$2,785,379.13</b>	<b>\$2,702,377.46</b>	<b>\$7,333,287.92</b>

## Early Intervention (EI) Services

The Early Intervention program provides eligible infants and toddlers and their families with services and supports to enhance child development in the areas of cognition, speech, communication, physical development, motor development, vision, hearing, social or emotional development, and self-help skills. Early Intervention is a public health entitlement program and therefore does not have a waitlist.

The two primary services that are performed for Early Intervention (EI) Services are case management and direct services, which includes clinical assessments as well as therapies to address identified needs. Funding for these services includes State funds, Medicaid, and private insurance. In the EI program for children with Medicaid, the reimbursement for case management is programmatically capped at 60 hours annually. Moreover, a Community Centered Board is required to pay for any identified therapy needs of individuals in this program. In both instances, when an eligible infant and toddler needs more case management or therapies than is reimbursed through existing EI funding, Mill Levy funding is utilized to support that individuals' needs. During this reporting period, a total of 1,314 individuals were served in this program. Over 90% of the children served in Early Intervention receive additional case management services funded through the Mill Levy to ensure services are in place and to monitor children's health and safety. Without Mill Levy Funding, RMHS would not be as responsive to these individuals' needs from a case management or therapeutic intervention standpoint.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers are preliminary and subject to audit adjustment. Staffing expenses are included.

## Family Service and Supports Program and Respite Care (FSSP)

FSSP is a partnership between families and publicly funded supports. The individual's and family's circumstances and needs are utilized to determine the appropriate types of services or supports which can best assist a family with the least disruption to the family lifestyle. In the FSSP program, State funding covers direct services and case management activities, both of which are capped contractually to Community Centered Boards. When an individual on FSSP needs more case management or direct services than is reimbursed through current funding programs, Mill Levy Funding is utilized to supplement that individual's needs. During this reporting period, 997 individuals were served in this program. Without Mill Levy Funding, more than eight hundred individuals on FSSP would lose case management and direct services, and a waitlist would be enacted.

## Life Essentials Provider Network

The Life Essentials Provider Network Program provides direct service for adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities through Medicaid programs such as Home and Community-Based Services-Supported Living Services (HCBS-SLS) and Home and Community-Based Services- Children's Extensive Supports (HCBS-CES), including home health care, daily living skills, coaching, and independent living supports. RMHS uses subcontractors in this service model to provide services, which means that individuals have a greater choice of providers and can utilize a family member or other relative to provide those services. During this reporting period, 428 individuals were served in this program. Mill Levy Funding was utilized to supplement the costs of an increased administrative burden of providing oversight to 376 contractors to serve these individuals. Other CCB's in Colorado have ceased providing services in this model due to the higher administrative costs. Without Mill Levy Funding RMHS would be unable to provide this option to Denver County residents.

## Comprehensive Residential Services

RMHS' Residential Services Program provides services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. When an individual in Residential Services needs more care and support than is reimbursed through current funding programs, Mill Levy Funding is utilized to support that individual's needs. During this reporting period, 93 individuals were served in this program.

## Service Coordination (Adult Case Management)

Service Coordination provides case management to children and adults receiving Medicaid-funded developmental disability services. Case management includes intake activities, eligibility determinations, enrollments into services, and locating, coordinating and monitoring services. Service Coordinators also assist individuals in securing other non-developmental disability-funded services and benefits, such as medical, social, educational and other services. During this reporting period, 1,516 individuals were served in this program.

Case management reimbursement for services is capped at 60 hours annually and some case management functions are not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. When an individual receiving service coordination needs more case management beyond what is reimbursed through current funding programs, Mill Levy funding is accessed to support that individual's needs. Without Mill Levy Funding RMHS service coordination caseloads would increase, reducing the organization's responsiveness to the community's needs.

## Assessment and Consultation Team (Children's Clinical Services)

The Assessment and Consultation Team provides comprehensive assessment, consultation and intervention services to infants, children and adolescents, birth to 18 years of age. As a Community Centered Board, RMHS

conducts developmental assessments and diagnostic evaluations for children including those with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, RMHS provides and uses subcontractors for intervention services, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology, and psychology. The current funding for these assessments services does not provide reimbursement to meet all of an individual's needs, nor for the administrative oversight of sub-contractors. During this reporting period, a total of 592 individuals were served in this program. Approximately half of those individuals receive assessment services only and half receive ongoing intervention services. Mill Levy Mill Levy funding in this area is making a significant impact. RMHS is able to complete diagnostic evaluations in two months or less, while other entities in the community are taking six months or longer to complete.

## Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health needs of individuals with I/DD are unique, and require complex coordination of care needs – a population for which there are limited resources in our Denver community. RMHS' behavioral health clinic is staffed with psychiatry, psychology, and licensed therapists, all with specialized expertise and extensive experience in working with individuals who are dually diagnosed with I/DD and mental health/behavioral issues. Because of the specialization of staff required to meet these needs, the cost of providing services is greater than the current funding reimbursement. Mill Levy funding is utilized to support individuals' needs in these areas. During this reporting period, 234 individuals were served in this program.

