



9900 East Iliff Avenue  
Denver, CO 80231  
P: (303) 636-5600  
F: (303) 636-5603  
[MillLevy@rmhumanservices.org](mailto:MillLevy@rmhumanservices.org)  
[www.rmhumanservices.org/ml](http://www.rmhumanservices.org/ml)

# **2018 Quarter 1 Report Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services Supported by Denver Mill Levy Funding**

*Working Together for Denver*

January 1, 2018 – March 31, 2018

# Introduction

Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) is a non-profit human service organization that provides services to more than 4,500 individuals in Denver County with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) annually. We are a community centered board, which means we act as a local hub and resource for individuals with I/DD and their families who need assistance in Denver. We serve the community by providing case management and direct services to individuals and families with I/DD. Our staff conducts more than 13,000 visits in the Denver community annually and ensures that individuals with I/DD are receiving the services necessary to meet their needs.

In 2003, Denver residents generously approved a mill levy property tax to benefit Denver residents with I/DD. As a result, Denver residents can access programs and services, and receive funds to pay for individualized services and resources not available from Medicaid or other funding sources. In this report, RMHS is highlighting its efforts to meet Denver residents' needs through two primary goals:

- 1. Increase access to services.**
- 2. Increase flexible service options to address individualized needs through a variety of providers.**

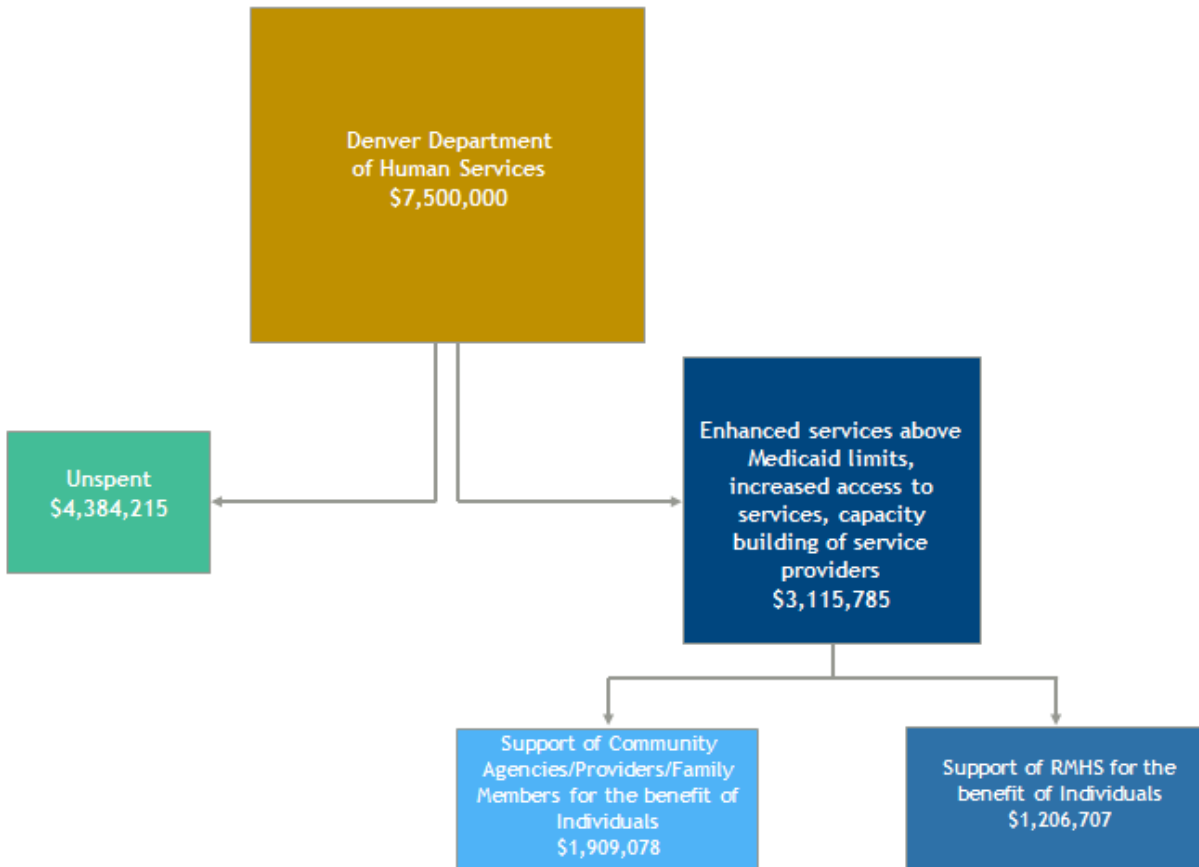
## Goal 1: Increase access to services

The Denver Department of Human Services (DHS) maintains administrative oversight of the mill levy dollars and maintains a contract with RMHS to deliver programs and services to support the community. Since 2016, RMHS has increased funds going into the community to support individuals, family members, existing providers and new program development.

This shift in funds going directly to the community represented a major change in the way we use mill levy funding; we achieved this transformation through a variety of means. First, we listened. We heard from stakeholders about community needs and reoriented our efforts to support those needs. Second, we developed processes and infrastructure to simultaneously meet the needs of individuals with I/DD and providers who serve them. Next, we conducted outreach and information-sharing through our website, public and one-on-one meetings to get the word out about this resource. Through these combined efforts, we provided enhanced services to 3,272 unduplicated Denver residents with I/DD.

The current contract between DHS and RMHS runs from January 1, 2018, to June 30, 2018, with a total contract value of \$7.5 million. For the period from January 1, 2018 to March 31, 2018 (Q1 of 2018), RMHS expended \$3,115,785 for enhanced services to the I/DD community. Of this amount, approximately 39 percent of funds supported RMHS services for this population, and 61 percent supported individual requests, community agencies, providers and family members. RMHS has demonstrated a continued ramp-up of service requests and anticipates using the majority of the \$7.5 million during this contract period. Graph 1 below provides a high-level summary of how mill levy dollars were used for Q1 of 2018.

# Graph 1: Q1 2018 Mill Levy Summary

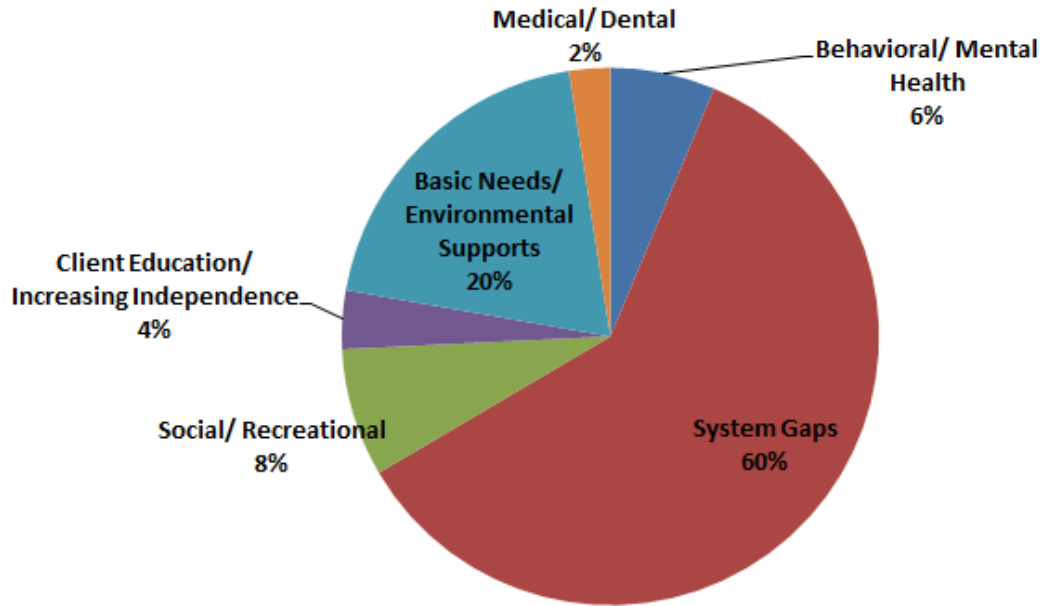


Denver mill levy dollars provide enhanced services for people with I/DD. These dollars support RMHS services, as well as the enhanced services that community organizations and agencies provide. In this way, both individuals and the provider community benefit from mill levy support. RMHS recognizes the importance of monitoring programmatic intent and outcomes and tracks mill levy dollars by how they were originally accessed – whether by an individual or by an agency. Ultimately, it is the individual with I/DD who benefits from enhanced services.

## Individual Requests

Residents of Denver with I/DD have two ways to access mill levy funds. They can either contact their RMHS or submit a request directly through the RMHS website. The average number of individual requests received per month continues to increase. In 2017, average numbers of requests per month increased from 207 in the first quarter to 301 in the fourth quarter. During the first quarter of 2018, **RMHS received 945 individual requests for mill levy funding** (an average of 315 requests per month) **from 683 individuals. Approved requests totaled more than \$700,000.**

Graph 2: Q1 2018 Funding for Individual Requests by Category (n=939)



Individual requests have resulted in funding for diverse needs. Examples of these are:

- To purchase a bed for a growing child.
- To provide general housing stabilization support to over 50 individuals and families.
- To pay for hippotherapy to support a child's development.
- To buy a bike for an adult so he can be active in his community every day.
- To pay for a child's seizure medication that was not covered by insurance.

On average, an RMHS service coordinator meets four times a year with individuals who use RMHS for their case management services. The service coordinator works with the client to identify his or her needs, which may include services or resources not available from Medicaid or other funding sources. These needs are documented on an individualized service plan, and mill levy funds are then used to pay for identified services that other funding sources do not support.

Conversely, when an individual submits a request directly through the RMHS website, staff reviews the request in accordance with the contract to ensure appropriateness to an individual's needs and lack of availability of other resources before they issue any payment. **Individuals in Denver are eligible for mill levy services regardless of current case management agency.** Those who RMHS does not currently serve can request access to mill levy-funded services and supports through our website at [www.rmhumanservices.org/ml](http://www.rmhumanservices.org/ml).

