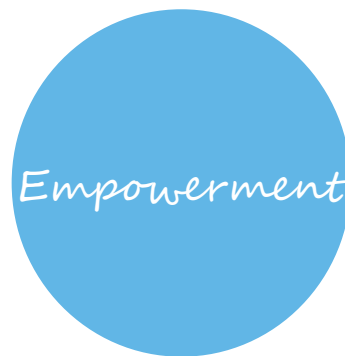


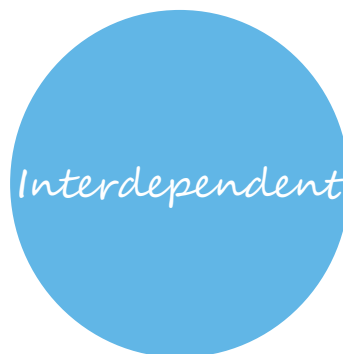
Community Living And Support Services

2013 Annual Report

Different Name, Same Dedication



***The future is literally in our hands to mold as we like.
But we cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is now.
-Eleanor Roosevelt***



Friends,

Thanks so much for taking a few minutes to review the 2013 CLASS Annual Report. As you may know, CLASS has been providing services and supports to individuals and families in the Allegheny County area since 1951, most of that time as an affiliate of UCP. This year, however, we have become independent of UCP and, as our report states on the cover, "different name, same dedication."

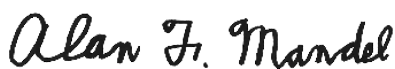
We are proud of our many years of service and how we have grown in size and scope. In 2013, we were in the "Book of Lists" top 25 largest social service nonprofits in Southwestern PA reaching out to over 2,000 individuals. Our programs have gained national praise and prominence.

Beyond this however, we are equally proud of the day in and day out continuation of services that make it possible for hundreds of people with all types of disabilities to get up and out into their communities to take their rightful place and, in turn, make our community a better place to live. CLASS and our programs place great importance on the concept of community and "social capital." We are finding that the key impact of our services is when people with and without disabilities come together in the gathering places of community. The relationships that then form help develop more "social capital" and everyone benefits in the process.

As we move into 2014, we look forward to consolidating all of our programs and services into our new Swissvale Center on 1400 South Braddock Avenue. This site provides ample room and location for CLASS to not only continue its important work, but to grow in the future.

So, please, continue to read this report, and then pass it on to a friend. Building a stronger community is everyone's responsibility and CLASS is not only excited about what we have done – but in what we can do tomorrow, together. Join us as we continue to build a community where each belongs.

Sincerely,



Alan Mandel, MS,MS
President, Board of Directors



Al Condoluci, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

The
Board of
Directors
contributed 750 hours
in volunteer time by
sitting on committees
and lending expertise
to the organization

Board of Directors 2013

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Assistive Technology

Given our knowledge of families who experience challenges with obtaining home modifications and assistive technology, we provide basic assistive technology and/or home modification assessments and make recommendations to allow the individual to remain self-sufficient in their home.

Attendant Care

This program reaches out to consumers with primarily physical disabilities who live in their own homes. Individuals receive help with personal care and day-to-day living activities and are provided assistance that enhances their ability to live on their own.

Residential Services

This program serves consumers with all types of disabilities, who require short-term or long-term support. Adults with disabilities live in their own homes and apartments allowing for self-determination and control over their own lives.

CLASS Kids

Connecting children with and without disabilities through training and educational programs for parents, vocational placements, and community gathering places.

Who is CLASS?

After 63 years of service to the disability community, CLASS (Community Living and Support Services) continues to find innovative and creative ways to support people. Perhaps that commitment and focus has prevented us from sharing our stories in a way that captures the essence of what we do. Serving the disability community and striving for inclusivity for all people is at the forefront of CLASS' mission, equally important is to bring awareness to the people who define our agency. It is those very people who tell the story of an organization determined to bring people together based on their similarities not their differences.

CLASS was added to the organization name in 2008 to change the community's perception that the agency only provided services to people diagnosed with cerebral palsy. We dropped our affiliation to United Cerebral Palsy this past year to stand as an independent organization. CLASS is defined by much more than a disability; the agency believes in an individualized support plan using a holistic approach to services, simply put, allowing people to tell us what they want and providing the resources to help them get it.