## Community Outreach and Communications

Mill Levy funds are used to support community outreach and communication activities regarding services and activities for Denver residents with I/DD, ensuring that their voices are heard and that they are aware of and have access to programs, services and activities available to them. RMHS communication and outreach activities include the following:

- Bimonthly Community Advisory Council meetings (formerly the Mill Levy Advisory Committee)
- Community Forums for persons accepting services, family members and the community to provide input on their needs and priorities and to learn about RMHS' activities
- Public event for new agencies to present projects and services to the community, individuals accepting services and RMHS staff
- Online survey of needs
- Continually updated website with information for clients, families and caregivers
- Two monthly e-newsletters: one for providers and one for the broader community
- Over 100 face-to-face meetings have been conducted with over 350 community agencies interested in accessing Mill Levy funding for their program ideas and services
- Calendar of client and community events
- Coordination of quarterly meetings for service agencies working with I/DD individuals

Mill Levy Management also works to collect data, interpret findings, and share results among stakeholders at the Community Forums and across RMHS communication efforts.

## Upcoming projects

RMHS is continually engaging with our community and stakeholder to ensure that we are accountable for addressing their needs and concerns. In addition to the continuation of all the programs projects described in this report, there are many new projects in active development. A summary of each new project is below.

## Collaborative Positive Behavioral Support Project

A statewide analysis of the gaps in services for individuals with dual diagnoses of I/DD and mental health/behavioral health disorders was reported in 2014. The analysis concluded Colorado has a severely limited capacity to provide crisis intervention and stabilization services for the I/DD population and limited access to mental health providers with knowledge and skills to work with the population.

In the third quarter of 2017, RMHS initiated efforts to identify the gaps in services for the I/DD population specific to the city and county of Denver. Discussions commenced with a variety of providers in the community, including: psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavior analysts, case workers, and state employees, as well as host home, day treatment, and residential treatment providers. RMHS will be engaging in community partnerships, exploring already-established models of service delivery for potential adoption, and joining ongoing state initiatives.

## Social Inclusion Project

Connect Us provides a unique and powerful opportunity for families and youth with I/DD to become more socially connected, particularly those with High Functioning Autism (HFA) and other developmental differences, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. This project builds upon the 9-year history of Connect Us to expand by creating a Parent Support and Learning Group to further the support of children with I/DD and their families, as well as to pilot an integrated kindergarten program at Lowry Elementary.

The transition to kindergarten is one of the most challenging times for children with I/DD's. The program's goal is to equip children in early childhood with the tools and support they need to develop friendships and be included with their peers. The program provides opportunity to establish an inclusive play environment at the beginning of primary school when school-age children are most receptive to guided play and before social perceptions and hierarchies are established.

## Developmental Disabilities Network of Care Database

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is implementing an online database of service providers and resources connecting people to I/DD services and supports. This database will provide the Denver metropolitan area with a comprehensive and accessible resource on community programs. The current systems in Colorado are siloed between I/DD providers, aging providers, and disability providers. DRCOG and the Network of Care database is a major initiative to streamline multiple sources of information into one, and to create reportable information on what are the community's needs.

## Collaboration with Denver Public Schools

RMHS is partnering with Denver Public Schools in identifying and facilitating staff trainings in the areas of motivational interviewing and cultural competence. Training topics are geared toward increasing cross-system knowledge so that consistent information and messaging can be provided to families of infants and children. In addition, the trainings will increase staff's ability to quickly assess supports parents may need including alleviating anxiety, addressing feelings of denial, or coping with new diagnoses - as they go through the referral process and begin navigating the I/DD and education systems and services on behalf of their child.

## Expansion of School Services for Children with I/DD and Behavioral Challenges

Children with I/DD or on the Autism Spectrum can require extensive individualized special education and other supports. The earlier the interventions are initiated, there is an increased likelihood of that child's ability to

live as independently as possible as an adult. RMHS is partnering with local schools to increase their capacity to address children’s behavioral, therapeutic, and educational needs.

## Respite Collaborative

RMHS is communicating with multiple area community organizations interested in collaborating to develop a comprehensive respite program, for families with I/DD in Denver, with the following goals:

- A. Assist families in obtaining needed respite from the stress and demands of caring for family members with I/DD.
- B. Determine need for certification for respite providers, including organizations, family members and other caregivers.
- C. Train families and friends on how to become certified respite providers.
- D. Identify specific respite resources and needs that can be addressed on a broad scale.

