The Virginia Institute of Autism is proud to present our 2019 - 2020 Annual Report. As we prepared to publish this report, we passed the one year anniversary of the Governor’s order to close schools and businesses across the state. This past year has been challenging for all of us, and perhaps most for the families we serve.

The reality of those challenges makes it all the more gratifying to report on some truly remarkable accomplishments in 2020. VIA completely reimagined our service model, retained all of our staff, and quickly implemented telehealth and remote supports. Those achievements also include:

- Two awards recognizing VIA staff’s flexibility and speed in staying connected to our families and adopting virtual services
- The successful, and safe, return to part-time in-person services as soon as the relaxation of restrictions allowed
- The launch of the Bridge to Adulthood Campaign and progress on our new Center for Adolescent and Adult Autism Services, which will expand VIA’s service capacity this spring

We are also glad to take this opportunity to share with you the portion of this report that focuses on our accomplishments in 2019, stories that we delayed telling as we addressed the outbreak of COVID. Filling in that gap now provides a much-needed reminder of what “normal” once looked like, and will look like again—VIA staff and our clients working face-to-face every day to build the academic, social, and life skills that help produce a fuller participation in family and community life.

We are proud of the skill and dedication of VIA’s staff, the trust and resilience of the families we serve, and the steadfast support of our donors and partners in the community. All of those efforts are on abundant display in the stories told in this report. They have seen us through the challenges of 2020, and they will see us through our work building a brighter future in 2021 and beyond.

Ethan Long
President and CEO

Molly McShane
Chair, Board of Directors
JAMES C. HORMEL SCHOOL

The highly trained special educators, instructors, and behavior analysts at VIA’s James C. Hormel School provide year-round education and therapies focused on life skills, communication skills, behavior challenges, social connection, and academic advancement. Staff work closely with families and local school districts to develop and implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student.

In 2019, VIA launched its innovative Bridge program on the grounds of a local high school. The program provides opportunities to build academic and social skills that will support the student’s transition back to their local public school.

The James C. Hormel School is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education, and accredited by CARF International, and by the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities.

2019 IMPACT

73
Students from fourteen school districts
91%
IEP goals met or students made progress
OUTPATIENT BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

VIA’s Outpatient Behavioral Services (OBS) provides individualized therapies for school-aged children in clinic, school, home, and community. Intensive focus on communication skills, behavior challenges, and social connection combine with parent and family education to expand opportunities for success.

In 2019, OBS expanded to include diagnosis, cognitive assessment, and psychological counseling services, as well as speech language therapy. Over half of our outpatient clients received these specialized services.

2019 IMPACT

89%
Families who received specialized parent training as part of services

92%
Clients discharged who required a lower intensity of treatment

134
Clients and their families served
ADULT SERVICES

VIA's Adult Services program provides a flexible menu of day programming for adults, as well as the VIable Ventures micro-enterprise employment program. Adult Behavioral Consultation offers intensive work with families, group homes, or other day providers to address life skills or behavioral challenges in adulthood.

Along with providing ongoing community engagement, vocational supports, and life skills education, Adult Services added a new focus in 2019 on Community Coaching. This learning model develops the communication and social skills that make more substantive engagement in the community possible.

2019 IMPACT

781 Hours of Adult Behavioral Consultation for families

1,056 Hours of Community Engagement and Community Coaching
VIABLE VENTURES

VIable Ventures is a social impact program that develops small, sustainable businesses specifically tailored to create jobs for adults with autism. The first such business is a candle-making enterprise that produces hand-made, soy-blend candles for internet and retail sales. VIA trained 10 artisans in 2019 and paid them for their work on our candle production process—with equipment and procedures engineered specifically to allow for gainful employment for any of our clients, regardless of degree of disability.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (CPIP)

The Community Partners Internship Program prepares students at the James C. Hormel School for greater participation in the community by teaching the basic skills needed to secure and maintain a job. These internships are one key part of VIA’s focus on smoothing the often rocky transition to adulthood for young people with autism.

MEET OUR ARTISANS VIDEOS

We updated our “Meet Our Artisans” videos in 2019 with our new branding and a fresh new look. You can view these videos on the VIA YouTube channel.

PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE THE PROGRAM’S SUCCESS

Thank you to the businesses that provided opportunities for our interns in 2019: Alloy Workshop, Bellair Farm, Ben & Jerry’s, Charlottesville Parks and Rec, Colonial Auto Center, Crutchfield, Fluvanna County SPCA, Greene County Parks and Rec, The Habitat Store, Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, Loaves and Fishes, Meals on Wheels, Moe’s Original BBQ, PB&J Fund, The Pie Chest, The Salad Maker, Salvation Army, Wildrock.
ADVANCING RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Research, training, and professional development drive VIA’s service model and fuel our vision of “bridging science and service to build a brighter future.” Collaborative partnerships with the University of Virginia, James Madison University, and others bring applied research and the development of evidence-based practices to bear on the service needs of students, clients, and families.

