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Our Mission
Skills is committed to creating opportunities, providing choice and support, and promoting recovery to enhance all aspects of people’s lives.

Our Vision
We will redefine our industry through innovation, partnership, and inclusion—making people our priority.

Skills provides quality programs and supports to people with intellectual disabilities and mental health diagnoses in 17 counties throughout Pennsylvania.
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Skills thanks these businesses, organizations, and individuals who supported us during the past fiscal year.

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In memory of Doris Yetsko
Vicki Johns
Paula Laflerty
Joyce Lascoli
Rebaka Morris
David Nazaruk
Steven Rawlings
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# Skills Programs by County

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<th>County</th>
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<th>Employment Services</th>
<th>Home and Community Habilitation</th>
<th>Lifesharing</th>
<th>Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Residential Services</th>
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*Our programs provide volunteer opportunities in every community in which we operate.*
Adult Training Services

Skills Adult Training Services (ATS) provide people with disabilities the opportunities to help them reach their potential every day. They engage in activities that help them experience personal growth, enrichment, a sense of empowerment and greater independence. Some of the focus areas include: activities of daily living, communications training, health and fitness, community integration, volunteering, and social skills.

Adult Training Services provide support to more than 250 people in Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Juniata, Somerset and York counties. The Bedford ATS supports 33 people and the Blair ATS supports 68 people.

- The Johnstown AT facility expanded and moved to a bigger building in January 2015. The number of members is increasing (eight new admissions) as people transition from school into the program. One of the volunteer partnerships is with the Humane Society, making dog collars and treats.

- The Cresson AT facility employs 17 people with over 239 combined years of experience. They provide support to 35 people, 7 of whom live at home with their families. In addition to the normal schedule of social rehabilitation activities, the AT offer therapeutic art and music activities as well as dog therapy activities.

- The Ebensburg AT facility is a senior citizen oriented center, supporting 28 people, with four new admissions. The oldest participant in the ATS program is Verna, who is a young 87 years old. In addition to the regular activities, religious services are provided weekly. As part of the All Saints Multigenerational Program, which has been ongoing for decades, the seniors participated in the “R” Word Rally. There are plenty of community connections, including connecting with Bishop Carroll High School students who join the seniors for Christmas caroling and Easter activities. Occupational Therapy students from St. Francis University participate with the seniors as a part of their school curriculum.

- The East Berlin AT facility is deeply involved in volunteer service to the community. The 39 people in the program have medical and physical needs, requiring a great deal of hands-on support. This level of care is provided and does not compromise the programs’ activities. The people make a variety of items for the Hanover Hospital, including baby hats for the nursery and soup mugs for pediatrics. They support the local Senior Center, making items as requested, and they work with the Head Start Program through activities with the children. The people at the ATS regularly provide favors for Meals on Wheels to bring some cheer to the individuals when they receive their food. Other agencies who benefit from the ATS and their handiwork are the East Berlin Library and Cashman’s Hardware.

Behavior Support Services

Skills Behavior Support Services (BSS) provide support to adults with intellectual disabilities who also have a co-occurring mental health diagnosis. The services include the development of a functional behavior assessment, development of strategies to support the person based on the assessment, and the provision of training for the person to improve adaptive skills. The behavior support specialist often provides support to the person and team members in understanding mental illness and in accurate reporting to the psychiatric provider.

BSS provide support to 134 people in eight regions (Armstrong, Indiana, Bedford, Somerset, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Jefferson, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, and Lycoming, Clinton). The staff includes the Director of BSS, two Licensed Clinical Specialists, two Managers of BSS, and 12 Behavior Support Specialists.

A 60% growth has been seen in the number of people supported in the Lycoming, Clinton area. Due to the expansion in this region, we will hire a fulltime Behavior Support Specialist for this area in the 2015-16 fiscal year. In addition, a new Behavior Support Specialist will be hired in 2015-16 for the York, Adams, Cumberland, Perry regions to help establish a new program. All other regions either show a slight increase or remain consistent in the number of people supported.

