



## New Executive Director named

With a commitment to continuing the mission of Choices In Community Living since our founding in 1985, our Board of Trustees has selected Trent Grooms as our new Executive Director, following the retirement of Tom Weaver. Trent has been an integral part of our leadership



team since he began as Human Resources Director in 2005. Over his 16 years of service, he has overseen the Fun-Fit Adult Day Services program, Nursing and Maintenance. His appointment will assure continuity and consistency of our values, programs and services. As Executive Director, he will be part of a leadership team with years of experience and knowledge with Choices, including Chief Program Officer David Roustio and Chief Financial Officer Shawn Valentine.

Upon acceptance of his new position, Trent recognized Tom's dedication, leadership and innovation that has seen Choices grow from its initial three homes in Montgomery County to now serving individuals in seven counties with a range of services, some of which have been the first of their kind in Ohio, such as our Fun-Fit program.

"We have been blessed to have been led by Tom for so many wonderful years," shares Trent. "Through his tenure he has nurtured so many individuals, me being one of them. His leadership has been constant and his message consistent. He has taught us all by his example that providing the highest quality of care for our clients is our highest priority. That leadership has certainly been put to the test over the past two years, with the 2019 tornadoes and then COVID-19 this past year. Through all the trials and tribulations, Choices has continued to provide excellent services to our clients and support for our staff. Tom's experience and compassion was evident every day that he guided us over the years. That spirit will continue to guide us into the future."

## A farewell message

*by Deborah Dulaney, Chair  
Board of Trustees*



On behalf of our Board, we wish Tom all the best as he retires from his position as Executive Director, effective June 30, 2021. His more than 35 years of service has been a true labor of love. I have personally known Tom for many years. We first met in the 1990s when I was Executive Director of the Stillwater Center and Tom was Choices' Executive Director. We both were elected and served on the Board of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) for many years, where Tom also served as the Board president.

Tom's commitment and dedication to serving individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities is truly amazing! He has been part of CICL since our very beginning with the spin-off of residential services by the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Tom has been at the center of the growth of CICL over the years, including:

- an original staff of 15 to now more than 400 professionals
- services in one county to serving clients in seven counties
- growth of the Fun-Fit Adult Day program from its one original site in the community to more than 10 programs currently in several counties
- growth of the Non-Medical Transportation program to more than ten daily routes in multiple counties providing more than 150 trips per week
- growth of the CICL vehicle fleet to more than 70 vehicles.

Through his tireless commitment, he has built relationships with other providers to better serve individuals with I/DD, including the 2002 founding of Partners For Community Living with Brenda Whitney and the Resident Home Association. He was still focused on the value of partnerships in 2020 when he collaborated with George C. Martin for the purchase of the George C. Martin Funeral Home and its accompanying 30 acres, a major expansion capping Tom's career.

His relationships with elected officials at the state level has had a direct impact of recognizing the work of Direct Support Professionals, testifying on numerous occasions for higher wages, as well as HPS rate increases. He has been a part of significant systemic changes within the I/DD system,

*Continued on page 2*

## Just like in the movies

by Tom Weaver, Executive Director

As I take my final steps in my journey as Choices' Executive Director, I am feeling the impact ... kind of like leaving a theater after a great movie. It is over and I know it, but I don't want it to be. I want to stay in this moment for just a little while longer.

Reflecting on my years at Choices I recognize how lucky I have been, how filled with gratitude I am for having been a part of this wonderful agency. And I say I was part of it because Choices is like a big ol' machine; so many people doing so many things in so many exceptional ways for so many people. My part has always seemed so insignificant compared to the work done every day by our dedicated and creative staff. I am peppered with memories from over the years of smiling faces providing loving care. Our DSPs, our heroes, show by their compassion and care what I have always known to be true for myself – this job gives you back so much more than what you put in!

How the time has flown. Seems like only yesterday when I was putting in an application for Choices at the Hook Center operated by the Montgomery County Board. Choices was just starting with three group homes and one apartment setting. We have grown in the number of people we serve and in the scope of services, and along the way we have also defined our vision – Home, Family, Community – and committed to our mission.

We have a saying in our office. It's all about the mission. One person at a time. Building relationships. Building supports. How cool it has been to provide the support someone needs to live a healthy and safe life in the community, to assist someone to be the best person they can be. It is all about the mission!

