# DEPAUL COMMUNITY RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT 2021





# OPENING DOORS TO HOPE AND BELONGING

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# LOVE

"Love is the strongest emotion there is, Amanda. It makes us brave. It gives us the courage to do things we may not have otherwise done."

I sat in a straight-backed wicker chair across the room from my friend. Now age 92, he had been a pastor to me during some difficult middle and high school years. He and I had been writing to one another and I finally went for a visit at his apartment. His wife was now in hospice care and he, too, was facing an illness from which he would not recover.

Questions I asked, like "what made you decide to go into ministry," prompted him to go far down memory lane, recalling the string of events that led one thing to another, up to the moment he decided to attend seminary at the age of 57. One of those stories was about his first love. The words he spoke, quoted above, are now imprinted in my memory for good.

"Love ... makes us brave."

Printed on the pages of the book you're holding are other descriptive pictures of love:

Love is more than a feeling.

It is patient, committed, enduring, in-the-trenches action.

It is asking for help when you wish you didn't need to.

It is praying and deliberating and preparing before growing your family.

It is bearing the weight of knowing your child may not find belonging when he steps outside your home.

It is prioritizing the safety of others, even when that means the temporary loss of a cherished program.

It is making a commitment to support others through fear and uncertainty.

In its most powerful form, it is there no matter what—never ceasing and never giving up.

Your love, reader, is evident. It has given us courage and sustained us over these very unpredictable and difficult years. We see it in your gifts, in your attention, in your time, in your energy, in your sharing.

Love makes us brave, and I'm so glad it does.

On behalf of a grateful team, thank you.

Amanda Stanley
President and CEO





# FELICIA'S JOURNEY TO FIND PEACE

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Joy Shots Photography

Short, sweet, and straight to the point. That's how Felicia Johnson responded to the question, "How do you feel about living with Tom and Debra Cook?" Felicia has lived with the Cooks for eight years now, but her journey with DePaul and with the Cooks began much earlier.

At 8 years old, Felicia entered DePaul's Treatment Foster Care program. She found a safe, loving home and thrived. But then she was nearing 21, the age at which youth in Virginia must leave the foster care system. She needed a new safe, loving place to go, so Felicia transitioned to DePaul's Developmental Disabilities program. Group homes were provided to her, but they did not fulfill her needs. That is what led her to living with Tom and Debra, who had been DePaul foster parents before becoming compassionate caregivers in our Sponsored Residential program.

"I always had a heart for helping people, and we just wanted to give love and support that they could not get at home," said Debra.

Felicia knew the Cooks through church and decided they were the right home

for her. When Debra got the call that Felicia trusted them enough to care for her, she was overwhelmed. Retelling that moment today, she still gets emotional.

"It's remarkable, that's all I can say," said Debra.
"For someone to ask to come live with us, the feeling of that ... I can't even describe."

Debra did hesitate about the move for just a moment. She knew Felicia's family of origin from which she had been removed as a child, making everything more complex and complicated. But hearing that Felicia, who just wanted to be loved and supported, believed they were the best fit for her erased all doubts.

In their years together, Felicia and the Cooks have grown extremely close. Felicia has been respectful of the healthy boundaries they've established, and they have given her love and a chance to be herself.

"She's very caring and considerate of others," said Debra. "She has been a joy in our home. We have our moments, but she's been a joy."

Years ago, Felicia and the Cooks took a leap of faith together. Today, they know that leap has changed all their lives for the better.



# BEING THERE NO MATTER WHAT

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Joy Shots Photography

A safe space to be independent, to be loved, and to belong. That's what Teresa and Patricia work every day to provide for their son, Elijah.

"I think he does know that he's loved more than anything," said Patricia.

Elijah is 21 years old and has autism. He likes watching TV, walking at the local park, and he especially likes playing hideand-seek. He feels most comfortable at home in his room, which is set up as an apartment, so it feels like his own place.

Teresa adopted Elijah in 2012. She committed to being there for him for life. That commitment is what led her and her partner, Patricia, to become sponsored residential providers, also known as compassionate caregivers, with DePaul.

