



CHEERFUL HELPERS CHILD & FAMILY STUDY CENTER

CASE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT



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CASE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION FROM A PARENT

I knew something wasn't quite right. I was watching our little Lillie, in the farthest reaches of the preschool yard, dancing in circles by herself. The following week, my heart sank when, standing next to her peers, who were busy at work painting scenes from the book they'd just heard, Lillie painted her hands. A few parents glanced over, their eyes full of concern and confusion, their gaze avoiding mine. The director called a meeting. We never imagined a preschool parent/teacher conference would be anything other than asking my wife and me for help at the school fundraiser. But the looming question was - how can we reach Lillie?

By that June's final school day, it was clear, Lillie couldn't keep up with the other children and we were scared and exhausted. Our little Lillie was living in her own disconnected world. The school was out of ideas, Lillie wasn't learning, and more than that, she was biting, hitting, spitting and disrupting the class. Lillie's aggressive behaviors were escalating at home and at school. We worried. We asked everyone we knew for helpful referrals. We felt so alone – even walking right beside her.

Then came a chance conversation that changed our entire outlook on our daughter, our family and our day-to-day lives. Through the brother of a friend of a friend, we had been given the phone number of a therapist at Cheerful Helpers. When we called her, it was evident from the first minute that she understood. I wept; my wife wept. The Cheerful Helpers therapist knew exactly which questions to ask so that we could share the details that scared us most about Lillie's development, or lack thereof. She got it. We felt a new sensation—someone was going to be able to lead us through the alternative universe in which we found ourselves.

At Cheerful Helpers, my wife and I felt such relief that these gifted, trained, experienced professionals would be there to teach us how to steer our family's ship. They even required us to attend a "parent group." As they explained, Cheerful Helpers would be working with our children for a handful of hours each day, and we would have them the majority of their lives. One of the most remarkable things about Cheerful Helpers is their devotion to the notion of treating the entire family -- recognizing parents as an integral part of the child's support team. We needed to understand Lillie and learn new tools to ensure we could support our child. We were finding her. There was hope that Lillie was going to have a shot at being the best version of herself she could be.

Now, at age 16, Lillie is thriving. She can talk. She can read --- it took her until age 13(!) to figure that one out. She can learn. She can text her friends, of which she has many. I wasn't sure that she would be able to do any of these things.

Cheerful Helpers provides a way for families to steer themselves out of chaos and onto a sustainable course. Cheerful Helpers offers **the gift of hope and a process**. Now we must work together to ensure that other families, and many more families, will receive this gift in the future. A family shouldn't have to rely upon blind luck to give their child a real chance in life.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States with a greater than 10% annual growth rate. In Los Angeles County alone, there are more than 25,000 children, ages 3-17, who have an autism spectrum diagnosis. While the annual cost of care is calculated to be \$60 billion nationally, **the lifelong cost of care can be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis and early intervention.**

Cheerful Helpers serves young children with high functioning ASD and related developmental delays, including sensory and social processing disorders, as well as learning and emotional challenges. The need for Cheerful Helpers' programs is continually growing while public funding is dramatically shrinking.

Autism Spectrum Disorders and emotional, social and communication delays have a profound impact on **both the child and the family.** Cheerful Helpers remains the only early intervention school and social services agency in greater Los Angeles to require active, reflective and collaborative parent participation.

Just as evidence is building for the vital importance of parental involvement in their children's education and early intervention services, Los Angeles Unified School District has ceased to support or to fund Cheerful Helper's essential Family Counseling Program.

To more effectively serve the growing number of children with ASD and their families, Cheerful Helpers needs to find a permanent home, and to grow and extend its developmental-individualized-relationship-based model to serve ever younger and more diverse populations and communities. At the same time, Cheerful Helpers must continue to support and serve as a beacon for early, family-oriented, educational and therapeutic intervention.



MISSION & VISION

MISSION - OUR PURPOSE FOR EXISTING

To make a real difference in the lives of families and their children with special needs.

WHO WE SERVE:

Over the last six decades, our family-centered early childhood intervention programs have been thoughtfully developed for young children with high functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders, attachment disorders, developmental delays, and for those with processing, learning and emotional challenges.

WHAT WE DO:

We provide the essential therapeutic services for families and their young children experiencing significant developmental, social and emotional challenges. In a safe, warm setting, we offer a unique collaborative, educational and therapeutic approach, empowering the entire family to achieve their potential for life-long growth. We strive to maintain an environment that is respectful and supportive of each child's developmental accomplishments, emotional resilience and autonomy. Cheerful Helpers combines compatible theories of children's psychological cognitive development with an attention to individual differences and family processes.

