

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Easter Seals Blake Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, was originally formed in 1950 as the Cerebral Palsy Foundation of Southern Arizona. Its first Board of Trustees was comprised of Tucson citizens who saw a need for educational services for children with significant developmental delays. Its current Management Team continues to carry out the organization's mission as defined by the Board.

In 1993 the Trustees decided to change the name, not only because the original mission had changed, but also to honor Danny Blake, a person who was and is a very important part of the Foundation's life.

The Foundation's educational and therapy services grew during its first twenty-five years. In the mid 1970s Federal laws were enacted mandating special educational services in public schools for children with disabilities. These laws prompted changes in the Children's programs. New needs were identified, and the Foundation began contracting with the State of Arizona's Division of Developmental Disabilities for Early Intervention services for children born at risk of developmental delays. The new Children's Achievement Center also offered therapy and nursing services. In time it also became licensed as a preschool. Many of these new services were also provided in the homes of the children being served. With these diversification's a new program name was adopted, Children and Family Services.

In the early 1980s the Foundation was asked by the Division of Developmental Disabilities to provide Rehabilitation Instructional Services to adults with developmental and physical disabilities. These programs were physically located at the Arizona Training Program (ATPT Tucson). They were pioneering in their use of computers and adaptive technologies. Eventually these workers moved from institutional programming into the community where new employment opportunities were available for much better salaries. These vocational and employment programs were eventually called SAGE Employment and Community Services.

In 1992 and 1993 the Foundation began offering a variety of specialized residential services. These services focused on the specific needs of each individual to be served. To accomplish this a planning process called "Personal Futures Planning" was utilized. The person needing residential care played a central role in designing the home where they would live. These homes usually are one or two person settings. This program is called Supported Living, and is operated by SAGE.

At about this same time the Foundation agreed to begin residential services for persons with substantial physical and behavioral challenges. The Division of Developmental Disabilities requested that these persons be served in group settings in either three or four resident homes. Since its inception this type of service, called Community Living Services, has broadened the scope of its services to include persons who are dually diagnosed with developmental and behavioral disabilities, and persons who have suffered traumatic brain injuries.

The final major change in the Foundation's operations happened in 1994. Once again the Division of Developmental Disabilities asked it to bid on services in rural southern Arizona. Initially programs were awarded to Children and Family Services, SAGE, and Community Living Services in Safford and Willcox. Additional programs were developed in Cochise, Santa Cruz, and Pinal Counties.

Over the years the Foundation has grown significantly. New service centers for children were opened in Safford and Sierra Vista. Early Intervention services were primarily offered in the home. Early Head Start, Head Start and Day Care are also provided in these centers, as well as in the Tucson center. Children and Family Services provides Assessment and Support Coordination.

SAGE continues to operate vocational and day treatment programs in Safford. Community Living Services operates group homes in Safford, Sierra Vista, and Nogales.

Children and Family Services, SAGE, and Community Living Services have been awarded contracts with many other funding agencies including the Arizona Department of Economic Services, Head Start, Arizona Department of Health Services, Pima Health Systems, Cochise Health Systems, CODAC, LaFrontera, Southeast Arizona Behavioral Health

Services and Horizon Health. In 2003 the Foundation became a Qualified Vendor under the Division of Developmental Disabilities' revised purchasing system.

In all of these programs, the Foundation places the strongest possible emphasis on person-centered planning. This approach is grounded in the belief that the most effective personal growth comes from an emphasis on the whole person and family. We invite you to explore our website to learn more about the services we provide. If you need assistance with program information, please contact us at (520) 327-1529.