

Keystone Human Services

2023-2024 Annual Report





Our Mission

Keystone Human Services works to create opportunities for growth and meaningful life choices so all people can be valued, contributing members of their community.

Working in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, New Jersey, Moldova, and India, we provide individualized, person-directed support for each person accepting our services in the areas of intellectual disabilities, autism, and mental health, as well as Capital Area Head Start and Susquehanna Service Dogs. We offer technical assistance to governments, regulators, and other organizations, and provide educational opportunities to promote inclusion everywhere.

What We Do

Our work focuses on inclusion – designing and developing innovative, sustainable community-based services, ending institutionalization, promoting disability rights, and connecting people with the resources they need to pursue their goals at home, school, work, and in the community.

Dear KHS Membership,

Keystone Human Services was founded with a vision of supporting people with disabilities within their communities, in natural settings at home, work, their neighborhood, and school. That vision continues to shine through all that we do. Inclusion lies at the center, contributing to the strength, independence, community presence, and capacity of each person as they build and direct their own lives.

This year, our work has focused on building trusted collaborations with people who choose to accept our services. We are expanding our person-driven approach, examining how we develop and provide services and supports with people with disability rather than for them. That distinction matters. It places people with disability in the lead role of their lives.

Based on input from people who accept our services, we are innovating and evolving our programs so we can continue to meet people’s wants and not just their needs. That partnership contributes to why we are considered a model of inclusion.

Health equity for people with disabilities has been a particular area of focus to remove barriers and disparities to access not just healthcare but also general wellness. Our work to promote health equity aligns with our work to provide good support, where we stand beside people with disabilities and better support them to advocate for themselves and access their rights.

In our advocacy work, we hosted Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh, people with disabilities, families, providers, and advocates for a roundtable discussion on the then proposed increases for intellectual disability and autism services in PA Governor Josh Shapiro’s 2024-2025 budget. The increases in the final budget reflect an investment in Home and Community-Based Programs, as well as competitive wages for Direct Support Professionals, a vital step in creating a valued and respected workforce dedicated to providing good supports so people with disabilities can live their desired lives within the community.

Our mission and vision become real in people’s lives every day. This is the result of a partnership between people accepting our services, employees, communities, like-minded organizations, and our volunteer boards working together in recognition that the world is a better place when we are all included and valued. Whether you’re a donor, employee, family member, someone accepting services from us, or someone interested in our work, we welcome you to join in our mission and work together in our collective journey toward inclusion. Thank you for all your support.

Sincerely,

Stephen Rader
Board Chair
Keystone Human Services

Charles S. Sweeder
President and Chief Executive Officer
Keystone Human Services



Stephen Rader



Charles S. Sweeder

Intellectual Disability Services

Partnerships for Empowerment

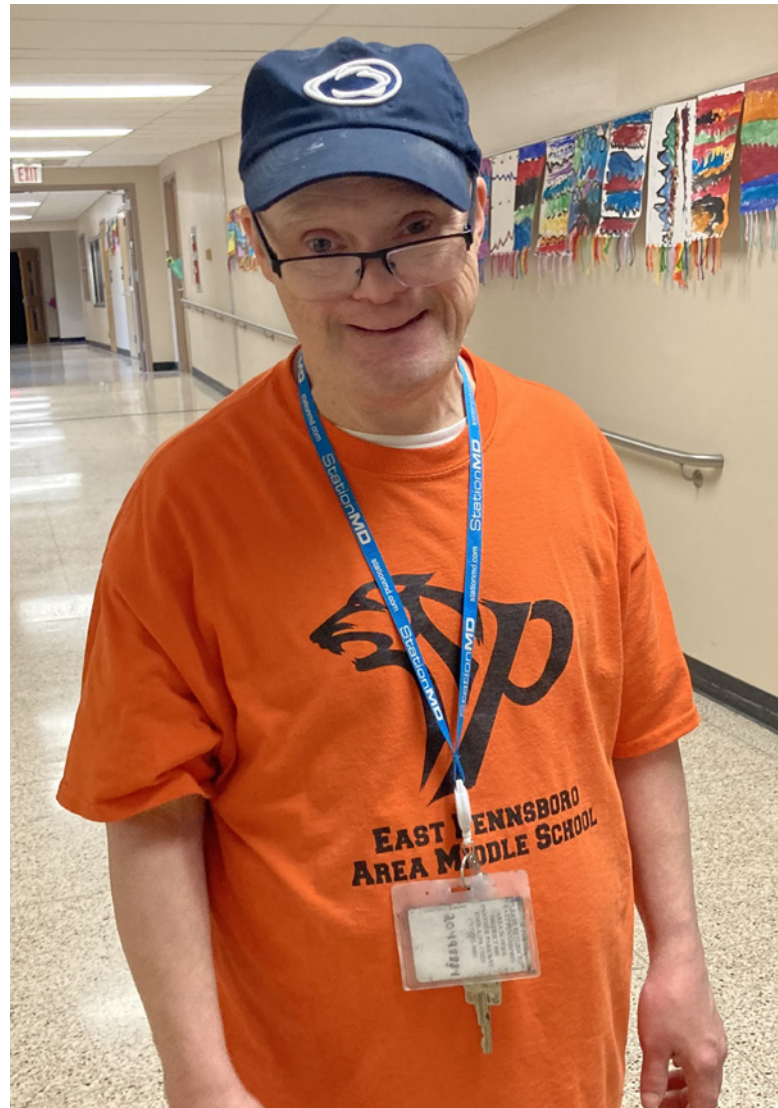
In June 2024, Keystone Human Services offered two exciting events facilitated by Sara Sherman, President of Provider Power Moves.