## Summary

RMHS provides case management and direct services to adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Denver and surrounding communities. As the designated CCB and single point of entry for individuals seeking assistance for all needs related to intellectual and developmental disabilities, RMHS is in the best position to meet the community’s needs. RMHS has embraced the opportunity to create responsive and innovative processes to address the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with generous Mill Levy funding provided by the residents of Denver. Our efforts have been successful at developing systems to provide funding directly to individuals, families and caregivers, based on their priorities. Additionally, RMHS has ensured that Mill Levy dollars go to the many community agencies that offer invaluable services to Denver citizens with I/DD. We have demonstrated increasing success in this third quarter, with more than 50% of Mill Levy expenditures going directly into the hands of families and agencies providing direct support. We look forward to continuing this trend, and in our continued partnership with the Denver Department of Human Services.

Thank you,

*Kris Kogan, Ph.D.*  
*Director of Strategy & Innovation*  
*Rocky Mountain Human Services*  
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# Appendix A: Implemented Projects: Mill Levy Management Program Portfolio<sup>3</sup>

Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Target Age Group	2017 Spending to Date	Total 2017 Projected Spending	Projected # Benefitting in 2017	Projected dollars per person
<b>Arts &amp; Community Exploration - ACE Program (Jewish Family Services)</b>	Individuals enjoy vibrant and creative art projects, group and individual music therapy, cultural and holiday explorations and recreation	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$11,000	\$76,000	<b>50</b>	<b>\$1,520</b>
<b>Assistive Technology (AbleLink)</b>	Supports long-term independence skill building for safe access to communities for work and recreation	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$241,000	\$241,000	<b>185</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>
<b>Client Assistance (RMHS)</b>	Access to funds for individualized needs in all areas	<b>0 &amp; up</b>	\$321,000	\$485,000	<b>450</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>
<b>Community Events &amp; Adventures (Active Community Access)</b>	Provides community integrated evening and Saturday activities	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$34,000	\$80,000	<b>72</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>
<b>Family Autism Resource Bag (RMHS)</b>	Resources and materials for families of newly diagnosed children with Autism	<b>0 - 18</b>	\$3,100	\$14,000	<b>100</b>	<b>\$140</b>
<b>Firefly Autism Scholarships</b>	Facility school scholarships for youth with Autism, organizational web development	<b>0-11</b>	-	\$35,000	<b>8</b>	<b>\$4,400</b>
<b>Firefly Autism Trainings</b>	Trainings for police and caregivers on autism	<b>0 &amp; up</b>	\$2,500	\$2,500	<b>80</b>	<b>\$30</b>

<sup>3</sup> Spending to date and project spending amounts are rounded to the nearest \$1,000; dollars per person rounded to the nearest \$100 if over \$100, otherwise exact



Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Target Age Group	2017 Spending to Date	Total 2017 Projected Spending	Projected # Benefitting in 2017	Projected dollars per person
<b>FSSP Supplement (RMHS)</b>	Includes Assistive Technology, Home Modification, Respite, Transportation, Medical/Dental, Parent/Sibling Support, Professional Services	<b>0 - 17</b>	\$934,000	\$1,370,000	<b>2050</b>	<b>\$700</b>
<b>Guided by Humanity Yoga</b>	Enhances the quality of life by providing inclusive, accessible yoga classes within the community.	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$11,000	\$91,000	<b>270</b>	<b>\$340</b>
<b>Homelessness Project (CFPD)</b>	Outreach to homeless individuals who are diagnosed with or have indications of I/DD who need assistance connecting with I/DD services and other benefits	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$42,000	\$106,000	<b>50</b>	<b>\$2,100</b>
<b>Laradon EI Family Navigator</b>	1. EI Play Group 2. EI Parent Support Group	<b>0-3</b>	\$20,000	\$40,000	<b>100</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Laradon Expanded Behavioral Services</b>	Provision of behavioral services and supports beyond waiver defined services, including crisis support, customer-specific trainings, and consultation and training to external systems	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$10,200	\$52,000	<b>20</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>
<b>Play &amp; Learn Library (RMHS)</b>	Assistive technology, adaptive equipment, books and DVDs for clinicians to check out to assist children improve communication, social skills, mobility, daily living skills, and cognitive functioning	<b>0 - 18</b>	\$3,200	\$5,000	<b>100</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>The Possibility Pool Collaborative Jobs Bank</b>	Supported employment online jobs bank with mobile staff to engage clients and help them meet their employment goals.	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$171,000	\$411,000	<b>500</b>	<b>\$800</b>
<b>Project World (Activity Options)</b>	Community activities and overnight travel opportunities	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$90,000	\$184,000	<b>699</b>	<b>\$300</b>

Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Target Age Group	2017 Spending to Date	Total 2017 Projected Spending	Projected # Benefitting in 2017	Projected dollars per person
<b>Provider Document Translation (RMHS)</b>	Document translation of guidance materials for family providers	<b>0 &amp; up</b>	\$1,200	\$7,500	<b>10</b>	<b>\$750</b>
<b>Rec Pass Project (RMHS)</b>	Denver Parks and Recreation Center passes	<b>0 &amp; up</b>	\$50,000	\$70,000	<b>864</b>	<b>\$80</b>
<b>Resource Ability Program (Financial Health Institute)</b>	Provides a social learning environment to strengthen financial health and advance quality of life for people with I/DD and their support systems	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$96,000	\$264,000	<b>250</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Self-Employment Education (Celebrate EDU)</b>	Teaches the benefits of entrepreneurial education	<b>15 - 50</b>	\$104,000	\$179,000	<b>240</b>	<b>\$700</b>
<b>Social Inclusion (Connect Us)</b>	Provides opportunities for families and youth for social connections through after school social groups, inclusive recess facilitation, and parent support groups	<b>3 - 11</b>	\$41,000	\$81,000	<b>500</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Support Management dba Community Intersections</b>	Provided hoier lifts and changing tables for the men's and women's restrooms in day program facility to enable agency to expand services to individuals who need this support	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$16,300	\$16,300	<b>15</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>
<b>StellarCare Vacations</b>	Provides opportunity for vacations	<b>21 &amp; up</b>	\$80,000	\$189,000	<b>20</b>	<b>\$9,400</b>
<b>T.A.C.T.</b>	Provides trade and technical skills to children & young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	<b>7 - 21</b>	\$367,000	\$500,000	<b>18</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>
<b>The Wayfaring Band</b>	All-inclusive, multi-day trip packages that focus on getting participants off the beaten path	<b>18 &amp; up</b>	\$60,000	\$121,000	<b>42</b>	<b>\$2,900</b>

# Appendix B: Outcomes according to priority area

## Priority: Basic Needs/ Environmental Supports

Meeting basic needs and providing environmental supports for individuals/families includes addressing needs such as housing, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, and furniture or clothing. Approximately 10% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been utilized towards these needs.

### Client Assistance Project (RMHS)

This project provides assistance to persons qualifying for I/DD services living in Denver. Access to funds can help support individuals in the case of emergencies and when appropriate for services not covered elsewhere. Requests are reviewed twice a week and typical time to process the request is 48 hours. Over 180 individuals received this individualized assistance in the third quarter. Requests have included funds for temporary assistance with rent or utilities to ensure housing stability, clothing, beds, tutoring, adaptive equipment, trainings for family/caregivers, and co-pays for needed therapies. Here are some examples of the purposes of funds distributed through client assistance during this reporting period:

- 25 customers received support to stabilize their living environments
- 5 customers received support for their behavioral or mental health needs
- 11 customers received assistance with costs associated with their medical and dental care

### Client Assistance Success Story

*Our son, Andre, was born at St. Joseph's Hospital at 25 weeks gestation. So many things were up in the air at that time—we didn't know what complications he might have or how well he would do in the face of numerous medical challenges. He was treated for holes in his heart, intraventricular hemorrhages, infection, jaundice, received multiple blood transfusions, and his intubation was traded for a tracheostomy, which he still has. We needed to move to an apartment closer to Children's Hospital, where he was transferred, and to one large enough for Andre's equipment and his nurse. By relieving some of the financial pressure, RMHS gifted the ability for us to focus on our son, and I believe that focus is part of why he's doing so well today. We were told Andre would likely be hospitalized until his first birthday, but we recently were able to take Andre home. He is now thriving and you would never know by looking at him that he was once so fragile. We are so grateful for the financial, medical, and therapeutic support we have received for Andre. Andre is a happy, curious, affectionate baby and we want you to know how much it has meant to us to be able to be by his side every moment possible. You bought us precious time with our son.*

*— Jami and Sean Lickly*

### Homelessness Project (CFPD-Mission Supports)

Through collaboration with the Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities, Mission Supports has created a new program to locate individuals with or suspected to have intellectual/developmental disabilities that are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. Their innovative program structure offers individuals one-to-one support to obtain services and secure housing and other environmental resources through a Peer Advocate. In the third quarter of 2017, the Homelessness Project has begun to formulate their team, their program logic model and their community partnerships to ensure that individuals with a cognitive disability experiencing or nearing homelessness can get their basic needs met. Two individuals have been served to date.

### Project Goal: Client Education/Increasing Independence

Approximately 36% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been utilized to address these needs. The following are community project partners offering education to clients with a focus on increasing their independence, among other life skills:

#### The Assistive Technology Project

Provides tablet computers with applications designed for individuals with I/DD to increase independence with skills like cooking, budgeting, personal hygiene, safely navigating the community, and making a schedule.