UVA COLLABORATIONS

VIA staff and UVA researchers met at the Brooks Family YMCA to develop a research study on water safety training for school-aged children with autism. When completed, the study will help bring evidence-based techniques to this critical learning and safety need of people with autism.

Social deficits and isolation are among the greatest challenges for adults with autism. “Snack Talk” is a way to teach and support social interaction during a shared meal. A joint VIA / UVA study of Snack Talk was turned into a regular lunchtime activity at Adult Services in 2019.

Rose Nevill, Director of UVA's Autism Research Core, a frequent collaborator with VIA, works with a student on the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS).
Journal Club is an after-hours study opportunity that provides continuing education credits to Behavior Analysts. Reading and discussion topics in 2019 included compassionate care, studies on functional assessment of social behavior, and social validity. VIA is a certified provider of continuing education units by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

Specialized practices, such as Medical Administration Training, and Safety-Care™ Behavioral Safety Training, allow our staff to meet the complex medical and behavioral needs of students and clients.

VIA staff attend and present at professional conferences like the Virginia Association of Behavior Analysts to deepen our connection to current directions in research and best practices in education and therapies.
The members of VIA’s Board of Directors represent the broad range of the organization’s connections to community, families of children with autism, business and corporate leadership, and professional partnerships. The board guides VIA’s strategic vision, and carries VIA’s mission of compassionate, effective services to all corners of our extended community.

**IN MEMORIAM – CARL FRISCHKORN**

Soon after his appointment to the board in July of 2020, Carl Frischkorn unexpectedly passed away. Carl began his connection with VIA in 2019 when he became an inaugural member of our Capital Campaign Steering Committee. As with everything he did, he immediately brought the full force of his considerable commitment, insight, and integrity to VIA’s mission and strategic goals. Carl is greatly missed, and it is in deep appreciation that VIA staff, students, clients, and families honor and remember his lasting legacy.
2019-2020 SERVICE AND FUNDING DATA

CLIENTS SERVED BY PROGRAM 2010-2020

REVENUES BY SOURCE FY 2020
July 2019 - June 2020

- LOCAL / STATE BILLING $6,813,780
- MEDICAID $1,277,209
- PRIVATE INSURANCE / SELF-PAY $525,085
- CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING $1,480,888
- UNRESTRICTED FUNDRAISING $603,590

viacenters.org
When the Governor of Virginia ordered the closure of schools on March 13th, 2020, families of children with special needs were among those most severely affected. Autism in itself can be a profoundly isolating condition, and stay-at-home orders only compounded the isolation.

VIA responded immediately with an organization-wide effort of outreach and engagement. In the first three months of the pandemic, VIA staff logged over 2,500 contacts with our families. They built and delivered schoolwork packets, assembled online resources for parents, organized food drives for families in need, and conducted 800 remote therapeutic and educational sessions using video technology (see Remote Services on opposite page).

WE SENT AN “S.O.S.” – AND OUR FRIENDS RESPONDED

With the onset of the pandemic, VIA switched gears from our usual spring event planning and sent out an S.O.S to our supporters to help “Sustain Our Services.” A video appeal featured VIA President and CEO Ethan Long, Run for Autism 5K Volunteer Race Director Mark Lorenzoni, and a special guest appearance by UVA President Jim Ryan. Thanks to our compassionate and dedicated supporters, the appeal was a huge success, raising $130,000 to support VIA’s programs though the crisis. You can watch the video on VIA’s YouTube page.
VIA RECOGNIZED FOR REMOTE SERVICES UNDER PANDEMIC

In July, the Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center (MATRC) awarded VIA honorable mention in its annual “Breaking Barriers through Telehealth” award. The award recognizes the work of medical and human services professionals who, through use of innovative video-conferencing technology, are “breaking down barriers to accessing quality care.” In the announcement, MATRC Director Kathy Hsu Wibberly cited VIA for having “successfully transitioned its in-person School Program, Outpatient Behavioral Health Services Program and Adult Program to the use of video-enabled services.”

In November, the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce acknowledged VIA as one of the recipients of its Pivot Award at its annual Rebound Ball. The award recognizes VIA as one of the organizations which “reimagined their operations in 2020 and forged ahead despite all obstacles.” Nine regional businesses were included in the award citations.

A SAFE RE-OPENING FOR HYBRID SERVICES

By July, safe partial re-opening for in-person services became a possibility. VIA implemented air purification, distancing in classrooms and clinic rooms, personal protective equipment, and screening measures and began welcoming back clients in small groups for part-time in-person activities. Service for both younger and older clients included instruction in COVID-safe practices such as mask wearing, distancing, and use of sanitizers.
BRIDGE TO ADULTHOOD CAMPAIGN

The transition to adulthood is a challenging time for people with autism and their families. With the 22nd birthday comes an end to school-based funding for services and a shift to an environment with fewer resources, fewer supports, and fewer opportunities.

