



CENTER FOR  
ENRICHED  
LIVING

*A Community of Friends. A World of Opportunities.*

DREAM BIG &  
BRACE FOR IMPACT



Annual Impact Report July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020

# TYPICALLY AN ANNUAL REPORT TELLS THE STORY OF ONE YEAR.

However, the novel coronavirus  
and the pandemic created a  
new story - one that changed  
the course of CEL's history.

**This impact report is from  
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020**



## OUR MISSION

The Center for Enriched Living  
exists so that people with  
developmental disabilities  
can be fully included in the  
community, achieve personal  
success and enjoy a good  
quality of life.

## OUR VISION

We see a future where every  
person with a developmental  
disability is an equal, valued,  
and contributing member of  
the community.





**In October 2018, we proudly gathered for our 50th anniversary celebration where our DREAM BIG Strategic Plan was launched.** The goals were ambitious - double membership, create a lifetime of exceptional experiences, build a foundation of long-term financial security, and to innovate with technology - all in the name of reaching and impacting more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Chicagoland area and beyond.

Strategies and tactics were established. Task forces met and plans were outlined.  
**The work to make those big dreams a reality began.**

**Then the unexpected occurred.**

A once in a generation global pandemic.

We closed our doors for what we thought would be two weeks. Two weeks turned into months. Little did we know that Friday, March 13, 2020 was the day our whole landscape had changed.

We went into survival mode.

**The following pages will tell that story...** the joys of what took place in what was posed to be a strong and successful year. The anxieties and the challenges that came next. But more importantly, the resiliency of our members.

**And you were there the entire time.** Stepping up to ensure that in a world of social distancing and isolation, CEL members would remain connected to their friends and the opportunities for social enrichment, lifelong learning, and employment that they depend on.

**Your support has sustained us. You have helped us weather the storm. You gave us hope that the CEL story will continue for many, many years to come.**

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Harriet Levy, CEO



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# MARCH 2019

## CQL ACCREDITATION

**In March of 2019, CEL took the first steps towards accreditation through the Council on Quality in Leadership (CQL), a leader in supporting organizations that serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

CQL Accreditation is an extremely rigorous process that recognizes organizations like ours for sustaining a high standard of excellence and continuous improvement in person-centered programs and services.

After months of preparation and a week of in-person focus groups, meetings and interviews, the staff from CQL gave CEL high praise for a first-time reviewed organization.

**“The Center for Enriched Living is commended and congratulated for achieving accreditation with CQL’s Quality Assurances Accreditation methodology and for its ongoing commitment and efforts to exemplify how a singular focus on the lives of people supported leads to making meaningful discoveries about What Really Matters.”**

CQL works to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, people with mental illness and older adults and the people, organizations and communities that support them. Accreditation will formalize CEL’s partnership with CQL and provide access to a network of peer organizations around the world who can share new ideas and best practices.

**We’re so proud of the hard work that went into achieving this recognition from CQL.**

Accreditation will equip our staff with a new set of tools to help grow our mission and have greater impact on the lives of even more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities!