- 115 individuals have been trained on how to use the assistive technology applications over 9 deployment sessions held in the third quarter
- RMHS Staff are working with AbleLink Technologies on their evaluation software to implement a survey instrument that will properly obtain that information as to how clients are utilizing and benefitting from the assistive technology applications
- Reactions from participants and accompanying caregivers have been overwhelmingly positive

#### Assistive Technology Project Takeaways

*“One of my clients who reported concern over breaking his glasses and forgetting to wear his dentures has benefited from the AbleLink Endeavor software on his tablet, which now reminds him to take his glasses off before bed, and then again reminds him to put his dentures in every morning.”*

- Emily F., Client Mentor

### Guided by Humanity Yoga Project

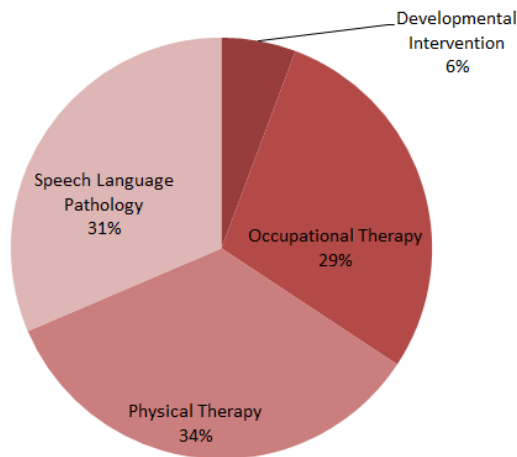
As a new project added during the third quarter, Guided by Humanity was created to provide inclusive and accessible yoga opportunities for the I/DD community in Denver. They have hosted classes four times a week, with 40 participants during the reporting period. They have also collaborated with other yoga studios to provide integrated yoga classes to support inclusivity of I/DD individuals, as well as partnered to host a panel discussing inclusivity in the yoga community. They are currently working to determine a surveying mechanism to measure the short- and long-term outcomes to participants.

### Guided by Humanity

*GBH's accessible yoga has been beneficial to our participants, as well as therapeutic. When we offer our own breathing and stretching at Goodwill, participants reference what they have learned from attending GBH yoga. They look forward to GBH classes every week, especially the people that are non-verbal. We have watched some of our clients that have dealt with anxiety constantly, and noticed physical changes as well as decreased behaviors. The people that normally do not socially participate in Goodwill activities within the group will now participate in yoga class. One participant now does yoga on his own with his provider. Another participant with profound arthritis will attempt some of the poses, which is a huge accomplishment. Yoga with GBH has been engaging and does not require attendees to be anything other than who they are; whether they are verbal or non-verbal, flexible or non-flexible, use a wheelchair or not, this program meets them where they are in their abilities, and they enjoy it.*

- Bill Peters, Goodwill Provider and Participant Liaison

### Play & Learn Library use by Discipline July - Sept 2017



### Play & Learn Library

RMHS as an organization maintains an inventory of therapeutic equipment for therapists to borrow to support their therapy work with children. This enables therapists and families the opportunity to try equipment and ensure it works for individuals prior to making a commitment to purchase. In surveying the therapists who have been using the equipment, RMHS has received the following positive feedback:

- During this reporting period, 35 items have been borrowed from the library by clinical therapists to trial with children and increase their skills
- On a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), therapists rated:
  - Did the item help improve the child's skills? **Average score: 4.7**
  - Will you access the Play & Learn Library again in the future? **Average score: 5.0**

### ResourceAbility Program (Financial Health Institute)

Financial Health Institute developed a new program to improve financial health throughout the Denver's I/DD Community. During this initial quarter of services, FHI developed their curriculum, marketing materials and cultivated relationships with individuals and organizations to host a series of educational trainings on how to manage financing on a limited income.

#### ResourceAbility: Financial Health Institute

*Going into this project, we were not certain if our approach to financial health concepts and exercises would resonate with customers with I/DD, but their eagerness to participate in the classes and the relevancy of the topic to each of them has confirmed for us the importance of what we are offering to them. We learned from the customers that having control of their money was very important, so they could make their own decisions. They expressed the strong desire to understand how to make transactions at a store, particularly when using cash, so that they would not be scammed. Other financial health topics of importance were budgeting and saving so that they could accomplish goals.*

- Joanne McLain, FHI

- Through partnerships with program approved service agencies working with adults with I/DD, FHI provided training to 70 individuals during this reporting period, with a positive on-task participation rate.
- Initial feedback from these trainings included customers expressing their interest in participating in more classes and staff at the host agencies reporting that customers were engaged and that staff appreciated the opportunity for customers to attend.
- FHI is implementing outcome measures for customers and their support systems in skill development of increasing financial health and decreasing financial stress.