WHY WE DO IT:

We do this work in order to provide hope to families and their young children experiencing the pain and isolation associated with significant developmental, social and emotional challenges. We also do this work because we are needed: there is no other organization that provides our unique combination of individualized attention to the entire family system, integrating multidisciplinary treatments all under an overarching framework that blends both a strengths-based and a relationship-focused approach. Finally, we will continue to do this work because we have seen such remarkable and tangible results in the children and families we have treated.

VISION - WHERE WE NEED TO GO

Cheerful Helpers must expand its reach and influence beyond the bricks and mortar of our existing school and allied programs and positively impact more children with special needs and their families. To achieve this, we aim to create a leading-edge institute in which we:

1. serve more children and families in our existing model,
2. train other professionals on specific core processes and techniques, and
3. serve as a prototype that can be replicated in more locations.

HISTORY OF THE CHEERFUL HELPERS ORGANIZATION

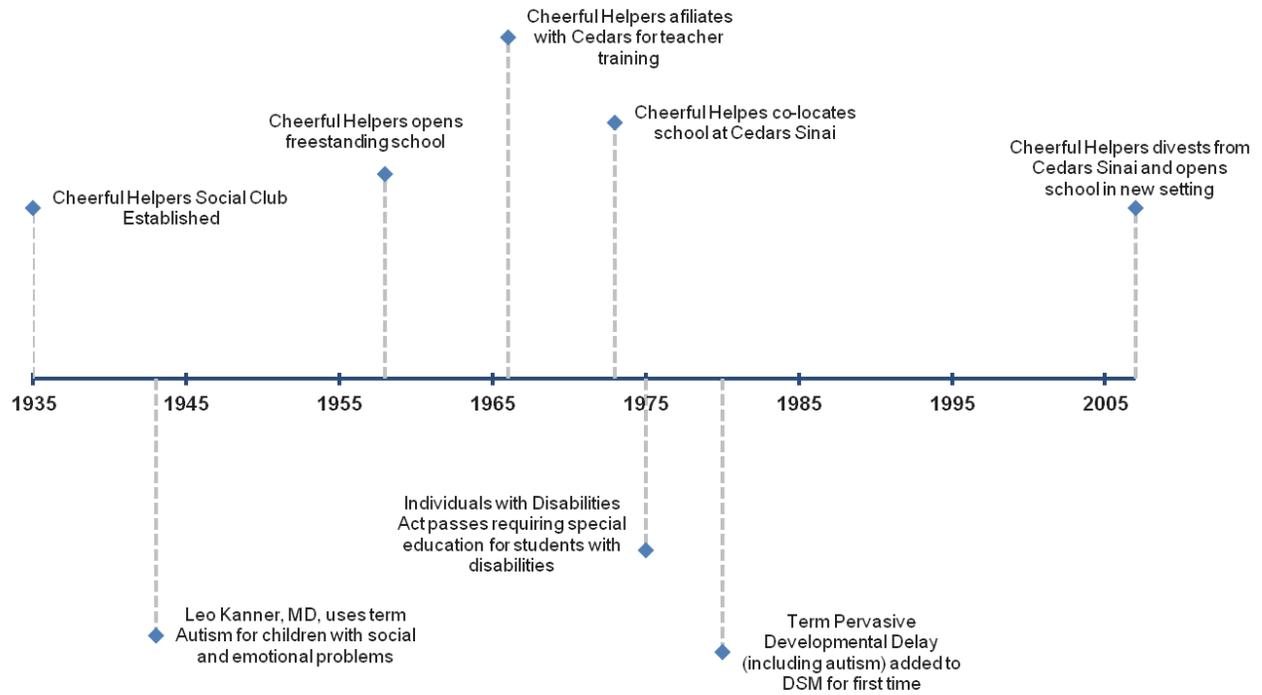
In 1935, twelve philanthropic women in Los Angeles joined together to form The Cheerful Helpers, a corps of “willing hands in dedicated service to the unfortunate child in our midst.” From 1935 to 1955, the Cheerful Helpers mission evolved into one consistent with an increasingly complex view of child development and autism. In 1958, the dream of creating a school for the understanding and treatment of emotional disturbances in preschool-aged children was realized when the Cheerful Helpers Child and Family Study Center opened on the campus of Mt. Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. In 1966, the organization affiliated with Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. In 1973, the school was co-located in the Thaliens Mental Health Center on the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center campus. Then, as now, Cheerful Helpers offered a unique, family-oriented, multidisciplinary, integrative approach to early childhood intervention.

Our programs and services continued to expand, and in 2007, Cheerful Helpers divested from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, becoming an independent, self-reliant non-profit organization. At that time, Cheerful Helpers moved to its current home at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 3300 Wilshire Boulevard, in the heart of Los Angeles.