Community Partners

This program provides short or long-term, one-to-one assistance with illness, family concerns, employment, or living arrangements. CLASS' Community Partners program works with people to establish viable solutions to challenges as they arise.

Multiple Sclerosis Service Society (MSSS)

provides assistance to those diagnosed with MS through the Multiple Sclerosis Exercise and Support Program. Staff provide instructional range of motion exercises, equipment, and assistive living device evaluations. MSSS also offers therapeutic social and recreational activities along with community education.

Centre Services

Vocational Services and Community Skill Building function much like a college setting, teaching classes focused on building independent living skills that support opportunities for people to explore their interests, grow relationships, and live independently.

The Alliance for Community Respite Care

is a collaborative network of families, providers, and stakeholders dedicated to educating the community about the need for respite care.

C *ommunity*

Confidence Paves The Way To Community

Michael loved high school. Knowing that graduation was coming soon, Michael and her family began to explore different transition options and she was introduced to CLASS' Centre Services in the Fall of 1993. Transitioning from high school to other opportunities is a challenging time for most people. After the daily schedule of high school, students face the uncertainty of what the world holds for them after their graduation date. For students with a disability, these times are especially challenging and difficult to navigate because services and supports need to be in place once the student graduates and is no longer supported by their school district. CLASS supports local high school students, like Michael, to ease into this transition period. Transition services occur when a young adult prepares to leave the school environment and becomes more actively involved in the community.

Diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum of behaviors, Michael was very quiet as well as withdrawn and often seemed to avoid people. While it appeared that she wanted to talk and interact with her peers, it was very difficult for her. Michael would also only say a few words and would allow people to finish her sentences or thoughts. When staff tried to engage Michael, she would move away and lower her eyes. As Michael became familiar with the routine brought by the classes of the program, staff began to witness her transformation. CLASS encouraged staff to prompt Michael to finish her own thoughts. She began to approach staff on a regular basis, engaging them in conversation or asking for assistance without prompts. As this became common practice, Michael began to talk with others in her classes. As she began to gain confidence in her communications, Michael began to join people in their groups rather than

avoiding them. She began making friends and engaging them in conversation. Playing an active role in class, Michael would even call attention to the needs of others in class who may not be able to ask for themselves.

In 2013, Centre Services:

- Served, on average, 75 people
- Assisted with the integration of 54 people within the community through volunteer work or recreational activity
- Hosted 13 volunteers and student interns for a total of over 2,000 hours of assistance



The more confident Michael became, the more risks she would start to take such as trying new activities or classes. She began to step out of her comfort zone and challenge herself to try new things. With support from instructors during classes, Michael learned to prepare meals through her work in the café and meal preparation classes, basic computer skills, housekeeping methods, strategies for improving interpersonal communications, and reading comprehension skills. Michael also began to ask staff to complete social tasks such as painting her nails or helping her fix her makeup. She even asked if her case manager would accompany her to a local drug store to pick out a new nail polish color.

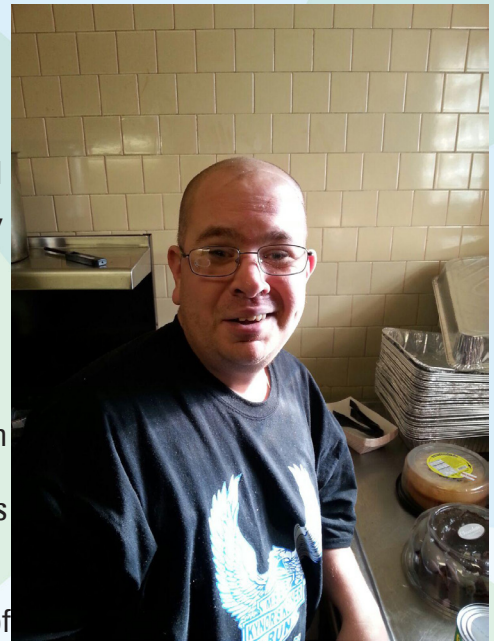
Along with classes, Michael wanted to begin volunteering in the community at a local library and hospital. These two positions enabled her to get out in the community and interact with people she would not usually interact with, as well as learn various vocational skills she could apply at home or at other positions in the future.