### Self-Employment Education Project (Celebrate EDU)

Celebrate EDU's Self-Employment Education Project provides opportunities for client education and increasing independence by offering innovative entrepreneurial education for I/DD individuals ages 15-50. Individuals receive training to learn how to create a business plan, and explore their own business ideas that build on their interests and passions. Celebrate EDU is shifting perceptions of family members, service providers, and staff providers about the possibilities that entrepreneurship provides for people with I/DD. During this quarter, 40 individuals with I/DD were impacted through the projects. Survey results that we received from the attendees:

- 83% say that it shifted their perception about the viability of entrepreneurship for individuals with I/DD
- 89% report that their clients will benefit from entrepreneurial education

### T.A.C.T. – Teaching the Autism Community Trades

Starting August 2017 TACT began for credit classes for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ages 14-21. There are 5 students from Denver enrolled in one of three for credit class: Computer Science, Carpenter's apprentice and Automotive Service Technology. These students come from seven different partner education institutions. TACT also continues to provide night and weekend workshops for individuals with ASD aging 5-21. Workshop classes are varied and include trades such as photography, welding, electronics, fiber arts, graphic design, audio engineering, carpentry, auto mechanics and instrument making.

### **The Possibility Pool Supported Employment Marketplce**

The Possibility Pool was developed by a collaborative of community-based organizations to partner to develop a new avenue of supported employment for Denver residents. Currently, supported employment is a service provided on a small scale by several government and private agencies. The Possibility Pool is designed to fill in the gaps in employment services in a more accessible and comprehensive way specific to the needs of individuals living in the City and County of Denver. The project is currently led by three local organizations with a history of serving I/DD folks in the supported employment field. With their commitment and collaboration, the project partners are now offering individualized and person-centered job placement and community employment job coaching support. Through hands-on curriculum, soft skills, and job readiness training, families and caregivers of participants have gained confidence and independence that participants will gain the tools necessary for sustainable employment. Once placed into supported employment in the community, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be able to participate in and actively contribute to the City and County of Denver to the best of their ability and choosing. 38 individuals have benefitted from this the early development of this project in the third quarter of 2017.

### **Project Goal: Behavioral Health/Mental Health *and* Project Goal: Medical and Dental**

Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health services includes a wide variety of health-related services to ensure the health and well-being of individuals with I/DD. Combined, approximately 4% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been utilized toward these two project areas. RMHS stakeholders cited these types of services as a significant need, and the number of requests to date has not shown the demand for these services expected based on stakeholder feedback. RMHS is continuing to work with the Community Advisory Council and other community stakeholders to refocus outreach efforts to ensure the community's needs are being met in this area.

### **Project Goal: Social/Recreational**

Resounding feedback was received to generate more social and recreational opportunities for individuals, which are currently not supplemented by Medicaid or other insurance programs. Individuals on Medicaid with limited incomes have very limited resources to pursue these goals without support from Mill Levy funding. According to a recent AAA survey, 35% of Americans were planning to take a vacation 50 miles or more away from home in 2016<sup>4</sup>. In contrast, a recent poll of I/DD providers indicates fewer than 5% of individuals accepting services can afford to travel, particularly given the additional expenses associated with supports for supervision and personal care necessary to travel safely. The benefits of this project are in line with the benefits to anyone in being able to take a vacation. Reduced stress, lowered anxiety, possible decrease in heart disease, improved mental health, and better developed interpersonal relationships, in addition to overall increase in quality of life, are among the well-known benefits of taking vacation. The Journal of the American Medical Association published a study that concluded men who take frequent annual vacations were 32% less likely to die from heart disease than those who did not take frequent vacations<sup>5</sup>.

Stakeholder feedback to Rocky Mountain Human Services has indicated that there are gaps in current systems and our programs supporting people with I/DD related to recreational opportunities, health and fitness, and community integration. Approximately 26% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been

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<sup>4</sup> <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/04/aaa-one-third-americans-will-take-family-vacation-year/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jill-l-ferguson/health-benefits-of-taking-a-vacation\\_b\\_9384466.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jill-l-ferguson/health-benefits-of-taking-a-vacation_b_9384466.html)

utilized for social and recreational goals. There are several different programs that have provided social and recreational opportunities for individuals with I/DD in Denver County during this reporting period, ranging from supporting individuals to attend summer camp, taking local day trips to regional points of interest, and taking trips with family members or to see family members out of state. RMHS also provides annual regional recreation center passes through Denver Parks & Recreation for individuals accepting services and also one caregiver pass for children.

- 43 Denver Parks and Recreation Center Annual Regional Memberships passes have been distributed to individuals as well as caregivers of children under 18 years of age
- 326 individuals have participated with our community partners, which provide a variety of increased community engagement opportunities, including local day trips and overnight trips

### Arts & Community Exploration – ACE Program (Jewish Family Services)

The ACE Program was developed to enhance cultural and artistic exposure for clients to participate in community offerings, while cultivating new skills and awareness in the process. Through September 2017, ACE benefitted 22 individuals in services. In the classes, participants learned to become artists by mixing primary colors to create a new color for use on their canvas. The art instructor taught artists about Matisse’ life and history during the art lesson, and a Matisse picture was outlined for the artists – using their own brush style – to paint the picture. One artist learned that she naturally uses a Matisse style brush stroke, up and down single strokes.

