

Spirited People Leading Spirited Lives Always Growing



Cindy Clark, President & CEO

WHAT WE DO Many people with developmental disabilities find it hard to live independently. At Emmaus, we provide services so they can be in control of their lives and **live like you and me**.

Dear Friends,

Like many of you, 2020 proved to be an enormously challenging year. Yet despite the incredible hurdles we faced, and because of your generous support, Emmaus persevered. Even the global-wide COVID pandemic could not stop our historic mission of serving more than 200 adults with developmental disabilities. Our heroes – the hundreds of courageous frontline team members who work in client homes – remained resolute in their commitment to protect the health and safety of our clients. Thankfully, nearly all our clients have received the vaccine and are currently virus-free.

Sadly, the impact of COVID at Emmaus has only further exacerbated our staffing crisis. Over the past year, our headcount for direct support professionals (DSPs) decreased by nearly 20%, leaving our organization with critically low staffing levels. Because of this, we have been forced to make some difficult decisions that included discharging clients and consolidating some client homes. We have also made the decision to stop accepting new clients, simply because we do not have enough staff members to safely support them.

Our commitment to continue our ministry is directly tied to our ability to provide a living wage for our frontline team members. We are disappointed that Governor Parsons recommended only \$9.9 million in general revenue to combat this critical issue. This decision will have little to almost no impact on our staffing crisis. To put this in perspective, the recommendation from Governor Parsons would only provide an additional \$200,000 in revenue to **Emmaus.** We estimate that providers like **Emmaus** need an additional \$86 million to pay DSPs a living wage of \$15/hour. While the Emmaus Board of Directors committed more than \$3 million each year over the last three years to pay our frontline team members \$12/hour, we are simply unable to continue this subsidy.

Our direct support professionals remain the absolute backbone of our organization, yet they continue to experience many harsh realities outside of work including:

 More than half of the 15,000 DSPs working in Missouri are forced to access some form of public assistance including Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program).

- Nearly one in every four Missouri DSPs lives at or below the federal poverty level.
- The most recent data available indicates that the average starting wage for DSPs in Missouri hovers between \$10 and \$12/hour – barely above the Missouri minimum wage of \$9.45/hour.

Sadly, the DSP crisis has had an even more devastating impact on the people we are entrusted to serve. For people with disabilities, this crisis can mean that the staff they have come to love, and trust are often forced to leave Emmaus, and seek employment elsewhere. It also means that new, unfamiliar people are responsible for their most intimate care. And in some cases, it may also mean that our clients do not feel as safe.

We need you to help us share our message with **elected officials.** Your advocacy is more important than ever. Emmaus, along with other service providers, is tackling the DSP crisis head-on. We are imploring our elected officials to increase state funding to ensure every DSP in the state of Missouri earns at least \$15/hour. We need your help to sound the alarm about this crisis. People with disabilities deserve so much better and YOU can help us by lending your voice. Please consider contacting your representatives and help us share our story. It is easy to do – and we can provide you with talking points to use when contacting your elected officials. Austin Hayden leads our advocacy efforts and can be contacted at haydenaustin@emmaushomes.org or 317-902-2078.

Emmaus is a leader in providing high-quality services to adults with developmental disabilities and we look forward to solving this crisis so that we can continue our mission by offering services to those in need.

On behalf of everyone at Emmaus, including the more than 200 clients we serve and the nearly 450 direct support professionals who provide their care, thank you for your continued support and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Cindy Clark President & CEO

ART WITH VAL

Valerie is a busy person. She goes on large shopping trips almost every other week, gets manicures and pedicures once a month, and rides horses when sessions are offered.

With fewer and fewer of Valerie's favorite activities being feasible this past year, she has shifted her sights onto a newer hobby: Crafting.

Valerie works closely with her Direct Support Professionals to grow her artistic talents and tackle a few extensive cardmaking activities each month.

Valerie expresses her creativity by handcrafting a memorable surprise for all who are lucky enough to receive one.

She improves her arts and crafts skills is by practicing personalized cards for her friends and loved ones!

