2017

Annual Report
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When the Virginia Institute of Autism was founded 21 years ago, it took something like a series of miracles just to get the doors open. Our founding families searched for the evidence-based practices that could help their loved ones with autism. But that was just the beginning.

They needed to find a building to house the new program. They needed to hire staff. They needed to find like-minded families willing to work to get their loved ones enrolled in an innovative new program. Slowly, and with a lot of help, they put together the pieces that became VIA.

Now 21 years, a thousand students and clients, and hundreds of thousands of service hours later, VIA is still growing, evolving, and finding new ways to put together the pieces for our families. The Annual Report you are now looking at is a testament to that continued focus on building comprehensive services that meet the needs of the families we serve.

Perhaps the most essential part of that equation is you – the donors, supporters, and community partners to whom this Annual Report is addressed. The work that VIA does is based on science and evidence, but the results we delivered in 2017, with your support, are intensely personal. You will find a number of those stories highlighted in this report. They include:

- A child learning to communicate
- A student finding success in public school
- A young adult learning to cope with the stresses of independence

And they also include our innovative, value-added Strengthening Families programs that we continued to expand in 2017.

So thank you to everyone who has joined us in the past year to deliver hope and connection to the families we serve. And here’s to continuing the work in the year to come — TOGETHER.
Overcoming lack of communication can be a key to making progress in other areas—from reducing problem behavior to building life skills such as washing, dressing, and cleaning up.

**Cole is like many students at VIA.** He came to the James C. Hormel School in 2013 with a few basic communication skills in place from previous early intervention work. His initial evaluations suggested that he also had substantial challenges in related skills such as self-care and following directions.

Through intensive training in the components of communication, Cole has steadily increased the sophistication of what he can do with his assistive communication device. Now, he can not only express basic needs, he can go beyond to request favored activities, refer to people and things in his environment, and build increasingly complex sentences. All of which make following directions, life skills, and addressing problem behavior that much easier.

**James C. Hormel School 2017 Impact**

- **93%** of student Education Plan goals made either Progress or Substantial Progress.
- **77%** reduction in challenging behaviors for students progressing on behavior goals.
- **50%** of students qualify for free or reduced cost lunch.
“Cole’s work at VIA has changed our lives. His ability to communicate has opened up the whole world to him—allowing him to request things that he needs, even to ask for individual people he wants to play with, and to be creative doing it. The change has been absolutely profound.”

— Ashley, Cole’s mother

Charting Success: Communication Skills and Tantrum Behavior

X Marks the Spot

Evidence-based practices drive our work. The goal is demonstrable reduction in negative behaviors, combined with clear progress in positive skills.
For children on the autism spectrum, development of the base skills needed for success in a school environment doesn’t proceed in the same way, or at the same pace, as neurotypical kids. But with the focus and techniques of evidence-based practice, success can still be within reach.

John Paul comes to VIA’s Outpatient clinic after school a few days per week to work on reinforcing and expanding his school skills. In 2017, VIA Outpatient staff began working with him to help him participate in his weekly “Show and Share” time at school.

Over a period of weeks, they broke the task down into the basic skills that would add up to success—standing in place, making eye contact, introducing the object, asking for questions, and sitting back down. With practice, and lots of focus on the details, basic skill advancement blossomed into achievement.

Outpatient Behavioral Services 2017 Impact

100% of families report satisfaction with effectiveness of VIA services.

98% of Outpatient families receive formal parent training.

77% of discharged clients require less intensive degree of treatment.

30 hours per week average in-home or in-community parent training.
“Every week now, John Paul stands up in front of class and, unprompted, talks about his drawings and answers questions from his classmates. This is a huge accomplishment for a kid who was pretty much non-verbal at 3. Since he started at VIA he has been progressing by leaps and bounds.”

— Irene, John Paul’s mother

Charting Success:
Percent of Steps Successfully Executed

Building Toward Mastery

Breaking a task into basic steps tells a clear story. For VIA’s Outpatient clients, it’s not uncommon to see success charts like this one. With patient, one-on-one coaching, more and more basic steps are executed correctly. Consistency grows, and so does mastery.
The transition to adulthood with autism spectrum disorder carries unique challenges. Among those is isolation.

For that reason, VIA’s Adult Academy exists to give adults with autism a lifetime of opportunities for social, work, and community connection. But, for some adults, ongoing behavior challenges can get in the way of full participation in all that their community has to offer.

Stephen came to VIA three years ago, but before he could take advantage of a day program like the Adult Academy, he needed help developing the patience and flexibility that would help him cope with the anxieties of separation from his family.

VIA’s Adult Behavior Consult staff was able to work with Stephen and his family to develop behavior strategies that would allow him to stretch his wings and take full advantage of the social and community engagement that Adult Academy offers.

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**FOCUS ON: Fostering Engagement**

Adult Academy

2017 Impact

4,316 total Community Engagement hours for our clients.

100% of clients participated in community engagement, exceeding state guidelines.

