Anixter center

On the MOVE

2017 ANNUAL REPORT
Anixter Center Board of Directors, Fiscal Year 2017

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Editorial: Sharon Honaker (SHonaker@Anixter.org)
Photography: David Kindler
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Dear Friends and Supporters of Anixter Center:

Anixter Center is on the move! That statement has never been truer in our almost 100-year history, and it will continue to be our guiding light in the future. Throughout this fiscal year, we were moving—literally and figuratively.

First, the literal. We have sold our Administrative Services building and consolidated our offices into other locations where we can use our space more efficiently and cost-effectively. We’re also in the midst of selling our flagship location at 2032 N. Clybourn Ave. In anticipation of that change, we’ve started to move our programs out to locations that are closer to where our clients live, learn, work and play.

For instance, many CRS clients are moving to CRS North, the first floor of our Ferst School. This is a wonderful new neighborhood for our clients to explore. We are very excited about transitioning our programs and services closer to where our clients live and their natural communities. We are pleased to be establishing ourselves as the industry leader in this growing trend.

We’ve also been moving in other ways, especially in how we think about our services. We want to ensure Anixter Center is always best serving the needs of people with disabilities. As an example, we’re placing an increased emphasis on our employment services, from skills training to integrated internships to job placements in the community. As you will read in the following pages, we continue to expand these services, including a wonderful new partnership with Mesirow Financial.

I started this letter by mentioning our nearly 100-year history. What makes Anixter Center truly unique is our longevity. Chicago Hearing Society celebrated its 100th anniversary last year and in 2019 Anixter Center will do the same. Celebrating a century of service is remarkable for any organization, and we are enormously proud to have two such celebrations.

These milestones are possible because of your support. We are fortunate to have many wonderful supporters, volunteers, stakeholders and donors—all of whom make our success possible. Your faith in our mission and our ability to fulfill that mission is inspiring.

As we look to the future, your support will be even more critical to our success. Thank you to all who make our work possible. With your continued help, I look forward to 2018 with much anticipation.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Clark
President & CEO
Anixter Center
Throughout the Anixter Center family, the resounding watchwords for this year were: “We’re on the Move!” Indeed, the entire Anixter Center family was in motion, working hard to provide the best programs and services to as many people as possible. There was particular emphasis on moving our services and programs out into the community, closer to where our clients live, learn, work and play.

About Us
Anixter Center is an experienced leader in helping those with disabilities. For nearly 100 years we have served others, often those whose needs are not met anywhere else. Today Anixter Center offers employment, residential, behavioral health and social/recreation services. Each program focuses on helping our clients become as independent and as involved in the community as possible.

For 101 years, Chicago Hearing Society, a division of Anixter Center, has served those who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing through its audiology clinic and hearing aid bank as well as its interpreter referral services, youth mentoring program and domestic violence and victim assistance and advocacy programs.

A Sample of This Year’s Highlights

• In grand style, Chicago Hearing Society celebrated its 100-year anniversary and kicked off its next century of service to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing communities.

• Employment Services formed a new partnership with Mesirow Financial to provide job internship services to adults with disabilities at Mesirow’s downtown office.

• Our programs continued to span the age spectrum, this year serving those from two months old to age 101.

• CHS’s audiology clinic served more than 2,000 people this fiscal year. Its Interpreter Services area responded to nearly 600 requests for interpreters. Both numbers were up year over year.

• Free tutoring was provided to 130 adults with disabilities as part of our Jack Ehrlich Literacy Program, an increase of almost 20 percent year over year.

• Our Community Resources & Support (CRS) program prepared to move approximately 30 clients to a new location—CRS North (located inside our Ferst School)—that will provide a fresh, exciting neighborhood for all to explore. More clients will make this move as space becomes available.

• Our Substance Use Disorders programs for people with disabilities grew by nearly 30 percent.

• After building up a strong niche in Chicago serving people with HIV/AIDS, CALOR left the Anixter Center family in January and joined the AIDS Healthcare Foundation. There CALOR can expand its services nationally and globally.
The people who come to Anixter Center and Chicago Hearing Society are wonderfully diverse. They are from all ethnic and racial backgrounds and represent all ages, from infant to centenarian. Most have at least one disability—developmental, cognitive, sensory, physical, psychiatric or medical-related—and many have more than one. While our clients come from all economic and social backgrounds, the vast majority have incomes well below the poverty line.
Akil’s dream is to have a retail job. He’d really like to be part of a team and learn new responsibilities. More than anything, he wants the satisfaction of knowing he is truly earning his paycheck.

Finding a job can be particularly challenging for those with disabilities. But having one can truly change lives. So this year Anixter Center focused on its Employment Services and helping clients land jobs in the community.