RMHS has consistently approved most requests. Of the 945 requests received from individuals with I/DD, their families or providers, including requests received for Denver residents served by other community centered boards, 939 (99 percent) were approved and six were denied: five because other resources were available and one because the individual resided outside Denver County.

RMHS considers these denial decisions to be resolved. There were no disputes between RMHS and recipients of services. In all denials, RMHS provided explanation about the reason for denial to the individual and/or their family, and provided information and referrals to other community resources when appropriate. In most situations, RMHS staff could meet the individual's needs by accessing other funding sources. Individuals who

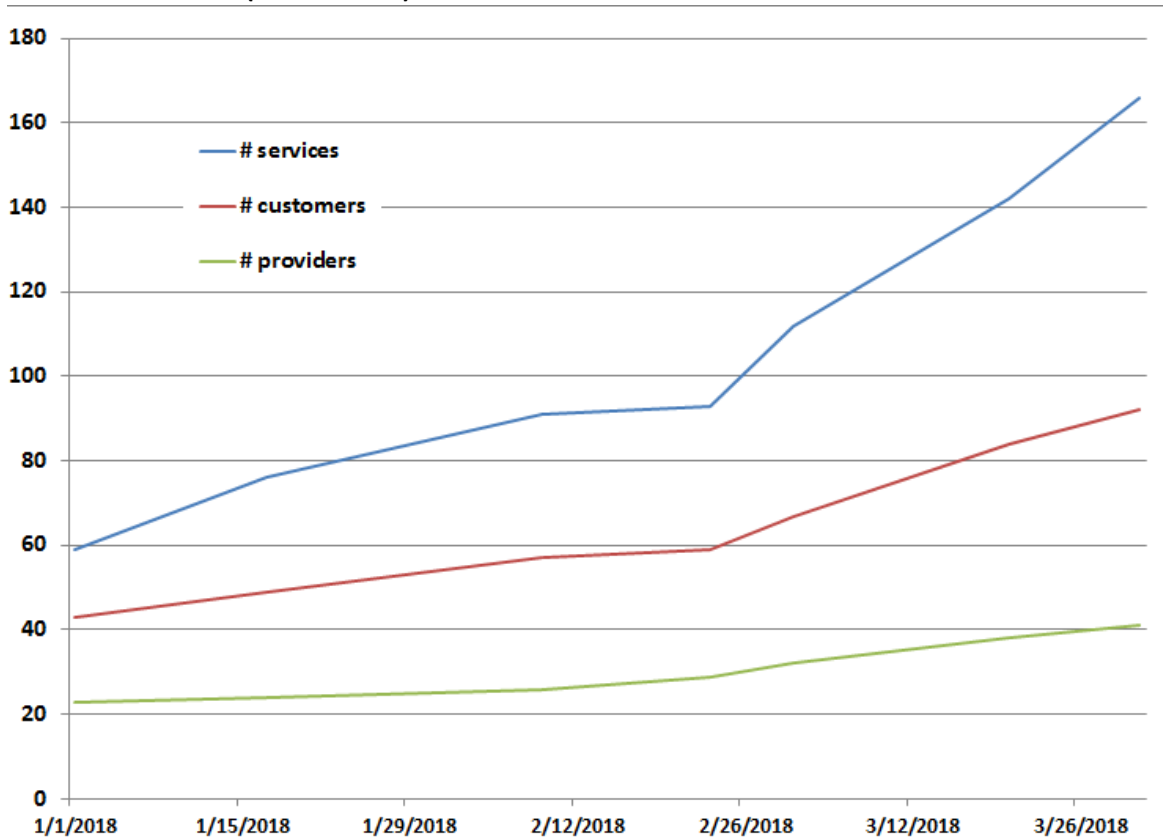
did not live in Denver were encouraged to contact county officials regarding mill levy availability in their county of residence.

The individual requests component of mill levy funds will continue to expand significantly. As RMHS service coordinators meet with individuals to identify needs, the service coordinators develop personalized service plans that access Medicaid and other funding sources, including mill levy funds. When appropriate, RMHS contracts with an individual’s provider of choice to ensure payment for ongoing services. This enables RMHS to communicate to the provider the expectations for performance and accountability regarding the use of mill levy funds. Additionally, RMHS service coordination staff use the service plan to ensure that providers are meeting individual needs and individuals are satisfied with the content and quality of services provided.

## Mill Levy Service Plans

In addition to providing funds to meet individual requests, RMHS continues to implement the individualized mill levy service plan model, which began in August 2017. RMHS’ goal is that its service coordinators develop mill levy service plans for every Denver resident the organization serves. Individuals may receive services through either a Medicaid Waiver program or Early Intervention<sup>1</sup>, and will have a mill levy service plan completed over the course of the next year. Evidence of the growth of this program is highlighted in Graph 3 below.

Graph 3: Increase in Mill Levy-Funded Services as Identified in Individualized Service Plans (Q1 2018)



<sup>1</sup> Mill Levy Service Plans for Early Intervention were piloted beginning Feb. 1, 2018, and are expected to be fully implemented by June 1, 2018.

## Goal 2: Increase flexible service options to address individualized needs through a variety of providers

### Community Agency Requests

During the first quarter of 2018, RMHS established five new partnerships with community agencies, and continued all community agency-initiated projects that requested continuation from 2017 for a total six-month budget of more than \$2.5 million across **23 community agencies**. One proposal received during this reporting period was denied because it did not meet necessary standards.

In addition to community agency partnerships described above, program-approved service agencies (PASAs) are also invited to contract with RMHS to provide services through individualized mill levy service plans, as described on page 5. In total, RMHS has executed 2018 contracts with **44 community agencies** to provide services through individualized mill levy service plans.

In total, RMHS is currently contracted with **67 community agencies** to provide mill levy-funded services and supports. Two community agencies are providing services through special projects as well as through individualized mill levy services plans.

### Services Sought through Mill Levy

Our stakeholders and Community Advisory Council members outlined the seven priority areas of mill levy funding. As RMHS has approved mill levy funding to community agencies, providers, family members and individuals, 100 percent of approvals have been for the benefit of individuals with I/DD and met the definition of one or more of the following priority areas.

1. **Basic Needs/Environmental Supports:** Meeting individuals' and families' 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.

Table 1: Q1 2018 Mill Levy Projects

Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Total Q1 2018 Spending <sup>2</sup>	Total Individuals Served	Average Dollars per Person
<b>Basic Needs/Environmental Supports</b>				
<b>Homelessness Project (CFPD)</b>	<i>Conducts outreach to homeless individuals who are diagnosed with or have indications of I/DD and who need assistance connecting with I/DD services and other benefits.</i>	\$40,000	53	\$754.72
<b>Behavioral/Mental Health</b>				
<b>ASPEN Program (Tennyson Center for Children)</b>	<i>Provides behavioral supports and educational services to students with I/DD in ASPEN program. Amount spent per student will decrease as enrollment increases</i>	\$130,912	5	\$26,182.40
<b>Laradon Expansion of Behavioral Services</b>	<i>Offers behavioral services and supports beyond Medicaid-defined services, including crisis support, customer-specific trainings, and consultation and training to external systems.</i>	\$10,606	13	\$815.85
<b>Client Education/Increasing Independence</b>				
<b>Ability Connection Colorado: RAMP Extension Program</b>	<i>Serves transitional-age, foster care youth with disabilities through a 16-week national mentoring and live-skills program that is evidence-based and career-focused.</i>	\$15,687	0	N/A
<b>Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC): Probate Power</b>	<i>Provides estate planning and probate legal services to adults with I/DD in Denver.</i>	0	0	N/A
<b>Guided by Humanity Yoga</b>	<i>Enhances quality of life by providing inclusive, accessible yoga classes within the community.</i>	\$8,544	114	\$74.95
<b>Pizzability</b>	<i>Provides job opportunities in a restaurant for individuals with I/DD. This project is in the process of opening and was not fully implemented in Q1.</i>	\$40,000	0	N/A

<sup>2</sup> Total Q1 2018 Spending = total amount paid for services delivered in Q1. Depending on the timing of invoices received, spending totals included in Table 1 may or may not be reflected in reported community agency spending.

Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Total Q1 2018 Spending	Total Individuals Served	Average dollars per person/service
----------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------

### Client Education/Increasing Independence (Cont.)

<b>Resource Ability (Financial Health Institute)</b>	<i>Provides a social learning environment to strengthen financial health and advance quality of life for people with I/DD and their support systems.</i>	\$117,143	251	\$466.71
<b>REVEL: Mentor Program</b>	<i>Provides an integrated setting called the REVEL Lounge for teens with autism to hang out, make friends, learn new skills and explore interests.</i>	\$26,155	10	\$2,615.50
<b>Self-Employment Education (Celebrate EDU)</b>	<i>Teaches the benefits of entrepreneurial education.</i>	\$12,590	12	\$1,049.17
<b>Supported Employment Collaborative: Goodwill &amp; Jewish Family Service</b>	<i>Offers a supported employment online jobs bank with mobile staff to engage clients and help them meet their employment goals.</i>	\$78,846	114	\$691.63
<b>T.A.C.T.</b>	<i>Provides trade and technical skills to children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder.</i>	\$53,575	17	\$3,151.47

### Social/Recreational

<b>Arts &amp; Community Exploration - ACE (Jewish Family Service)</b>	<i>Provides vibrant and creative art projects, group and individual music therapy, cultural and holiday explorations and recreation.</i>	\$7,180	20	\$359
<b>Community Events &amp; Adventures (Active Community Access)</b>	<i>Provides community-integrated evening and Saturday activities.</i>	\$4,319	6	\$719.83
<b>Project World (Activity Options)</b>	<i>Offers community activities and overnight travel opportunities.</i>	\$86,396	274	\$315.31