"DePaul has been very supportive," said Teresa.

There are many moments of happiness and celebration in the family's life. But there are also moments of misunderstanding and frustration. Elijah can't effectively express his needs verbally, so Teresa and Patricia must work to uncover what need or want is behind his sounds, gestures, and actions. Sometimes he gets emotional about his struggle to communicate. Sometimes he becomes extremely overwhelmed by the world around him.

"We always try to get him to be involved, but sometimes, it's just too overwhelming for him and that's okay," said Teresa.

Over the years, the police have been called by community members who viewed Elijah's reactions as something other than built up frustration and a struggle to communicate. Each time, Teresa and Patricia have felt overwhelming fear that Elijah will be seen as "a defiant Black man." They want people to understand Elijah, not fear him.

DePaul grapples with the same questions as Teresa and Patricia. How do we create hope and belonging in our communities when trauma and disabilities are still so misunderstood by the general population? And how do we create hope and belonging when lived experiences of racism have created additional inequities for people of color living with a disability?

At home, Teresa, Patricia, and Elijah have built a safe, welcoming, and understanding space. Their hope, and DePaul's hope, is that the world outside their front door can become that kind of space, too. What if Elijah was afforded more grace and understanding during his tough moments? What if the community had more education and understanding around autism and individuals with disabilities? For DePaul, that's a world we're committed to working toward.





# NEVER GIVING UP

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Carla Funk Photography

Virginia and Dale Craig came to DePaul seeking hope and a support system that would not give up on them. With five children, including two who were new to the family through adoption, Virginia and Dale were learning to navigate the challenges of a blended family. They were trying to find a sense of peace. DePaul answered their call.

"They're going to walk with us through this no matter what," said Virginia.

The Craigs adopted siblings Annie and Cameron 16 years ago when Annie was 3 months old and Cameron was 2. Though they were young, Annie and Cameron felt the weight of that transition and loss, and it has affected them to this day.

"They had a lack of love and nurturing from the very beginning," said Dale.

Cameron is very quiet and holds a lot of his emotions close. Annie struggles with losing control and becoming violent. She finds it difficult to form secure, healthy emotional bonds with parental figures—a condition called reactive attachment disorder that is common for children who have spent time in foster care.

Over the last few years, DePaul has wrapped around the family working to meet all their needs—from counseling to intensive in-home support to group outings. Virginia and Dale credit their faith and DePaul's counseling services team with keeping them going.

"Overall, things are more stable and more functional now," said Dale.

Even with all the support, the Craigs still face tough days and fight tough battles. Addressing trauma takes time and patience—not just from Dale and Virginia, but from the whole family.

"I used to think all I had to do was love them and it would be okay," said Virginia. "But there are times that love, on its own, is not enough. Sometimes it takes more than love. You've got to get in there and go through the trenches with them."

But maybe going through the trenches is not separate from love; maybe it is love in action. A love that works to keep a family together. A love that has the power to overcome obstacles. A love that invites help when needed and acknowledges that some days are dark and difficult. A love that lasts no matter what.

<sup>\*</sup>Pictured: Dale, Virginia, daughter Diana and daughter Annie (Cameron not pictured)







# THE POWER OF HOPE

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Carla Funk Photography

Hope feels free—free to grow, free to live, free to dream.

"They let me do my own thing and don't judge me, and they're letting me find my own rhythm," said Hope.

Hope is 18 years old and describes herself as always wanting to help others, but not really knowing how to ask for help herself. She has been in DePaul's Independent Living program since last summer. Her transition to Independent Living happened a bit faster than she had planned, but Hope is familiar with the feeling of life happening too quickly.

"Foster care forced me to grow up super fast," said Hope.

When she was 9 years old, Hope, along with her two siblings, entered the foster care system. Through the years, Hope moved through foster homes but never really felt at home. She buried her emotions and built walls around her heart to protect herself. She said many people assumed the worst of her instead of giving her a chance.