There is the adage "if you want to get better at something,

surround yourself with great people who will help you grow." That is what we have done at Choices. The average tenure for our director team is nearing 20 years, with some over 30 years. We have some managers and DSPs who have been with us through it all for 25 years or more. In this job, you laugh, sometimes you cry, but it is always a part of you. It feels like home.

And so now back to that thought about a great movie you don't want to see end. That is where I am now, happy to be leaving Choices in such capable and caring hands, but not quite ready for that difficult word – good-by.

I think of one great movie – the one that received numerous Oscars this year – Best Movie, Best Actress, Best Director among them – the movie called *Nomadland*. I think of it now as I think of the good things I've done and weigh some of the things I wish I had perhaps done differently or better. I think of you and perhaps have not said thank you enough or I'm sorry enough. It is because of you that I feel this tug that is making it so hard for my movie to come to its end.

And so, I will say to you the words last heard when the movie *Nomadland* ends, as people who know each other, who are friends, who are in so many ways extended family, leave their campsites to go off in different directions, "we don't say good-by," they tell us as the Oscar-winning movie ends. "We just say see ya' down the road."

And so now as my movie, the one where I was cast in the role of a lifetime as Choices' Executive Director, fades from the screen, I won't – I really can't say good-by to you.

**See ya' down the road.**



### A voice across Ohio

by Peter Moore, President and CEO  
Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)

Tom Weaver has been such an important influence on OPRA and OPRA's members. During his time serving on the Board and in leadership roles, he used his experience along with a common-sense approach to influence important decisions over the past several years.

On a personal note, Tom has been kind and supportive during my two years at OPRA. I looked to him for guidance. When he spoke, I paid attention because I knew what he said was thoughtful and meaningful. Our field is losing a great leader. We wish Tom all the best with his new adventures.

### A farewell message ... continued from page 1

always a passionate and vocal advocate for clients, families and staff.

If there had ever been any doubt (*which there was not*) as to Tom's leadership, the past two years of destructive tornadoes and a devastating pandemic certainly highlighted why Choices is respected across our community and Ohio for our commitment to mission and standard of care.

It is with a saddened heart that the Board says farewell to a true definition of an unsung hero. The past two years he has been uplifting his staff as heroes. Let it be known that he is also a hero. We wish him many blessings as he pursues wherever the road will take him on his next journey.

## We're back



*Most of the time DSP (Direct Support Professional) Phillip Napper can be found supporting Fun-Fit participants at the Vandalia Recreation Center, but there has been some time for him to get creative in putting together a portable greenhouse for the Adult Day program at our Martin Center. He is one of many Fun-Fit staff who have spent time at the Martin Center helping with renovations and setting up spaces for a variety of activities within the Center and on the spacious grounds.*

While still cautious to assure the safety and well-being of clients and staff, Choices happily announces that we are back in business! Much of our Fun-Fit program, transportation services and FunOne activities were closed or cut back during the worst of COVID-19. Vans are now back on the road. Fun-Fit participants are back in their community locations. Clients are back to work. FunOne is getting people out to movies, ball games, concerts and other entertainment. Things are buzzing at our Martin Center.

Construction and renovation at the Center, formerly the George C. Martin Funeral Home, is continuing. The Adult Day Services part of the building is 90% completed and has welcomed back participants. We have received a \$40,000 grant for our newest effort, our Cooking Immersion Project. This effort is now a funding priority so that we can raise additional funds that will allow us to add a kitchen at the Martin Center. When completed, the kitchen will give us the option to offer cooking classes for participants that will increase or enhance their daily life skills, as well as provide training to prepare them for jobs in the community in the food/restaurant business. We are also considering a small business that will provide lunches and catering.

A wide range of additional options will be available for participants when renovation is completed, including small in-door greenhouses to grow food, a sensory room, aquarium, television room, exercise area and more. Picnic areas and other outdoor activities are being planned, along with the renovation of the building.

About 50% of the rest of the building has been completed, with work still proceeding in downstairs offices and the installation of updated lighting in other parts of the building. When completed, the site will provide space for administrative offices, as well as staff training.