Implemented Projects	Project Purpose & Service Types	Total Q1 2018 Spending	Total Individuals Served	Average dollars per person/service
<i>Social/Recreational (cont.)</i>				
<b>Social Inclusion (Connect Us)</b>	<i>Provides opportunities for families and youth for social connections through after-school social groups, inclusive recess facilitation and parent support groups.</i>	\$50,087	64	\$782.61
<b>StellarCare Vacations</b>	<i>Provides opportunity for travel to enhance personal growth, reunite family members and support social skill development.</i>	\$11,461	9	\$1,273.44
<b>The Wayfaring Band</b>	<i>Offers multi-day trips that focus on taking participants off the beaten path to increase independence and foster community connections.</i>	\$80,660	13	\$6,204.62
<b>Training and Support</b>				
<b>Autism Society of Colorado: Autism 101 Community Series and Police Training</b>	<i>Provides community trainings to increase knowledge and improve interactions with individuals with an autism diagnosis in the community.</i>	\$31,765	212	\$149.83
<b>Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG): DD Network of Care website</b>	<i>Provides a searchable database of resources specific to the I/DD community.</i>	\$39,369	0	N/A
<b>Laradon Early Intervention Family Navigator</b>	<i>1. EI Play &amp; Learn Group 2. EI Parent Support Group</i>	\$16,940	37	\$1,273.44
<b>Parent to Parent</b>	<i>Developing a data system to help match support parents with parents new to the system. Also trains new support parents.</i>	\$1,618	0	N/A
<b>THRIVE: Project Independence</b>	<i>Delivers trainings to parents and youth with I/DD to provide information and resources during the time of transition from high school to adulthood.</i>	\$16,059	20	\$802.95

Community agencies can request access to mill levy funding by completing a proposal application on the RMHS website at [www.rmhumanservices.org/community-partners](http://www.rmhumanservices.org/community-partners). These agencies may also be identified through an individual's service planning process when a needed service is not available through Medicaid or other funding sources. RMHS mill levy management staff evaluates each community agency's proposal to comply with the DHS contract. Successful proposals require multiple components including:

- Proposed program serves Denver residents with I/DD in a way that addresses a clear need in the community.
- Proposed program's Need Statement is clear, meaning that the proposed program and its intent are fully understood.
- Proposed program's goals align with one or more of the seven identified goal areas.
- Proposal lists clear, realistic, measurable objectives that address an identified community need directly impacting Denver's I/DD community.
- Proposal describes implementation steps.
- Proposal clearly identifies how the agency will use budgeted items to further the project goals.
- Proposal includes distinct means to evaluate the difference between outputs and outcomes, and to measure and demonstrate the effectiveness of funded projects.

A community agency's proposal is approved once its program proposal adequately addresses the seven components identified above. Before contract execution, RMHS mill levy staff works with each community agency on its proposal to ensure: a) outcomes are defined, b) a proposal's model of service delivery is sound, c) budget amounts are appropriate, and d) deliverables are clearly defined and measurable. Mill levy staff also work with each community agency on an ongoing basis to monitor service delivery, conduct outreach, resolve issues and ensure that information reporting is timely and accurate.

Because of mill levy funding, community agencies have expanded and implemented new programs and services over the last year that are meeting the holistic needs of Denver residents with I/DD.

Graph 4: Q1 2018 Mill Levy Funds for Individual Requests and Community Agencies by Priority Area (Total = \$1,661,483.85)

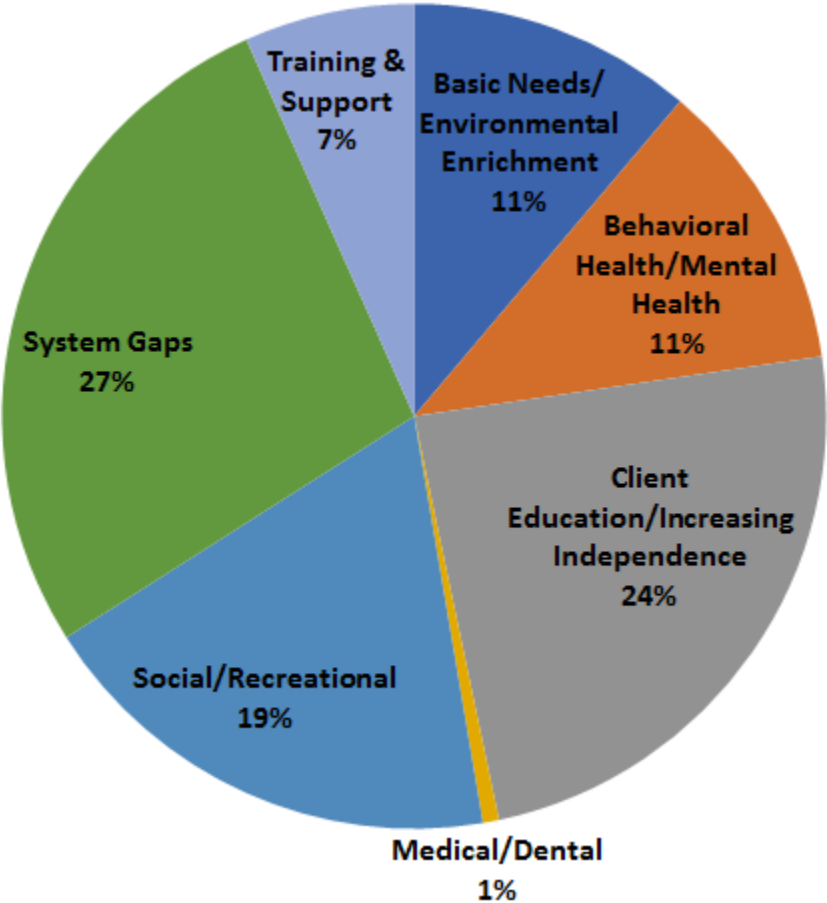


Table 2: Q1 2018 Mill Levy Distribution Details by Priority Area

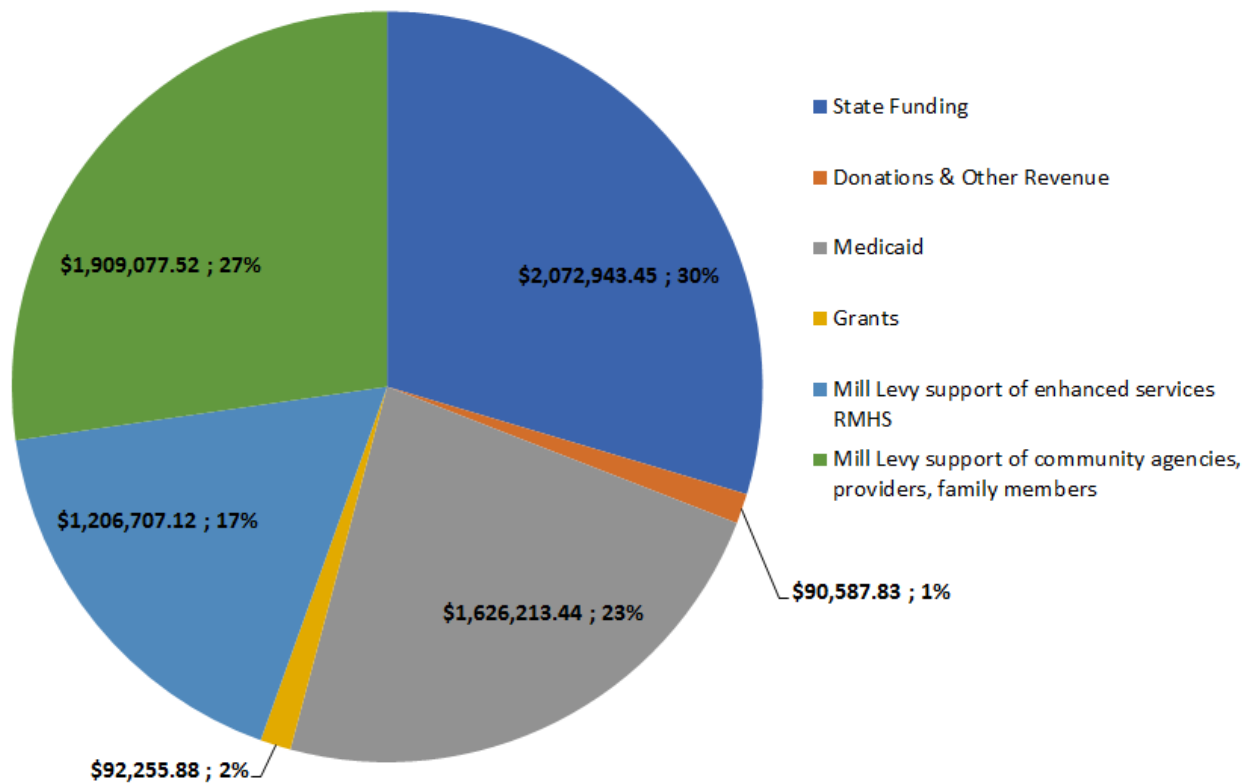
Priority Area	Number of Providers/Families/Organizations Paid <sup>3</sup>	Transaction Amounts
<b>Basic Needs/Environmental Enrichment</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>\$189,890.96</b>
General Housing Stability Assistance	51	\$80,787.60
Home Accessibility Adaptations & Assistive Technology	17	\$38,558.64
Medical & Client Care Supplies	84	\$20,362.58
Personal Care & Other Professional Svcs	6	\$5,268.78
Residential Habilitation	3	\$13,157.90
Specialized Med Equip/Wheelchair	1	\$324.30
Transportation & Vehicle Modifications	19	\$31,431.16
<b>Social/Recreational</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>\$302,615.61</b>
Other/Other Professional Services	2	\$50,232.00
Recreational Activities/Other Events	103	\$252,383.61
<b>System Gaps</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>\$459,076.45</b>
Assistive Technology	3	\$4,324.00
Day Habilitation & Mentorship	22	\$13,999.80
Interpretation Svcs	15	\$4,006.91
Music, Occupational, Speech/Language, and other therapies	41	\$31,313.60
Respite	417	\$405,432.14
<b>Client Education/Increasing Independence</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>\$398,159.74</b>
Assistive Technology	15	\$14,514.80
Medical & Client Care Supplies	2	\$594.95
Other Professional Svcs	54	\$330,625.22
Supported Employment	7	\$52,424.77
<b>Behavioral/Mental Health</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>\$190,657.24</b>
Assistive Technology	1	\$1,166.78
Behavioral & Other Professional Services	25	\$189,393.63
Medical & Client Care Supplies	1	\$96.83
<b>Medical/Dental</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>\$10,418.30</b>
Dental/Vision Services	1	\$519.30
Medical Care & Care Supplies	17	\$8,469.00
Pharmacy	1	\$1,430.00
<b>Training &amp; Support</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>\$110,665.55</b>
Interpretation & Other Professional Svcs	15	\$86,344.57
Parent Ed/Support	15	\$24,320.98
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>\$1,661,483.85</b>
<b>Project Management</b>		<b>\$120,467.98</b>
<b>Overhead on Distribution of Funds</b>		<b>\$120,556.69</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>\$1,902,508.52</b>

<sup>3</sup> Table 2 provides information regarding the total number of payments per category that were made to individuals or organizations outside of RMHS. The number of payments to providers/families/organizations identified in Table 2 is duplicative.