Supervisors in Operations and Clinical Team Members from Intellectual Disability Services in Delaware and Pennsylvania and Autism Services joined in discussions designed to support supervisors and clinical teams to further clarify their roles and establish a productive and sustainable partnership.

Also in June, people with lived experience, Support Professionals, Supervisors, Clinical Team Members, and staff from multiple support departments joined in conversation to expand our understanding of how to effectively empower people who choose to accept our services to live the life they desire.

Participants from across Keystone Human Services worked together to explore the definition of “meaningful,” learn where these concepts originated, and delve into the meaning of “empowered.” Together, they discussed creative means to enhance our partnerships and to put these values into action.

To continue to move us forward, participants with lived experience who attended the event will work alongside the Operations Education Department to develop and facilitate shared learning sessions to share the information and energy generated during our time together with employees and people who choose to accept our services.



I’m Living a Good Life”



“I’m living a good life,” said Mark Henry, “having good neighbors, good friends, and good people in my environment.” He moved into his own home after living in several apartment complexes, but his house didn’t quite feel like a home. Using the Charting the LifeCourse Framework, he envisioned his life and developed a plan to achieve that vision, complete with any supports he may need to make it real. He planned and decorated his man cave, and he now has an entire room with couches, a television, lighting, and everything he needs as he cheers on his favorite sports teams.

Creating a man cave is only the tip of the iceberg of what Mark has envisioned for his life. His support team has worked hard to make sure he is driving the decisions, and he has built rich friendships. He started by simply meeting people at the local library he patronizes, and he now has a network of friends – people who will stop and talk with him whenever they cross paths.

“His confidence has gone above and beyond,” said Shonna Stevens, Senior Program Director in Delaware. “He is so comfortable starting a conversation with someone. He’s comfortable with going into the grocery store, feeling like he fits in. It’s amazing to see how these roles have changed his life because now he’s not devalued. Now, Mark is a friend. Mark is a neighbor. Mark is going to be a church member. He cooks.”

Mark has a job that he enjoys. He has built friendships with his coworkers and is included in birthday and holiday celebrations and luncheons.

“We had a mindset of he can, rather than he can’t,” said Shonna. “Mark can do, Mark can be, and Mark can have valued social roles and live a good life.”

Keystone Human Services is the only provider of Supported Living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a service that continues to grow. Within Supported Living, people live within their own homes and receive support to live independently, access community resources, and participate in the community.

258 people accepting our services have access to Supported Technology. Remote Supports are also available.

61 people are accepting supports in Delaware.

6 single family homes were added in Delaware.

168 people are accepting services in Connecticut.

33 people are accepting services in New Jersey.

Autism Services

Each Person Is Unique

“We are all individuals,” said Elizabeth Fromm (Liz), speaking about employment. “We don’t all have the same support needs. Some of us might need outside support from a program, but that doesn’t mean we can’t work or aren’t employable. Sometimes it may take us a little longer to catch on to new tasks, but that’s it. Personally, I just prefer to be treated like any other employee and don’t want anyone else to look at or treat me differently.”