Akil came to our Employment Services to build the skills—and the confidence—he needs to reach his goal. He especially appreciates the personal attention he’s received.

From identifying job goals and building job skills to prepping for interviews and helping clients retain jobs after they’ve landed them, our Employment Services Department supports clients at every step of a job search.

Clients come to Employment Services through many avenues, including other Anixter Center programs as well as referrals from state agencies, community agencies or Chicago Public Schools.

Some clients start with our pre-employment training program. This unique program places clients, like Akil, in a 10-week “internship” program where they work in business settings. These job training programs are currently offered at two locations—Mesirow Financial’s Chicago loop office or The Westin O’Hare.

The partnership with Mesirow is new this year; The Westin has been a long-time Anixter Center supporter.
In FY 2017, Employment Services served 240 clients; 66 are already working at full- or part-time jobs.

Clients have been placed at a variety of employers, including:

- Large retailers
- Restaurants
- Grocers
- Food-processing companies
- Office maintenance companies
- Luxury hotels

“At Mesirow, I learned so much—the importance of arriving on time and how to manage things so I get my work done on time.” - Akil
Akil worked at Mesirow three days a week. He prepped conference rooms before and after meetings and stocked supplies. He also worked with onsite Anixter Center staff to update his resume, polish his interview skills and conduct a job search.

The partnerships with Mesirow and The Westin, and the real-world work experience they offer, are critical to the success of our Employment Services. They give clients the chance to learn about the real world of work and to hone their job skills.

These partnerships also offer benefits for the host company. “Any time our employees can take a moment to work closely with a person who is new, unique, and different from themselves, they gain new perspectives and exercise different skills. We know that experiencing diversity in the workplace has a positive impact on business for these reasons,” said Ellie Forman, Mesirow’s Corporate Community Relations Manager.

From these internship programs, clients discover whether they need to work on more skills or are ready for the job market.

For those who are ready, we offer placement services, including networking with employers to match clients with job opportunities. This year Employment Services placed clients in jobs at 20 different employers across Chicago and the suburbs.

Akil is going to job fairs and sending out resumes. He’s had several interviews and expects to have a job soon. “I used to get nervous at interviews but now I like them. I can show employers that my disability won’t affect me. I will be a really good employee for them.”

“I want to earn the money I make. It means I’m doing a good job.” – Akil
Chicago’s iconic Art Institute, pumpkin farms, Navy Pier, neighborhood libraries—the venues were as varied as our clients’ interests. This year, perhaps more than any other year, our clients and staff were on the move out in the community, exploring all that Chicago and the suburbs have to offer. The result was more fun and lots of learning, as well as growing confidence and independence for all.

From Art Therapy to Day Mental Health, Ferst School to ACT (Adult Community Transition), our program staff made sure outings were planned—with plenty of client involvement—throughout the year.

We even scored some hard-to-get tickets for “Disney’s Aladdin” and the Museum of Contemporary Art’s popular “Takashi Murakami: The Octopus Eats Its Own Leg” exhibit.

There were also outings to help others, including a trip to a local Ronald McDonald house to bake cookies for families visiting their children in the hospital. We also initiated an impromptu beach cleanup along Chicago’s lakefront.

While the final destinations are always the highlight, that isn’t the full story. The prior planning and the trip itself are often just as important. Selecting the destination and then planning the outing’s schedule offer great learning opportunities as do reading CTA schedules and buying passes. Eating in new restaurants is not only fun but a chance to experience a wider variety of food.

With each trip, self-assurance and independence expand. The ultimate goal is to have clients feel increasingly comfortable exploring their neighborhoods and the city on their own or with family and friends.
“I want to work and learn about jobs so that I can find out what is out there to do.”
–Melissa, after a trip to Navy Pier

CRS’s trip to Navy Pier was more than a chance to see the sights. It was also an opportunity to explore the various jobs that workers held there, including looking at job responsibilities and what skills a job requires.

Just Some of Our Outings This Year

• Art Institute of Chicago
• Bangston’s Pumpkin Farm
• Blue Man Group/Autism Friendly Show
• Brookfield Zoo
• Chicago Bulls
• Chicago Cubs
• Chicago White Sox
• Chicago Wolves
• Disability Pride Parade
• Disney’s Aladdin
• Great America
• Greektown
• Marvel Live!
• Mental Health Rally 2017
• Mexican Art Museum
• Morton Arboretum
• Museum of Contemporary Art
• Navy Pier
• Ronald McDonald House
• Shedd Aquarium
• Wendella Architecture Boat Tour
At five years old, Kayla was diagnosed with a brain tumor. As often happens, the chemotherapy that followed the surgery caused significant hearing loss in both ears. By first grade, that hearing loss was impacting Kayla’s ability to hear her teacher and learn. It also made hearing her friends difficult.

