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PERMIT NO. 315  
WORCESTER, MA

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Everyone is on their own  
unique journey.

*Empowering individuals and their  
families to reach their goals.*

**\$35.3**  
**million in**  
**revenue**

**Venture** provides support to individuals facing diverse challenges through a compassionate and dedicated workforce using innovative practices that encourage independence, empowerment, and opportunity.

**140** members at day habilitation =  
**240**  
**hours** of community service

**851**  
**employees**

**202** individuals living in community residences =  
**221,190**  
**meals served**

**45** vans in fleet =  
**1.17**  
**million miles driven**

**1,368**  
hours spent on  
**staff training**

**595**  
direct support professionals =

Owning and operating **44 homes** =  
**880 lawns** mowed each summer and

**18,595**  
**gallons** of heating oil each winter

**2.1**  
**million**  
**hours** of direct care provided



# Message from the President



As we head toward the end of another year at Venture Community Services, we are continually reminded of how fortunate we are to have such a tremendous group of professionals doing incredibly important work. It really is every single day that someone at this agency does something amazing

that improves the life of someone we support. Although the work is gratifying, it is also very challenging and we know that the agency's success would be impossible without the dedication of our workforce. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the daily contributions of our administrative staff too. Each of the tireless professionals in our human resources, finance, and I.T. departments work hard every day to help Venture fulfill its mission across the agency...and the word "incredible" is entirely fitting for the men and women in our facilities department who work day and night to keep the many properties that Venture owns working properly.

Venture has continued to grow over the past year. We have opened a new home in Paxton and have purchased a home in Brockton so that we may expand services to people in that part of the state. We've also seen the census in our Uxbridge Day Hab grow at a rate faster than we expected and we've been able to use that site to provide services to autistic children, programming that the agency offers free of charge to local families. In partnership with Shri Service Corps in Pawtucket, R.I., Venture has been providing adaptive yoga classes at the program for children and their parents on a regular basis, in addition to the classes that have been happening in

several of our programs for more than a year. We have also implemented a social skills group for autistic children which is led by one of our clinicians. Recently, Venture held its 2nd Annual Sensory Friendly Halloween at our Uxbridge program so that children from the community have a safe and enjoyable environment in which to experience the fun of trick or treating. The agency will be looking to expand these free events in the future as part of our commitment to ensuring that people have access to compassionate and innovative programs.

The year ahead will undoubtedly present Venture Community Services with many challenges and opportunities, and we remain ready for both. We'll continue working with our business partners to prepare for managed care companies taking on a more prominent role in Massachusetts and we will do this with an eye toward ensuring that everyone who needs services will be able to get them. The agency will also continue to take the lead in advocacy in an effort to expand programs and to support the vibrant and diverse workforce that is responsible for keeping so many people safe on a daily basis...and we will use our voice and speak loudly when any group is marginalized or discriminated against in any way.

Thank you to all of our donors and many supporters for your investment in what Venture does and for always helping us to create better lives for the people we support.

Mike Hyland  
President & CEO



# Programs and Initiatives



## COMMUNITY LIVING OPTIONS

Venture is committed to providing options for community living. We recognize that every person we support is an individual with their own unique set of needs, interests, preferences and health concerns. Community living options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are far from one-size-fits-all. We offer barrier-free residences for individuals using wheelchairs or with other mobility issues. We offer medically-intensive group home settings for those who need specialized medical equipment and access to consistent skilled nursing care. Individuals in need of behavioral support can reside in homes with extra assistance from clinicians and benefit from Applied Behavior Analysis. While many individuals benefit from living with their peers in a highly supportive setting, others find a more independent living arrangement is the right fit. We also offer Shared Living case management – this year, six individuals living in our group homes reached their goal of increased independence and moved into Shared Living households. For those who are ready to live on their own, they can receive services from our Individualized Supports program, which helps people to live independently in the community with the help of a skilled and compassionate case worker to help them with challenges or concerns. This continuum of care allows us to provide residential services to a broad spectrum of individuals with unique needs that change throughout their lives.



## ADVOCACY

Venture is deeply invested in strengthening the human services workforce. Our agency employs nearly 600 direct support professionals who provide emotional, recreational, medical, behavioral, and physical support to hundreds of individuals. However, this number only represents a sliver of the people working in similar positions in other agencies across the Commonwealth. Nationally, the human services workforce is experiencing a 45% turnover rate, which threatens the stability of services provided to those in need of support. We are committed to helping to manage the human services workforce crisis on a national stage, which means working with state and local legislators to represent our employees. Direct Support Professionals are what make it possible to provide quality services 365 days a year – these employees are skilled, trained professionals and we are working diligently to support the human services workforce and in turn secure the highest quality services for the individuals we support.