Liz works for Canteen Vending in Lancaster, PA, where she helps to package food and other items for the drivers to transport to the green vending machines and markets. Although she took advantage of the employment services available through the Adult Community Autism Program (ACAP) to figure out what kind of jobs she was interested in and prepare for interviews, Liz ultimately found and applied for her job through Indeed.

“The main group I work with [at Canteen] is pretty great!” said Liz. “We get along really well and have a lot of fun! I’m not the only autistic or neurodivergent member of my team, so I think that helps.”



57% of participants in the Adult Community Autism Program are competitively employed.

Participants pursued a total of 103 goals related to employment and education, up from 12 in 2023. This is a huge step to supporting participants to gain valued roles and become more financially independent.



Set a Goal and Meet It

On the first day of his enrollment in the Keystone Autism Services Vocational Initiative (KASVI), James declared that his goal was to work at the Movie Tavern. The Vocational Initiative in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania is an innovative approach to supporting young adults with autism and their families. Adolescents and adults ages 12-35 plan, prepare for, and achieve employment or post-secondary education (or both) while increasing their independence – and that’s exactly what James did. By working with a collaborative team from KASVI and his other services, he reached his goal. At the end of the 2023-2024 school year, he applied for an open position at the Movie Tavern and was hired.

Mental Health Services



Confidence to Live Independently

Sara successfully found independent housing on her own. Her time as a resident in a Mental Health Community Rehabilitation Residence program helped her build the confidence to accomplish this goal. "Being a part of the CRR services gives me a feeling of safety and security," said Sara. "KHS staff checks in daily, and I know that help is there if needed. With the CRR services, I know I am not alone. There are social groups I am a part of where I've made friends. We talk about our feelings and learn coping skills. We have also gardened, journaled, and learned new skills."

Mental Health in Schools

The Student Assistance Program provides informal mental health assessments and other supports to kindergarten through 12th grade students. Throughout all of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, KHS provides mental health consulting services to 66 schools, including 21 elementary schools. During the 2023-2024 school year, teams conducted 539 informal mental health assessments.

"The hope is that by providing the necessary services and supports to students, they can be successful academically, physically, and emotionally," said Sandy Gates, SAP Program Director for Keystone Human Services.



35 Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAPs) were completed. Mental Health Peer Support staff worked with people accepting services to develop WRAPs to monitor wellness, times of being less well, and times when experiences are uncomfortable and distressing, including details on how a person wants others to support them during these different times.

22 people are receiving assistance through Supported Living to find independent housing.

15 people are receiving support through Domiciliary Care, where people experiencing mental illness live with families within the community.

Capital Area Head Start



It takes a community to raise a child.

This is exactly what the teachers at CAHS did for our child, Magid.

Our son Magid went from hardly talking to speaking full sentences. He can now communicate with his mother and father very well.

It brings joy to our lives as parents in this country to have English as our second language. But our child Magid will speak English very well, thanks to this great school.

Thank you all very much!

-- Ayman and Alaa

Nature-Based Play Inspires Learning

In April 2024, Capital Area Head Start broke ground on a new outdoor area for learning and play at the Granite Street Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Plans for the new area include spaces for digging, gardening, and climbing, as well as a sensory garden. Nature-based play enhances children’s physical, mental, and emotional health, giving them opportunities to connect with the world around them. This new outdoor learning environment was made possible by a grant from the PNC Foundation through their early childhood education initiative, PNC Grow Up Great®.



20,346 resources were provided to families.

1,324 family goals were set during the 2023-2024 program year.

34% of staff were once Head Start parents.

100% of preschool children have a medical home.

375 activities for children and families were completed to support the transition to school.

Susquehanna Service Dogs



Facility Dog Builds Connections in York County, Pennsylvania School

“Part of the family” – that’s the slogan of Dallastown Area Intermediate School. It’s also the perfect description for SSD Doodle, the school’s facility dog, who has been part of the school for two years. Specially trained by Susquehanna Service Dogs, she performs specific tasks focused on providing calming pressure, either by placing her head or the front half of her body in a student’s lap.

“She changes the environment wherever she is,” said Marjie Whye, Intermediate School Counselor and one of Doodle’s handlers. “She creates a space of happiness and calm. She’s so in tune with the entire room and intuitively knows how to respond to whoever she’s with.”