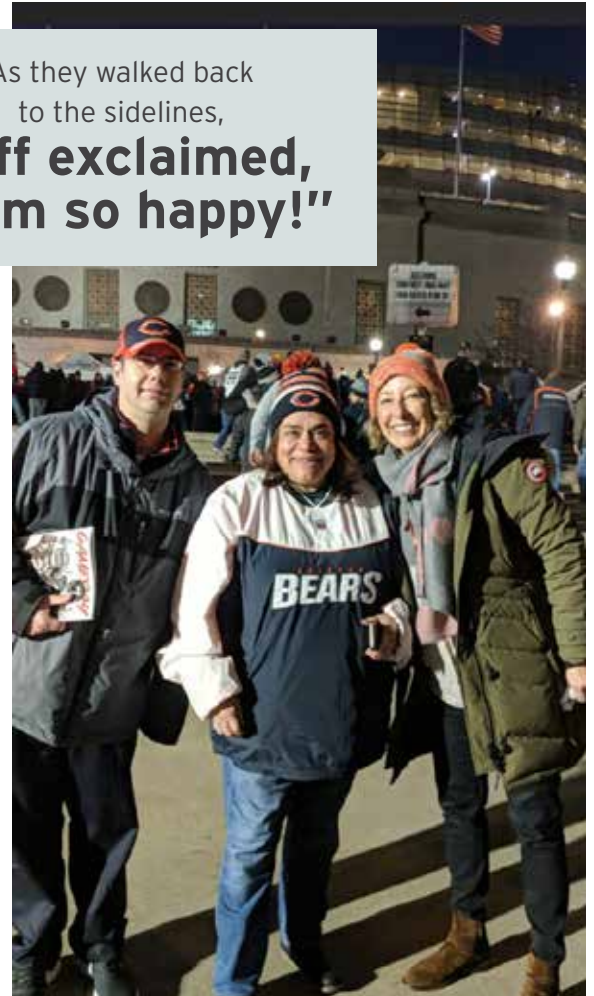


# SEPTEMBER 2019

## WON THE \$100,000 CHICAGO BEARS COMMUNITY ALL-PROS



As they walked back to the sidelines, **Jeff exclaimed, "I am so happy!"**



The competition was fierce, but we kept our head in the game! An opportunity unlike any other - to celebrate their 100th season, the Chicago Bears were giving out \$1,000,000 to ten charities - \$100,000 each! Nine of the charities were selected and the final \$100,000 grant would be selected by voting!

CEL was among the final 3 charities. Our game plan was solid, and you rallied around us to ensure that victory would be ours! After a week of voting, the results were in. **Our community of supporters voted in such high numbers that the Chicago Bears representative said**

**they'd never had as many votes for any contest they'd run before!**

To accept the \$100,000, CEL sent a small delegation to attend the Bears game on December 22, 2019 - CEO, Harriet Levy, Board President, Dan Ripes, Director of Program Services, Melissa Juarez-Ehlers, and long-time CEL member and #1 Bears fan, Jeff! They all got to participate in pre-game activities on the field, while honorary co-captains Jeff and Melissa were midfield for the coin toss! As they walked back to the sidelines, **Jeff exclaimed, "I am so happy!"**

# MARCH 2020

## CEL CLOSES IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

**Social distancing. It was contrary to everything we believe in at CEL. We are social. We are fun.**

But when you're in a once in a lifetime global pandemic, social distancing was added to our lexicon. And on Friday, March 13th, we made the decision to shut our doors.

A year of social distancing has given us a tiny glimpse of what CEL members face each and every day... were it not for places like the Center for Enriched Living! Our staff was busy during those first weeks calling our members to check on their wellbeing. What we heard was both heartbreaking and eye-opening.

**Social isolation had a meaning all of us could relate to.**

We knew that we had no control over what was going on outside our doors. **We needed to take steps to ensure that despite everything happening around the world, we would find a way to continue expanding the world for our members.**

**We launched a volunteer-driven letter writing program (PanPals) to our members who live in residential facilities throughout the Chicago-area.** Letters and cards were (and continue to be) gratefully received.



**Our calendars once so full with community outings became a distant memory.**



# APRIL 2020

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS LAUNCH



**After we made the heart-wrenching decision to shut our doors, and with the uncertainty of exactly how long this would last, we knew we needed to move our programs online. Virtual programs were a part of our Dream Big 2023 Strategic Plan but at the time, it was a goal for the future. But as they say, necessity is the mother of innovation.**

### **So we did what we do best: innovate!**

We spent those initial two weeks creating a modest lineup of virtual programs that we offered to any teen or adult with a developmental disability - at no charge.

We learned that even by offering complimentary virtual programs, many members still lacked access to the technology needed to connect. We made the necessary investment in technology to provide a Technology Lending Library so members and partner agencies could borrow a computer or iPad of their own at no cost.

When the pandemic hit, we knew our members were anxious. **Many members rely on routines**



**so when the world around them was shutting down and getting smaller, they didn't understand what was happening.**

The virtual program calendar provided similar classes and opportunities to connect to friends and the staff that they rely on.

