

## **SIGNAL CENTERS HISTORY:**

- 1957 -- Signal Centers, Inc. was organized and chartered as United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Greater Chattanooga.
- A report emphasized the need for a comprehensive day-care program for pre-school handicapped children. Also, it described the need for a central diagnostic, evaluation and referral service. UCP agreed to assume responsibility for providing both recommended programs.
- 1958 -- The day-care program began in January 1958 at Ridgedale School, providing service to ten children.
- 1959, United Cerebral Palsy formally requested consideration for funding from the United Fund and this proposal was approved.
- 1959 -- The program moved into the Siskin Building during the summer of 1959, then into the new Rehabilitation Building when school opened in November, 1959. The Siskin Brothers planned these new quarters specifically for the Cerebral Palsy Center, which consisted of three classrooms, a physical therapy room, play room, and free use of the kitchen, waiting room, conference room, general office and room for the volunteer trainees. The Siskin Foundation equipped the four rooms with the latest in specially designed furnishings, equipment and wheel chairs and provided all utilities, janitorial services, and outside playground.
- 1959 -- In 1959, 20 children: 11 boys and 9 girls received services, with 10 of the children receiving transportation.
- 1962 -- In 1962, the program moved to Avondale School and remained there until the summer of 1964. In the fall of 1964, the programs were moved again, this time to Pilgrim Congregational Church. 148 children and their families received services at the Preschool Development Center. Trotter Buick furnished a free Pontiac station wagon for needed transportation, and volunteer workers gave 2,500 hours of service as teacher's aides. Pilgrim Congregational Church allowed their facilities to be used free of charge. The facilities were shared in conjunction with their Sunday School program.
- 1965 -- In 1965, hot lunches began to be served to the children and the only program in Chattanooga that offered before and after school daycare was developed to assist working mothers whose job schedule did not fit their child's school schedule.

Throughout the years, the programs had various names and were housed at several locations throughout Chattanooga. The details that follow will incorporate some of the various names over the years of Signal Centers, Inc., the Adult Center, and the Children's Programs in Cleveland and Athens.

- 1978 -- The Independent Living Center program began in 1978 to provide services for 20 physically handicapped adults at the Eastside Health Center. This facility would later be known as Signal Centers' Adult Center.
- 1979 -- In 1979, the Infant and Preschool Development Center was located at 4315 Brainerd Road with 20 staff members providing services to 112 children with developmental disabilities. The Creative Adult Activities Project was located at 1312 Moss Street with seven staff members and four support staff providing services to 35 adults with physical disabilities. On-site student training was conducted for 200 student nurses.
- 1980 -- In 1980, the Ocoee Center for Exceptional Children in Cleveland was opened providing service for 18 children at a cost of \$86,676. This would later be referred to as The Children's Program – Cleveland.
- 1981 – In 1981, there was 20 staff for 99 children in the Infant and Preschool Development Center, located at Brainerd United Methodist Church. The Creative Adult Activities Project had 6 staff and 37 adult participants, located at East Chattanooga Church of God on Dodson Avenue. The Ocoee Center for Exceptional Children had 5 staff and 28 children with disabilities. On-site student training was held for 50 special ed/physical therapy students and 48 student nurses.
- 1982 -- In September, 1982 the Children's Program moved to the former Hemlock Elementary School and provided service to 111 children. The Adult Program had 27 adults and the Ocoee Center for Special Children in Cleveland had 26 children.
- 1983 -- In 1983, the Chattanooga Children's Program had 129 children, the Adult Program had 30 adults and the Cleveland program had 35 children. 157 students received training for nursing, special education, elementary education, psychology, and child development. Also in June, 1983, the Adult Program was finally united with the Children's Programs and was moved into the former Hemlock School.
- 1984 -- On October 22, 1984, a Children's Program in Athens began and serviced 16 children. Support for this project came from local service clubs - Civitan, Kiwanis, Jaycees and Rotary continued to be strong in that region.

- 1985 -- Standard-Coosa-Thatcher employed 16 Adult Center clients to recycle cones for their Textured Thread Plant.
- 1986 -- In 1986, the program name was changed to Signal Centers, Inc.
- 1987 -- In 1987, William McCarthy; a four-year-old student of the Center with Reyes Syndrome, addressed Gov. Ned McWherter's "Open Cabinet" meeting and using his electronic speaking device (known as "touch talk") sang for the crowd. His performance drew attention to the needs of individuals with disabilities and how the State can help. Students participated in a therapeutic aquatic program in partnership with the Downtown YMCA.
- 1990 -- In 1990, Signal Centers, Inc. moved to its current location in the old Sunnyside Elementary School at 109 North Germantown Road in Chattanooga. The Adult Program's modular building is located on the same property.
- 1991 -- In 1991, the Assistive Technology Center opened to provide technology to empower people with disabilities to have control and choices in all aspects of their lives. Through 21st Century technology (simple as well as sophisticated), people with a variety of disabilities can enhance their lives and promote inclusion at school, at home, in the work place, and in the community.
- 1994 -- In 1994, the Child Care Resource Center was established with funding support from The Junior League. The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) provided training and education assistance for child care providers (infants to 12 years of age) in the areas of Health and Safety, Best Practices, and Inclusion of all children. The Child & Adult Care Food Program also began in 1994. This USDA program is dedicated to improving the lives of children by assisting family daycare providers who wish to participate in the US Department of Agriculture's nutrition and food service program. Under the program, family child care providers are reimbursed monthly for the cost of food served to children enrolled in the child care setting.
- 1996 -- In 1996, the Welfare Reform Program, Families First, started in Tennessee, and Signal Centers, Inc. received the contract from the State to begin providing services to this population. Families First assesses a participant's vocational interests, aptitude, and personality type and offers career guidance counseling based on the results. Staff members encourage and assist participants to design a plan of steps they will need to meet their goal: permanent employment and freedom from assistance.

- 2000 -- In 2000, The Parents' Place, at 2300 Bailey Avenue, opened its doors to provide a one-stop shop for parents to get help and assistance. The Child Care Resource Center is also located at The Parents' Place.
- 2002 -- Families First moved to their new home in May, 2002, at 1819 Dodds Avenue.
- 2003 -- In 2003, Signal Centers celebrated its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Adult Program celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Open Houses were held to recognize the clients, families, volunteers and staff who have worked so diligently on behalf of Signal Centers' mission and goals.
- 2003 – The Child Care Resource and Referral Network began to provide management, fiscal and administrative services to all eleven (11) CCR&Rs across the entire State of Tennessee.
- 2005 -- In August 2005, Signal Centers, Inc., in collaboration with Hamilton County Schools, was awarded one of Governor Bredesen's lottery-funded Pre-K classrooms. Classes began on September 30. The classroom has a licensed Early Childhood Teacher and a classroom assistant serving 20 children.
- 2006 – The Chattanooga Children's Program developed a transitional or "Learning-to-Learn" classroom to assist students with significant communication delays and insufficient coping skills. This classroom provides intense one-on-one instruction with an emphasis on conditioning children to the routines and expectations of a pre-school environment.
- 2006 – The Chattanooga Children's Program opened a new classroom for typically-developing three and four-year olds. This classroom addition provides many additional inclusion opportunities that are beneficial for both typically-developing children and those with disabilities.
- 2006 -- The Relative Caregiver Program received a grant from The Southeast Tennessee Development District/Area Agency on Aging and Disability to begin services to six additional counties in the Southeast Tennessee Region. The goal of this program is to prevent children from entering State custody when the parent is unable to provide appropriate care.