All of the skills and experience Michael gained at CLASS allowed her to take the next big adventure in her life: moving out of her family home. In December of 2013, Michael moved into a new home with several roommates. She will be able to utilize the various independent living skills she learned through Centre Services within this new environment. CLASS wishes Michael well and was glad to have been a part of her growing independence.

A Passion For Community

At the age of 14, Jason underwent surgery to remove two brain tumors, which was followed by chemotherapy and an extensive stay in the hospital for several months. Wanting to become more involved with his community, Jason enrolled in the Community Partners program in 2012. Jason has a passion for volunteering and helping others; he has volunteered at a local food bank and Meals on Wheels, served as chairman of the Lion's Club, and has been involved with events at his local Croatian Club.

Due to ongoing health concerns as a result of his cancer treatments, Jason was not as active in his community as he was in the past. He was anxious to begin setting goals with his Community Partner to apply for the programs and services he needed to get back into the community. Jason and his Community Partner established two goals so he could become more active in the community: apply for and utilize ACCESS Transportation and obtain of a volunteer position.



Previously, Jason had applied for ACCESS, but was denied. With his Community Partner, Jason worked to resubmit the application. His Community Partner was able to explain the questions, if necessary, and was also able to assist Jason in choosing the best possible answers on the application, so the ACCESS Office could best understand his need for transportation services. In addition to assisting Jason with the actual application, Community Partners helped him compile a full summary of his medical history and diagnoses from several different doctors and medical providers, which was necessary for the application. When asked to complete the interview with ACCESS, Jason and his Community Partner attended the interview together to ensure Jason was able to fully understand the questions and able to convey his answers to the interviewer. Within three months of resubmitting the application, Jason was approved for ACCESS and his goal became to learn how to best utilize his ACCESS membership. Jason and his Community Partner developed different strategies to build his confidence in using the ACCESS System. These strategies included learning how to use the e-purse system and creating a logbook to track all of the information needed to schedule rides with ease such as the destination address, phone number, and the date and time of his pick-up. Through this added confidence, Jason has shown a steady willingness to travel and is able to do so independently in the community.

Another of Jason's goals was to obtain a volunteer position. After researching options with his Community Partner, Jason decided that Hillman Cancer Center would be a perfect opportunity for him. As a patient, Jason was familiar with the facility and wanted to give back to the place that was able to support and care for him over the years. Community Partners assisted him with preparing a resume, completing a volunteer application, and practicing possible questions for the interview process. Jason was offered the position. As part of his volunteer duties, Jason interacts with cancer patients by providing emotional support and mentoring. He has expressed that he feels as if his experience with cancer helps him in providing support to others, as 'he has been there' and knows what they are going through.

Within the time Jason has been with Community Partners, he has grown increasingly confident in his steps toward independence. Jason believes he can make an impact in not only his own life, but in the lives of others. While continuing to work with Community Partners, this belief continues to motivate Jason. Now in his thirties, Jason is cancer free and resides with his grandmother in McKeesport.

In 2013, Community Partners:

- Provided support to 62 individuals with 21 new referrals
- Delivered 4,058 hours of service
- Held 10 Peer Support Group Meetings in addition to two community gatherings and two holiday socials



Leslie, A First CLASS Attendant *Told From The Perspective Of A Consumer*

I first met Leslie a year and a half ago during one of the most difficult periods of my life. My doctor allowed me to come directly home from a very difficult hospital stay on the promise that I would get a hefty schedule of rehabilitation therapies and personal care at home. So of course, having worked at CLASS, I called their Attendant Care staff to schedule an attendant every morning and evening. I knew that it might be difficult to get both shifts covered seven days a week, but as I suspected, CLASS was able to accommodate me. Shortly thereafter Leslie knocked on my door one morning and introduced herself, which started one of the best and most helpful relationships I have ever enjoyed.