*For more information on Adult Day Services at the Martin Center and with community partners, please contact Nancy Viets at [nviets@ciclob.com](mailto:nviets@ciclob.com).*



*Like Tom, Program Director Danette Addison has been a part of Choices' professional team for 35 years. She shares her reflections about Tom as she represents not only current staff, but all who have been part of the past 35 years of dramatic change and achievement.*

Tom hired me 35 years ago and I am forever grateful for that. As he grew the agency, he brought me right along with it. He has always been the person most committed to Choices and so following his example has made it easy for me to be the same way. We have been through so much together, but I have never seen him panic or at a loss. Tom just begins to work the problem and brings resolution.

Most importantly to me, Tom makes sure that there is an element of fun in everything we do and after all these years, he is still full of surprises! I am happy he is retiring so he can do a better job of relaxing. I know whatever he will be doing, he will have a great time and so will those around him.



*Bea Tharpe (l) and Teresa Blythe represent all those served in sharing their message of appreciation and good-bye to Tom Weaver, all of those who found home, family and community during his leadership. Ask Tom about why he dedicated 35 years to all the challenges and changes and his answer is clear. It was for Bea and Teresa and every individual who has been part of and who will continue to be part of Choices' extended family.*



# 2020 Annual Report

## Choices In Community Living...

*assisting people with developmental disabilities to have opportunities to access safe, healthy and meaningful lives in the community since 1985.*

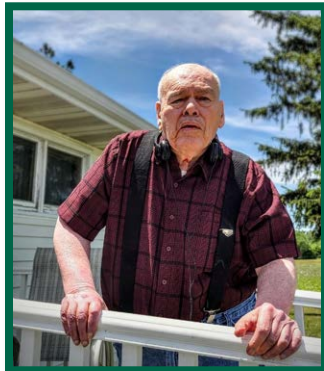
*A meaningful life for Donald and Margie Little (Clark County) as they celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.*



*Healthy lives as Michael Holmes (I), Tim Powers (Montgomery County) and Donald Little (Clark County) each celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.*



*A safe life for 84-year-old Joe Holland (Madison County) the oldest individual served by Choices in 2020, with Nathan Bell (Warren County Fun-Fit) and Joe Seifert (Montgomery County Fun-Fit) as the youngest individuals at 21-years-old.*



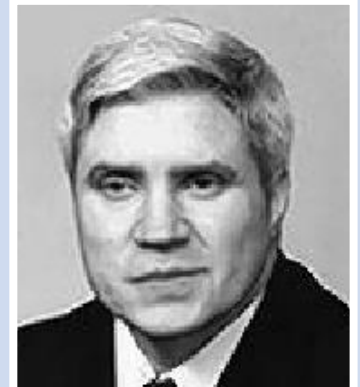
Choices In Community Living (CICL) is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1985 as a spin-off of residential services provided by what was then called the Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Twenty-three (23) individuals were served in three group homes and one apartment, with 15 staff providing services. Nine of those original individuals continue to be respected members of our Choices' extended family, while others have died.

**The storm came in 2019 and we walked with heroes. COVID came in 2020 and we walked with heroes.** "The human spirit can and does persevere in the face of hardship and change. We were afraid of the unseen virus and rightfully so. No one said it was going to be easy. No one ever said it could be this bad. No one will ever say that our staff and our Board gave it anything but our very best!" *Tom Weaver, Executive Director*

Choices provides person-centered, value-based services in the community for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities in Butler, Clark, Greene, Madison, Montgomery, Preble and Warren Counties. Services include lifelong residential options, Adult Day Services, Non-Medical Transportation Services and Respite Services.



*Richard Boze*



*Roger Bronstetter*



*Mary Ridenour*



*Lois Hays*






*We said good-bye to four members of our extended family in 2020: at 91, Richard Boze was one of our oldest and the only individual we lost to COVID; Roger Bronstetter was 70 when he died following a long illness; Lois Hays was 71 and Mary Ridenour was 75.*

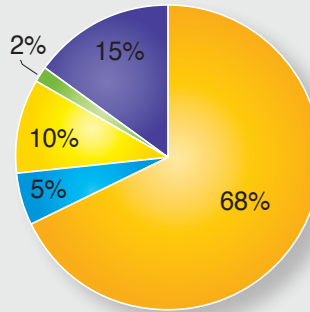
## 2020 Financial Overview

Choices is supported by federal, state and local funding, including the Montgomery County Human Services Levy. Medicaid provides 97% of our funding.