The Trauma Informed Behavior Support (TIBS) Program in the Blair region expanded during the year.
- One additional Clinical Specialist was hired.
- TIBS was expanded to both Lycoming, Clinton and Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata.
- A TIBS curriculum was developed and all Behavior Support Specialists were trained.
- The number of people supported using a TIBS treatment model increased by 100%.
Skills Mental Health Services and Dual Diagnoses

Drop-In Centers
Skills drop-in centers are supportive, non-therapeutic places where people with mental illness come together to socialize and engage in activities that help them in their recovery process without therapeutic intervention. Approximately 160 individuals attend Skills drop-in centers in Cambria, Centre and Lycoming counties.

- **Vines of Hope**: Vines of Hope (VoH) in Ebensburg is an informal community center that provides a support network for people with mental health concerns — especially those who live or work in northern Cambria County.
  - We support an average of 10 to 15 people daily.
  - Members participated in the 4th Annual Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community (proceeds to Vines of Hope).
  - Members participated in the 13th Annual Candlelight Vigil in May. Members shared their stories of recovery with family members, staff and members of the community.
  - We promote, provide and participate in opportunities for: **Community Involvement** (community clean up, suicide prevention walk); **Independence** (shopping, cooking, cleaning); **Socialization** (game days, group discussions, crafts, holiday parties); **Entertainment** (movies, plays, dining out); **Physical Activity** (stationary bike, treadmill, Wii Dance).

- **Opportunity Centre Clubhouse**: At the Clubhouse, work and membership are key components for providing members with opportunities to develop skills, find jobs and housing, and engage in social activities. Opportunity Centre Clubhouse supports 100 active Clubhouse members in Centre County. There are 292 active and inactive members. Five members are actively volunteering in the greater Centre County region.

  This year’s Rose Cologne Volunteer of the Year Award went to Pastor Calvin Miller as an outstanding example of giving back to the community. Despite being a busy minister, Pastor Calvin serves on the Advisory Board of OCC, volunteers his time, and assists in fund raising.

Mobile and Site-Based Psychiatric Rehabilitation
The staff includes the Director, two PR specialists, three fulltime site-based and two fulltime mobile PR workers, one Per Diem worker, one PR assistant, and two van drivers. The average daily attendance of participants is 15 and the number of open participants is between 36 and 49.

**Site-Based Psychiatric Rehabilitation** provides support in Centre, Clearfield and Jefferson counties.
- **Wellness Program**: We have implemented a Behavior Health Home Plus Expansion (BHHPE) Integrated Care project and hired an RN Navigator, who will work collaboratively with participants in our PR programs who also have significant physical health concerns. Our goal is to help our participants navigate and coordinate their physical and behavioral health treatments, giving them better success in their overall wellness. Our staff have been trained to act as wellness coaches to support small incremental goals toward leading a healthier lifestyle.
- **Soap Pantry**: We have established an in-house soap pantry. Together with a PR worker, a mobile participant created a connection with the local Walmart distribution center. Skills receives approximately $2,000 of various products every six-eight weeks. Participants from across the company as well as the staff can utilize the pantry.
- **Six Word Memoirs**: The program has grown from a simple personal medicine exercise to so much more. Our presentation was accepted at the annual PRA Summit in Baltimore in June. We were approached by a new PR program in Pakistan and we are continuing to work our Memoirs for Recovery with them.

**Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation** provides support to people in Centre, Clinton and Lycoming counties.
- We have begun the wellness enhanced component of the program in Clinton and Lycoming counties, hiring a fulltime RN and a Wellness Coach. We work with the county mental health office and Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH) to identify high risk users of psychiatric and medical health. The program serves about 40 people.
- We have implemented a mobile program in Clearfield and Jefferson counties. The program started with a marketing campaign to providers, primary care physicians and other non-traditional referral sources, including homeless shelters, CYS and probation programs. The program has grown to three full time staff.
- We have received permission to extend our services into Blair county.

Program Accomplishments in the past year:
- We continue to integrate in the community by participating in events: Main Street (holiday parades, Chocolate Fest, Business After Hours, Heritage Days, Chili Bowl); Suicide Prevention Walk; Skills Candlelight Vigil (first time in Clearfield); *Pieces of Hope* art exhibit in the Clearfield County Library; and a presentation at the 2015 PRS Summit.
Employment Services

Finding gainful employment is very important to many of the people we support. Employment Services (ES) help people with disabilities find jobs that fulfill their career goals. Employment Services are provided in Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, and Lycoming counties. Some of the people at the Vocational Training program transition to the ES program. Others begin at ES once they are ready to find work.