22 regular engagement opportunities provided by community partners in 2017.
“As a family, we do lots of things together, but VIA has opened up a whole new world for him through community engagement. We’ve learned to navigate change. He’s learned to be flexible, and just to be with other people in those social interactions. That opens up a whole new world for him, and he wouldn’t have that if it wasn’t for VIA.”

—Sylvia, mother of Stephen

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### Charting Success: Waiting vs. Problem Behavior

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### The Power of Patience

Simple positive skills can reduce problem behaviors. When anxieties or emotional outbursts crop up, often it’s a focus on basic coping skills, like patience, that help turn the tide. As the family becomes more practiced at helping their loved one wait patiently for desired objects or attention, problem behavior can be significantly reduced.
Magnifying Impact

FOCUS ON: Strengthening Families

Innovative services allow VIA to multiply the force of our core programs. Whether that means help navigating the challenges of services and funding, or direct training in behavior management techniques, VIA works to strengthen families by meeting them at the point of need.

Family Resource Navigator

Licensed Clinical Social Worker Hilary Nagel serves as a guide for families through challenging terrain.

286 families newly diagnosed were helped to access services and support in 2017.

40% of those received periodic follow-up support.

50% of our James C. Hormel school families receive ongoing help with accessing services and funding.

Adult Behavioral Consult

Even for adults already placed into a day program, a job, a residence, or in college, behavior issues can still arise. Adult Behavior Consult allows adults to remain on the path to greater independence and engagement (see pp 8-9) by training parents, caregivers, and support staff to foster positive behaviors.

19 cases in 2017.

9 clients in danger of losing school or residence or day program placement.

100% of clients discharged were able to maintain placement.
Starting in 2017, we brought together a number of high-impact services under the umbrella of our Strengthening Families Initiatives. These are family-focused training opportunities that help build skills and resilience.

**Jump Start Clinic**
In 2017 VIA launched this clinic for families with recently diagnosed preschoolers who need bridge support while waitlisted for services. The pilot program was a resounding success and is poised to grow in 2018.

**Intensive Caregiver Training**
Training families in the curriculum and techniques used at VIA helps them to implement evidence-based practices at home. Parents report that it also helps them be more knowledgeable and forceful advocates for their children.

**Crisis Training for Families**
Safety training gives families proven techniques to diffuse behavioral crises before they happen, and to manage them effectively when they do. Training is delivered in a two-day intensive, and is followed by periodic booster sessions.
Thank You 2017 Donors

You helped us rise to the challenge.

Listed are donors of $100 and above from calendar year 2017. Every donation matters, and we appreciate your support at any level.

$5,000-$9,999
- Alacin Foundation
- Children’s Dentistry of Charlottesville
- Jessica & Will Cohen
- The Dorothy & Jonathan Rintels Charitable Fund
- Pamela & Franklin Edmonds
- Anne C. Hormel
- Deborah Lewis & Woody Sherman
- OluKai
- Quantitative Investment Management
- Jayne & David Rathburn (The Rathburn Family Foundation)

$2,500-$4,999
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- Alisa Bahl & Ethan Long
- Barbara & John Battiston
- Ben & Jerry’s
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- Annemarie Clemente & Milton Dunlap
- Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign
- Judy & David Drayer
- ExxonMobil Foundation
- Cheairs & Dave Graves
- Sarah P. Hendley
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- Kathleen Gillaspie Hormel
- Heidi & Robert Johnson
- Thomas Kenan
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- Elizabeth & Hunter Reichert
- Brigid & Brendan Rogers
- Starr Hill Brewery/Red Light Fund in CACF
- Lisa & Tripp Stewart

$1,000-$2,499
- ACAC Fitness & Wellness Center
- Nancy Achilles
- All Zion X, LLC
- Karin & William Banks
- Barbara & Andrew Baxter
- Alice & David Bell
- Kris Bell & David Webb
- Better Living Foundation
- Lori & Thomas Brannock
- Anne & Paul Breza
- Diane & E. Richard Brownlee
- Carter Myers Automotive
- Gillian & Anthony Cockerill
- Natalie & Alan Cohen
- Nicholas Dupont
- Kenner Foote
- Evelyn & Adam Frazier
- William Gillespie
- Tori Goodloe & Chris Little
- Carol & Gregory Hagen
- Erik Hagen
- Sheryl & Keith Haney
- Tracy & Rodney Harrington

Profiles in Engagement

Jeff Thomas, Founder and CEO of SHINE Systems, VIA Board Member, 2017 and 2018 Finish Line Sponsor for Run for Autism 5K

What connects you to VIA?

“This is very near and dear to me. It’s a combination of having a daughter on the spectrum, and wanting to get smarter about autism and what services are out there. For me, the question is: How can I help and give back to others, to make a difference for other parents whose challenges might be greater than mine?”
Family Impact

“Wesley has been at VIA for three years and is truly a different child because of their love, support, and education. Today he sits at the table with the entire family and feeds himself. For a child with profound cognitive impairment as well as autism and chromosomal abnormalities, this is a miracle.”