"I feel like we're in trouble as soon as we walk through the door, and honestly that hurts a lot because all I ever wanted to do was make everyone else happy," said Hope. Those difficult years are what led Hope to dream of a future where she could help youth in foster care.

"I feel like in my situation, no one really listened to me and I want to be the person that listens to other people."

Her plan is to graduate high school in the spring, enroll in community college, and study psychology. She wants to stay in the Independent Living program, learning more about herself and about life.

Hope is hopeful about her future. Hopeful about a mended relationship with her siblings. Hopeful about rebuilding a relationship with her biological mother. Hopeful about the friendship blossoming with her neighbor, a young woman named Cat who is also in the program. And hopeful that fewer children will enter foster care and the children that do will be given love and support and room to write their own stories.

"Remember that they are children, and you can't blame kids for something they can't control," said Hope. "They don't have options on what their life story is yet ... give them a chance."





# LEANING IN WITH LOVE

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Josselyn Marie Photography

The Leary house is full—full of kids, full of hope, full of love. There's Melissa, Sam, Mia, Ellie, Willow, Emma, Ayiah, Summer, and a new foster child. They are a family of nine, whose relationships were formed by birth, adoption, and foster care.

"More people, more love as long as we can meet everyone's needs," said Melissa.

There are a lot of needs to meet, but Melissa and Sam feel this is their purpose—a feeling that bloomed during the difficult loss of Sam's mother.

"She always had an open door for anybody that needed family," said Melissa.

After much discussion and deliberation in their family, Melissa and Sam became foster parents with

DePaul in the summer of 2020. Within days, sisters Emma, Ayiah, and Summer were walking in the door desperately in need of support, guidance, and love. Because of their past, they were fearful of everyday activities, they didn't know what a bedtime was, and they had little understanding of self-care.

"What shocked us was the sheer number of little things they had missed out on," said Sam.

At times, the girls would refuse food, which meant tears and screams of "I can't, I'm afraid." From discussions with a therapist and their own research, Melissa and Sam grew to understand that food refusal was the girls' way of finding control in an out-of-control world.



Melissa and Sam relied on their faith and the strength and resilience of the children to bring them through those tough early days. They are also grateful for DePaul's counseling, help with doctors' appointments, just being there no matter what.

"To see the girls enjoy life, find peace, and know they have a secure and stable future, it's extraordinary," said Melissa.

Today, the whole Leary family has been transformed by their foster care journey.

"Growing your family through foster care is going to grow your life in ways that are beautiful and beyond your imagination," said Melissa.

They know it took work to get here and that the work never really ends, especially because they just welcomed a new foster child into the home. But the work is worth it to them. The family is stronger, they are closer, and their gratitude for the little things in life, and for each other, is immeasurable.

"There are challenges along the way, but you just lean into them, turn your face into the wind, and walk through them together holding hands as a family," said Melissa.



Growing your family through foster care is going to grow your life in ways that are beautiful and beyond your imagination.

**MELISSA** 





# BRIDGING GAPS AND REMOVING BARRIERS

Story by Alison Wickline | Photos by Ali Johnson Photography

When 19-year-old Bijon discovered she was going to be a mom, she started to look at certain things differently. Before, walking and using public transportation was no issue, but she wanted to have her own reliable transportation when the baby came—a more dependable way to get to appointments, the grocery store, cosmetology school, and the salon Bijon hoped to open. It would make a big difference in her life and in the life of her child. But the path to obtaining reliable transportation for a young person who's aged out of foster care is filled with barriers.

DePaul's Independent Living program was providing Bijon with support, a safe place to live, and assistance with bills so she could save for her future. But those savings would be wiped out if she had to pay for driver's education courses on her own. She couldn't get her license without taking those courses, and she couldn't pay for those courses without taking money from the savings account she was trying to build with her limited income. DePaul saw Bijon's need and worked to meet it. Bijon began her driver's education courses last summer.