Members like 25-year-old Evan. Evan is very active and likes to be outside. He stays busy running and walking with his mom. One of his favorite activities in the world is simply walking around the grocery store. He's also an artist who loves to paint watercolors during CEL's Tuesday Arts Night and loves coming to the REACH Adult Day Program.

When the pandemic shut everything down, he was confused and wanted his routine back. With the launch of the virtual programs, Evan was participating between 1-3 programs each day. He would get a big smile on his face once he was logged on and recognized his friends and staff on screen. **From Club Fit and Art to Dance Parties and Games Club, the virtual program lineup kept Evan's calendar full again - and he and his family happy!**

# JUNE 2020 VIRTUAL CHEFS'

**700 people typically gather in the ballroom at the Lincolnshire Marriott. 30 of the area's favorite restaurants, bakeries, caterers, breweries, distilleries, and wineries typically donate their time, food and drink for our annual Chefs' Night!**

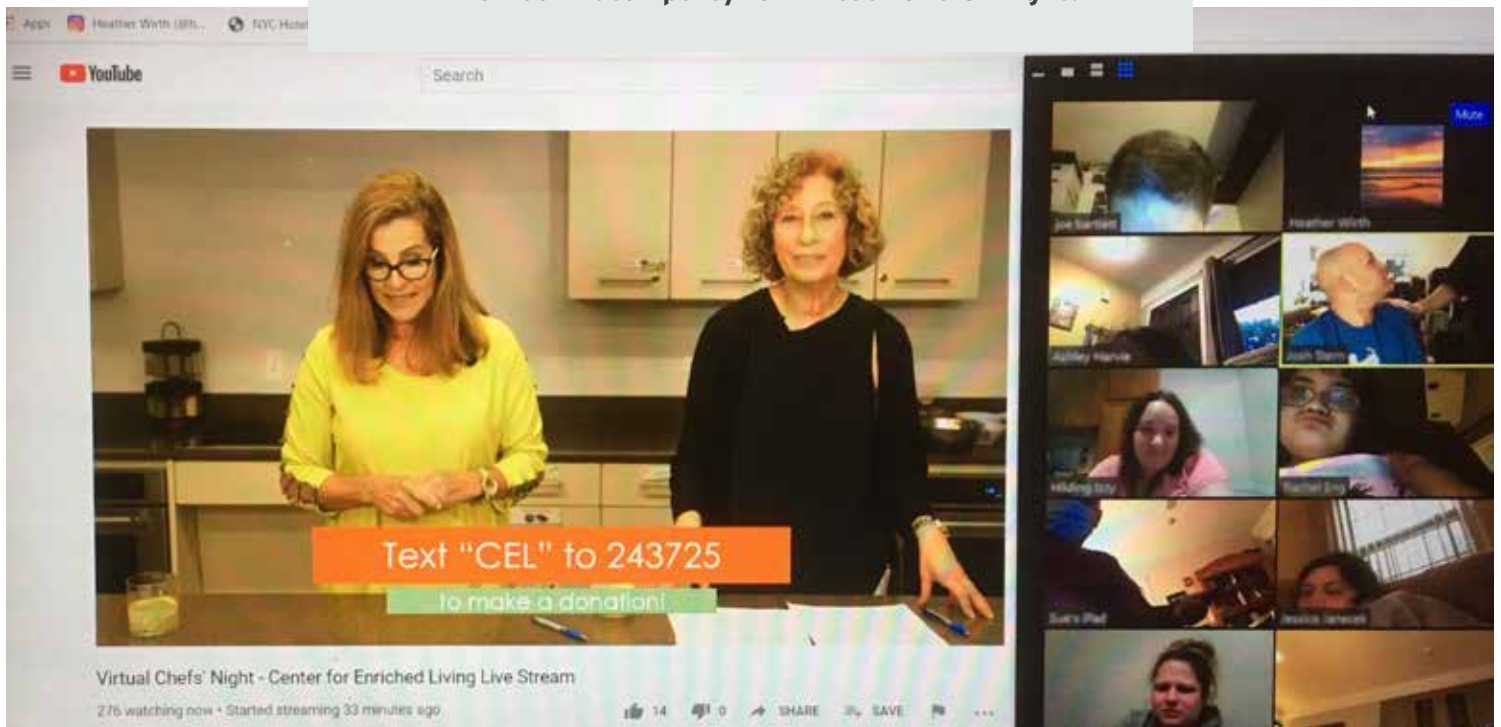
It was clear once the global pandemic was declared that there would be no Chefs' Night in 2020. Another pivot was in order - a virtual Chefs' Night!