She sends pictures and art to her Direct Support Professionals, family, and church groups. Even former Emmaus employees receive her work. Sometimes she'll get cards and letters back to stay in touch.

Valerie is always excited to head outside and drop a handcrafted card in her mailbox, hoping to spark a conversation in return. "Val is creative.

She brings pleasure to others through her crafts and art.

She creates with a passionate style that is personal and unique to her."

MYRIAM MEYER, Direct Support Lead

DID YOU KNOW?

Your gifts help fund the supplies Valerie and her direct support team use along with the relationships they make.







The technology suite that is now a staple in Sean's life only started to exist a few years ago.

He was one of the first people at Emmaus to begin experimenting and equipping his room with assistive technology. By installing an Amazon Alexa, he paired commands with connected electronics in his room.

Since Sean uses a wheelchair, controlling aspects of his life by using the power of his voice was essential for his growth and independence.

He started by asking Alexa simple things: Set a reminder. Check on scores of last night's baseball game. Find facts about my favorite WWE superstars. Pull up the weather for the week ahead.

As time went on, Sean used his device more and more, such as connecting his light bulbs.

This gave Sean the ability to flip the light switch without even getting up. At night he moves around his room freely, without relying on anyone's support. He even put a light in his closet so he can pick out his own wardrobe without assistance.

Alexa really came in handy in 2020. Fighting boredom from staying at home, Sean would ask his smart assistant regularly to turn on his favorite scary movies, play music, and pull up his trending social media accounts. Staying connected is one of the ways Sean overcame what could have been a deep depression during COVID-19.

Sean loves going out. You can usually catch him in-person at some sort of gathering with huge crowds. As the rest of the world shut down this year, Sean's Direct Support Professionals made sure his world didn't. They invented new fun experiences for Sean

to try out and put his techy twist on things.

"We re-invented what 'going out' looked like," says Ashley.

Sean used his smart device to research popular things to do from the car. "We found Lone Elk park and had buffalo and elk pull up right next to our window."

Sean could even ask his device to reroute the trip and add a few extra stops along the way.

"We even stopped at a dam. It was awesome for Sean because he could take his wheelchair out of the car and park it on a platform to watch the barges passing beneath us."

Trish, who has worked with Sean throughout the pandemic, has seen positive changes. "He's gotten better at vocalizing his wants and





needs. Instead of asking for help to clean off his glasses when the mask fogs, he just does it."

As staff spent more time working with Sean on his skills, he grew more confident and less reliant on them.

The people who work with Sean have recognized his shy nature and built trust so he could come out of his comfort zone. They joke a lot.

"A few months ago, Sean would not joke or be sarcastic. Today he pulls pranks on us and just laughs about it."

Along with adding humor to Sean's life, his team also added a tablet. Sean now uses a tablet to keep in touch with his mom. family and friends virtually, anytime, anywhere.

Seeing how well Sean adapted, he was invited to participate in

a technology grant training at Adam Morgan Foundation.

It is the first class of this kind and currently only open to 5 people. This year-long program implements Sean's needs. wants, and interests when it comes to technology.

With his support team's help, Sean engages in a pre- and post-assessment to measure his progress. He attends a monthly training to gain new knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, values, and interests.

Technology has become part Sean's daily routine. Knowing how to use it effectively lets Sean connect to the world and increase independence in everyday life skills.

"Sean has shown to be an excellent leader in his group and scored above average in self-directed learning skills.

He brings with him an amazing attitude and thirst for learning new strategies in the area of technology. We look forward to learning alongside him and can't wait to see his leadership skills shine throughout the program." says Dr. Rachel C. Morgan, Adam Morgan Foundation, **Executive Director**

Each time Sean turns to technology, smart devices, and his support staff, he also turns to everyone who has generously invested in his independence.

Thanks to donors like you,

Sean is

FUNDRAISE FOR FAMILY

Ellie had been thinking about her brother a lot lately. She was used to seeing him a lot over the summer. Going to baseball games, heading to the movie theater, and even getting together for the annual family camping trip. Andrew lights up the outdoors when they're under the twinkling stars. But this year, Ellie didn't get to share any of those experiences with Andrew.