Read more about Wesley and his family in our newsletter: http://bit.ly/WesleyStory

Continued
Family Impact
Sixteen James C. Hormel School students participate in Project Lifesaver, which delivers peace of mind to families whose loved ones are in danger of wandering and getting lost. Donations to VIA help fund the ankle bracelets that track location and keep these students safe.

2017 CONTINUED

$100-$499

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Ray Agnello
Jay Alexander
Debbie Allen
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Nadia Anderson
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Danielle Cote
Jessica Croes
Janet & Ken Cronch
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David Greene
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Susan & James Haden
Jordan Hague
Kate Hall
Bryan Hammon
Natalie Hancock
This year we’ve switched our Annual Report from the fiscal year to the calendar year. So we want to look back and acknowledge donations received from July to December 2016. Listed are donors of $100 or more. Thank you, friends, for your compassionate support of VIA and the families we serve.

**$50,000 +**
Anonymous

**$10,000-$49,999**
Claudia Campo & Jason Cockerill
Jane & Pete Elliott
The Heiner Family Fund
Anne C. Hormel
Elizabeth Hormel
James C. Hormel & Michael P. Nguyen
James C. Hormel, Jr.
Kelley MacDougall & Mike Pausic
Alice P. Meador
Skanska
Virginia National Bank
Alison & Bernard Webb

**$5,000-$9,999**
BamaWorks Fund of Dave Matthews Band (CACF)
I.J. & Hilda M. Breeden Foundation
Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
Sarah & Tommy Everett
Sarah & C. Grey McLean
Kelly & Alexander B. Moore III
OluKai
Quantitative Investment Management
The Dorothy & Jonathan Rintels Charitable Fund
Cindy & Al Schornberg (Alacin Foundation)
Gina & Gregory Yoder

**$2,500-$4,999**
Barbara & John Battiston
Thomas Cannady
Jessica & Will Cohen
ExxonMobil Foundation
Tori Goodloe & Chris Little
Kathleen Gillaspie Hormel
Heidi & Robert Johnson
Anne & Thad Jones
Bruce & James Murray
Jean Pearce & William Sherman
SHINE Systems
Larry Soule
Lisa & Tripp Stewart
Jane & John Sullivan
Wells Fargo Foundation

**$1,000-$2,499**
Nancy Achilles
Alisa Bahl & Ethan Long
Karín & William Banks
Alice Bell
Better Living Foundation
Diane & E. Richard Brownlee
Elaine & David Cheng
City of Charlottesville
Annemarie Clemente & Milton Dunlap
Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign
Kari & Kent Couling
Judy & David Drayer
Pamela & Franklin Edmonds
Barbara & Richard Fontaine
Kenner Foote
Tarpey & Scott Gillespie
Ann Lawrence Grasty
Mark Hampton

**$500-$999**
Sheryl & Keith Haney
Tracy & Rodney Harrington
Hallie & Matt Hegemier
Christy & Tom Hickey
Elizabeth & Scott Hilles
Polly & John Hormel
Mark Jampol
Thomas Kenan
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Amy & Aaron Lauder
Carol & Richard Lavine
Cynthia & Mark Lorenzoni
Louise McNamee & Peter T. McHugh
Merck Company Foundation
Amy & Owen Nolasco

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**Family Impact**

Demond is a student at the James C. Hormel School. He has also received in-home family sessions from Outpatient Behavioral Services. “We are working with him on learning to ask for things. And on waiting... that’s been a challenge for him,” says his mom.

“Demond made his first friend when he started at VIA, and we’ve even had play dates with the two of them.”
Profiles in Engagement

John and Sandra Will, Gala Attendees, Children’s Dentistry of Charlottesville — 2017 and 2018 Sponsor of Run for Autism 5K

What connects you to VIA?

“What got me interested in VIA was that I realized that we served the same clientele. Our practice at Children’s Dentistry of Charlottesville has a number of patients who are affected by autism. And so, we wanted to find a way to reach out and connect. Being a responsible citizen means getting involved in the things that make your community special. For us, VIA is one of those things.”
A heartfelt thank you to all the individuals and businesses and organizations who provided learning, vocational, and social engagement opportunities for our clients and their families in 2017. Your spirit and generosity helps connect our families to community and to hope.
Service and Funding Data

Growth of Clients Served by Program

Locations Served

18 localities across Virginia have been served by VIA’s programs.

2017 Revenues by Funding Source— $7,829,352 total

- Local/State Funded: $5,243,303
- Medicaid: $1,296,339
- Private Insurance: $481,835
- Fundraising: $735,875
- Private Pay / Misc: $72,000

The Virginia Institute of Autism is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and is accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities.
Our Mission

The Virginia Institute of Autism is dedicated to helping people overcome the challenges of autism through innovative, evidence-based programs in education, outreach and adult services.