**We took the best elements from Chefs' Night and created a virtual event with food and drink and some surprises! But the focus of the evening - as is always the case - is on our mission and our members.**

Long-time member Rachel shared how small her world had gotten and how much she missed her friends at CEL! Her mom, Amy, echoed those fears. After CEL had moved to virtual programs in April, she sent out a letter to families at CEL asking them to consider donating their program fees because she understood the investment CEL had made to keep staff on board and the technology upgrades that took place. "I wanted there to be a CEL for Rachel to return to," she shares.

And our community responded. Again. Our goal for the evening - share our story and meet our budget for the year. **We needed to raise just over \$50,000 - and you helped us surpass that goal with \$57,268!** Overall, the event netted \$328,822 through sponsorships and contributions.

**A member watch party for Virtual Chefs' Night!**



# NIGHT IS A SUCCESS



We needed to raise just over  
**\$50,000**  
and you helped us surpass that goal with  
**\$57,268!**

# BY THE NUMBERS

## MEMBERS

**FY2019**

**FY2020**

**488**



**TOTAL  
MEMBERS**

**464**

**126,019**



**PARTICIPATION  
HOURS**

**89,488**

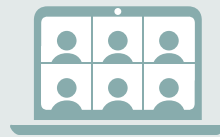
**5,586**



**TOTAL PROGRAM  
HOURS OFFERED**

**3,998**

**0**



**VIRTUAL PROGRAM  
HOURS OFFERED**

**831**

**62**



**PROGRAMS OFFERED**

**65**

**\$73,003**



**TOTAL  
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED**

**\$89,925**

# SUPPORT & REVENUE

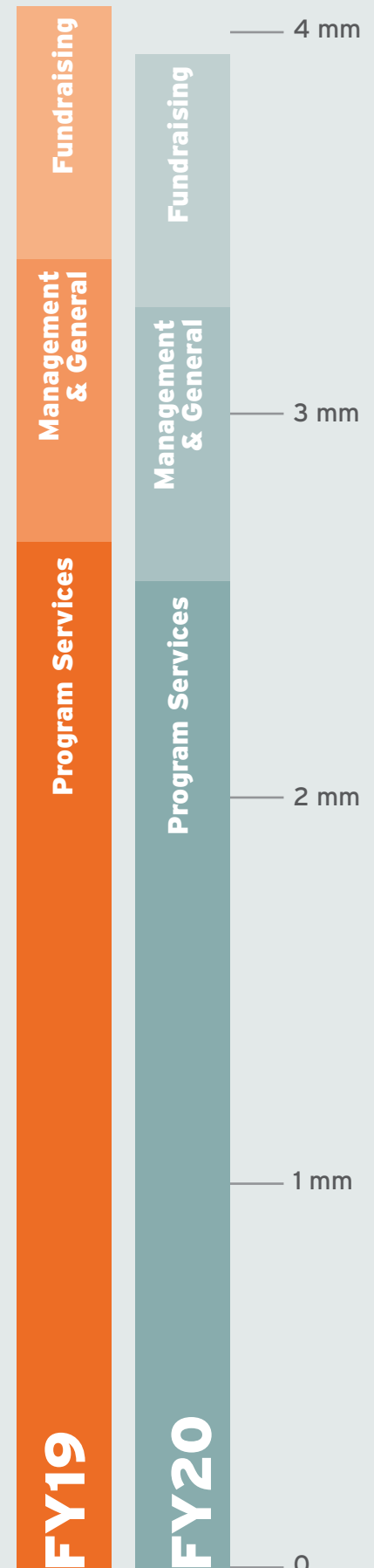
	FY19	FY20
Contributions	\$877,319	\$1,311,276
In-kind	\$163,830	\$269,466
Foundation & Public Funds	\$209,913	\$350,280
Government Grants	\$48,508	\$96,496
Other Income	\$150,522	\$71,452
Special Events	\$977,224	\$890,568
Membership Program Fees	\$1,163,486	\$935,471
Investment Income	\$11,330	\$12,742
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,602,132</b>	<b>\$3,937,751</b>