In addition to her specialized tasks, Doodle has helped students practice their reading skills, lending a nonjudgmental ear and a furry back to scratch. With her reassuring presence, some of the stigma of struggling to read has faded.

She is also building connections. Students who otherwise wouldn’t have interacted are connected over their shared love for Doodle. And she’s opening avenues of communications between students and staff as students find it easier to share more honestly if they’re petting the dog instead of looking at an adult.

“She gives kids the desire to come to school,” said Beth Duvall, Academic Intervention Specialist and Doodle’s other handler.

“With my service dog, I feel like I can go into the world again. Things that were impossible before are suddenly doable with her. It’s not that she makes it so there aren’t obstacles, it’s that she makes me so that I can face obstacles.”

– Callie, partnered with SSD Faith



25 assistance and facility dogs were placed from July 2023 through June 2024.

There are 204 active dogs in the program, plus support for their raisers, sitters, and breeder hosts.

43 dogs went through Advanced Training with SSD’s professional trainers.

Nursing Services

Nurses Serve as Advocates

Nurses play an important role in supporting people to live full lives within their homes and the community. Key Human Services in Connecticut provides comprehensive Nursing Services specially designed to address the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

Stanley has always been independent, taking care of his own medical needs, but as he aged, he began to rely more on the nurses available to him through Key.

“We try to give him choices in his medical care,” said Loradonna LaBelle, an R.N. who has been supporting Stanley since June 2023. “For example, I might need to check A, B, and C with him, but he’ll choose which one we do first.”

Now in his early 80s, his health recently took a sudden decline, and his primary care doctor recommended more skilled nursing services, which meant hospice. That’s when his nurse stepped in as his advocate, pursuing other options for support. She pulled the entire team together – the program manager and assistant manager, nurse, physical therapists, case managers, and his guardian – to develop a support plan to meet his changing needs.

Thanks to the team, Stanley no longer needs hospice. Loradonna helped him find doctors closer to home who were receptive to his needs. By putting several preventative measures in place, the team has been able to ensure his health continues to improve. Not only has his appetite increased, but he has expressed interest in walking again after using a wheelchair for over a year and is now doing stretching exercises to strengthen his legs.



Nurses from Key Human Services in Connecticut served 1,030 people.

Growing Global Connections

2024 Statement on the Right to Live in the Community

During the 17th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), held at the United Nations, Keystone Human Services International addressed 191 countries that ratified the UNCRPD. Our statement focused on true and meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities, including designing community-based services together with people with disabilities.

- We called on member states to:
- Ensure the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), in all their diversity, in all efforts to implement the CRPD, drawing on inclusive practices such as the Listen Include Respect guidelines.
 - Support community living for all people with disabilities, end all forms of institutionalization, and establish inclusive, accessible community-based services.
 - Transform systems of care for children with disabilities to fulfill every child’s right to live with their families and communities.
 - Leverage the expertise of family members and direct support professionals in these efforts.



KHSI Joins USAID Consortium to Promote Inclusive Development

Keystone Human Services International joined 12 other organizations on the USAID IDEA project, a global initiative led by the Education Development Center (EDC). IDEA, which stands for Inclusive Development and Equitable Assistance, focuses on inclusive development by strengthening local organizations headed by or representing marginalized and underrepresented groups or people in vulnerable situations.



Keystone Moldova

Two Years of Support for Refugees from Ukraine

“This is the second time we are running away from the war. This time, we decided not to return to Ukraine. We have nowhere to return. Everything we had was destroyed.” The house S. and her family lived in was destroyed by bombing.

While in Moldova, her daughter with disabilities turned eighteen, so her degree of disability needed to be re-established. The social worker from the Mobile Team for refugees provided the family with support to complete the paperwork. She accompanied the family and guided them through the necessary investigations. Keystone Moldova also connected the family with community social services and provided food and hygiene products.

S. and her family are among the 15,000 refugees and vulnerable local community members that received supports from Keystone Moldova this year, including mediations, consultations, investigations, assistive and medical devices, rehabilitation services, medical hygiene items, winterization items, household heating, and vouchers for food and hygiene.



Keystone Moldova Contributed to Developing 41 Community-Based Social Services

775 people benefited from social canteen services.