Now, more than 55 years since its founding, the *Cheerful Helpers Child and Family Study Center remains the only program in the Los Angeles area that integrates educational, psychological, and therapeutic modalities in a manner that empowers the entire family to achieve its potential for life long growth.* This has been our history and remains our continuing commitment.



HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF CHEERFUL HELPERS



EXPLANATION OF THE PROGRAMS

PHILOSOPHY

Interdisciplinary Model

The Cheerful Helpers interdisciplinary therapeutic approach incorporates a broad spectrum of skills by early childhood and mental health professionals and staff, including credentialed general and special education teachers, mental health clinicians and interns, speech, occupational, play and family therapists, and graduate and postgraduate students seeking intensive training in early therapeutic intervention.

All Cheerful Helpers staff are highly trained to work with children with special needs individually, as well as in small groups, and with parents. Effective integrated, cross-disciplinary service delivery is a function of daily collaboration amongst team members and the on-going development of plans that identify specific accommodations, modifications and goals for each child. To assure best practices, continual professional development for the team and trainees is supported and provided.

PROGRAMS

Therapeutic Preschool & Kindergarten – this developmental, relationship-based program, for children, ages 3-6, includes a combination of educational, sensory-motor, communication, psycho-dynamic and family systems interventions. Children attend school five days per week, in small language-rich classes, with a 1:2 staff: student ratio and a dedicated multi-disciplinary team of special education teachers and therapists. All parents participate in Family Therapy, as well as a weekly Parent Group that includes classroom observation. School-based Occupational and Speech Therapy are also provided as needed.

Brief Evaluation & Intervention Groups – short-term intensive early intervention program where children, ages 2-5, participate with their parents in small groups twice a week, and, once a week in individual family sessions. Through ongoing dialogue, families learn how to support their children in skills such as building emotional and functional language, interactive play skills and increasing a deeper understanding of their role in their child's development.

Socialization & Social Skills Groups – children, ages 3-6, learn the skills needed to be successful in their play and interaction with peers for playground, school and community activities. In these groups, children and, through a family component, their parents learn the necessary tools to manage difficult emotions, communicate effectively, as well as positively relate and interact with others.

EXPLANATION OF THE PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

PROGRAMS

Family Counseling Program – Family Therapists provide counseling services for families struggling with the emotional and behavioral difficulties of parenting a child with significant developmental, social, or emotional challenges.

Parent Support Groups – Mental Health Clinicians facilitate psycho-educational support groups providing a safe and understanding environment for parents to reflect on their unique and universal experiences raising children with special needs while increasing parenting skills.

Play Therapy – Child Therapists work one-on-one with children to help them learn to interact reciprocally while organizing their experiences and feelings through the process of play.

Speech & Language Therapy – Through individual and group format, Speech and Language Therapists work with children on expressive and receptive language goals, including the ability to understand words and express basic wants and needs. Therapists also focus on the mechanics of producing words, such as articulation, pitch, fluency and volume.

Occupational Therapy – Through individual and group format, Occupational Therapists work with children to strengthen their fine-motor skills, such as writing, shoe-tying and using utensils and learn self-regulation strategies. Therapists target areas of delay and difficulty while applying a sensory integration approach and using play-like activities to help children tolerate and process the information they receive through their senses.

Early Intervention Community Programs – Parent outreach initiative geared towards disseminating knowledge and understanding about identifying children in need of early intervention services, dispelling myths and stigmas, cultivating awareness and empathy, and accepting the signs that indicate when early intervention is warranted.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Program – In development: parent workshops, support groups and family oriented attachment work to help infants and families transition from crisis mode to stabilizing mode in the NICU and beyond. This strengths-based program aims to expand parenting skills through a calm relationship-based approach that helps recognize, understand and respond to the unique needs of each baby and parent.

OUTCOMES AND PROOF OF IMPACT

Since 1958, over one million hours of advocacy and therapeutic services have been contributed by Cheerful Helpers original visionaries, staff, clinicians, board members and volunteers. In addition to this direct professional dedication, guided and supported parents of special needs children contribute thousands of hours each year – pouring out their love, sweat and patience in service of maximizing their nuclear family’s potential. As a result of this tireless devotion, hundreds of graduates have gained essential personal tools needed to realize their full learning and living potential. Cheerful Helpers graduates have successfully transitioned to elementary, middle and high school. Furthermore, many have pursued post-secondary education - obtaining advanced degrees at colleges and universities around the country. Most importantly, our alumni have become independent adults -- living meaningful, fulfilling and connected lives.