"It would have been so hard for me to pay for that on my own ... it was a big help," said Bijon. The Bridge to Hope fund was created after a generous \$15,000 donation from the Hughes Philanthropic Society, a donation which they have since graciously made again. The fund was designed to help bridge the financial gap for children, teens, families, and individuals with disabilities who are at a crossroads. It covers big things and small, ordinary things. It covers services and tangible needs that cannot be billed to insurance or do not meet certain reimbursable requirements set by governmental agencies. It covers things that many people take for granted.

"The fund lets us say yes to lifechanging services and items when everyone else has said no," said Daria VanRavestein, development manager.

Bijon is dreaming big these days ... of that salon she's going to open, of the financial stability she is going to build, and of the loving, nurturing home she is going to provide for her son. The courses covered by the generous donors who make these funds possible helped remove barriers on Bijon's road to her future, and for that, she is extremely grateful.

"Thank you," said Bijon. "Whether it's a little bit or a lot of money, it all goes a long way. It's much appreciated on my end."



# A LONG-AWAITED REUNION

Story by Alison Wickline

As Keith walks through the door at DePaul's OPTIONS day support center in Lynchburg, he raises his face, closes his eyes, and holds his arms out wide. He smiles and sighs, saying, "Ahh...I missed this place.

After many months of missing each other, OPTIONS participants and staff members have reunited.

"It feels good," said Darrell, who attends Roanoke OPTIONS. "I'm happy that it's open and I'm looking forward to going out into the community."

The long-awaited reunion comes after day support centers paused operations in 2020 because of COVID-19. The nature of the close, in-person work at our centers does not allow for social distancing. So, OPTIONS staff members thought differently about how to build connections and relationships outside a physical building. They mailed crafts and activities

and letters to help them stay updated on participants' lives.

The journey to reopen OPTIONS required conversation, consideration, and commitment. It was not easy, but it was worth it.

"It has been a long 19 months, but we are so excited to be reopening our day support programs and welcoming back participants," said Pam Lewis, director of day support services. "The day support team has worked diligently to make this happen and we are all looking forward to the future."

Rooms that sat empty are now filled with smiles and laughter. Games are being played, projects are being started, and relationships are being built and blossoming in-person. The world is still different and the centers are, too. But there is beauty in that choice being available to individuals who so often don't get the opportunity to make their own choices.



"I'm happy that it's open, and I'm looking forward to going out into the community."

**DARRELL** 









# You Made It Possible



### MOVING TOWARD EQUITY

DePaul believes that having a more racially diverse community of foster parents will improve long-term outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system. After seeing the disparities in the data for children of color, especially Black children, the Sam and Marion Golden Helping Hand Foundation Inc. generously invested in a pilot program to increase the racial diversity of foster parents in the Roanoke Valley through community partnerships.



#### **CREATIVITY IN ACTION**

Thanks to generous grants from the George J. and Effie L. Seay Foundation and the Louise R. Lester Foundation, DePaul's counseling services program has been able to expand its offerings. The grants provide for therapies such as equine, animal, or music. These unique therapies allow DePaul counselors to be more creative and flexible as they work with individuals and families to achieve their therapy goals.



# A MUCH-NEEDED EXPANSION

DePaul's Big Stone Gap office noticed a significant need for sponsored residential services in the area. To meet that need, DePaul expanded services, but then saw a need for more awareness and education in the community. Thanks to a generous grant from the C. Bascom Slemp Foundation, DePaul has been able to increase community outreach.

#### A FAMILY AFFAIR

For many years, one close-knit family has continued to show up for those in need at DePaul. This year, Jessica and Will Boardman rallied their family and friends to ensure every child in the foster care program at DePaul had an extra special gift this holiday season. Her aunt and uncle, Sam and Irvin Marshall, stepped up to provide all the young people in the Independent Living program with gift cards, crockpots, blenders, and all the fixings for beef stew.



# ENCOURAGING STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY



DePaul was honored to be selected as the Virginia Bankers School of Bank Management's charity of choice for 2021. The annual educational experience is sponsored by the Virginia Bankers Association (VBA). Bankers from across Virginia raised funds that have been used to establish a matching savings program for vehicles for youth in our Independent Living program. A special thank you to Board Member Ashley Ratliff-Ives for nominating DePaul for this lifechanging partnership that has youth saving for a car and excited to use the matching funds.