In the Opportunity Centre Clubhouse, 27 members are working in competitive employment. Some of the businesses we work with include the County MH, DA and ID BSU, OVR, TJ Maxx, Walmart, Filmore United Methodist Church, PAWS, Scraps & Skeins, Giant Store, Goodwill, Faith Centre, Interfaith Human Services, and Penn State University. The Transitional Employment Program’s earnings are $17,990 and the member work hours totals 2,502 hours.

In Centre County, 56 people served are working at an average hourly wage of $9.14. Some of the businesses we work with include Duffy’s Tavern, Callao Café, Sam’s Club, Weis Market, PSU, Juniper Village (Brookline), Moyer’s Jewelers, Weis Markets, Kildare’s, Otto’s, Remodeling Workshop, The Autoport, The Faith Centre, McDonald’s, Quaker State and Lube, Best Western, Tire Town, Walmart, Burger King, The Deli, The Tavern, Goodwill, Pizza Hut, Penn Dot, Olive Garden, Taco Bell, The Corner Room, Ollie’s, Best Buy, Long John Silver’s, Kids Court, CCIS of Centre and Clinton counties, Centre County Homemakers, and Skills Residential Services.

The Skills Academy in Centre Region is in its planning and development stages as an alternative program designed to help people discover their life’s path through employment or volunteering. Currently, there are two individuals enrolled.

In Clinton, Lycoming counties, 32 people served are working at an average hourly wage of $8.81. Some of the businesses we work with include Walmart, Williamsport Hospital, Susque View Home, Penn College, Best Western, Lowe’s, Tractor Supply, Love Center, YMCA, K-Mart, Salvation Army, Panera Bread, Manor Care, All Things Bright and Beautiful, Lock Haven University, Nittany Minute Mart, Dollar Tree, Brother’s Pizza, Frito Lay, Burger King, Sam’s Club.

In Cambria County, Employment Services business partners are Torvian, Ebensburg Yamaha, Hoss’s Family Steak and Sea House in Ebensburg, Mt. Aloysius and Penn Cambria in Cresson, Ziegler Tire in Altoona, Safari Contract Cleaners, Chili’s and Laurel Management Holdings in Johnstown, Aikens Power Sports in Clymer, and Ideal Market in Vinco.

In Blair County, 24 members are working in competitive employment. Employment Services business partners are Martins, PennDot MVR Photo License Center, McDonald’s, Lowe’s, Weis, Walmart, Giant Eagle, Burger King, and Marzoni’s.

Vocational Training and Volunteering

People with intellectual disabilities participate in the Vocational Training (VT) program to become better prepared for community employment. They complete subcontract work for area businesses and industry as they earn both job skills and a paycheck. Many of the people who attend the Vocational Training program eventually transition to Employment Services.

The number of people participating in vocational training are 121 people in Altoona, 42 in Huntingdon, and 62 in Lewistown. Some business customers are:

- Huntingdon: Acco Brands, Containment Solutions, and Fastenal.
- Lewistown: Bonney Forge, Corvette America, and Trinity Plastics.

Centre County received eight new jobs from Supelco.

In Bedford and Blair counties, program participants contributed 3,737 hours of volunteering while people in Centre County volunteer time to make Boo Boo Bears for children in Mount Nittany Medical Center. York and Adams counties have people volunteering at Somerset Hospital, Jager Dog Park, Wings of Change Inc., Somerset County Humane Society and Somerset Senior Center.
Living Options

Home and Community Habilitation Services
This program provides support to people who live independently or with their families. They have achieved some level of independence but many of them still need support with day-to-day tasks and participating in the community. Whatever assistance a person requests, a Home and Community Habilitation (HCH) Services Specialist will work on goals and tasks to help him or her become more independent. HCH can be found in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Huntingdon, Jefferson, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, and Somerset counties.
In Blair County, the HCH Program supports 68 people and in Clinton, Lycoming counties, 21 people are supported.