The thoughtful, quiet little girl grew quieter. Cindy, Kayla’s mom, knew hearing aids would help, but their insurance didn’t cover the cost. That’s when Kayla turned to Chicago Hearing Society and “Hear The Cheers.”

Each year this unique partnership raises money to provide children with much needed hearing aids and audiology services. “Hear The Cheers” was started by Eliza Peters when she was in middle school. Having hearing loss herself, she understood how important it is for others to be able to hear their teachers, sports coaches and friends.

So along with Sarah Spain of ESPN radio, Eliza created the Hear The Cheers Fund and selected Chicago Hearing Society as a partner. Now more than five years later, CHS and Hear The Cheers have raised over $120,000 and helped more than 48 children, including Kayla.

At CHS, Kayla received her hearing aids—free of charge. Now learning is much easier as is hearing her friends. “As a mom, seeing her talking and smiling with her friends again is simply incredible,” Cindy says.

CHS offers a broad range of services, including an audiology clinic, Interpreter Referral Services, social and advocacy programs and a youth mentor program. Find out more at ChicagoHearingSociety.org.
Our 2017 Spring Gala was a night to remember, not only for its many firsts but also for the new friends we made. The gala was held at a new venue—Morgan Manufacturing—on the City’s west side. The spacious location was perfect for mingling during the cocktail hour and generating lots of energy for the live auction. In keeping with the theme of “Access for All,” honoree Chris Kennedy shared his extended family’s stories of health-related challenges, which culminated in a standing ovation.

New this year was an auctioneer to help with the fundraising. Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of our guests, the auction and paddle raise generated more money than any other year. Also new was a touching video and song celebrating our clients.

Thanks to the support of our Chair, JLL, the night was an absolute success, raising nearly $420,000. It also was a chance for long-time Anixter Center supporters to renew acquaintances and for new supporters to get to know us and join our extended Anixter Center family.

*Our Spring Gala was made possible by many generous donors, sponsors and underwriters, in particular the Lester & Edward Anixter Family Foundation, Diamond Sponsor, as well as Comcast/NBC 5 Chicago/Telemundo and JLL, Platinum Sponsors.*
Rob Johnson, CBS 2 Chicago weekday anchor, was Master of Ceremonies.

Honoree Christopher G. Kennedy shared his family’s stories.

Steve Anixter helped lead the bidding.

The bidding during the live auction was spirited!

Anixter Center board members Angela Kahnes and Barbara Rickse Schau with Ana McCauley

One of the evening’s highlights was a video starring our talented clients, set to an original song commissioned just for us.
FINANCIALS
Fiscal Year 2017 (7/1/16–6/30/17)

EXPENSES
Program Expenses $16,939,416
Supporting Services $3,219,661
Fundraising - Cash $484,281
Fundraising - In-Kind $787,582
Sub Total $21,430,940
Depreciation & Amortization 1,088,246
Total Expenses* $22,519,186

REVENUE
State of Illinois $9,138,727
Other Grants & Fees $2,912,569
Earned Income $3,963,941
Contributions - Cash $1,403,669
Contributions - In-Kind $787,582
Rental Income $1,771,651
Investment & Other Income $846,974
Total Revenue* $20,825,113

EARNED INCOME
CHS $2,565,298
Packaging $1,323,403
Janitorial $39,578
Canteen & Other $35,662
Total Earned Income $3,963,941

DONATIONS RAISED
Cash $1,403,669
In-Kind $787,582
Total Donations $2,191,251

*Revenue and Expenses above do not include the $88,864 loss from CALOR operations which were discontinued during the year.
COUNCILS and VOLUNTEERS

Each year thousands of dynamic volunteers support our programs and services. We are very grateful for their commitment. Without them we wouldn’t be able to serve as many people as we do. We are especially fortunate to have the support of two groups of truly exceptional volunteers—the Anixter Center Associate Council (ACAC) and CHS’s Advisory Council.

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Cara Carlson, co-chair of the Anixter Center Associate Council, pulled the winning raffle tickets at our Spring Gala.
This Friends of Anixter Center list recognizes donors who made gifts to the Anixter Center family during FY17 (7/1/16-6/30/17). These gifts make our work possible and are critical to our clients’ success. We have done our best to make sure this list is accurate and complete. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Iversen, Senior Director of External Relations, siversen@anixter.org.
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The mission of Anixter Center is to provide an array of services and supports for individuals with disabilities and related challenges to live, learn, work and play in the community.