## YOUR 2021 IMPACT



#### **Foster Care:**

children and teens experienced safety and healing in a family home



#### **Day Support:**

individuals with disabilities received personalized calls, notes, activities, and packages to maintain connections while day support centers were closed



# Community-Based Services:

278 family relationships were strengthened



#### **Adoption:**

children and teens were officially welcomed into their forever home



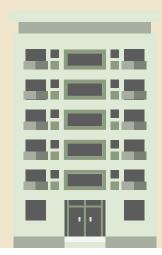
# Sponsored Residential Care and Group Homes:

individuals with disabilities living in a family home instead of an institution

#### **Independent Living:**

young adults transitioned into college, employment, and stable housing

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...



559 children are living in temporary care facilities, group homes, or

residential treatment facilities

Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, January 2022



youth aged out of foster care without a permanent placement during fiscal year 2021

Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, January 2022

1,162 children in foster care are waiting to be adopted

Source: Virginia Department of Social Services,
January 6, 2022



**76** adults still reside in training centers

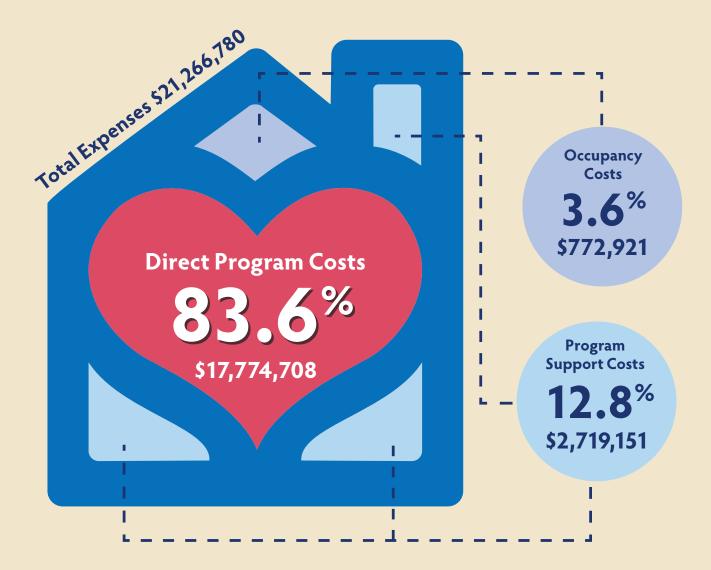
Source: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services, December 21, 2021



**14,180** Virginians with I/DD are on waiting lists for waivers that would provide life-changing services

Source: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services, December 21, 2021

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



\$10,240,384 \$2,491,966  \$12,732,350
\$12.732.350
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
\$3,349,198
\$9,383,152
\$12,732,350

SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Program Services*	\$20,488,364	
Contributions	\$251,636	
Investment Income Less Expenses	\$906,240	
Government Grants	\$602,883	
Paycheck Protection Program	\$1,644,487	
Other Income	\$28,556	
Total	\$23,922,166	
*includes \$1,434,187 of grant revenues		

## LICENSURE AND MEMBERSHIP

LICENSED BY:



Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services



Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Social Services

MEMBER OF:









Virginia Network of Private Providers, Inc.



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#### **FUNDRAISERS**

These generous individuals and families rallied their networks to fuel our mission:

Will and Jessica Boardman

Amy Brown

Gordon and Susan Ewald

Friendship Resort and Marina

Michelle Lynn Hughes

Ellie Koserski

Lily Koserski

Nian Koserski

Lindsay Marie

Irvin and Sam Marshall

Lise Martin

Kay McAliley

Kevin and Molly McPike-Copenhaver

Kristina Miller

Taralyn Wear

Franki Whitt

Amy Wolford

#### HEART AND HOME SOCIETY

The Heart and Home Society is comprised of philanthropic individuals whose generous contributions open doors to hope and belonging for generations to come. The following individuals have provided for the future of DePaul through a planned gift:

Russell H. Brown\*

Beth Ann Collins\*

Dr. Betty C. Etzler

Gordon and Susan Ewald

**Emily Mayhew** 

\*Deceased members

If you would like more information about how naming DePaul as a beneficiary in your will, trust, retirement plans, and/or life insurance policies can ensure that families in crisis, children in the foster care system, and individuals with disabilities continue to receive access to high-quality services, please contact Jamie Snead at 540.269.0878 to learn more about the Heart and Home Society.