# Rocky Mountain Human Services

During the first quarter of 2018, RMHS provided services to individuals in Denver through a variety of programs and funding sources. A breakdown of the costs of services and supports in the first quarter of 2018 is detailed in Graph 5.

Graph 5: Q1 2018 RMHS Cost of Services and Supports by Funding Source



Approximately 39 percent of the total mill levy funding expended in this reporting period supported enhanced services that RMHS provided to 3,272 unduplicated individuals in Denver. In many cases, RMHS is the only provider of these services in Denver, and the services are not otherwise reimbursable but are important for the individual's well-being. RMHS delivers services through multiple programs for children and adults with I/DD. Mill levy expenditures by department are detailed in Table 3 and described below.

Table 3: Q1 2018 Mill Levy Expenditures Supporting Enhanced Services Delivered by RMHS

RMHS Departments Providing Mill Levy-Funded Services	Mill Levy Funding
Early Intervention	\$271,695.06
Family Services and Support	\$156,597.00
Life Essentials Provider Network	\$84,679.58
Service Coordination	\$333,974.44
Assessment and Consultation Team	\$242,211.36
Behavioral Health	\$ 70,556.44
Community Outreach and Communications	\$46,993.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,206,707.12</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. EI is a public health-entitlement program and does not have a waitlist. However, in the 2017 legislative session and prior years, State of Colorado staff and EI providers indicated their concerns about funding shortfalls that could affect the current system’s ability to meet the program’s goals.

The two primary EI services are case management and direct services, which include clinical assessments and therapies to address identified needs. Funding for these services includes state funds, Medicaid and private insurance. EI case management for children with Medicaid is 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, mill levy funding pays for case management and therapy when an eligible infant or toddler needs more than is reimbursed through existing EI funding. RMHS is the sole provider of EI case management in Denver. During this reporting period, RMHS served **1,401 Denver individuals<sup>4</sup>** in this program. Over 90 percent of the children served in EI received additional mill levy-funded case management services. Without mill levy funding, these children’s needs would not be met as comprehensively or as expeditiously as possible.

### Family Service and Supports Program (FSSP)

FSSP is a partnership between families and publicly funded supports. The program assesses each individual’s and family’s circumstances to determine the appropriate types of services or supports that can best assist and are least likely to disrupt the family’s lifestyle. In FSSP, state funding covers direct services and case management activities, both of which are capped contractually to community centered boards. Mill levy funding pays for the case management or direct services that other funding sources do not reimburse. RMHS is the sole provider of FSSP services in Denver. During this reporting period, FSSP served **989 Denver individuals**. Without mill levy funding, more than 800 individuals in FSSP would have lost case management and direct services and would be placed on a waitlist.

<sup>4</sup> Some individuals receive services from more than one RMHS program during the year and are therefore included in each program’s count.

## Life Essentials Provider Network (LEPN)

The Life Essentials Provider Network provides direct service for adults and children I/DD through Medicaid programs. RMHS oversees a service model that uses family members as subcontractors to provide services. This increases individual choice and creates a mechanism to reimburse family members for the valuable services they provide. LEPN uses both nursing and quality assurance staff to enhance the quality of services delivered enhancements that are neither required nor funded outside of mill levy. RMHS uses mill levy funding to offer state-mandated trainings, such as first aid, to LEPN providers at no cost. During this reporting period, LEPN served **120 Denver individuals**. LEPN used mill levy funding to supplement the costs of providing oversight to 123 contractors serving those individuals. Other CCBs 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 residents.

## Service Coordination

Service Coordination provides case management to children and adults receiving Medicaid-funded developmental disability services. Case management includes intake activities, eligibility determinations, service enrollment, 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 and educational services. As Denver's community centered board, RMHS must process intake and eligibility for Individuals in Denver seeking service coordination. During this reporting period, service coordination served **882 Denver individuals**.

Case management reimbursement for services is capped at 60 hours annually and some case management functions are not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. Mill levy funding pays for case management beyond what is reimbursed through other sources. 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, from birth to age 18. 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. In this reporting period, the Assessment and Consultation team served **326 Denver individuals**. Approximately half received assessment services only and half continue to receive ongoing intervention services. 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.

## Behavioral Health

The behavioral health needs of individuals with I/DD are unique and require complex coordination of care needs. This population has 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 and behavioral health issues. Because specialized staff are required to meet these needs, the cost of providing services is greater than current funding reimbursement. RMHS uses mill levy funding to support individuals' needs in these areas. During this reporting period, our Behavioral Health clinic served **88 Denver individuals**.

## 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 the community is aware of how to access mill levy funds. RMHS outreach activities in this reporting period included:

- Community Advisory Council meeting on Feb. 20
- Community Forum on March 5 at Laradon for RMHS clients, family members and the community to provide input on needs and priorities and to learn about RMHS' activities, including the programs provided by community partners
- Presentation to Denver City Council SAFEHOUSE Committee on March 14
- Ongoing website updates to:
  - Provide new information about community partners and valuable resources and programs
  - Publish Board and Community Advisory Council meeting agendas, presentations and minutes and organization reports
  - Continue to provide translations of key information for Spanish speakers
  - Maintain online calendar of client, partner and community events
- Social media communications to promote mill levy-related efforts, including community partners' events
- Two monthly e-newsletters distributed – one for providers and one for the broader community
- Over 25 meetings have been conducted with 20 community agencies interested in accessing mill levy funding for their program ideas and services
- Outreach at public and private sector events, including presentations and/or attendance at 33 neighborhood association meetings
- Coordination of quarterly meetings for service agencies working with I/DD individuals



## Demographics

Graph 8: Age Ranges of Denver Clients Served by RMHS

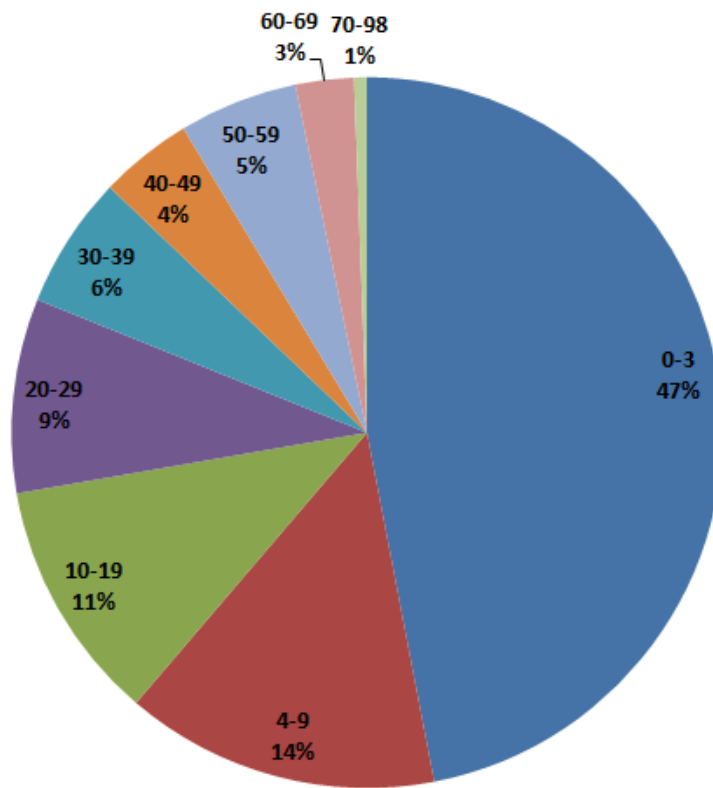


Table 4: Reported Ethnicities of Denver Clients Served by RMHS

Ethnicity	%
White/Caucasian	39.85%
Hispanic/Latino	34.76%
African American or Black	12.35%
Unknown/Not Reported	4.58%
Asian	2.20%
Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian	2.03%
<5 reporting specific ethnicity	1.07%
Asian, White/Caucasian	0.69%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.69%
African American or Black, White/Caucasian	0.65%
3 or More Ethnicities Reported	0.52%
African American or Black, Hispanic/Latino	0.38%
American Indian or Alaskan Native, White/Caucasian	0.24%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 5: Primary Languages of Denver Clients Served by RMHS

Primary Language	% of individuals
English	75.95%
Spanish	20.30%
Other	1.65%
Arabic	0.69%
Amharic	0.28%
ASL	0.24%
Burmese	0.21%
French	0.21%
Nepali	0.17%
Somali	0.17%
Vietnamese	0.14%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Program Outcomes

RMHS provides mill levy funding directly to individuals and families in Denver, and caregivers and agencies that support Denver residents. These services are as diverse and unique as possible to meet individual needs. RMHS is committed to meeting the unique needs of individuals, families and others; additionally, RMHS is committed to enhancing the capacity of community agencies to develop programs and deliver services to support Denver residents with I/DD.