In fact, she was lucky to squeeze in a few window-visits with her brother at his home with Emmaus, if the weather permitted. But today was the start of the weather changing. It was getting colder outside, and Ellie knew that meant she'd be seeing less of her brother through the glass pane that divided them.

She could always tell in her brief visits with Andrew that his routine was all over the place. She had watched her older brother grow up with consistency and watched him grow new independences with Emmaus. She wasn't going to let this year stop that growth.

Ellie knew she couldn't be the only family member that COVID-19 was affecting.

She flipped open her laptop and went to the Emmaus website. From there, she learned how Emmaus had implemented procedures to keep her brother and his Direct Support Professionals healthy and safe during the pandemic. While it broke her heart, she understood. While scrolling, Ellie saw story after story of people with disabilities finding success even in this time of struggle.

The dedication of team members and community support gave her encouragement.

But what could she and her husband do? They were engineers, and there weren't many options for the pair to jump in and help the world of developmental disabilities get back on track.

Then it hit her.

"I'll share Andrew's story," she thought to herself in an aha moment. In just a few clicks, she pulled up the most famous of social media platforms. She landed on the Emmaus profile, found the Create a Fundraiser feature, and started typing her brother's story.

In the blink of an eye, she had gone from little sister to large supporter.

Ping! Ellie got an alert that someone had donated. Then another, and another. Ping! Ping! Almost instantly, Ellie's friends and followers rallied to her cause. Many knew a little bit about her brother, but most had never been introduced to Emmaus before. Her mission was to help people become more aware.

Ellie knew Andrew's world was turned upside down, and it's hard to explain to him why. Now, at least she can tell him that there are brand new advocates for Emmaus who are supporting him and others like him, every day.





Ellie's fundraiser for Emmaus Homes

Fundraiser for Emmaus Homes by Ellie Hanna

My brother, Andrew, has been able to live independently because of this organization. With Emmaus, he has been able to flourish and live a life we always wanted for him.

PART-TIME TO PASSION

Personal and professional growth are experienced in many unique ways at Emmaus. This is precisely what happened to Esther. As an Emmaus team member for 6 years. Esther has found her passion and built relationships that will last a lifetime.

When she first spotted an advertisement for Emmaus. Esther had no idea where her response to the ad would eventually lead her. Starting out as a volunteer, she quickly learned about Emmaus' true mission and was devoted to getting more involved.

Esther was soon offered a part-time position as a Direct Support Professional (DSP): "I fell in love with it. Pretty quickly, I quit my other fulltime job to start working fulltime at Emmaus." says Esther. "I enjoy working with the clients very much, and I feel this is more purpose-driven work."

Her role as a DSP has taught her that behavior is communication. She uses this insight to make any client she works with feel at ease. comfortable, and safe when they are with her.

While growing her career, Esther helps others excel, including clients like Laura. Laura has experienced tremendous growth, makes independent decisions and listens to staff's guidance.

Esther explains how the right

combination of people, training and approach have helped Laura to be more comfortable in her home

"I am very proud of her and the team that has helped her to trust and be more comfortable with daily events in her life." praises Esther. "She is a much more relaxed person today. It warms my heart to see her at

Esther's leadership did not go unnoticed. She eventually pursued a new opening and became the HR Assistant for Emmaus. Although heartbroken that she would not see her clients as often, she knew this calling is where she was needed most.

Time away from working with clients did not stop Esther from seeing them. She continued to visit and eventually was asked if she wanted to pick up a few hours working in direct support again. Esther was overjoyed at the opportunity!

For over a year Esther has worked as a Direct Support Professional over the weekends while still working in HR during the week: "I truly love being able to still work in direct support."

Esther turned her part-time position into a passionate career in care. She is a great example of growth and is why we often get to tell the successful stories of the people Emmaus supports.





GROW YOUR PASSION, GET INVOLVED, AND SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LIKE ESTHER DOES! WWW.EMMAUSHOMES.ORG

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