Additional funding through grants, individual donations and fundraising events come from Partners For Community Living, providing financial support for activities and needs not covered by other revenue sources, such as whole-home generators, home modifications, vans, recreation, Venturing Crew, clothing, furniture and other needs.

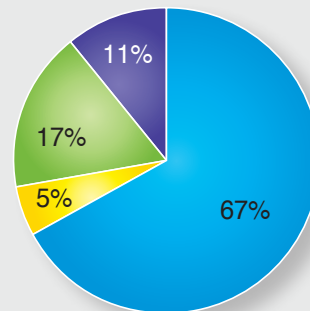
### Revenues:

	IO Waivers Homemaker/ Personal Care	\$11,627,949.44
	Day Services	\$952,219.23
	Client Benefit Resources	\$1,732,941.84
	Supported Living	\$280,512.43
	Grants/Donations/Other	\$2,546,856.82
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$17,140,479.76</b>



### Operating Expenses

	Support Staff Wages/Benefits	\$9,944,110.34
	Home General Services	\$770,430.34
	Administrative/ General Services	\$2,506,516.94
	Food & Daily Living Expenses	\$1,603,527.08
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$14,824,584.70</b>



## 2020 Service Overview

As COVID-19 health and safety restrictions were in place for most of the year, Adult Day Services and Transportation Services were cancelled or scaled back for part or all of 2020, with an increased focus on residential services providing care and support around the clock in 40 residential locations, including 20 individuals served in semi-independent residential settings:

- 178 individuals were served in residential programs
- 60 individuals received non-medical transportation services
- 50 individuals participated in Adult Day services.

Services were provided by 228 full-time professional staff and 78 part-time staff.

Taiwana Johnson, Program Manager at our Mill Trace and Wendhaven homes, was recognized by the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) as Front-Line Supervisor of the Year for District 2.



Executive Director Tom Weaver received special recognition for his years of service as a member of the OPRA board, including his service as board chair.



Licensed and certified by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Choices is governed by a policy-making board of volunteers representing families, business and the community. The Board made a major advancement in 2020 with the purchase of the former George C. Martin Funeral Home and accompanying 30 acres to allow for expansion of administrative/management space, staff training space and services (*such as Adult Day Services,*) as well for the development of new programs and services.

### 2020 Board of Trustees

- Deborah Dulaney, Chair
- Myron Rheahme, Vice-Chair
- Bill Kramer, Treasurer
- Susan Seitz, Secretary
- Clinton Brown
- Sharon Hairston
- Larry Hansgen
- Steve McHugh



# Partners For Community Living

enhancing the quality of life for people served by  
Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association

## The best of partners

### Pete's reflections

*(Pete has served alongside Tom as one half of Partners For Community Living, the collaborative partnership between Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association that was formed in 2002 under the leadership of Tom and Brenda Whitney. Following is his retirement message to Tom.)*

I have known for quite some time that retirement was coming for Tom. Every time I gave it much thought I had a mix of emotions for my friend and colleague. From a professional point of view, the loss of such a dedicated and genuine passionate voice for those we serve is immense. It is not that those who follow in Tom's footsteps are not up to the task. To the contrary, Choices is blessed to have Trent Grooms and the leadership team that will keep things moving forward. Taking away an active, experienced leader in the I/DD field will have lasting effects on so many who have known and worked with Tom. His insight, commitment, energy and dedication to this profession can be matched by very few. Having one less voice, especially one like Tom's, cannot help but leave a void.

Now Tom is off in a new direction. To borrow a quote from Fred Rogers, "often when you think you're at the end of something, you're actually at the beginning of something else." In Tom's case, he is joining the ranks of the unstructured. No more setting the alarm, driving (*perhaps a little too fast*) to endless meetings. No more being told to do more with less. Now he can forget about the clock, drive at a slower and safer pace (*maybe*), do less and do it more often. I am truly proud of Tom and happy for him. Congratulations on your retirement, my friend. No one deserves it more!