Mill levy-funded services continued to successfully meet effectiveness measures in Quarter 1 of 2018. Whether new services were working to increase individuals' independence; keeping individuals and families healthy, safe and in their homes; increasing caregivers' skills; or improving quality of life, the results are remarkable. A summary of outcomes is provided in Appendix A. Below are some of the highlights:

- More than 28 individuals and families received support for **housing stability** and home modifications so that they can remain safely in their homes.
- Three individuals experiencing homelessness were permanently housed and secured employment.
- 419 individuals were successfully learned about and increased their independence:
  - Learning **trade skills** toward gainful employment (22 individuals).
  - Increasing **cultural and artistic** exposure (20 individuals).
  - Appropriately participating in **integrated yoga** classes (114 individuals).
  - Improving **financial health** (251 individuals).
  - Turning their interests into **entrepreneurial opportunities** (12 individuals).
- Over 88 percent of children served through facilitated play improved in their **self-confidence, resiliency, and/or social skills.**
- Individuals improved their **quality of life** through social and recreational opportunities.
  - 132 individuals and caregivers can now access recreation centers throughout Denver Parks & Recreation.
  - Over 386 individuals have participated with our community partners in a variety of community engagement opportunities, including local day trips and overnight trips.

## Upcoming Projects

RMHS is continually engaging with our community and stakeholders to ensure that we are accountable for addressing their needs and concerns. In addition to the continuation of all the projects described in this report, new projects are also in active development. Below is one of these projects.

### Mill Levy Service Plans – EI

Much like the mill levy service plan project initiated in August 2017 for individuals accepting waiver services, RMHS has begun piloting the service plan approach for children in the EI program. The concept is to build into service plans any needed services and resources not available through EI funding. EI uses a combination of public and private insurance, along with state general fund dollars, to address the developmental needs of children birth to age 3. Service coordinators conduct assessments during the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, process individual requests and listen to stakeholder feedback. Families receive access to services at the time of the child's six-month IFSP and will work with their primary providers to ensure services and supports address the child's developmental and basic needs. For additional information and initial pilot data, see the System Gaps section of the Appendix at the end of this report.

## Summary

RMHS provides case management and direct services to adults and children with I/DD in Denver and surrounding communities. As the designated CCB and single point of entry for individuals seeking assistance for all needs related to I/DD, RMHS is in the best position to meet this community's needs. RMHS has embraced the opportunity to create responsive and innovative programs to address the needs of individuals with I/DD through the generous mill levy funding provided by Denver residents. Through the first quarter of 2018, RMHS continues to transform the use of mill levy funding to maximize the impact of these dollars on the lives of Denver residents with I/DD. As discussed in this report, RMHS has used mill levy dollars to enhance the well-being of children and adults in a multitude of ways, including the following:

- Funding individual requests from nearly 700 individuals, including needed medical care and therapies when they are not covered or only partially covered by Medicaid or private insurance.
- Building services that are unfunded or underfunded by Medicaid or other funders, such as respite care, into more than 90 individuals' annual service plans.
- Supporting innovative programs through 67 community agencies to provide services to more than 1,200 individuals, including educational and supportive services for school-age children with severe behavioral and other needs; providing entrepreneurial education to young people; and providing parents of infants and toddlers with opportunities to meet other parents while their children develop social skills in therapeutic play settings.
- Enhancing RMHS services to 3,272 individuals, such as additional case management, first aid training for family members, and therapies for infants and toddlers, when adequate funding is not available from the state, Medicaid or other sources.

RMHS is grateful to the City and County of Denver for its generosity to people with I/DD and is honored to serve these individuals every day.

# Appendix: Program Outcomes by Priority Area

## Priority: Basic Needs/Environmental Supports

Meeting basic needs and providing environmental supports for individuals and families includes addressing needs such as housing, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, and furniture or clothing. Approximately 14 percent of mill levy funding expended in this reporting period has been utilized to help meet these needs.

### Client Assistance

This project provides a way for individuals to access funds for emergencies and when appropriate for services not covered elsewhere. Requests are reviewed twice a week and the typical time to process the request is less than 48 hours. RMHS approved 939 individual requests in the first quarter of 2018. Requests have included temporary assistance with rent or utilities to ensure housing stability, clothing, beds, tutoring, adaptive equipment, trainings for family and caregivers, and co-pays for needed therapies.

### Homelessness Project (CFPD-Mission Supports)

Through collaboration with the Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities (CFPD), Mission Supports locates homeless individuals with or suspected to have I/DD. The program structure offers individuals one-on-one support with a peer advocate to obtain services and secure housing and other environmental resources. In the first quarter of 2018, the team served 53 individuals. All individuals received case management, information and referral, wrap-around services, and other assistance to mitigate crisis situations and address the individual's immediate needs. Some participants received the following additional support:

#### Client Assistance Successes

- *Dylan is 4 years old and receives speech therapy services two times a week. His family recently lost Medicaid insurance coverage and they are unable to pay for the cost of speech therapy. RMHS provided \$1,000 in mill levy funds to cover one month of speech therapy while the family identified a new insurance provider.*
- *Collin is a 1-year-old with a seizure disorder. His insurance does not cover the cost of his medication until the deductible is met. RMHS provided \$2,000 in mill levy funds to cover the cost of the medication for one month and to work toward meeting the deductible amount.*
- *Nathan is in his 50s and his lifelong dream is to further his education. RMHS provided \$1,477 to pay for a baking class to help Nathan fulfill a goal to work in a bakery in the future.*
- *Stacy is in her 3's and enjoys participating in ski camp. RMHS provided \$182 in mill levy funds for Stacy to receive minimal personal care services while at her Easter Seals ski camp, which will enable her to socialize with peers in an outdoor setting and also have an opportunity for physical exercise.*

- Thirty-seven individuals were placed in temporary housing, alleviating the stress of homelessness.
- Five individuals received vocational training.
- Twelve individuals received Social Security Disability Benefits.

Some long-term outcomes were achieved this quarter as well:

- Three individuals with I/DD were permanently housed.
- Three individuals with I/DD secured employment.
- Four individuals with I/DD received long-term rep payee services.

### Priority: Client Education/Increasing Independence

Approximately 31 percent of mill levy funds expended in this reporting period was utilized for client education and increasing independence. The following are community project partners offering education to clients with a focus on increasing their life skills and gain independence.

#### Guided by Humanity Yoga (GBH)

Guided by Humanity was created to provide inclusive and accessible yoga opportunities for the I/DD community in Denver. GBH has served 114 individuals in the first quarter of 2018, an increase from 2017. Attendance increased with 70 returning yoga students from last quarter and 38 new yoga students. This program is giving students the tools to control their own well-being. GBH added a cooking class this quarter to further focus on increasing healthy living skills. Six cooking class participants made their own snack or meal with the assistance of staff. Below are the outcomes realized in the first quarter of 2018:

- Increased accessibility of services: Seventy returning yoga students from last quarter, 38 new students.
- Increased self-confidence: Continued attendance has shown that students increased confidence in familiarity of the sequence of poses and are beginning to rely less on the teacher for visual demonstration. Students are also beginning to advocate for themselves when they need assistance.
- Increased leadership skills: Students are volunteering to begin sound work and assisting the teacher by demonstrating what the pose looks like. They are becoming leaders in assisting others.
- Increased independence skills: Students are able to navigate the yoga studio, sign in and interact more with community members and fellow classmates.

GBH is also increasing public awareness of individuals with I/DD through the *Namaste Notes Newsletter*, which is posted on the organization's website and distributed by email. GBH has been featured in the local news and appeared in two documentaries with Brewability Lab. Founder Mary Sims was featured in [The Native Society](#).

### THRIVE Center

THRIVE is providing trainings and an all-day college visit to parents and caregivers of children and young adults with I/DD with a focus on outreach to underrepresented families. The trainings will give parents a better understanding of the nature of their children’s disabilities, and both parents and youth with I/DD will better understand their educational, developmental and transitional needs. During the first quarter of 2018, THRIVE offered two trainings. During these training sessions, parents are learning how to better prepare to assist their children for life after high school. The youth participants attend their own sessions as the parents attend theirs. They are learning about self-advocacy and are making new friends. They are finding and feeling confident in using their voices. According to the evaluations collected from parents for the training sessions:

- 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the products and services were of high quality.
- 100 percent found the products and services relevant.
- 100 percent found the products and services useful.

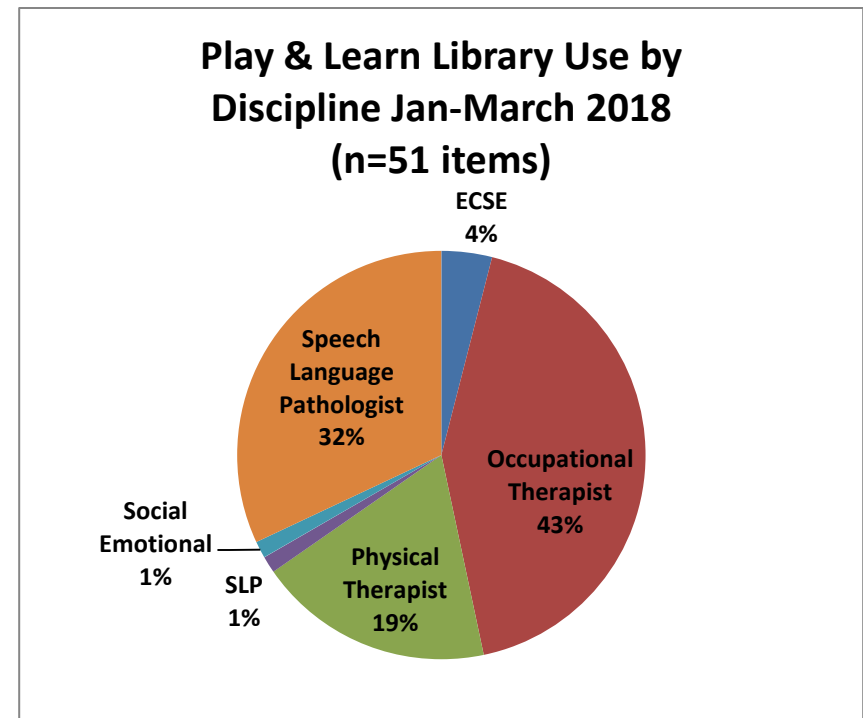
The youth participants also completed evaluations, which showed:

- 95 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the products and services were of high quality.
- 100 percent found the products and services relevant.
- 100 percent found the products and services useful.