685 received specialized services such as vision diagnosis, hearing screening, palliative services, psychological assistance for child victims of domestic violence.

195 people received assistance from Mobile Teams.

170 children were enrolled in early intervention services.

160 people benefited from home care.

104 people received other services, such as protected living services, community homes, and multifunctional centers.

A Meal and Conversation

Mr. Petru, a 51-year-old man, returned to his roots in Dorotcaia village after spending most of his life in the Transnistrian region. A skilled tractor mechanic, he now uses a wheelchair to get around and lives in his parental home. A former classmate helped him reintegrate into the community by guiding him to the social canteen. Here, Mr. Petru not only enjoys a hot meal every day but also a place where he is welcomed with smiles and goodwill. The canteen building, adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities, offers him a safe and welcoming space.

"I am very grateful to these people who prepare lunch for us every day. I don't know what I would do without them; they are always very welcoming and kind," he said. A lunch, a place to socialize, and support for those facing challenges – all these denote the crucial role of a social canteen service in the community.

Keystone Moldova partnered with other stakeholders, with support from the European Union, to improve the operation of the Food Bank in the Republic of Moldova. Through five social canteens, 8,000 people benefited from increased access to food.



Keystone Institute India



Keystone Institute India works across India to support families, people with disabilities, organizations, and government to think about ways that people with disability can take their place at the community table.



41 values-based and mindset-shifting events were conducted.

1,173 people from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan participated.

15 people achieved full credentials in the Customized Employment course, the first ever certified customized employment practitioners in India.

11 more people received assistance to leave the institution and were reunited with their families.

24 more people have been credentialed as trainers of the Foundations of Direct Support training, a national direct support professional development curriculum developed by Keystone Institute India.

Keystone Institute

Leadership Development Around Core Values

One of the most compelling reasons the Keystone Institute was developed was to teach and promote the enduring and powerful ideas of Social Role Valorization. Every two to three years, the Keystone Institute offers an SRV Educator Development Curriculum, a series of 12 sessions over 12 months of focused study on the principles of SRV, along with teaching and facilitation practicum work and a capstone project for a cohort of nominated employees across the organization. At the conclusion of the course, graduates become members of the KHS SRV Leadership Group, serving as organizational resources, role models, teachers, and advisors on the application of SRV in our work. This year, five employees completed the SRV Educator Development course, joining others across KHS working together to fortify these principles throughout all organizational efforts: Sudha Anand, Area Supervisor in Intellectual Disability Services in southeastern Pennsylvania; Fasineh Conteh, Service Director in Intellectual Disability Services in Delaware; Keyon Mallory, Associate Executive Director of Autism Services; Shonna Stevens, Program Director in Intellectual Disability Services in Delaware; and Courtney Wagner, Education Specialist with the Keystone Institute.



Keystone Institute increased accessibility of workshop presentation materials, resources, and formats, including speech to text technology.



15 distinct educational events were held.

Participants completed over 10,500 educational hours.

Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

Keystone Human Services continues on our journey to strengthen our culture of inclusion, diversity, and equity and build an environment where everyone feels respected and valued. Every employee has the opportunity to participate in *Introduction to Inclusion: Creating Common Language and Skills Across the Organization*, and this year, 665 people completed the training.

Seven employees completed the first internally-led Inclusion Guide Cohort training, representing HR, HR Education, Operations Education, Intellectual Disability Services in Delaware, and Capital Area Head Start. Inclusion Guides are a critical component to actionize inclusive practices and incorporate our learning into our everyday interactions and workflows. They forge the path for higher performance and create space for employees to participate fully, engage at an even deeper level, and apply inclusive practices in their work.



2,594 total employees

\$232,877,452 revenue

37,444 people impacted by KHS services and supports

KHS completed 35 Capital Projects, including new homes, accessibility projects (ramps, flooring, bathroom and kitchen renovations), fire detection systems, and HVAC replacement.

The Information Technology Department worked to provide employees with more productive tools, integrated collaboration, and a more stable and secure environment on which to run those tools.

The Help Desk answered over 12,000 calls and completed over 30,000 requests for services.

The Information Technology Department supported 30 facilities projects, installing 73 external cameras, 7 intercoms, 52 door access systems, and 3 building alarm systems.

KHS implemented new safety committees throughout the organization in the US.

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