The above represents gifts received during the 2021 calendar year. Please report any omissions or corrections to Jamie Snead at 540.269.0878.

# MISSION, VISION, AND WHERE WE ARE

#### **VISION:**

Opening doors to hope and belonging

#### CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES MISSION:

We work to ensure safety, promote permanency, facilitate healing, and support independence for the children and families we serve. We accomplish this through foster care, adoption, independent living, and community-based services.

# DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES MISSION:

We work to support personal choice, promote individual growth, and increase social inclusion to improve quality of life for individuals who have a developmental disability. We accomplish this through the provision of sponsored residential homes, group homes, and day support services.

#### **OUR VALUES:**

As we do our work, we exemplify the following FIRST values:

- ♦ Fairness
- ♦ Integrity
- ♦ Respect
- ♦ Safety
- ♦ Trust

Roanoke



Christiansburg







#### **CORPORATE MISSION:**

We work to support the success of our clients by providing a high-quality, sustainable, accountable, and supportive organization that "clears the skies" for our workforce. We accomplish this through our administrative departments, leadership teams, and board of directors.

DePaul Community Resources is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.







Harrisonburg

**Fishersville** 





Charlottesville





# DIRECTOR

#### Friends of DePaul,

I write to you after another year of uncertainty and challenges. 2021 marked moments of difficulty for DePaul Community Resources, but also many moments of joy and triumph.

Please know how grateful we are for your generous gifts to DePaul. Your time, talent, and treasures make the work of hope and belonging possible. That work takes action, commitment, and courage. It is transformational work that each of our individuals and families and staff members have shown up daily to do. Over the last year, families were given invaluable support to grow stronger. Children found safe, loving forever homes. Individuals with disabilities stayed connected with their communities despite distance. Young people transitioning to life outside the foster care system had someone in their corner, reminding them they were not alone. And behind the scenes, DePaul continued to build the framework needed to work toward achieving racial equity.

Moving forward, we strive to find hope and belonging for those in need of no matter what. A forever family no matter what. Someone to listen and offer support no matter what. Compassionate care for an individual with a disability no matter what. We cannot do this alone. With your support, we can change the stories for those who can't imagine hope and belonging today. Your generosity will continue to create opportunities and successful outcomes for our neighbors who deserve hope and belonging.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I send my warmest thanks for your investment in the mission of DePaul, and the work of hope and belonging.

**Greg Withers** 



Greg Withers, Chair
Beverly Binner, Vice Chair
D. Scott Miller, Past Chair
Ashley Ratliff, Secretary
John H. Parrott, Treasurer
Gordon Ewald, Lifetime Member

Rachel Thompson
Todd Selkirk
Troy Smith
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Mark Lucas

# GET INVOLVED WITH DEPAUL

#### Become a...



#### **Donor**

Help us open more doors by investing in the people in our community who need a voice.



#### **Volunteer Ambassador**

Join us as a one-time volunteer or as an ongoing volunteer in our newly launched Ambassador group.



#### Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent, or Care Provider

Open your heart and home to a youth in need or an individual with a disability.



#### Storyteller

Stories are a powerful tool to inform, unite, and inspire. Visit depaulcr.org/storytelling to read, listen, and share DePaul's stories with your family, friends, and community.



#### Advocate

Give voice to individuals with disabilities, children in foster care, and families in crisis by joining DePaul's legislative advocacy efforts as a volunteer.



#### Social Media Follower

Find DePaul on Facebook and Instagram. Follow us, engage with our posts, and share with your family and friends.

Visit us at depaulcr.org/get-involved to learn more.





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