### Community Events & Adventures (Active Community Access)

This project has a goal of improving the quality of life for Denver I/DD clients and their families by providing memorable, community integrated evening and weekend activities with peers. Active Community Access has benefitted 17 individuals and their families by engaging participants in local events and offerings available on Thursday evenings and on Saturdays.

#### ACE Program Staff Realizations

*Participants really love being out in the community and love exploring the cultural arts. This grant has afforded us the ability to expand great opportunities. By facial expression, laughter and verbalization, we know they fully enjoy the community.*

- Sara Leeper, JFS



### Project World (Activity Options)

The purpose of “Project World” is to facilitate access to community activities and overnight travel that will enable adults with IDD to experiences the world in the way that other people do in order to increase inclusion, independence, social skills and quality of life. Activity Options has observed a major increase in the social interaction among participants. Individuals are happy to connect and support each other during the group times as well as outside of the formal activities, and some of the more independent people have even visited each other’s homes. About 70% of the participants attending more than once, with new folks registering all the time. Over July, August and September of 2017, Activity Options hosted 18 day activities and three overnight trips benefitting 301 individuals with I/DD.

### Social Inclusion Project (Connect Us)

The work of Connect Us provides a unique and powerful opportunity for families and youth with DD to become more socially connected, particularly those with High Functioning Autism (HFA) and other developmental differences, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. This project has been under development in the third quarter to include Denver kids and build upon the 9-year history of Connect Us to expand efforts by creating a Parent Support and Learning Group to further the support of children with DD and their families, as well as to pilot an integrated kindergarten program at Lowry Elementary. The transition to kindergarten is one of the most challenging times for children with DD’s. The goal is to equip children in early childhood with the tools and support they need to develop friendships and be included with their peers. The program provides opportunity to establish an inclusive play environment at the beginning of primary school when school-age children are most receptive to guided play and before social perceptions and hierarchies are established.

**Project World Staff Takeaways**

*“We have seen that the abilities of the folks is greater and expands quickly once given the opportunities and support. We are amazed by the ability of these folks to support and encourage each other, when we really didn’t think they had the awareness or intuition to do so.”*

- Peggy B., Project World Staff

**Mill Levy Special Project Staff Perspective: Connect Us “Social Inclusion Project”**

*When I first learned what Connect Us was about, all that kept running through my mind was, “Where was this when I was a kid?” The mission with Connect Us is not only to teach kids social skills through play, but it is also to build their confidence, teach them conflict resolution and even how to be a better friend. We accomplish this by guiding the natural leaders to use their skills in a positive way and by assuring that every child is included regardless of their abilities, their inabilities or even their disabilities.*

- Chris Glock, Facilitator and Tech Support

## StellarCare Vacations

StellarCare Vacations work to allow individuals with I/DD the experience of travel and community integration more often afforded to people without disabilities. This project connects I/DD clients with their loved ones and/or to provide a dream vacation specifically for those who have been unable to participate in a unique life experience in the past. Of the 8 personalized and accompanied trips in the third quarter, StellarCare achieved the following results for their I/DD clients:

- 2 clients reconnected with family members in a different state
- 6 clients experienced their dream vacation and went to a state they had never been
- All 8 participants experienced an outing or activity they had never done before such as seeing the beach/ ocean for the first time in their life
- Results determined this project benefitted the client with increase in life experiences, increase in socialization and reported a decrease in stress levels after having returned home

## The Wayfaring Band

Expansion of The Wayfaring band programs to Denver individuals with I/DD offers emphasis on community-building, skill-development, and place-based adventures. Using a person-centered approach to foster a culture of mutual aid, The Wayfaring Band designs group travel that generates opportunities for all program participants to make meaningful contributions to the community. In the third quarter, 13 Denver participants experiencing I/DD showed:

### Parent Perspective – The Wayfaring Band

*“As a parent of a young man with disabilities, and three young adult children who do not have disabilities, I am constantly striving to give my son Travis as many opportunities as his siblings have. The Wayfaring Band has given Travis the opportunity to experience travel, adventure, and friendship that he wouldn't otherwise have been able to enjoy. He comes back from his trips literally 'high' on life, and the joy and relationships he gains from these experiences is quite literally priceless!”*