Testimonial by Rich Spaid (Skills staff member)
“June 2015 will be considered a milestone in K.S.’s life. K.S. is a member of the Somerset Home and Community Habilitation family. Prior to June, K.S. was not in the best of spirits because she could no longer work outside, doing yard work and planting. Tami Boring, her DSP, had tried several different approaches to improve the situation, but was unsuccessful.

Ms. Boring, who is a dog owner, dog rescuer, and dog care advocate, takes her dogs to the Jager Dog Park, located at the Georgian Place in Somerset. While at the park one day, discussions sprang up between Ms. Boring and the park staff. She mentioned that she worked with a lady who loved to garden. The Jager Dog Park staff were excited to have a volunteer plant flowers and maintain the flower beds. When the idea was first offered to K.S., she was not receptive. Her HCH team met with her and K.S. agreed to give it a try.

K.S. is a different person since she started volunteering at the park. She has taken her knowledge of plants and flowers and made a wonderful park more colorful. Now, K.S. looks forward to her time at the dog park. She is very proud of her achievements and has been given permission to paint the statues of the dogs at the Jager Dog Park.”

Residential Services
Skills has 89 homes that meet the needs and wishes of the residents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The homes are modern and built for accessibility. Residents have their own bedrooms and decorate their home in the style of their choice. Skills provided supports to 251 people in community homes during the past fiscal year.

Clearfield, Jefferson Social Club (Skills and Thrills): The Social Club participated in a bake sale, Halloween and Christmas parties, parades, and weekly meetings of the committee, which is made up of people being served, staff, and community members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOME COUNT BY REGION</th>
<th>HOMES</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearfield</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntingdon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mifflin</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniata</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycoming</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lifesharing
Lifesharing is a residential option that provides adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) the choice to move in with a loving family. People with ID can choose where they want to live and with who they want to live. For Skills Lifesharing, building relationships between the person and the Lifesharing family is most important. The person and family are given several months to get to know each other to guarantee a perfect match. They are supported by Lifesharing Specialists and DSPs.

Skills Lifesharing provides support to 36 people in 32 homes: Bedford (2), Blair (21), Cambria (2), Centre (1), Clearfield, Jefferson (2), York, Adams (8).

- Average yearly cost to support a person in Lifesharing: $41,803
- Average number of years that people supported are in the program: 9.57
- Average number of years that Lifesharing families have been with Skills: 7.25
Testimonial from Judith Iris Quate, mother of Jason Quate of Windsor House in York County.

“In 1987, I was 37 years old and caring for twin boys, one diagnosed with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. We were living in a small row home in Philadelphia that was not handicapped accessible. We were living on my husband’s salary only, since I was needed at home to care for the boys. Jason’s care was 24, 7 and was placing a severe strain on our marriage and our family’s quality of life.

A very difficult decision needed to be made in order to give Jason a better opportunity to receive quality care and allow my husband, Michael, and pieces of our family life back together.

We found a medical facility in Abbottstown, Pennsylvania, called The Children’s Developmental Center. We found a new home for Jason that could give him the quality of care we were looking for. Jason’s quality of care did not change. In fact, it was even better. He was loved by everyone who had contact with him, and we considered Skills to be Jason’s family as well.

He lived in this facility for 20 years. In the time that Jason lived there, Skills of Central Pennsylvania took over the ownership of the facility. He was loved by everyone we considered Skills to be Jason’s community living home with three roommates. He had his own room, a window to see outside and continued 24, 7 quality care that he was receiving before. He loved living in a real home after so many years. We were ecstatic to see his enthusiasm flourish when we would visit him.

In 2004, Jason moved into a community living home with three roommates. He had his own room, a window to see outside and continued 24, 7 quality care that he was receiving before. He loved living in a real home after so many years. We were ecstatic to see his enthusiasm flourish when we would visit him.

On December 22, 2006, Jason passed away at the age of 28. His adopted family attended his funeral and hosted a memorial in his honor.