In the words of one of our founders, VIA is "doing something about it." In late 2019, we announced our planning for the Center for Adolescent and Adult Autism Services (CAAAS). This new facility will expand VIA’s capacity to serve adolescents and adults, and bring under one roof our innovative internship, life skills training, job skills training, and community coaching services. The new facility will also house VIable Ventures – our initiative to develop micro-businesses to provide meaningful work for people with autism.

VIA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE

VIA’s Capital Campaign is led by a capable group of committed individuals whose leadership giving and ability to build connections and enthusiasm amplifies VIA’s capacity to create new opportunities for people with autism.

Ambassador James C. Hormel
Pam Edmonds
Kelley MacDougall
David Rathburn
Gary Taylor
Alison Webb
Bernard C. Webb

Thank you to this dedicated, generous group of individuals for their assistance and commitment!

President and CEO Ethan Long speaks with the press at VIA’s public announcement of planning for CAAAS in November of 2019. The Charlottesville Daily Progress published an extensive article on the planning.

The Center for Adolescent and Adult Autism Services (CAAAS) will occupy the site of the former Senior Center.
CAMPAIGN IMPACT
In April of 2020, VIA purchased the property on Hillsdale Drive with funds raised from the Bridge to Adulthood Campaign.

In July, The Perry Foundation announced a matching challenge grant to VIA of $250,000 toward renovation and construction costs. Active fundraising to fulfill the grant match and complete the renovation is now ongoing.

Read the news story about the Perry Foundation grant on the viacenters.org News page.

The building that will house CAAAS appears at the end of the rainbow in this photo from the spring of 2020, shortly after VIA closed on the property.

By the first half of 2021 this space, now under construction, will become a state-of-the-art facility housing a broad spectrum of programming – from fitness to jobs to social life and independent living skills. To find out more, read our Building the Bridge to Adulthood brochure, and a video walkthrough of the new facility on the viacenters.org Bridge to Adulthood Campaign page.
In the summer of 2020, in response to renewed cries for equal justice and equal rights for Americans of color, VIA convened our Social Justice Work Group to advance equity and diversity in our work, in our workplace, and in our community.

VIA co-founder David Gordon has said that “autism is a human rights issue.” That means that equal access, equal justice, equal opportunity, and the dignity and respect due to every individual are at the heart of our mission.

Thanks to the staff who have contributed so far. Special thanks to Board of Directors Member Caruso Brown, and Community Advisory Board Member Charles Lewis for meeting with us to brainstorm strategies and connections.

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

The Social Justice Work Group operates a number of task forces to put in place a broad range of diversity and equity initiatives.

- Social Justice Journal Club
- Social Media / Communications
- Community Outreach
- Recruitment
- Staff Training
- Organizational Partnerships

**AIRWAVES**

Thanks to Instructor Kea Anderson, Family Resource Navigator Hilary Nagel, and Instructor Dom Eley for their appearances on radio talk show “In My Humble Opinion” in August of 2020. Co-host Charles Lewis, of VIA’s Community Advisory Board, led discussions of perceptions of autism and developmental disability in the Black community, treatment of autism, and opportunities for career advancement at VIA.
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

This list acknowledges donors of $100 or more during 2019 and 2020. We are grateful to everyone whose generosity helps support compassionate, evidence-based services for people with autism.

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VIA celebrated a Galaxy of Possibilities at our 2019 Gala. Thirty-eight major sponsors and patrons joined 270 guests to enjoy dinner, dancing, raffle, and auction at Castle Hill Cider. Glenn Rust, CEO of lead sponsor Virginia National Bank, announced VIA’s planning for the Center for Adolescent and Adult Autism Services.

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During Autism Awareness Month in April 2019, our extended community turned out to support and celebrate VIA families and services at the Run for Autism 5K. Over 1,000 registrants joined our Corporate Challenge teams in raising funds and raising awareness for autism services across our region.

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The 2020 VIA Charity Golf Tournament, usually held in May, was postponed due to COVID. But, after thoughtful consideration of safety, the event was held on a gorgeous October day with a roster of 18 teams, safely distanced. Special thanks to organizing sponsors SKANSKA USA and Perkins+Will, and to everyone who helped make it happen.

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VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF AUTISM

Also in October, in lieu of our annual Gala, VIA founders, families, and friends raised a glass together virtually to celebrate and support the work we do. The online viewing party featured a “Raise a Glass” video with committee members, our VIP Sponsor Virginia National Bank, and founders toasting VIA. Other videos included a virtual overview of programs and planning for our new Center for Adolescent and Adult Autism Services, as well as this year’s edition of our heartwarming annual Gala video. You can watch the entire event, or the individual videos, on the VIA YouTube channel.

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