### 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 to have the opportunity to try equipment and ensure it works for individuals before buying. In surveying the therapists who have been using the equipment, RMHS has received the following positive feedback:

- 51 items were loaned in the first quarter of 2018 to clinical therapists to try with children and increase their skills.
- On a scale of one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree), therapists averaged the following ratings:
  - Did the item help improve the child’s skills? **Average score: 4.3**
  - Will you access the Play & Learn Library again in the future? **Average score: 4.6**



### ResourceAbility Program (Financial Health Institute)

Financial Health Institute (FHI) developed a new program to improve financial health throughout Denver’s I/DD Community. During this quarter, FHI scheduled and delivered classes for five groups of customers with three community partners in the I/DD system. The institute also delivered classes for staff in the I/DD community. FHI has developed and tested a customer survey to gain direct feedback about the classes provided. Here are the results from its survey:

- 168 (93.3 percent) customers said they liked the classes.
- 171 (90.0 percent) customers said the classes were helpful.
- 161 (92.5 percent) customers said they would like to have more classes.

To obtain more data about how the customers responded to classes, FHI developed an observational checklist that showed positive customer behaviors ranging from 89 percent to 94 percent, with an average of 91.3 percent positive observed behaviors.

Staff at host sites for the classes was also surveyed. Staff rated customers’ engagement in the classes on a scale of one to five (from not at all engaged to engaged all the time). The average rating was 4.48 with 52.1 percent of staff rating “all of the time.” Staff rated customer learning an average of 3.77 on a scale of one (learned nothing) to five (learned all of the topics covered). Finally, staff rated whether the lessons were relevant to the customers from one (not a good match) to five (very relevant), resulting in an overall average score of 4.56, with 63 percent of staff rating the lessons as “very relevant.”

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

Celebrate EDU’s Self-Employment Education Project provides opportunities for client education and increased independence by offering innovative entrepreneurial education for I/DD individuals ages 15 to 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 the first quarter, the program held two entrepreneur education information sessions, trained two Spark Program instructors, and recruited partners for future events and partnerships.

Celebrate EDU posted a [video](#) on its website and social media accounts to focus on the story of individuals with I/DD who have become entrepreneurs. In only four weeks, the video has been viewed over 7,000 times and its social media reach exceeded 15,000 people. Through these efforts, Celebrate EDU is empowering self-advocates to pursue entrepreneurship so they can lead happy, productive lives.

#### ResourceAbility

*The most important element of what the Financial Health Institute team brings to the individuals in the class is making financially sound decisions. Is it worth paying more money at the convenience store or at the vending machine when you could buy the same product at the local grocery store? Going through the different activities makes the individuals give the choices they make a second thought.*

– Calena Camacho,  
Laradon Work Teams Program Manager

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

T.A.C.T. offers for-credit classes for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ages 14 to 21, as well as night and weekend workshops for individuals with ASD ages 5 to 21. Workshop classes vary and include trades such as photography, welding, electronics, fiber arts, graphic design, audio engineering, carpentry, auto mechanics and instrument-making. In the first quarter of 2018, T.A.C.T. served 22 Denver students across the offered programs. T.A.C.T.'s outcomes included improving students' empowerment, independence, socialization, flexibility, problem-solving and self-confidence, and therefore increasing the likelihood of gainful employment. Here are the results realized during the entire semester through pre- and post-assessment scores:

- 17 of 17 students assessed (100 percent) showed improvements in trades skills.
- 17 out of 17 students assessed (100 percent) showed improvements in workplace etiquette.
- 13 out of 17 students assessed (76 percent) showed improvement in empowerment and independence.
- 11 of 17 students assessed (65 percent) showed improvements in socialization.
- 15 out of 17 students assessed (88 percent) showed improvements in flexibility and problem-solving.
- 10 out of 17 students assessed (59 percent) showed improvements in inclusion and aptitude.

### Supported Employment Collaborative (SEC)

The Supported Employment Collaborative project addresses the supported employment gap for individuals with I/DD by decreasing the number of unemployed individuals in the City and County of Denver. Currently, several government and private agencies provide supported employment on a small scale. SEC 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 Denver. The collaborative includes two local organizations with a long history of serving individuals with I/DD in the supported employment field. Once placed into supported employment in the community, individuals with I/DD can participate in and actively contribute to the Denver community. In the first quarter of 2018, all evaluation tools and measurements have been fully implemented. The project also worked to create an informational website that is now live. Below are the results of their work in Quarter 1 of 2018:

- 94 individuals received an intake/assessment (some served this quarter were assessed in 2017)
- 40 individuals were provided pre-vocational training.

### T.A.C.T.

*Justin is a 17-year-old young man who has a passion for art, electronics and puzzle-like games. Justin has a hard time accepting corrections and denied access, but is most successful when he works one on one with familiar staff and understands what to expect from a work session. In the past, Justin has only been successful at one other jobsite, dusting shelves for a duration of five minutes each visit. At T.A.C.T., Justin has participated in activities that could lead him to a future in biomedical engineering, computer science, computer engineering and graphic design. He is currently working for 20 to 30 minutes, has improved his functional communication drastically and has stayed safe attending T.A.C.T. for the past two months!*

Amanda Therrien, T.A.C.T. Educator



- 75 individuals received hands-on job-readiness training.
- Job-seekers completed 15 employer interviews.
- SEC held 68 business contact activities to increase awareness of I/DD and hiring potential.
- Three job seekers found community employment.

### Autism 101 Community Training Series (Autism Society of Colorado)

Autism Society of Colorado (ASC) offers Autism 101 presentations and trainings to increase autism awareness and improve the quality of interactions with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) communities. ASC provides site-specific training in how to better identify, respond to, communicate and interact with people with ASD. In the first quarter of 2018, ASC was able to offer over five very different trainings in Denver for 212 individuals. Based on a survey completed after attending the trainings:

- 79 percent of participants felt this training would help them to be more effective in their positions.
- 82 percent of participants found the information was relevant, interesting and timely.
- 79 percent of participants were interested in additional training.

### RAMP Extension for Foster Care Youth (Ability Connection Colorado)

The RAMP Extension program serves transitional age foster care youth with I/DD in a 16-week intensive program. RAMP is an innovative national mentoring and life-skills program, which provides evidence-based, career-focused mentoring for youth with disabilities and other challenges. According to available statistics from the Institute for Educational Leadership, youth with disabilities are four times more likely to be adjudicated and only 30 percent receive high school degrees. SMART data reveals that in challenging fields of study and employment, such as STEM, individuals with disabilities are the most underrepresented.

The RAMP Extension program began this quarter, and they had to delay the program due to lack of sufficient numbers of youth to start the project. They have done outreach to numerous organizations to find youth that meet the criteria of both I/DD and transition-age foster care youth. To date they have identified six individuals for the program with one completing the registration form. They will start the program once they have at least six participants registered. They are now working DHS as the primary partner to help recruit, and they are focusing their efforts to have greater success in recruitment. They have also developed a newsletter for each project to disseminate to community partners once projects are up and running.

#### Autism 101 Community Training Series: LAZ Parking

*The staff was very open and appreciative. The HR contact, as well as the team, really appreciated the additional help and ideas in terms of helping brainstorm how they could onboard 10 individuals with autism. Our training enabled them to understand more about the potential barriers to employment, and after the presentation, the team started to talk about solutions: giving the candidates with autism the interview questions in advance, giving them a chance to review surroundings prior to training, even creating a YouTube video of the job to show prospective candidates. It was incredibly rewarding to see them absorb the materials and immediately put into context what they learned.*

— Julie Wismann, Autism Society of Colorado

### **Mentor Program (REVEL)**

Research suggests that individuals with autism are at a greater risk of social isolation and depression than other populations. One in four individuals with autism has been completely isolated, meaning he or she has not seen or spoken to friends in the past year. REVEL's project will benefit a variety of individuals including teens and adults (ages 14-plus) with autism through a supported transition program. REVEL has developed a comprehensive, year-long mentor program encouraging teens and young adults in the Denver area to foster meaningful friendships with individuals with autism while learning valuable, applicable life skills. The REVEL Lounge provides a social setting where people with and without disabilities can be themselves, try new things, learn, make friends and have fun. The funding has helped REVEL achieve their intended outcomes by allowing the opportunity to thoughtfully develop the intricate pieces of a peer mentor program, offer scholarships to more individuals, and support the costs of mentors' activities and program material costs associated with scheduled activities.

### **Priority: Behavioral Health/Mental Health**

#### **Priority: Medical and Dental**

Medical/Dental and Behavioral/Mental Health services include a wide variety of health-related services to ensure the health and well-being of individuals with I/DD. Combined, approximately 16 percent of mill levy funding year-to-date has been utilized toward these two priority areas.

### **Laradon Expansion of Behavioral Services**

Laradon's Expansion of Behavioral Services project supports clients with behavioral challenges beyond what is reimbursable through Medicaid, including crisis support, behavioral support training of staff, and involvement with the legal system. Billing data over the last quarter shows that more than 60 percent of the actual time required to provide direct consultation and counseling services for individuals requiring behavioral support in the I/DD system is not billable through Medicaid.

Project goals include decreasing inappropriate or problematic behavior of adult individuals and increase the average of length of placement in day, vocational and residential settings. Major behavioral incidents during this quarter decreased 120 percent. Laradon developed positive behavioral supports for all individuals served, increasing their quality of life and enabling greater inclusion in the Denver community. While project staff directly served 13 individuals in the first quarter, they estimate they indirectly impacted as many as 100 through the training day program and residential providers, as well as family members. This program allowed direct service providers to receive training in:

- Antecedent intervention.
- Signal recognition.
- Engineering environments and approaches to mitigate trigger.
- Use of differential reinforcement of alternate and incompatible behaviors to de-escalate during the early stages of crisis.