Being stubbornly independent all my life, I was already losing patience with my grown children and an endless stream of nurses, therapists, and equipment providers coming into my house, seeming to take over my life, and telling me what to do. Leslie was a breath of fresh air. She came in quietly, and asked me to tell her about my needs and how she could best help me. And she listened! When I wanted help, she helped, and when I wanted to try to do something on my own, she let me while she unobtrusively kept a watchful eye. It took a lot of sensitivity, patience, and persistence on her part to get me to allow her to help me, but she succeeded.

Leslie understood that caregiving is more than a list of physical tasks. In 18 months, she demonstrated such reliability and was always on time. When my alarm clock

broke I didn't get another one because I knew Leslie would be at my door every morning to wake me up. She understands the importance of social capital in her own life and in the lives of her consumers, too. When I started to feel well enough to get together with friends or colleagues, she made sure my house looked nice. She would fix my hair, remind me to put on some makeup, and said she wanted me to look my best. Leslie listened to all my fears and concerns and responded with lots of support, encouragement, and reassurance.

Over time we have come to enjoy visiting with each other while she helps me get started with my day. At Christmas time she stopped by on her own time to meet my daughter and grandchildren from out of town. My daughter thanked her enthusiastically for taking such good care of me. Recently one of my doctors told me, with considerable amazement, that he had only seen two patients in his entire career recover as well as I have. I told him I appreciated the good health care I received, but thought that the skillful and emotional support and caregiving provided by Leslie contributed equally to my recovery as all the medical intervention.

Leslie speaks often of how much she loves and values her work at CLASS because it gives her the opportunity to help others. It is a pleasure to have her in my life. This morning one of my coworkers remarked that the meaning of CLASS is "to cultivate respect for everyone including oneself, to be polite to others and to reflect a genuine interest in them." I can't think of a better way to describe Leslie and everyone else from the CLASS Attendant Care Program.

In 2013, Attendant Care:

- **Provided approximately 300 individuals with a total of 340,000 hours of Personal Assistance Services in their homes**
- **Hired over 250 Dedicated Direct Care Workers**

Living

Interdependent Living

Margie is an outgoing person who loves spending time with people, especially her large Italian and Irish family. She enjoys reading, organizing her apartment, and volunteering at a local hospital. She is always willing to share her strategies on how to do tasks in a different way. Margie is creative and responsible.

When we first met Margie, she was frustrated by the challenges she faced as a result of a brain injury. She seemed to lack confidence and was afraid to try new things. Her challenges were magnified by her temper and her fear of getting hurt from a transfer or just simply pivoting from her wheelchair to her bed.

It was Margie's involvement on the Community Skill Building Team, combined with the residential support she received from CLASS's residential program that eventually helped Margie realize her potential. Margie developed a plan of action that prioritized her goals. She first wanted to increase her independent living skills, learn how to cook, manage her finances, and get a volunteer job. Margie was able to work on these skills in the classes she attended during the day while her staff helped her to generalize the skills learned to her living environment.



While the changes didn't occur over night; it was the consistent approach by staff and their ability to listen to Margie and hear her needs that eventually gave way to a change. Most importantly, it was the perseverance of Margie that enabled her to make positive strides to a more interdependent lifestyle.

Margie eventually graduated from the Skill Building Team to pursue her goal of volunteering on a more permanent basis. She spent 10 years volunteering at a local library and after a restructuring decided to volunteer at a nearby hospital. She continues to enjoy spending time with her family. Margie is confident in her abilities, is no longer fearful of transfers and is still sharing her suggestions on how to do tasks in a different way.

In 2013, Residential Services:

- Served 55 individuals providing approximately 20,075 days of service
- Acquired a total of 2,494.75 training hours by 106 residential staff

And

Empowering People. Creating Communities. Capital Campaign

There are still plenty of opportunities to participate in the Empowering People. Creating Communities. Capital Campaign. Entering the final year of the Campaign, CLASS will move all of the programs and services to the Swissvale location. With your support, CLASS will continue to meet its mission of Working Toward A Community Where Each Belongs. To be a part of our future, contact the Development Department at 412.683.7100.

