

# *Building a Stronger*



# *Future*

## Letter from Executive Director



Dear Friends of CMR,

Each year, I see remarkable things happen—adults who have learned how to seek out and obtain resources to achieve their independence (and are now teaching others how to do the same); parents who have worked collaboratively with a school system to write an effective individual education plan for their child; and volunteers who have combined their time and talents to put together a perfectly orchestrated event, which will help CMR / The Arc of Cuyahoga County continue to provide services to adults and children with disabilities.

And yet, I continue to be humbled each time I meet one of these individuals in person—not only because the individual has achieved so much, but because in a small way, CMR has been privileged enough to have touched their lives.

In much the same way, I am grateful that the extraordinary members of CMR's board have chosen to devote their time and knowledge to an organization whose mission I so highly regard as necessary and purposeful. While I may serve as the captain of the ship, without the crew, CMR could not fulfill its mission.

Together, the crew—CMR's constituents, volunteers, board members and staff—have maneuvered through storms, steadied the ship and are now on the way to charting a new course that can rise to any challenge.

I sincerely thank you all for your guidance and perseverance in 2006, and I look forward to exploring new directions with you in the coming years.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia Norwood".

Cynthia Norwood  
Executive Director

## CMR At-a-Glance

The Center for Mental Retardation (CMR) is the local chapter of The Arc, the world's largest grassroots organization of and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

CMR's mission is to empower persons affected by mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities through advocacy, education and the promotion of activities that improve quality of life.

The agency was founded in 1962 by a group of parents, frustrated by the lack of support services and quality education available for their children. While many services now are available for families, the system is far from perfect. For 45 years, CMR has been an independent advocate fighting for the basic needs, safety and rights of children and adults with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities by helping families secure support services, financial assistance, housing, education and training, employment, health care and other services.



## *How does CMR help?*

- Provides information and resources to individuals and families to help them navigate the confusing public and private service systems
- Investigates and helps resolve issues that individuals or families might have with service providers
- Teaches individuals with intellectual disabilities how to protect their basic rights and receive equal access to services
- Serves as a watchdog for any agency or organization that provides services for individuals with intellectual disabilities

As part of **The Arc of the United States**, CMR works to advance public policy in the interest of protecting and enhancing the vital programs and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Through The Arc's Governmental Affairs Committee, The Arc has established the Disability Policy Collaboration, with United Cerebral Palsy, to focus on legislative, regulatory and legal issues at a federal level. Some of the issues on which we focus include:

- Health care – providing universal access to high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans
- Family support – supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live independently, have control over their own lives and participate fully in their communities
- ADA (American with Disabilities Act) restoration – protecting the civil liberties of people with disabilities
- Federal appropriations and budgetary issues – ensuring that federal funds are available to assist states to provide programs and services for people with disabilities and their families
- Assistive technology – advocating for funds that would help individuals in need of assistive technologies
- Direct support workers – making sure a well-trained, adequately compensated direct-support workforce is available to provide necessary supports and services to people with disabilities who live in community-based settings
- Education – ensuring that children with disabilities have a free and appropriate education as outlined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Housing – advocating for affordable and accessible housing options to allow people with disabilities to integrate into their communities
- Social Security – protecting and expanding the effectiveness of income support programs and their related health coverage programs

# CMR's 2006 Journey Log

In 2006, CMR directly served more than 2,300 constituents in Cuyahoga County through its programs and services. Through collaborative efforts, CMR touched an additional 2,000 people, having a widespread impact with respect to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities in the area.

## SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

### Partners in Policymaking®

CMR fulfilled its mission to effect systems change by offering Partners in Policymaking®, an internationally recognized training series that is designed for adults with disabilities and for parents of children with disabilities.

The program is designed to provide state-of-the-art knowledge about issues and policies related to disability and to help participants become more effective in influencing policy development at all levels. Currently, there are more than 20 Partners in Policymaking graduates in northeast Ohio.

In addition to offering Partners in Policymaking, CMR's advocates served on numerous committees and boards to help ensure the rights of individuals with disabilities.



*Tim McCormick presents on state and local advocacy.*

Members of the Partners in Policymaking class of 2006 achieved great results. One member became part of a national advisory board and another, as a result of her independent project, had her idea to reduce physical barriers to building access for people with disabilities accepted by local administrators of a community college.



*2006 Partners in Policymaking® Graduates*

## Individual Advocacy

CMR's advocates worked with adults with disabilities, and their families, to help them solve problems, provide information and link them to other service providers. CMR also served as an advisor to **People First of Cuyahoga County**, a self-advocate group that empowers adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities to speak out for their own rights.



*People First Advisor Kristal Kent and People First volunteers: Jessica Norwood, Linda Dunger and Marleen Clark*

## School-age Advocacy

CMR's advocates worked with parents of school-age children to provide guidance on everything from transitioning to pre-school to creating an individualized education program. In addition, CMR assisted parents by answering questions about the educational system and helped resolve issues that arose throughout the year.