## CREATIVITY IN OUR DAY PROGRAMS

We are encouraging out-of-the-box thinking at our day programs in order to foster independence and meaningful community integration at our day habilitation programs. At both our Sturbridge and Uxbridge day programs, participants have access to cost-free adaptive yoga classes twice a month. Adaptive yoga has earned recognition as a highly effective complementary therapy for individuals with developmental disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our unique curriculum, in partnership with Shri Yoga, combines an innovative approach to movement-based yoga classes with community building, mindfulness, and character education components. In addition to four adaptive yoga classes monthly, all three of our day programs participate in drum circles. This allows participants to explore body movement, experience sensory input, and express themselves. Many of the individuals at our programs also participate in community service by delivering meals to local seniors, visiting animal shelters, and collecting items for the food pantry during the holidays. We strive to provide a meaningful day program experience while assisting individuals with their behavioral, medical, and ambulatory needs.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We are incredibly grateful for our many generous sponsors and donors, and we are proud to report that 100% of donated dollars are used for programming, never toward operating costs. We strive to maintain a robust donation reserve fund, which is used for providing the individuals we support with services, equipment, and experiences beyond the scope of what their financial status allows. To us, these items might seem very basic – a pressure-relieving mattress to improve circulation; airfare for someone who, at 70 years old, has never been on a vacation; adaptive equipment to help with eating independently; music classes in our day programs; and much more based upon individual needs. For many of the individuals we support, these opportunities can be life-changing. Over the past fiscal year, we have dedicated nearly \$20,000 in donor funds toward assistive technology and offered at least six free adaptive yoga classes monthly. Additionally, we offer completely free resources to families of children with autism and other disabilities in our community.



# Autism Support for Children and Families



The newest program in our continuum of care offers support to children and families in need of autism services. We look forward to eventually providing center-based supportive services for individuals between the ages of 3 and 21 who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Our program currently includes three major components: twice-monthly social skills groups, twice-monthly adaptive yoga classes, and biannual inclusive family fun events. All of these offerings are provided completely free of charge.

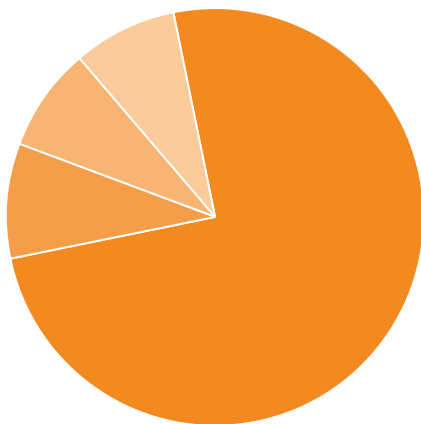
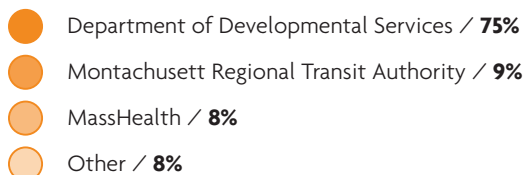
Our social skills group offers a supportive environment where children and young adults can improve their social skills by developing friendships, identifying interests, and participating in various hands-on activities. Participants learn skills to help enhance their self-regulation, learn to identify and express emotions, improve their communication skills, and identify their personal interests. The curriculum has been developed and administered by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with more than 20 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism.

Additionally, we host free family fun events that are sensory-friendly and geared toward kids with autism and their families. Our Halloween event offers practice trick-or-treating, crafts, and sensory activities. Our spring event allows kids the opportunity to experiment with different types of exercise, music, yoga, and meet therapy animals.

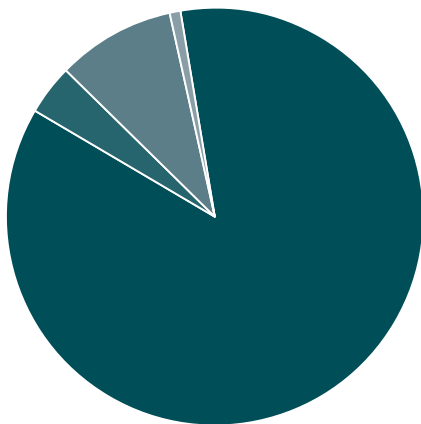
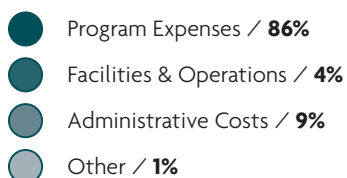
Lastly, our adaptive yoga classes are offered twice per month with a licensed occupational therapist and certified yoga instructor who has also been trained in yoga for special populations through our partnership with a service-based studio and teacher training program. Yoga has been shown to help students with autism spectrum disorders with concentration, impulse control, motor coordination, social skills, physical strength, and feelings of anxiety or stress.

# Statement of Activity

## REVENUE SOURCES



## EXPENDITURES



Venture Community Services is a 501©3 nonprofit organization that provides support to individuals facing diverse challenges through a compassionate and dedicated workforce using innovative practices that that encourage independence, empowerment, and opportunity. Federal Tax Identification 04-2593315

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# Thank you for your support

*The support you provide allows us to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities*

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations, volunteering, advocacy, event participation, or legislative actions – community support makes the difference. Visit [venturecs.org](http://venturecs.org) for more information about how you can join in our mission.

**Venture Community Services** • One Picker Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566 • 508-347-8181 • [venturecs.org](http://venturecs.org)