



# **2020**

# **Annual Impact Report**

Prepared by:

Shellie A. May, BSN  
Executive Director

# About FEAT (Families for Effective Autism Treatment) of Louisville, Inc.

## MISSION:

Families for Effective Autism Treatment (FEAT) of Louisville is a non-profit organization that actively supports and funds autism programs for the entire family. Created for families by families, FEAT of Louisville is dedicated to "easing the autism journey" through ongoing support, education and programs.

## VISION:

To be the largest provider of resources, support and education that empowers Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) individuals and their family on their autism journey.

## VALUES:

- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Education



# 2020 at a Glance

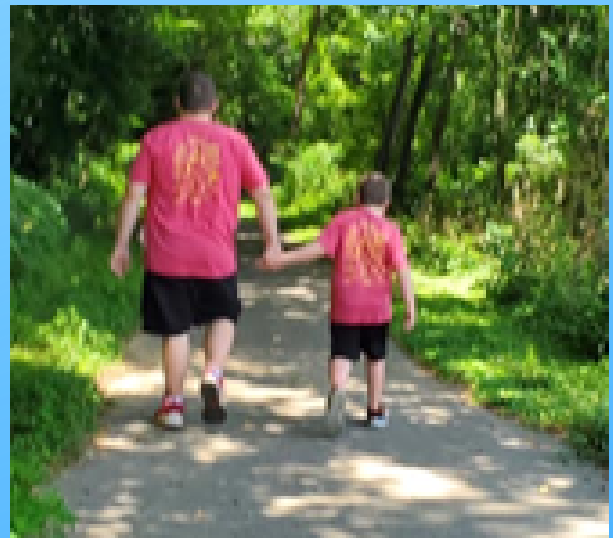
## Autism Awareness and Education

FEAT was founded in 1999 with an emphasis on supporting autism awareness and education for families – this continued to be a major focus in 2020. Throughout the year, FEAT was unable to sponsor any in person monthly parent meetings, programs for children, special events or training opportunities. We hosted several virtual forums for parents to socialize, ask questions or just vent.

In 2020, new FEAT Executive Director and staff made a concerted effort to expand the use of social media to promote autism awareness as well as the programs FEAT and collaborative partners provide in the community. Our FEAT social media pages continue to add to the overall impact of these efforts being that families facing the challenges of autism are able to learn more about FEAT and services available in the community.

## Key Challenges due to COVID-19

- No family support or social events
- Increased reports in feelings of isolation
- Increased stress & anxiety for families
- Children not receiving critical services
- Cancelled fundraising events





# Community Support

## Sensory Friendly Trunk or Treat- COVID Style

In October, FEAT partnered with AFBI member, Park Community Credit Union to host a drive-thru Trunk or Treat. Over 100 families participated, they remained in their vehicle and drove thru to see over 50 spooktacular creations. Park Community Credit Union and FEAT were positioned at the exit and handed out prepackaged goodie bags to all the children. We had over 300 register for this event.

The children loved the experience and the parents were so thankful for the opportunity to do something "normal." They also shared how difficult COVID-19 had been on their family and how they greatly needed to experience some normalcy. We saw lots of smiles and great costumes!





# Community Support

## Drive-Thru Sensory Friendly Santa

In December, FEAT partnered with AFBI member, ecotech to host a sensory friendly Santa drive-thru. There were 40 families with approximately 85 children that attended. Parents were so grateful for this much needed event, stating how isolated, disconnected, and overwhelmed with virtual learning they felt due to COVID-19. We saw lots of smiles and even some tears of happiness.

Parents shared their stories of how difficult the 'usual' trip to deliver the "wish list" and getting a picture with Santa was normally. One family was especially touching, mom and dad were both in tears because they had never been able to get a picture of their 10 year old autistic son with Santa. Because of our drive-thru sensory Santa, these parents experienced the joy of seeing their son (photo to the right) sit with Santa!!



