



December 2018

Holiday Greetings,

During this reflective time of year, I want to share with you why I find myself so deeply moved by the daily struggles and resiliency of the many vulnerable people whose lives we touch at Lakes Region Community Services.

From our core mission as an Area Agency helping adults with developmental disabilities and their families thrive in their community, to the hundreds of parents, children and families who benefit from our Family Resource Center's programs - to helping seniors maintain their independence - LRCS proudly wraps its arms around people of all ages in the Lakes Region.

### **The Most Critical Years**

Some of our most inspiring stories revolve around our work to improve and enhance the development of young children. Our early childhood experts take great pride in the important work of helping children be all they can be and in giving their families hope.

Our Family-Centered Early Supports & Services (FCESS) Program serves children under 3 who experience developmental delays, disability or an established condition. FCESS helps children to realize their full potential. We enrich children's lives, and support their families, by providing specialized and individualized early intervention services in the home or community, and we collaborate with other community partners to transition these children and families as they to continue to thrive.

As I write to ask for your renewed or special year-end gift to our Annual Fund Appeal, I share two powerful stories of children and families served by LRCS who are beating the odds.



### **Meet Benjamin Murphy**

***"Lauren had a special place in her heart for this little boy who had been dealt a very bad hand." Ben's adoptive grandparents Debbie and Skip Murphy:***

*Benjamin was born in November 2015 at 33 weeks gestation. His mother was twice the legal limit for blood alcohol and had opiates in her bloodstream. Addicted to opioids at birth, Ben was later diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. He spent two weeks in the intensive care nursery at Dartmouth and came home with us, his grandparents, at 3 lbs., 15 oz. We spent 24-hour days for the first 4 months holding him close and loving him to get him past the high risk for SIDS and avoid the 'Failure to Attach and Thrive' problems common in babies born to addicted mothers.*

*Ben was just 5 months old when Early Supports and Services got involved. Lauren came to our house and stole Ben's heart. She spent time swaddling him in blankets to comfort him and helped him reach important milestones like rolling over, sitting, crawling, and walking and gave us pointers each week so we could help him along.*

*Ben had a speech delay but even with that, he learned to say Lauren's name and always greeted her at the door. As he grew, they spent time playing with materials for fine motor skills. All of these activities helped Ben immensely. Ben is a preschooler now with signs of great improvement. Other professionals tell us he is doing really well. It's obvious to them that we had excellent early support services for him.*

*When a child turns three, they say goodbye to Early Support Services and transition to school-based services. The day arrived when Ben had to say goodbye to Lauren. Although he was too young to understand, it was very difficult for us to see her go. Her influence, however, didn't stop at that last home visit. The next step was to enroll Ben in the elementary school to oversee his progress with speech and social development. Lauren and the FCESS team helped introduce Ben and us to the school system.*

*We feel very fortunate to have the support of the FCESS. Ben's life is so much better because of it. We see the results every day.*



### **Baylee Baron's Story**

***Remarkable! That is the word that comes to mind when I think of Baylee and her family. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to know Baylee's family. I still feel a part of her life. Just the other day I received a video clip of Baylee taking her first few steps!***

***Debbie Judd, FCESS Physical Therapist***

*Baylee was diagnosed with Down Syndrome shortly after birth, along with heart defects. She required admission to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center at 6 months old. During her hospital stay she experienced breathing difficulty that required placement of a trache, had 3 blood transfusions, a heart catheter procedure, septic shock, and 3-4 cases of pneumonia. After 3 months in the hospital Baylee was discharged home with a trache and ventilator and a g-tube required for feeding.*

*Her family had to quickly learn the "in's and out's" of caring for a child who requires around the clock medical care. Her parents stepped up to the plate, learning all they could to be sure that Baylee's needs were met and to keep her healthy.*



*Baylee received FCESS with home visitors including an educator, a physical therapist, and a speech pathologist until she turned 3 years old. Her family was instrumental in the progress that Baylee made, always asking “what’s next” to ensure they were doing enough.*

*The FCESS Program focuses on ‘coaching’ family members and the progress that Baylee has made during her time in the program is remarkable. We were so proud last February when Baylee’s mom Carrie was recognized with an Unsung Hero Award presented by Gov. Chris Sununu and The NH Children’s Trust in recognition of being an extraordinary parent and caregiver, making a difference in the life of a child!*

Benjamin and Baylee are but two stars that inspire us on a daily basis. The FCESS Program currently serves 180 local children with an expanding caseload.

We don’t do this work alone. We rely on the kindness and generosity of friends like you to provide the flexible resources that allow us to be innovative and responsive to people’s needs, to help us fill unfunded service gaps, and to meet the critical challenges we face in recruiting and retaining our important workforce.

**I hope you will consider making a tax-deductible gift to Lakes Region Community Services Foundation.** We are so grateful for the growing support of friends, donors, sponsors, our dedicated employees and our many community partners. Together we make a difference and strengthen the health of our community!

Thank you from all of us at LRCS! May you and your family enjoy the holiday season.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Bryant  
President & CEO