*- Kristie G. - Parent, Portland Tour*

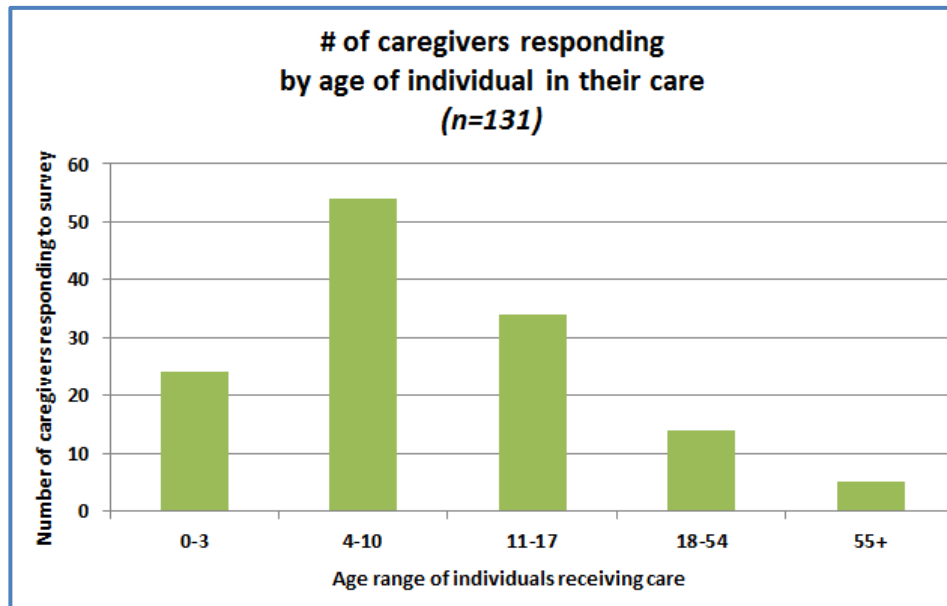
- Increased choice-making and independence
- Opportunities to feel challenged and stimulated
- Increased sense of belonging
- Increased understanding of and opportunities to practice independent living skills
- Place-based learning opportunities

## Project Goal: System Gaps

Mill Levy funded services to address system gaps currently comprise 23% of the total Special Project expenses for this reporting period. When an individual needs more care and support than is reimbursed through current funding programs, Mill Levy funding is used to address system gaps and program service limitations of other funding sources, such as Medicaid and State-funded services. In some cases these gaps may be within the I/DD system; in other cases, the gaps are between this and other systems, such as mental health, foster care, and homelessness. By far the service deemed to be the most important from area stakeholders is respite care. During this reporting period, nearly \$264,000 in respite funds has been paid to 334 individuals.

There is significant literature available that demonstrates the positive effects that respite care brings to the life of a caregiver. Over time, without relief and assistance, caregiving can take a mental and physical toll. The Family Caregiver Alliance reports that 40 to 70 percent of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression. The Center on Aging Society adds that 1 in 10 family caregivers report that their responsibilities have caused their physical health to worsen<sup>6</sup>.

This quarter, RMHS sent out a survey to the caregivers who had received funds for respite. The response we received was overwhelming. An astonishing 40% of the anonymous surveys (more than 130) have been returned to date. Caregivers were asked to rate 5 items on a scale of 1-4:



<sup>6</sup> <http://www.comfortkeepers.com/home/info-center/respite-care/importance-of-respite-relief-for-family-caregivers>

## Unmet Needs

Beginning in August 2017, individuals accepting waiver services who reside in Denver are able to access additional services through their RMHS Service Plan process. RMHS rolled out this option for customers in the following Waiver programs: HCBS-DD (Comp), Supported Living Services (SLS), and Children's Extensive Services (CES). Individuals are now able to add additional services with Mill Levy funding in the following categories:

- Behavioral Services
- Day Habilitation (specialized habilitation, supported community connections, community connector)
- Mentorship
- Respite Services
- Supported Employment

RMHS has invited all program approved service agencies (PASAs) providing one or more of the above services to Denver residents to contract with us to provide additional services with Mill Levy funds. Only one agency has declined after indicating none of the customers they serve are in need of additional services. To date, 112 PASAs have been contacted and contracts have been executed or in process with 43 agencies so far. RMHS will continue to expand the services offered and PASAs contracted as the need for services expands.

## Project Goal: Training and Support Opportunities

Training and support was identified as a specific goal differing from Client Education, as there are many needs of caregivers, families, providers and the general public for offering training on topics on how to better support individuals with I/DD. Currently only 1% of Mill Levy funding year-to-date has been utilized towards training and support goals, though RMHS has interest from area organizations to partner and offer community-wide trainings in the future.

### Laradon Family, Infant and Toddler (FIT) Program – EI Play Group/Parent Support

Play-and-Learn groups began in the spring of 2017 and continued on a limited basis during the summer months. The Family Navigator visited with families in their homes, helping them to identify the community resources with which they needed to connect to assure their children could be enrolled in preschool. This involved helping families visit preschools, gather appropriate records for their children, securing any needed medical procedures, completing paperwork, etc. At least 15 families were referred to various resources such as libraries, playground, rec centers, toddler music classes, free summer lunch program closest to home, free school supplies, food banks, preschool programs with wrap-around childcare, and low or no cost tutoring for an older sibling.