"Thanks to FEAT, I have my first picture of my son with Santa"  
~ Shannon Block - Mom



FEAT Team and Santa



Stuart Baird, FEAT 2021 Board  
Chairman and Family



# FEAT Programs

In 2020, FEAT continued to focus on collaborative efforts with other local agencies to help families. Through highlighted partnerships and the leadership of the Autism Friendly Community and a group of local autism service providers we provided much needed support.

## Get Your FEAT Wet Swim Program

In collaboration with All About Kids and Home of the Innocents, children with autism learn to swim with one-on-one instruction with behavior support as needed. This program improves the health of children with autism by teaching them the lifelong skill of swimming, which provides them not only with safety and enjoyment, but also with the means for physical exercise. Approximately 75 children participated in 2020 with many on a wait list.

## Autism Friendly Business Initiative - AFBI

FEAT began the Autism Friendly Business Initiative (AFBI) in 2011 with 40 local providers who were also looking to close the gaps and prepare the community for autistic individuals as they aged out of the "system." The mission of AFBI is to build a community of businesses dedicated to the inclusion of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in all



aspects of life. It is our goal to raise awareness, appreciation, acceptance and value to employment of ASD individuals. We ended 2020 with 320 AFBI certified businesses in Kentucky, Indiana, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia. Carlissa Brown, FEAT parent, and autism advocate and Compliance Officer at Park Community Credit Union stated, "AFBI means the world to my family. It helps spread awareness of autism across the city, it promotes inclusion of all people and gives families like mine hope for the future. The hope of acceptance and the promise that the AFBI program will lead to jobs for the autism community."



# New & Ongoing Programs

In addition to FEAT directly managed programs, we continued to support our ongoing partner programs:

## **Endeavor Program**

This collaborative program with Carriage House Educational Services utilizes a strong ABA approach to help children develop the verbal, social, emotional, and self-help skills required for younger children with autism to become successful when placed in a typical preschool or elementary school classroom. The skills learned in the Endeavor Program increase school readiness for young children with autism. The 2020 enrollment was 91 children with 12 scholarships provided.

## **Dreams in Motion**

This therapeutic and recreational summer day camp for children ages 7-21 with autism is a collaborative effort between FEAT and Dreams with Wings. The program typically offers onsite and community-based education and life skill activities as well as recreational summer outings. In 2020, Dreams in Motion summer camp was forced to go virtual and still had 50 children participate in the week long camp.

## **Bluegrass Center for Autism Vocational Job Coach Program**

Within their campus uniquely located in Mid City Mall, students are prepared to develop communicative, daily living and job readiness skills required to function as independently as possible. These skills are taught in a “school-like” setting and through community-based instruction that extends into surrounding stores. The mall has become an extension of the classroom where lessons are not taught in isolation and are more easily generalized. Approximately 19 children participate in this program and worked over 120 vocational hours prior to COVID-19.

Through collaborated efforts, FEAT helped provide funding for these new programs:

- Expanded Get Your FEAT Wet Program” to include additional hours and locations with All About Kids and Aqua-Tots.
- Partnership with Jeffersontown Police Department’s Angels for Autism Program.
- Collaboration with Leadership Louisville’s Ignite team to grow the Autism Friendly Business Initiative (AFBI), a project that enables any businesses in our community to become more autism friendly through training materials, workshops, training video and accommodation/employee training manuals.
- New partnership with Bernheim Forest to develop a Sensory Garden for ASD individuals and their families.
- Marty's Orchid House partnership to provide necessary therapeutic and health services to West Louisville preschoolers on the spectrum.

# Fundraising

FEAT remains active in its fundraising efforts in order to provide the mentioned programs and services to its members. The two major events held this past year included the following:

## **Outrunning Autism**

FEAT 5K Race and 1 Mile Fun Walk is usually held in late May or early June. It has grown to over 1300 participants and 100+ volunteers participate in the largest autism event of this type in the community. In 2020, Outrunning Autism ran virtual due to COVID-19. We saw a significant decline in registered participants and dollars raised. Funds raised by this event went to support our collaborative programs, the Autism Friendly Business Initiative and some new program initiatives.