### **Tennyson ASPEN Program**

This project expands the number of Denver County children receiving services through Tennyson's Autism Services ASPEN classrooms and provides needed therapeutic services, including family therapy and support that is otherwise unfunded. The project outcomes are to decrease maladaptive behaviors, increase social skills and increase academic proficiency. Three first-quarter objectives were achieved:

- Establish an additional ASPEN classroom.
- Expand capacity to accommodate eight additional I/DD children from Denver County.
- Start to develop outcome measures in SMART format to be utilized in assessing program success.

The most pressing need this project addresses has been to expand services to the Denver I/DD child population. Before mill levy funding for ASPEN, Denver kids were underrepresented in the Tennyson ASPEN program due to the Denver Public School policy, which declines full reimbursement of the program's service costs. Consequently, because therapy service coverage, including direct and integrated therapy costs, was declined, many ASPEN students were not Denver residents. ASPEN classes are now made up of five Denver Public Schools children, or 21 percent, which is a 7 percent increase from the beginning of the project.

### **Collaborative Positive Behavioral Support (CPBS)**

A 2014 statewide analysis of the gaps in services for individuals with dual diagnoses of I/DD and mental health/behavioral health disorders concluded that Colorado has a severely limited capacity to provide crisis intervention and stabilization services for this population, limited access to mental health providers with knowledge and skills to work with the population, and little to no follow-up post-crisis services. The analysis provided recommendations to include people with I/DD in the vision of fully integrated systems for primary health care, specialty care, behavioral health and dental care, with person-centered care plans that include access to appropriate supports and care coordination. This model does not currently exist in Denver. Most individuals with I/DD receive their care in segmented systems and continue to have limited access to providers with expertise in meeting their needs. This project aims to integrate all aspects of health into care plans for people with complex needs to help them improve their quality of life and reduce the burden on emergency care.

In 2017, RMHS began identifying gaps in services for this population specific to Denver. We are actively involving a variety of providers in the community, including psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavior analysts, case workers, DHS, and the Colorado Department and Health Care Policy and Financing, as well as host-home, day treatment and residential treatment providers. Several common themes have emerged. These themes aligned closely with the findings of the dual-diagnosis "gap analysis" of 2014. Our findings found five primary goals of the CPBS program, all with the underlying goal of ensuring access to quality and appropriate care for individuals with dual diagnoses. Project plans are now being developed for each of the five identified primary goals:

1. Intersystem care coordination
2. Crisis planning
3. Training and ongoing support
4. Integrated care
5. Functional behavior assessments

This quarter, CPBS staff presented their integrated care proposal to the Ambulatory Quality Improvement and Design Committee (AQIDC) at Denver Health, and received preliminary approval to pilot the project, with a projected start date of July 1, 2018. Following approval, Denver Health personnel met to discuss the model, logistics, action plan, and project management.

## Priority: Training and Support

### Laradon Family Infant and Toddler Program (FIT)

This project supports a family navigator to address gaps in EI supports for children from birth to age 3 and their parents. The project has three primary areas of focus: 1) Connecting parents to resources in the community, 2) Implementing weekly play and learn groups, and 3) Assisting families in enrolling children in preschool. The weekly Play-and-Learn groups not only increase children’s social-emotional development, but also create valuable social support for parents who meet others facing similar challenges, as many of them are socially isolated. FIT uses the evidence-based teaching practices and intervention approaches of the Pyramid PIWI Model in the Play-and-Learn groups to promote children’s social and emotional development and address challenging behaviors. The model’s group parenting programs promote positive social emotional outcomes by helping create supportive early childhood and home environments. FIT supported 37 children and parents in the first quarter. During this quarter some outcomes that were achieved are:

- Four children turned 3 and enrolled in preschool.
- A second play group was added with families attending on a regular basis

### Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Network of Care

Individuals living in Denver who have I/DD, their caregivers and providers often require support in identifying and accessing community resources specific to their needs. The Denver Metro Area is home to many community resources. However, no resource database for the I/DD population’s needs is available in the Denver region. Without a comprehensive and accessible resource, I/DD individuals and their families, providers and case managers are left to discover community programs without direction. DRCOG is currently working to develop a developmental disabilities Network of Care website, and make available a database of service providers and resources to everyone in the Denver region. This will connect people to services and support and increase use of community resources. DRCOG plans to launch the website in the second quarter of 2018.

### Laradon FIT

*At a group session, there were three little boys playing with each other. They had really good interaction with each other and were sharing toys between them. They were using really nice playing skills: sharing, taking turns, laughing at what the other child did and imitating. After the session, two of the moms talked outside the library and exchanged phone numbers so they could get together outside of the group.*

–  
Barbara Shaw, Laradon

### Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

*Seventy case managers at Developmental Pathways were trained on March 15, 2018. Fifteen of those trainees completed a survey and it was reported that 86 percent of the survey participants have Denver County clients. According to the survey, 66 percent were “confident” in their ability to find community resources specific to individuals with I/DD prior to training on the I/DD Network of Care database. The survey reports that following the training, 60 percent report to be “confident” and 40 percent report to be “very confident” in their ability to find community resources specific to individuals with I/DD. No trainees reported to be “less than confident” after the training.*

– Cassie Scott, DRCOG

### **Parent to Parent of Colorado (Ability Connection Colorado)**

Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2P-CO) is a parent support organization, which provides ongoing information and emotional support to over 4,000 families across Colorado. They offer a unique parent support service through their Individual Parent Support Program. In this program, a parent (typically someone with a child with a new diagnosis) can request a connection to a trained Support Parent for one-on-one support. They have experienced an increase in requests for the Individual Parent Support Program. Approximately one-third of new members request this matching program when they join. The standard for making a match is 48 hours upon request as many times the parent is in a crisis situation already when making the request. Due to insufficient database structure (currently an Access database), the staff are taking days to a week or more to make this match. Along with the increased demand, there is a backlog of parents who are willing to complete the Support Parent training. Parent to Parent did not have the staff capacity to provide this training within the next year.

This project is in the planning and development stages for the first quarter of 2018, but they have identified some outcomes and timelines for the second quarter:

- Implementation of database with ability to generate reports by May 1, 2018.
- 10 Denver volunteers trained as support parents by June 30, 2018.
- Support Parent training translated into Spanish with culturally/linguistically appropriate resources by June 30, 2018.
- 5-plus Spanish-speaking parents recruited to pilot the Support Parent Training (pilot to commence in summer 2018).
- Initial Connection with RMHS Teams: EI service coordinators, Behavioral Health and Children’s Clinical program by June 30, 2018.

### **Family Autism Resources (RMHS)**

RMHS provides diagnostic evaluations for children in order to assess and potentially give a diagnosis of autism. After the diagnosis is given, parents oftentimes want to research autism and look for ways to support their children. This often leads to internet searches that result in an overwhelming amount of, and sometimes inaccurate, information. The Family Autism Resources are now given out at the time of diagnosis to help with emotional support, trouble-shooting advice, support organizations, care tips, potential problem management, family and sibling discussions, and the definition of autism. The family then has access to appropriate tools and simple behavior techniques to use immediately and increase positive behaviors. To date, more than 125 families have received resources through this program. Families are receiving an assessment of the program after meeting, and the assessment’s results will be evaluated in the next quarter.

### **RMHS-Denver Public Schools Joint Trainings**

RMHS is collaborating with Denver Public Schools (DPS) on a series of staff trainings to enhance services to infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and delays. In addition to the education value, staff from both organizations indicates a strong benefit from the opportunity to come together, share ideas and brainstorm about the challenges they face in their work with very young children. The Motivational Interviewing training held in the first quarter of 2018 focused on basic motivation interviewing and was adapted to fit the needs of EI. The overall intent of this specific training is to have greater success in supporting families from referral to service entry. Twenty-one individuals participated in this training and all six intake staff were able to attend. The intake staff is the first point of contact and assists families in enrolling in the EI program, so the focus of the training was highly applicable to their role. A post-training survey indicated that both RMHS and DPS staff left with an increased understanding of motivational interviewing and an expectation to use materials presented during the training in their work.

## EI Provider Training Series

EI at RMHS serves children birth to age 3 who are experiencing delays in development and reside in Denver. Children in EI services may have complex needs that require specialized knowledge and training from EI providers. EI providers frequently need to pay for specialized training out of pocket. Families also frequently need to pay out of pocket for specialized trainings related to the complex needs of their children. RMHS can help to support EI providers and families in accessing specialized trainings to better support the needs of the child. During this reporting period, the RMHS provided the More Than Words training.

More Than Words is a program developed by the Hanen Centre of Canada specifically for speech language pathologists who work with children under age 5 who are on the autism spectrum and/or have social communication difficulties. It is a parent-training model for clinicians to help train and teach parents to help their child 1) Improve social communication and back-and-forth interactions, 2) Improve play skills, and 3) improve imitation skills. This training is an evidence-based practice for working with children with autism and provides clinicians with specific techniques for working with this population. Fourteen clinicians who serve an estimated 300 families were trained. Survey results on the effectiveness of the training are being compiled from attendees and will be reported next quarter.

RMHS expects to host an infant mental health training in the second quarter.

## Priority: Social/Recreational

RMHS received overwhelming feedback to generate more social and recreational opportunities for individuals, an area not currently supported by Medicaid or other insurance programs. Individuals on Medicaid with limited income have little to no resources to pursue social opportunities without support from mill levy funding. According to a recent AAA survey, 35 percent of Americans were planning to take a vacation 50 miles or more away from home in 2016<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, a recent poll of I/DD providers indicates that fewer than 5 percent 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 projects in this area are in line with the benefits to anyone who needs a vacation: reduced stress, lowered anxiety, possible decrease in heart disease, improved mental health and improved interpersonal relationships. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* published a study that concluded men who take frequent annual vacations were 32 percent less likely to die from heart disease than those who did not take frequent vacations<sup>6</sup>.