*Make the Most of Your Money training session*

## Public Awareness and Education

CMR offered ongoing educational workshops, including the popular **Making Choices/Opening Doors** session. The two-part series, which was offered several times throughout the year, educates families about financial planning and residential options for their loved ones. CMR co-sponsors a Disability Summit with national experts on a variety of topics.



*Cindy Norwood and Sue Swenson at the Disability Summit*

## *2006 CMR Baker Walk*



## *2006 High Rollers Ball*



*Big-Prize Winner*



## 2006 Legacy Luncheon



*Mike Grady presents Ben M. Bonanno with his namesake award*



*Legacy Luncheon Sponsors and attendees: Brian Cappelli, Mark Hicks, Dan Waldeck, Dave Lockman, Patrick Saccogna, Paul Thomas*



*Legacy Luncheon guests: Mark Hicks, Chair Elizabeth Kelley and Tim White*



*Karen Baker receives award from Dick Russ*



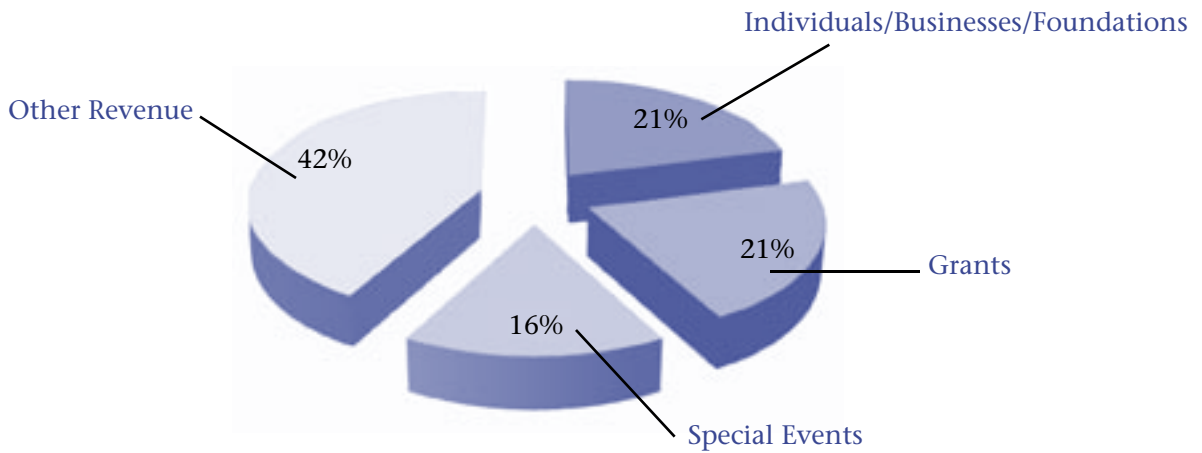
*Guests attending the Legacy Luncheon: Jeff Hastings, Kristal Kent, Paul Blumberg, Judge Mary Boyle and Suzie Hassett*



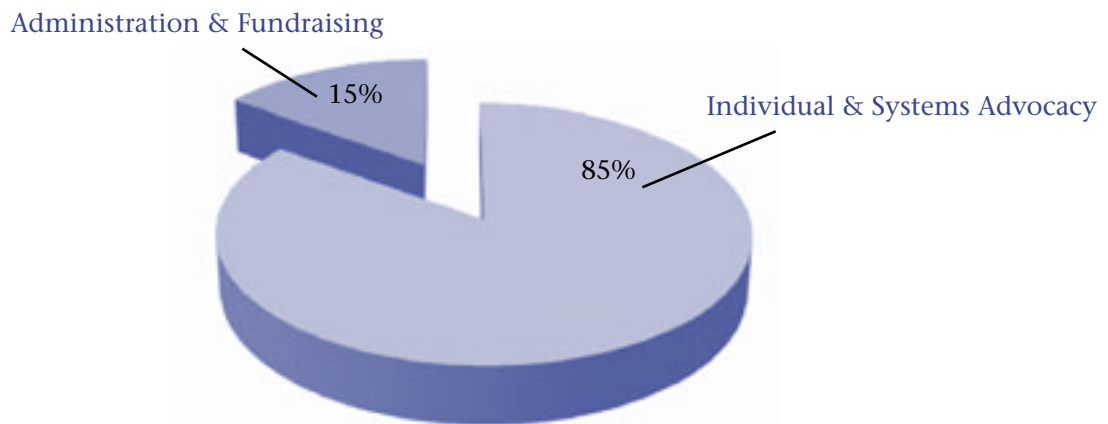
*Guests attending the Legacy Luncheon: Judge Dick Ambrose, County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora and Bishop Roger Gries*

## CMR's 2006 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

### FY 2006 Revenue \$410,259.00



### 2006 Expenditures \$365,123.00



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## RIDING THE WAVES OF CHANGE

As 2006 came to a close, the agency was already planning for 2007 – a year that would prove to push CMR to new heights and result in much success. The agency looks forward to sharing its 2007 highlights with you, as well as unveiling a new course that will help CMR ride the waves of the future.

## 2006 CMR Staff

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*For more information on The Arc U.S., visit [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)*

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