## **Create A Stir About Autism Gala**

FEAT's longest running event is typically held in September and includes dinner, live and silent auctions and dancing. Due to the pandemic, the gala was cancelled. We quickly transitioned to a virtual auction and a small "Healthy at Home" outdoor event with dedicated supporters and FEAT Board members. Funds raised from this event supported a variety of FEAT activities including direct program funding for Bluegrass Center for Autism Vocational Job Coach Program, Get Your FEAT Wet -Swim Program and Carriage House- the Endeavor Program, scholarships and parent trainings.

FEAT is excited about hosting these same events in 2021 and hope that their continued success will enable FEAT to support and grow existing and new programs in 2021.

The 2021 dates and locations of these events are:

- Outrunning Autism 5K -will be Saturday, June 5th, 2021 at The Parklands
- Create A Stir About Autism-will be Friday, September 17th, 2021 at The Olmsted Dinner, Auction & Dancing.
- Angels for Autism late October





# Financial Highlights

## TOTAL REVENUE AS OF Q4 2020

\$319,000

## BUDGET BREAKDOWN

38%- Direct Program  
Support

32%- Autism Awareness

30%- Administrative  
Support

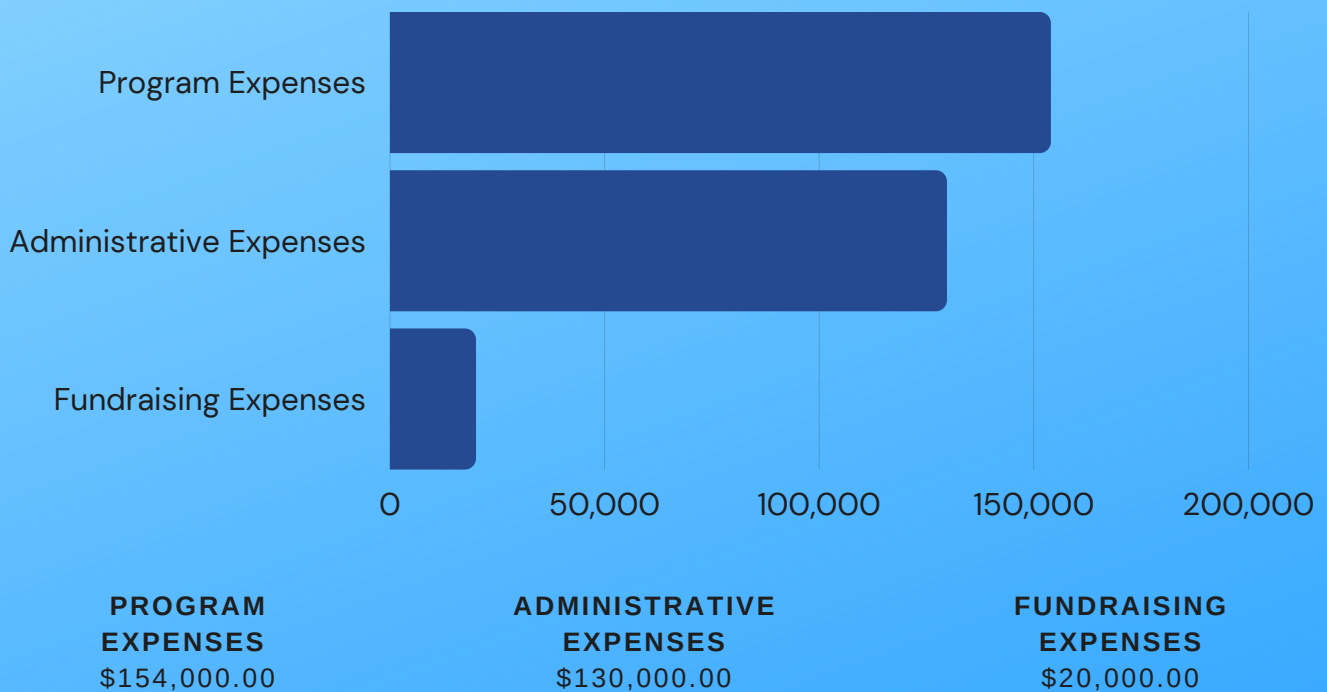
## MAIN SOURCES OF REVENUE

\$133,000 -Fundraising Events

\$124,000 -Grants & Donations

\$62,000 - KY Autism Licenses Plates

## PRIMARY EXPENSES



## TOTAL YEAR END NET INCOME

\$15,000.00

# Volunteers

During 2020, volunteers rallied together a little differently to help FEAT staff and board members carry out several “Healthy at Work” events. The completion of these events would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of our AFBI partners and many volunteers. Your service in terms of support for FEAT benefitted our programs throughout the year and have a profound impact on our organization. We had approximately 50 volunteers contributing over 200 hours for our fundraising events and overall program support.

Thank you to our Donors, Volunteers and Partners.



Lisa Callahan ~Loyal Volunteer ~



Rachel Williamson & Family FEAT 5K  
~Top Fundraiser~



Donna McGraw  
~ FEAT Volunteer of the Year~



Bobby Lee President ecotech  
~FEAT AFBI of the Year~