In 2013,
The Alliance for Community
Respite Care distributed 44 respite mini
grants to families. Here are their stories:

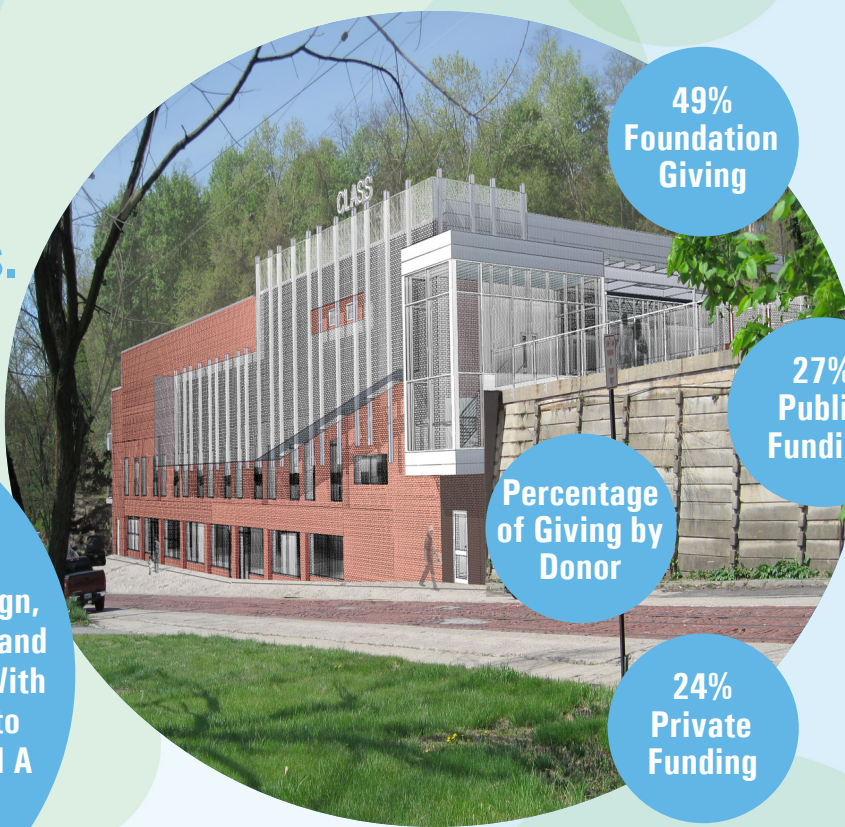
"The grant permitted my daughter to be in the best care while I work towards my bachelor's degree..."

"It was the first time in nine years that I've had an opportunity to get away from all the stress & responsibilities of caring for my special needs child...It's made a huge difference in my son & my's relationship..."

"... I have not been able to trust anyone to take care of our son...With receiving the respite grant I was able to hire an educated professional to assist with our son, and receive well needed relief!"

"My husband and I...were able to get some time to spend with each other—nurturing our marriage, re-connecting with nature, and renewing our sense of 'self'..."

"We used our time to take and pick up our other son from camp. We spent some very nice hours with just him, focusing on his needs which sometimes get overlooked because of his brother's needs..."



49%
Foundation
Giving

27%
Public
Funding

Percentage
of Giving by
Donor

24%
Private
Funding

In 2013, CLASS:

- Provided meeting and training space for over 20 groups at Swissvale, and for over 30 groups at Oakland
- Hosted the Reel Abilities Film Festival preview screenings
- Facilities Director represented CLASS on various committees and at various meetings throughout the community surrounding CLASS

Support

An Individual Perspective On Multiple Sclerosis

Sally Balogh is the perfect example of someone who recognizes challenges and moves on despite them. Currently, Sally sits on the Board of Directors for CLASS as the secretary. Her passion for volunteering her time is evident, as well as her advocacy for those in the community living with multiple sclerosis. Sally holds an AS degree in Recreational Therapy and while she no longer practices, she believes that her previous work in that field and her diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) gives her a better understanding and empathetic perspective for other people with disabilities.