*Over years of dramatic change, Tom Weaver (l) (Executive Director, Choices In Community Living) Mark Schlater (CEO, Toward Independence) and Pete Roll (Executive Director, Resident Home Association) formed not only system-changing partnerships but lasting friendships. One of their proudest collaborations has been the statewide Art & Soul juried art exhibit that has honored artists with developmental disabilities for 14 years. Few things could equal the pride they have shared together as they have presented awards to deserving and talented artists at each year's opening reception/awards ceremonies.*

### Mark's reflections

*(Mark has worked alongside Tom in the development of new residential services throughout our region, as well as creating new and innovative service options. He has been active with Tom at the state level in the important advocacy and legislative work of the Ohio Provider Resource Association. Following is his retirement message to Tom.)*

It's nearly impossible with just a few words to give justice to the impact Tom Weaver has had on the I/DD system in Ohio over the past

35 years. I met Tom 25 years ago at OPRA (*Ohio Provider Resource Association*) meetings where he would always advocate for needed changes in the system. Over all these years, he has never wavered in that advocacy, speaking first for individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as for those on the front lines who care for them, our Direct Care Professionals (*DSPs*.)

There was often tense and important conversations and debates at OPRA on state policies, budgets, departmental needs and other concerns for our I/DD system. You could always count on Tom to give his valued opinion, and even during heated debates, you could count on him to provide a little levity, sarcasm, or self-deprecating humor to break the tension and keep us moving forward.

Tom has touched so many lives over his 35 years of working in the field. It is impossible to reflect on all the impact he has had and to note all his accomplishments. I do, however, want to share one specific point about Tom. It takes a truly special person to dedicate a significant part of his life to ensure that the lives of others (*in Tom's case, people with I/DD*) are the best that they can be. Tom has seen a lot and done a lot. The system of services for individuals with I/DD here in our communities and across Ohio is so much better because Tom Weaver has been a leading part of it! Bless you, Tom, for all that you gave, all you did over your impressive career. Take care and God Bless!

## Safe at home – because of you

Our funding priority following the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes was to assure the safety of individuals served by Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association during emergencies. That priority resulted in a significant partnership between our donors and grantors, coordinated by Partners For Community Living, to purchase and install whole-home generators for designated homes for each agency. All donations since May, 2019, unless otherwise designated, have been used for this purpose. We also received funding from community partners through designated grants.



*It's a thumbs up from Aaron Knight (l) and Bruce Hart for the whole-home generator at their Kenbrook home (RHA.)*

### Because of you, 11 whole-home generators have been installed!

The generators insure that clients and residents will be able to remain in their homes during most emergencies. When electrical power is disrupted, the generators will kick on within 60 seconds. This will insure that people within these homes will be able to stay

at home. It will also provide enough homes to accommodate other clients/residents to be temporarily re-located if necessary during an emergency instead of needing to find shelter in hotels and other locations that are not prepared to meet their needs.

Resident Home Association now has generators at the following homes: Elm Grove; Garber; Greenhill; Kenbrook; Springmill and Woodbury.

Choices In Community Living now has generators at the following homes in Montgomery County: Abraham; Blue Ash; Broadbush; Gardenside and Lavon.

**Because of you**, we are now moving forward with other funding priorities, including the Cooking Immersion Project for Choices. You can support the Cooking Project with a donation to <https://bit.ly/3xikCry>.

## Thank you to our generous donors (April 1 - June 25, 2021)

### Choices In Community Living

Danette Addison  
David & Mary Bignell  
Daniel Cochran  
Ron Coursey  
Amy Fansher  
Richard & Mary Sue Federle  
George & Linda Ford  
Rollin & Jennie Furnas  
Michael Haap  
Doug & Ann Jones  
Dana Kane  
Erin Nichols  
Mary Panstingel  
Myrna Reese  
Myron & Charla Rheume  
Gerald & Verena Shroyer  
Arlene Szkudlarek  
Becky Toomey  
Keshia Tuttle  
Tom & Kathy Weaver