# FEAT Leadership



## SHELLIE A. MAY, BSN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FEAT announced Shellie A. May, BSN as the new Executive Director on May 11, 2020. She brings 25 years of personal experience in the area of advocacy for those with special needs. Her experience includes Medicaid, CBS, First Steps, IEP planning, home ventilation, home health/private duty nursing and all types of therapies. Shellie has passionately advocated on behalf of children and families for decades, serving on several state and local boards and committees focused on Kentucky's most vulnerable children.

Shellie grew up in Louisville, is a graduate of Sacred Heart Academy and holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the prestigious Donna Lansing School of Nursing at Bellarmine University. She has been married to her husband, John, for 27 years and have 25-year-old triplets, John Jr., Patrick, and Charlotte. As a mother of a medically complex son, Patrick, she has a unique perspective into the life and challenges of families and children with special health care needs.



## MONICA COOPER COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Monica is married to Brandon and they have three boys, Isaac, Ian and Elijah. Isaac and Ian both have Autism. She has over 12 years of personal experience in the area of advocacy for individuals on the spectrum. Her experience includes Medicaid waivers, respite care, CLS, First Steps and IEP planning. Monica is devoted to providing families hope, a sense of belonging and acceptance.



## MELISSA GERALDS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST

Melissa has a passion for serving in the non-profit world. She has helped Cedar Lake with their special events over the years and has worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters for 6 years as their Special Events Coordinator. She is married to Todd and has two daughters, Morgan who is currently serving in the United States Navy and Lexie.



## MELANIE H. WEST AFBI PROGRAM MANAGER

Melanie earned her B.A. in Communications from the University of Louisville. After a career in the banking industry, she took a different career path to become the CEO of her family. Melanie joined FEAT of Louisville in February 2018 becoming the Autism Friendly Business Initiative Program Manager. Being a Louisville native, she is passionate about this city and directly impacting families. Melanie is married to the love of her life Mark and has two children.

# 2020

## Board of Directors

Stuart Baird

Jim Ball

Debbie Barmore

Liz Braun - Secretary

Kyle Brown, Chairman

Jennifer Adams-Tucker

David Cosby Jr.

Jennifer Glassner

Jeff Gregory, Treasurer

Luke Hancock

Frankie Hilbert, Vice Chair

Joann Jolgren

Todd Metcalf

Jon Musick

Henrietta Pepper

Janet Pope, Ex-eficio

Stacy Trinkle, M.D., Ex-eficio

## 2020 Partners & Supporters