Sally and her husband John are members of the Steel City Fins, a local volunteer and social organization that holds multiple events throughout the year. The events raise money for nonprofit organizations and for the past 13 years has raised nearly \$15,000 for CLASS's Multiple Sclerosis Service Society (MSSS) program. Sally and John also volunteer for the Annual South Side Summer Open to benefit CLASS's many programs and Sally is active with the Salvation Army Project Bundle Up.

Sally's diagnosis may sometimes slow her down or make once easily completed tasks more complicated but it hasn't reduced her enthusiasm for life. Just a few of the roles that Sally enjoys on a daily basis include wife, board member, volunteer, and pet owner. As a board member she knows the importance of providing people with support and information that enables them to move forward after diagnosis.



In 2013, the Multiple Sclerosis Service Society (MSSS):

- Provided 736 visits to 48 clients in the MSSS program
- Supported 8 MSSS social/support groups on a monthly basis that were attended by 84 clients

CLASS offers support to individuals living with MS through the MSSS program. The Multiple Sclerosis Exercise and Support Program provides an in home wellness program that helps individuals maintain their current level of function both safely and comfortably. Instructional exercise, emotional support, equipment and assistive living device evaluations are provided under a doctor's orders. The program also provides referrals to the Community Partners Program for individualized case management if necessary, as well as eight social/support groups throughout southwestern Pennsylvania.

S*ervices*

Building Homes Where Each Belong

The Assistive Technology and Home Modification Program has been providing assistance to those in need of home accessibility, modifications or adaptive equipment. These needs vary but the following is an account of one success story that took nearly a year to come to fruition.

Bruce is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys fishing and hunting and is a hard worker who lives independently in his own home with some assistance from his wife Cyndi. Being independent is something that Bruce takes pride in and despite his disability he has persevered through modifications and adaptations that allow him to participate in physical activities and live a life of independence.

When Kevin, the CLASS Assistive Technology Program Coordinator first met Bruce he was a consumer living in Westmoreland County and receiving services from the Act 150 waiver program for attendant care. Bruce was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis with conditions that continued to worsen over the past four years. Since Bruce had been working at the time of his diagnosis nearly six years ago, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) put in an accessible bathroom for him. Sadly, the contractor that was used was not good. The workmanship and materials were poor which led to the tiles breaking, allowing water to soak into the subfloor. This eventually rotted the subfloor and some floor joists in the room. Since Bruce was no longer working, due to difficulties stemming from his multiple sclerosis—this absence of work meant that OVR would not pay for any repairs.

Kevin first began by working with a service coordinator to have Bruce moved from the Act 150 Waiver to the Independence Waiver. The Act 150 waiver did not suit Bruce's situation at the time since he was unemployed. Bruce required additional attendant care hours as a result of his disability progressing and the Act 150 Waiver would not allow for home modifications to be done to his bathroom.

Once Bruce was approved under the Independence Waiver, Kevin was able to go in and do a thorough home assessment. After some time, the Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) approved the modification but the issues with the bathroom had deteriorated severely.

Kevin immediately contacted a contractor that was registered with the state's attorney general website for HICPA (home improvement consumer protection act) to bid on the work and it was immediately submitted to the OLTL for approval.



