

United Way of the Tri-Valley Area is honored to have so many incredible Community Partners throughout the community. We fund these organizations because they tirelessly strive to make a difference within our community and they efficiently and effectively use our investment.

United Way is excited to be introducing their newest Community Partner; the Children's Center in Farmington. The Children's Center provides center-based, children's behavioral health day treatment and targeted case management. The day treatment program serves children diagnosed with autism or a mental health diagnosis in a highly structured setting with a high child to staff ratio. The classroom focuses on specific skills related to emotional regulation, behavioral management, and/or interpersonal skills. Children also work on increasing independence in behavioral, social, and functional living skills for these children to become successful in an inclusive early education classroom and/or public-school setting. Targeted Case Managers provide services to children ages birth through twenty-one identified with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, developmental delay, and/or a mental health diagnosis. These highly skilled professionals work closely with parents and caregivers to ensure that their child receives all needed services through coordination and collaboration with providers and/or natural supports while also assisting parents and caregivers to understand services and resources available in the community. Children ages birth through six-years-old identified as being at risk of having a developmental or behavioral diagnosis due to environmental factors may also be eligible for services.

For 50 years, The Children's Center has provided specialized programs to young children with disabilities and their families in the Augusta location but recently opened a location in Farmington in the Fairbanks School Meeting House building on the Fairbanks Road. "The Children's Center feels grateful and honored to become a new partner with the United Way of Tri Valley Area. The organization has been involved with the local United Ways connected to other locations, which have developed into strong and productive partnerships for both agencies," explained Katelyn Pushard, Director of Development & Quality Control. "The Center looks forward to creating the same sort of relationship with UWTVA."

The funding will be used to allow the organization to put research into practice in the Farmington location. Studies shows that children with disabilities make more progress when they participate in inclusive experiences with children who are typically developing because they are more motivated to play and engage with peers than they are with adults. Research says that these kids will make more progress on goals focused on communication and behaviors through interaction with typically developing peers. All the children receiving services at the center have at least one communication goal and one behavioral goal outlined in their individual treatment plan.

The Center has goals and accomplishments of their own that they try tirelessly to meet. Their biggest accomplishment that they have achieved recently is expanding their services over the past several years by opening sites in Farmington, Gardiner, and Skowhegan as well as increasing space in the Augusta location. As the Children's Center grows, they would like to

address further needs in the community by expanding specialized programming to a wider range of ages and types of disabilities. They also would like to introduce telehealth services to the surrounding local rural communities throughout the State of Maine. These services would include evaluations, speech and language therapy, mental health therapy, parent consultations with providers so that children can receive the opportunity to make significant gains during this critical period in their development regardless of location or local resources. With any organization, there are challenges that are hard to overcome. “One of the hardest challenges our agency faces includes finding and hiring qualified staff to meet the high demand for services in these areas,” said Pushard.

The Center is currently looking for an Educational Technician & Behavioral Professionals at all sites and locations. If interested or want more information, contact Karen Littlefield at (207)-626-3497 or email at klittlefield@childrensctr.org. You can also visit the Children’s Center website: www.childrensctr.org. The Centers have volunteer and internship opportunities for college students and/or high school students who are eighteen years old or older.