

# Dr. Norma J. Gray

July 6, 1929-April 18, 2019

"Norma was a guiding light."



## River Valley Child Development Services Annual Report 2018-2019

2019 proved to be a good and difficult year. River Valley was fortunate to secure funding and open RV CARES. This innovative work has been in progress for some time and it is good to see it finally open. We also received additional funding for Training Connections and this area continues to grow. Our Birth to Three and Resource and Referral Programs continue to diligently serve families, as does the home child care food program. Our School Age program has had challenges but continues to operate and serve children of need in Huntington.

As River Valley has grown and expanded the Governing Board has had to review our policies and procedures. With roughly a \$12 million budget some of our systems need updating. We will be working with an accounting firm to help us evaluate what we need to change and what we are doing well. This will help the organization remain strong so that we can continue to support our staff and serve West Virginia children and families.

Thanks for all you do – you are appreciated!!

*Kerri Carte, Board President*

### Our Programs

- Family Child Care Food Program
- Choices Child Care Resource and Referral
- Connect Child Care Resource and Referral
- Link Child Care Resource and Referral
- School Age Connections
- RV CARES
- West Virginia Birth to Three
- West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources

### 2018-2019 Board Members

|                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Kerri Carte, Chair Person</b>     | <b>Catherine Lawson</b>    |
| <b>Marsha Dawson, Vice President</b> | <b>Debra Lockwood</b>      |
| <b>Pamela Scaggs, Secretary</b>      | <b>Marianna Footo-Linz</b> |
| <b>Ora Muth, Treasurer</b>           | <b>Rocky McCoy</b>         |
| <b>Mindy Backus</b>                  | <b>Lyn O'Connell</b>       |
| <b>Shirley Birchfield</b>            | <b>Linda Spatig</b>        |
| <b>Deborah Chapman</b>               | <b>Mindy Thornton</b>      |
| <b>Sherone Hornbuckle</b>            | <b>Sherri Woods</b>        |

## A Word from the Executive Director

To say this year was filled with ups and downs would be quite an understatement!! I have always been a glass half full person and try to encourage others to look at things that way also, but the challenges this year have really put my “glass viewing” to the test. I can definitely say that the fiscal year ended much better than it began. I am not going to dwell on the negatives, but need to include them in the summary of the year because they are part of the history and because we need to learn from our struggles and I believe we have. The beginning of the fiscal year was very discouraging because we were almost to the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year and did not even have one of our grants. We never thought we wouldn't get them, but because these are crazy times; to work without any signed document guaranteeing payment for the work was very risky. I finally had to threaten all of our funders that we would go on furlough. I hated to threaten that because I know how scary that was to our staff but I had no choice. Amazingly, the signed grants came in immediately. Our payments dragged in late every quarter. In Jan., I sent letters to people all over the state including legislators, our funders and the Secretary of DHHR. I met in person with 1 of our legislators and had several phone calls with the Secretary who personally assured me that our grants would be on time. **WE DID RECEIVE OUR GRANTS ON TIME THIS YEAR** and I have communicated as needed with the Secretary **ON HIS CELL PHONE!**

Late in the spring, our bank showed deposits in all employee's accounts that should never have been there. It was not even a payroll date and they used an old set of payroll info. They never gave an explanation for that error, nor did they try to fix it for us. That error caused a lot of problems for employees as well as for payroll. Because we didn't know what caused that error, we were afraid to do any more direct deposits which was very disappointing for staff. **WE CHANGED BANKS AND ARE NOW BACK TO DIRECT DEPOSIT!**

Since our funds came in late each quarter, it was a real struggle to pay bills on time. In an effort to make sure that at least all employees were paid, payments of our benefits were delayed. **THESE BENEFITS HAVE ALL BEEN CAUGHT UP AND EMPLOYEES HAVE ALL BEEN COMPENSATED FOR ANY INTEREST LOST DURING THAT TIME. WE HAVE ADDED MORE COMMUNICATION OF CURRENT CASH FLOW PROCESSES. WE HAVE ADDED QUARTERLY TOWN HALL MEETINGS AT DIFFERENT PROGRAM SITES TO GIVE ALL EMPLOYEES A CHANCE TO ASK ME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AGENCY.**