Jason’s family was so overwhelmed by the level of love shown the day of his memorial. We will never forget the wonderful level of quality care he received throughout the 20 years at Skills. The staff is considered to be a part of our extended family. I thank God every day for finding a place where Jason could live. Without the care provide by Skills, our family would not have the peace of mind we desperately needed back in 1987. I just recently wrote Jason’s memoir and in my book, Our Special Child: Jason’s Story, you will read how much we loved and appreciated the staff at Skills. I will be thankful for the remainder of my life that we made that most difficult decision in 1987.”
Quality Improvement, Compliance, and Training

Training
The Skills Quality Improvement, Compliance and Training Department has again focused primarily on training responsibilities during the last year. With a staff of four Training Specialists, the Training Department maintains training schedules within all of the regions to provide new hire orientation and annual trainings with the assistance of regional trainers. The Training Specialists also develop new training materials, keep training materials up-to-date in the regions, assist in the use of the training database, and are responsible for providing Person Centered Thinking and Frontline Supervision training throughout the agency. The Department is also responsible for monitoring the completion of all hours of training to ensure compliance with applicable laws, policies and regulations. During the Fiscal Year 2014 – 2015, Skills staff attended over 59,000 hours of training to comply with regulations and to help ensure the health and safety of the people being supported by Skills.

Compliance
In July 2014, Laura Chandler, Senior Director of Quality Improvement and Training assumed the responsibility for creating a compliance Department within Skills. Andrew Bollinger was hired in October 2014 to assist in the creation of the Department and is primarily responsible for conducting investigations of any issues of compliance within the agency. Conducting and completing the first “compliance investigation” occurred in January 2015. At the end of the fiscal year, the Department had completed 9 investigations.

Quality Improvement
During the past fiscal year, quality improvement activities focused on accomplishing the goals outlined in the Skills Quality Management (QM) Plan for 2013 – 2015 and developing goals for the new QM Plan for 2015 – 2017. The new QM Plan again focuses of objectives related to:

- ensuring incident management policies and procedures are followed,
- promoting employment and increasing the number of people we support who are employed, and
- reviewing and evaluating practices to ensure each person being supported receives the most inclusive, least restrictive services.

Skills Foundation
While traditional funding sources continue to be cut back, Skills Foundation provides an alternative source of income. Skills Foundation invests a portion of the funds raised for long-term sustainability of the Foundation, while using a portion for grants to the people we support for essential equipment and services not covered by traditional funding sources.

Your support, no matter how small, makes a tremendous impact. To provide an important gift please use the enclosed envelope or go to www.Skillsofcentralpa.org to donate online.

Additionally, donating to Skills has been made easier and more fun, and it is all thanks to AmazonSmile. Each time you make a purchase, 0.5% of that purchase is automatically donated by Amazon to Skills at no extra cost to you! To use AmazonSmile, simply log on to www.smile.amazon.com, search for SKILLS, and select it as your charity of choice. Happy Shopping!

Employment Services: If you know of a business that is hiring, contact Skills Employment Services. We work with people with disabilities to ensure they are ready for the job. For more information about Employment Services, contact Liz Koch at (814) 234-2330 ext. 317 or lkoch@skillsgroup.org

Industrial Services: Do you know a company that might outsource subcontracted work to a Skills workshop? Visit http://www.skillsofcentralpa.org/public/services/vocational_training.php for a list of Skills contacts in your region.

Lifesharing: Do you know a loving family who would open their home to an adult with an intellectual disability? Contact Sarah Shaw at (814) 949-4800 ext. 824 or sshaw@skillsgroup.org.
Compared to sector benchmarks: the organization spends a good amount of its resources on programs. Ninety-two cents of every dollar is spent on programs, as compared to the eighty-two cent benchmark.
Become a friend of Skills: As a friend of Skills, you will:

- receive our newsletters with success stories about the people we support
- hear about Skills special events
- be given opportunities to volunteer and plan special events

To become a friend of Skills, sign up on our mailing list at www.SkillsofCentralPA.org or call Gwen Auman, Skills Senior Director of Development, at (814) 238-3245 ext. 313 or email gauman@skillsgroup.org.

Now and in the future, we will be reaching out to our friends through email blasts. If you would like to receive updates on life in Skills, please notify Gwen Auman of your email address.

To learn more about Skills, please visit www.SkillsofCentralPA.org

The official registration and financial information of Skills of Central PA, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.