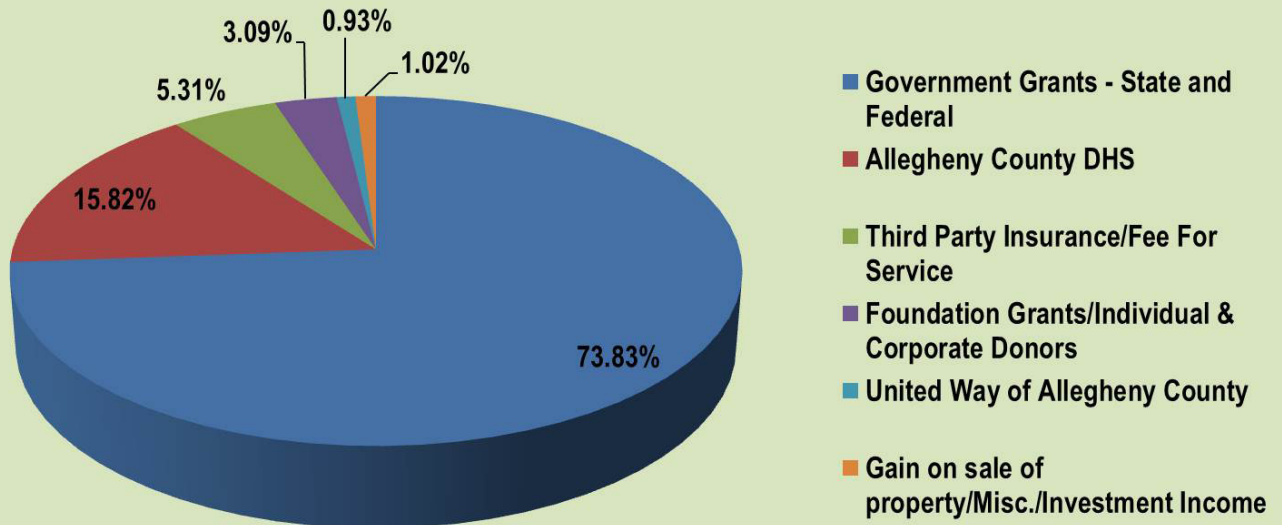
In 2013, Assistive Technology

- Completed 49 home assessments for accessibility
- Assisted 157 people with obtaining funding for assistive technology and home modifications

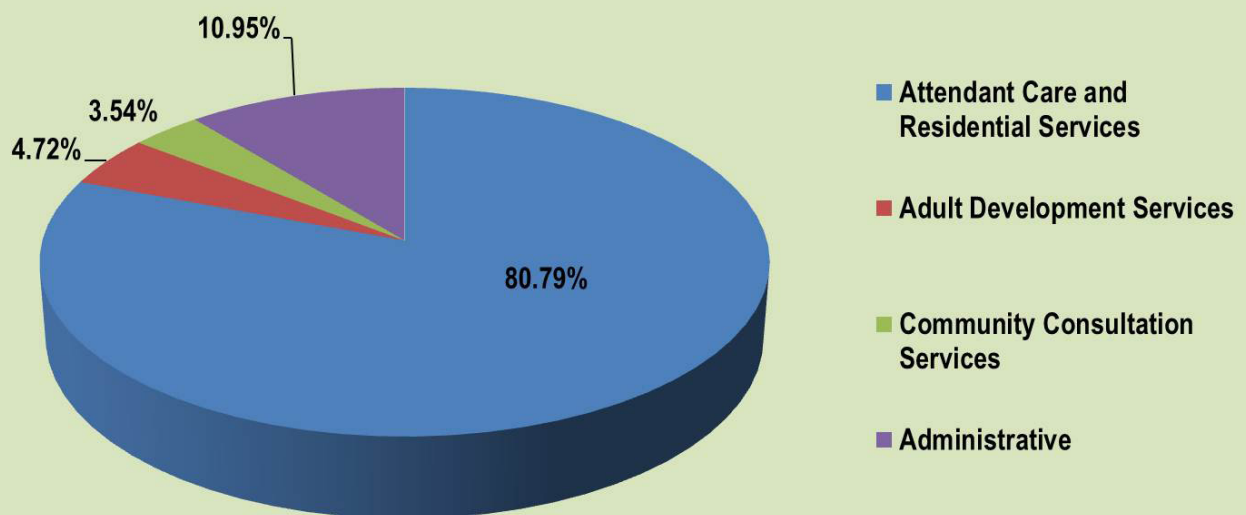
After some issues with paperwork and delays in getting the budget approved, work was finally ready to begin on Bruce's bathroom. The contractor was able to complete the job in one week. Bruce was able to gain even more independence as a result of the newly accessible bathroom. Having the ability to take care of his own personal care is something that is very important to Bruce. He is very appreciative of Kevin's support through the entire process and is thankful for the increased services he now receives through the Independence Waiver. Bruce is living life to the fullest as he continues to be as independent as possible both in his own home and while enjoying the outdoors.

Financials

Income Totals



Expense Totals



Equality



Empowerment



Community



Opportunities

CLASS

Community Living
And Support Services

Individuality



Respect



Interdependent



Possibilities