Stakeholder feedback to RMHS indicates that gaps exist in current systems and programs supporting people with I/DD related to recreational opportunities, health and fitness, and community integration. Approximately 24 percent of mill levy funding expended during this reporting period has been used for social and recreational goals. Several programs provide social and recreational opportunities for individuals with I/DD in Denver, 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 and Recreation for clients, as well as additional caregiver passes for children. RMHS has distributed:

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/04/aaa-one-third-americans-will-take-family-vacation-year/>

<sup>6</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)

- 132 Denver Parks and Recreation Center Annual Regional Memberships passes to individuals with I/DD, as well as 34 caregivers of children under 18 years of age.
- 140 Denver Botanical Gardens passes, 111 Children’s Museum passes, 132 Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and 140 Denver Zoo passes to individuals with I/DD.
- 386 social/recreational services for individuals through 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 Service)**

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. In the first quarter of 2018, ACE benefited 20 individuals. These participants developed skills and were exposed to numerous arts activities. Eight participants engaged in small-group acrylic painting class with a volunteer artist who comes to the ACE Program once a month.

The program also focuses on improving community and safety awareness for participants. Staff engages participants in safety discussions during time in the car and in the community. Some measurable progress measures are:

- 75 percent of participants demonstrated a higher awareness when a walk signal is present.
- Three out of four participants will put a seat belt on in the car without a reminder.

ACE researched several non-reading self-confidence and esteem scales and developed an assessment tool to capture true outcomes based on the cognitive level of the people served. The tool consists of questions like, “I feel proud of the accomplishments I had in the ACE Program today,” and “How did today’s art project make you feel?” The clients are presented with three emoji faces that reflect happiness, indifference and dislike and asked to circle which face best demonstrates how they felt about their experience in ACE. The results of the assessment tool showed that the majority of the clients felt positive and/or happy while participating the in ACE Program activities.

**Jewish Family Service – Arts & Community Program (ACE)**

*Jessica has been a participant at Shalom Denver since 1999, having started in the Work Services Program and transitioned full time to the ACE Program in 2006. Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable increase in behaviors with Jessica, both at her host home as well as in the ACE Program. Jessica was becoming very disruptive throughout the building at Shalom and this in turn was creating a turbulent environment for other participants in the programs. Jessica was engaging in more verbal outbursts, cursing and non-compliance with staff.*

*Thanks to the additional funding available via the mill levy, we are able to maximize the behavior services she is receiving to include having a behaviorist work one-on-one with Jessica weekly in the ACE Program. The behaviorist is also working in the home environment with her host-home provider to ensure a consistent message is being sent in both settings. We are happy to report we are seeing small strides in a positive direction.*

– Sara Leeper, Jewish Family Service

The ACE program has also hired a full-time board-certified behavior analyst this quarter. Once the Behavior Services Program is up and running, the ACE Program will examine expanding its eligibility criteria and taking on more clients with behavioral issues.

### Project World (Activity Options)

The purpose of “Project World” is to facilitate access to community activities and overnight travel that will enable adults with I/DD to experience the world in the way that other people do in order to increase inclusion, independence, social skills and quality of life. They continue to see participants engaging with each other in and outside of activities. They are exchanging phone numbers and spending time together. Several report that they have tried new things, and they have made suggestions for things to do. Parents and caregivers have been able to attend other family and personal events because they had funding and time.

### 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 benefited six individuals in the first quarter of 2018 by engaging participants in local events and offerings available on Thursday evenings and Saturdays. During this quarter, one day trip was offered. The program plans to offer many additional options in the next quarter to serve a higher number of participants. The participants who went on the day trip reported they were glad to be there and happy to know they would be going on more trips. Survey data will be reported in the second quarter.

### Social Inclusion Project (Connect Us)

The work of Connect Us provides a unique and powerful opportunity for families and youth with disabilities to become more socially connected. Youth on the autism spectrum are significantly more likely to suffer bullying, low self-esteem and social isolation, and have a higher than average risk for suicidal ideation or attempts. The transition to kindergarten is one of the most challenging times for children with developmental disabilities. 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. Because the Connect Us model is based on social skill-building and creating inclusive settings for children with developmental disabilities, Connect Us programs incorporate and serve typically developing children alongside children with developmental disabilities. This mix helps ensure an inclusive social environment in which children

#### Project World

*One of the participants moved to the Denver area from a neighboring state about a year ago. The individual did not immediately qualify for Medicaid funding and the single mother was paying for activities for her son out of pocket. Her resources were becoming exhausted, as well as her energy. They were in frequent conflict because of the tension of being together too much.*

*NH is a 35-year-old, fun-loving man who loves to dress up and was thrilled to be able to go out with a community of similar friends, many of whom live in his immediate neighborhood. He immediately fell into the swing of the community, in spite of hearing loss and difficulty speaking in ways that are easy for others to understand. He has made new friends, learned a lot about his community and has given his mother a chance to have some separate time. NH is a regular at dances, concerts, overnight travel, movies and sporting events.*

Peggy Decker Berry, Activity Options



with developmental disabilities are not stigmatized, and involves a variety of social aptitudes so children can learn positive relationship skills from one another guided through trained facilitators.

In the first quarter of 2018, Connect US served 64 Denver children with I/DD, as well as typically developing children, in integrated settings. The assessments also identified an additional 77 children as socially at-risk, fitting many criteria for I/DD despite a formal diagnosis being disclosed. One of this quarter’s intended outcomes was to measurably improve the social and emotional capacities of children participating in the recess programs and social groups.

- Over 88 percent of after-school participants showed improved self-confidence, social skills and resiliency after the seven-week session.
- Post-program parent surveys report that 100 percent of parents were “very satisfied” with the programs, and 100 percent will likely enroll their children in future programs.

**Connect Us**

*Connect Us taught me how to act more respectful to others and not to be scared of people who are different from me. I learned ways I could include and help people. It teaches us through fun group games. We can forget our problems at home. We can talk to our group and our group leader about our problems.*

– Everly, 5



### StellarCare Vacations

StellarCare Vacations works to allow individuals with I/DD the experience of travel and community integration more often afforded to people without disabilities. This project prioritizes family reconnections while also enabling individuals to have new experiences, improve quality of life, and decrease overall stress. Family reunification is perhaps the most important benefit for the client when it is achieved. When this is provided the family can reconnect and become supportive, as well as serve as advocates for their family members who have I/DD. Our sense of value often comes from our connection to others. Healthy family connections are a catalyst for how we perceive ourselves in a positive way. This in turn affects all aspects of living for the better.

StellarCare has worked with seven individuals in the first quarter of 2018 to plan trips. Two of the seven individuals completed trips that were planned in the fourth quarter of 2017.

### The Wayfaring Band

The Wayfaring Band program 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 first quarter of 2018, The Wayfaring Band served 13 Denver participants with I/DD and achieved the following outcomes:

- 100 percent of trip survey responses indicate they strongly agree or agree they have increased daily-living skills, including food-preparation, cleaning, organizing, money-management, time-management and healthy choices.
- 100 percent of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the itinerary was exciting and original.
- 100 percent of survey respondents strongly agree they have noticed an increased sense of belonging. One respondent said, “The Wayfaring Band has had the single most significant impact on my son over the years. It is truly the one community, outside of immediate family, that he identifies with more than any other.”
- 100 percent strongly agree they have noticed an increase in social skills.
- 100 percent of survey respondents strongly agree they have noticed an increase in health and wellbeing, including self-care and personal safety. One parent survey respondent said, “Participation in The Wayfaring Band has had an amazingly positive impact on my son. He has made many new friends and views the world as reachable based on his experiences.”

### StellarCare Vacations

*The mill levy grant provided an opportunity for Stephanie Oakes to travel to New Orleans during the time of Mardi Gras, not only to partake in the festivities, but also to reconnect with family friends who were a vital part of her life growing up. On our way to see her family friends in Baton Rouge, Stephanie informed us that it had been 28 years since she had seen them last. Stephanie spent the entire day with them and she loved every minute of it. Stephanie told us that without the mill levy funding, she wouldn't have been able to do this on her own and it would have been many more years before she would have been able to see them again, if at all. She greatly enjoyed being able to reunite with her friends, therefore creating new meaningful memories with them after so many years. Her friends were also able to give Stephanie insight and tips for Mardi Gras so she could best enjoy her time throughout her visit.*

– Kelly Jacobson, StellarCare

### The Wayfaring Band

*During The Wayfaring Band's trip to Washington D.C., the Band visited multiple museums. One of the band members was strategically photographing almost all exhibits in all museums and would get frustrated when he wasn't able to photograph things. When The Wayfaring Band staff inquired about why he was taking so many pictures, he responded that because he couldn't read, he needed more time to take in the exhibits and the information provided about them. The Wayfaring Band was fortunate enough to get tickets to visit the African American museum, and a Wayfaring Band staff member who knew that the band member – who was African American – was really looking forward to the museum, but was nervous about not being able to read and comprehend the placards, accompanied the band member through the museum, reading every placard to him and helping ensure his understanding. At the end of the week, the band member said the thing he was most grateful for was the staff member who accompanied him and read everything to him.*

– Andrea Moore, The Wayfaring Band

### Priority: System Gaps

Mill levy-funded services to address system gaps currently comprise 6 percent 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, over \$37,000 in respite funds was distributed.

Significant literature 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 percent to 70 percent of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression. The Center on Aging Society adds that one in 10 family caregivers report that their responsibilities have caused their physical health to worsen<sup>7</sup>.

### Mill Levy Service Plans

Beginning in August 2017, adults accepting services who reside in Denver are able to access additional services through the 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). When state funds for SLS are exhausted, individuals in state SLS will also be able to access these additional services. Individuals are now able to add additional services with mill levy funding in the following categories:

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.comfortkeepers.com/home/info-center/respice-care/importance-of-respice-relief-for-family-caregivers>

- 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.

Beginning in February 2018, children accepting services in the EI program who reside in Denver can now access a menu of items that are identified needs not currently offered through the EI program. Services, all based on the needs of the family, to be available through the EI Unmet Needs project include:

- Infant massage
- Music therapy
- Environmental enrichment and home safety items
- Cribs or toddler beds

In addition, RMHS is gathering feedback from families at the time of the IFSP meeting on the need for respite providers.