Cheerful Helpers tenure and longevity provides a priceless storehouse of clinical and empirical data, case studies and **actual** results. Over the next several years, in collaboration with leading academic clinical research partners, Cheerful Helpers has committed to study and disseminate its scalable clinical and therapeutic practice model, ensuring positive outcomes for an expanding population of young children with special needs, their families and all stakeholders. Our initiative is geared toward identifying change agents and demonstrating positive outcomes. The impact of the Cheerful Helpers practice model will be amplified through research projects and papers currently in development.



FINANCIAL NEEDS

Cheerful Helpers is a cutting edge prototype organization that has adapted and refined its family-based therapeutic model over the past 55 years, using limited financial resources and a remarkably dedicated staff. By employing this family-based therapeutic model to its fullest capacity, Cheerful Helpers is uniquely poised to immediately capitalize upon and benefit from expanded philanthropic support.

A significant philanthropic investment will ensure the long-term financial viability of Cheerful Helpers by:

- a. increasing the impact and reach of its programs, and
- b. providing a new and permanent home, functionally designed to meet the special needs of the children, their families and the community at large.

A significant philanthropic investment in Cheerful Helpers at this time will have a direct, positive and long-term impact on hundreds, if not thousands, of families and children with special needs over the next several decades.

Offsetting a Decrease in Public Funding for Cheerful Helpers

In years past, funding to attend Cheerful Helpers was provided through school districts and regional centers. These days, traditional funding sources have seen their budgets cut and parents are finding increased barriers to getting the services they need. Most families must pay privately for Cheerful Helpers and then hope to obtain school district reimbursement for some of the costs. All families must pay out-of-pocket for the vital family counseling/parent group component of the program. A majority of families cannot afford this cost. Even those families fortunate enough to secure some public funding for the school program must lay out cash up front and then seek delayed reimbursement from the bogged-down, bureaucratic, legal and educational system.

A major goal is to create and implement a sustainable funding system that includes a scholarship/financial assistance fund so that no child, who is a suitable candidate for one of our programs, will be turned away for lack of funds.

FINANCIAL NEEDS (CONTINUED)

CAPITAL FUND (2013)	
Land & Building	\$5,000,000
Improvements	\$5,000,000
Kitchen Equipment	\$250,000
Therapeutic Equipment	\$250,000
Teaching & Learning Equipment	\$250,000
SUBTOTAL	\$10,750,000
OPERATING FUND (2013-2014)	
Pro Forma - Cumulative Deficits	\$500,000
Pro Forma - Mark to Market Compensation	\$500,000
SUBTOTAL	\$1,000,000
REVENUE GROWTH CAPACITY (2013-2016)	
Benevon Fundraising Model	\$100,000
Development	\$200,000
Board of Directors	\$100,000
Marketing & Public Relations	\$100,000
SUBTOTAL	\$500,000
ENDOWMENT FUND (2015-2016)	
Operations	\$5,000,000
Research	\$5,000,000
SUBTOTAL	\$10,000,000
TOTAL FINANCIAL NEEDS	\$22,250,000

MEANS OF SUPPORT

Cheerful Helpers is committed to attracting and cultivating long-term collaborative partnerships with compassionate individuals, private and corporate foundations, government and municipal agencies, public nonprofits and other strategic financial partners who understand and appreciate our mission and vision, and are motivated through their own experience to support this essential organization that provides vital early intervention and education.

FINANCIAL PROGRAM	LEVEL	NOTE
Capital Fund Recognition		
Building	\$5,000,000	rights term = 25 years
Building	\$5,000,000	rights term = 25 years
Dining Hall	\$250,000	rights term = 10 years
Therapy Room	\$250,000	rights term = 10 years
Technology room	\$250,000	rights term = 10 years
Leadership Recognition		
Spinel	\$500,000	5 annual installments
Ruby	\$250,000	5 annual installments
Diamond	\$100,000	5 annual installments
Emerald	\$50,000	5 annual installments
Sapphire	\$25,000	5 annual installments
Endowment Fund Recognition		
Lion	\$1,000,000	5 annual installments
Eagle	\$750,000	5 annual installments
Bear	\$500,000	5 annual installments
Whale	\$250,000	5 annual installments
Dolphin	\$100,000	5 annual installments
Special Programs		
Early Intervention Storybook	\$100,000	sponsorship
Inspiration Mars	\$100,000	sponsorship
Sister School Partnership	\$100,000	sponsorship
Digital Archive	\$100,000	sponsorship
Outcome Measurement	\$100,000	sponsorship
Website	\$50,000	sponsorship
Social Media	\$50,000	sponsorship
Annual Event	\$25,000	sponsorship

NOTES





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