# EXPENSES

	FY19	FY20
Program services	\$2,665,016	\$2,592,301
Supporting services:		
Management & general	\$761,750	\$697,277
Fundraising	\$655,646	\$684,782
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,082,412</b>	<b>\$3,974,360</b>

# EXPENSES

FY19 VS. FY20



**IN 2020, CEL ONCE AGAIN RECEIVED GUIDESTAR'S HIGHEST RATING, INDICATING OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY IN OUR FUNDRAISING AND OPERATIONS.**

Note: These are the final audited numbers from fiscal years 2019 and 2020. They include depreciation: FY19 \$375,519 and FY20 \$377,431

# SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS & DONORS

**Wow! Our community of supporters are AMAZING! Throughout this challenging year, you have stepped up to ensure that CEL would not only survive this year but be here for many years to come!**

Our volunteers found new ways to connect with our members. Across hundreds of virtual program sessions—from music and cooking to movies and, yes, even juggling—you shared your passions with our members!

And our donors' generosity gave us hope when we needed it most. You provided the security we needed to sustain our core programs and the spark to reinvent ourselves when the usual ways of operating seemed out of reach.

**Thank you: to the individuals and families, small businesses and large corporations, private family foundations and large community groups, local villages and townships - your support has ensured that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are continuing to thrive at CEL!**

**Volunteers make a difference - whether sharing a personal passion like juggling or cooking with members or helping keep our building and gardens beautiful - our volunteers are the best!**





# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR STAFF & LEADERSHIP

Under the best circumstances, CEL's board and staff team are the best of the best - leading with intention and working towards a shared vision. When trials and tribulations hit, you hope that your team can rise to the challenge - and our team truly pivoted on a dime. Keeping our mission at the forefront of everything we do, CEL's staff and board leaders truly stepped up to keep everything running smoothly and ensuring that our members' needs were being met.

## **From going through the rigorous CQL accreditation process to starting our innovative virtual programs, our program team went above and beyond!**

Our development team has taken the challenge of the pandemic to check-in on our donors and continue building those relationships with individual donors, family foundations, area villages and townships and large corporations and small businesses! While also creating fun, memorable events like our Virtual Chefs' Night and a hybrid Golf Tournament!

The nuts and bolts of our organization is our administration team. They have overseen the shift to our entire office working from home while maintaining a smooth operation and ensuring nothing falls through the cracks. The admin team has also developed a cleaning and sanitation system to keep our building safe for all who enter.

Our marketing team kept communication to all of our stakeholders flowing, ensuring our website was updated with the most up-to-date information, and creating and sharing content on a regular basis and for our virtual events.

Overseeing everything and ensuring that our staff team and our board of directors are working towards the same goal and ensuring that our mission and vision stay top of mind is our CEO.

Our board of directors works tirelessly to open doors to their individual sphere of influence so that CEL's mission can be shared far and wide! This challenging year our board of directors met more often to stay abreast of all potential hurdles and outline solutions. This group of active and engaged leaders served as our sounding board and support during our most challenging days!

Log on to [www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org/about-us/meet-the-team](http://www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org/about-us/meet-the-team) to see our staff and board leadership team!

**Thank you!**



Take a virtual tour of CEL and see all the fun that's still taking place!  
Watch at <https://vimeo.com/528544727>



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