We were very disappointed to have to close our Guyandotte after school program. We had been able to provide that program free to all children for the past 3 years because of funding we had received. **WE ARE DETERMINED TO BRING THE PROGRAM BACK BECAUSE IT IS SO NEEDED. WE ARE GOING TO HIRE A PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST TO BRING IN MONEY FOR THIS PROGRAM AS WELL AS DIVERSIFY OUR REVENUE SOURCES.**

On the bright side, we opened RVCARES at the end of the fiscal year. This innovative center is our response to what happens to the children who are born affected by Substance USE DISORDER. This site provides child care and will serve as a training site for child care providers, students and family members.

Our Board had its first retreat this year. It was an opportunity for them to get to know each other better and to participate in the review and update of our agency mission and vision. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated people who are willing to help us.

This spring we celebrated the 30 year anniversary of ACDS (Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist), a model program for the rest of the nation that helps current child care providers develop their skills and knowledge in the field. This innovative program was developed by our founder, Dr. Norma Gray who passed away this year.

Though this past year had its ups and downs, through it all we served the needs of thousands of children, families and early childhood professionals, which has been and continues to be our mission.

I would like to dedicate this coming year to Dr. Norma Gray whose vision put us on the right path and will continue to guide us in the future.


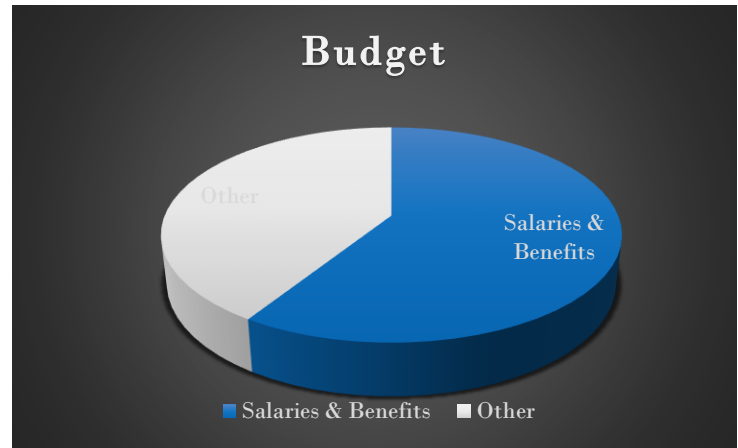
*Suzi Brodof*



## Notable Facts and Figures

Our total budget for the 2018-2019 year was \$**12,013,827**. Of that total, salaries and benefits accounted for **59%** of monies spent, \$**7,105,602**.

We are fortunate enough to have 142 professionals who work on behalf of children, families and the early childhood community.



**“It has been said something as small as the flutter of a butterfly’s wings can ultimately cause a typhoon halfway across the world.” -Unknown**

Together, our programs directly provided services for nearly **23,000** people. The ripple effects of those services are endless. We want every child in West Virginia to have access to quality early childhood programs. Your tireless efforts in this endeavor are not unnoticed.





## All Star Staff

- Our Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist program with WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources received an official Proclamation from the Governor's office for being the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest apprenticeship program in our state.
- RV CARES welcomed its first student May 29, 2019!
- Choices CCR&R's, Destiney Uebel, Connect CCR&R's Blake Turley and Link CCR&R's, Paula Stewart received their Infant Mental Health Credential from the WV Infant Mental Health Endorsement from the WV Infant Mental Health Association.
- Our Family Child Care Food Program, under the care of Tammy Leonard, was the first in the nation to use Minute Menu.

*Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society.*

*- Maria Montessori*