### Partners For Community Living

Anonymous  
Julia Bell  
John & Debbie Caporal  
Joyce Duncan  
Al & Laura Fike,  
*in honor and memory of Brenda Whitney*  
Edith Fuson  
Andrea Ginnan  
Helene Gordon,  
*in memory of Thomasine Hill*  
Diane Hayslip  
Dana Kane,  
*in memory of Richard F. Kane*  
Ellie Kent,  
*in memory of Brenda Whitney*  
Casey Marchal  
Joyce Marsh, *in memory of Roger & Charles Marsh*  
Ellen McCloskey  
Michael & Diane Pratt  
Marcia Rock  
Pete & Polly Roll,  
*in memory of Brenda Whitney*  
Edwin Shock, Sr.  
Tom & Kathy Weaver

### Resident Home Association

Patricia Burnside,  
*in memory of Stephen 'Steve' Shock*  
James & Mary Cannon,  
*in memory of James Sheehan*  
Rhonda Chandler  
Connie Erney,  
*in memory of James Sheehan*  
Karen Gabbard  
Mary Sue Gmeiner,  
*in honor of Tom Gmeiner*  
Jennifer Hamblin,  
*in honor of Woodbury residents*  
David Henkalin  
Lynette Hooper  
Debra Horseman  
Nafeesa Huff  
Sarah Jobe, *in memory of James Sheehan*  
Casey Marchal  
Susan Meyer  
Montgomery County Board of DDS  
David & Bobbie Murphy  
Melodye Pennington  
Charnell Posey  
Michael & Diane Pratt,  
*in honor of Pete Roll*  
David & Rhonda Rich  
Ryne & Megan Rich  
Pete & Polly Roll  
Annie Shaver  
Fran Sheehan, *in memory of James Sheehan*  
Geraldine Sheehan, *in memory of James Sheehan*  
Lori Singer  
John & Carol Stinson  
Christopher Traylor  
VFW Post 3438  
Betsy Whitney,  
*in honor of Kris Bergman*  
Ken & Ellen Zolnowski

The following grants have been received in support of Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association:

- Good Shepherd Foundation of Ohio, to Choices In Community Living for cooking project at the Martin Center;
- Kettering Family Philanthropies, to Choices for whole-home generators;
- Kettering Family Philanthropies, to Resident Home Association for whole-home generators;
- Disability Foundation, to Resident Home Association for transportation.

There's still time to let Partners know what you think! Thank you to those who have completed our **2021 Partners Supporter Survey**. If you have not yet completed your survey, we would appreciate your time and support in completing it and returning it to us. Please share your thoughts and insights in support of the individuals served by our partner agencies, Choices In Community Living and Resident Home Association.

Completing the survey should take only a few minutes, so won't you please find a pen, a comfortable seat and share your responses with us? Together we will provide ongoing support that adds to the quality of life for those we serve, such as support for the new Cooking Immersion Project that will provide cooking classes and possible job opportunities at the Martin Center (*Choices In Community Living*.)

## Choices In Community Living, Inc.

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## Choices' Voices

*The times ... they are a'changin'* — It's no time for looking back but time for walking into the future, knowing those served by Choices In Community Living, their families and the communities they live in have been changed for the better because of the four men walking together, as they will continue to be changed as one man now steps away, knowing the future is in the dedicated hands and hearts of the three who now carry his 35-year legacy forward.



It's a bittersweet yet joyful moment for Executive Director Tom Weaver (*center*) as he walks the hill at the Martin Center with (*l*) Chief Financial Officer Shawn Valentine, (*r*) Chief Program Officer David Roustio and new Executive Director Trent Grooms, knowing he will leave them at the top of the hill and take a new fork in the road for himself, his life changed for the better by what has been achieved and filled with confidence and hope for what will yet be ... for himself, for the agency that was and will continue to be his extended family and for the three men he has walked alongside in shared purpose, long-time colleagues ... forever friends.

### Partners Optimist support community children

With the support of Bob Glavin of the Centerville Noon Optimist, our Partners Optimist Club has completed their 50/50 fundraising raffle, raising \$710. The Club donated the proceeds to United Rehabilitation Services to assist with their outdoor weather education station and sensory garden.

URS Executive Director Dennis Grant met with Optimist members via Zoom to acknowledge the donation and to thank members for their work on behalf of others in the community, sharing "this generous gift from the Partners Optimist Club will help us provide meaningful experiences to hundreds of kids at URS. We deeply appreciate the support!"