

# THE CENTER

INAUGURAL ANNUAL REPORT 2020

December 2020



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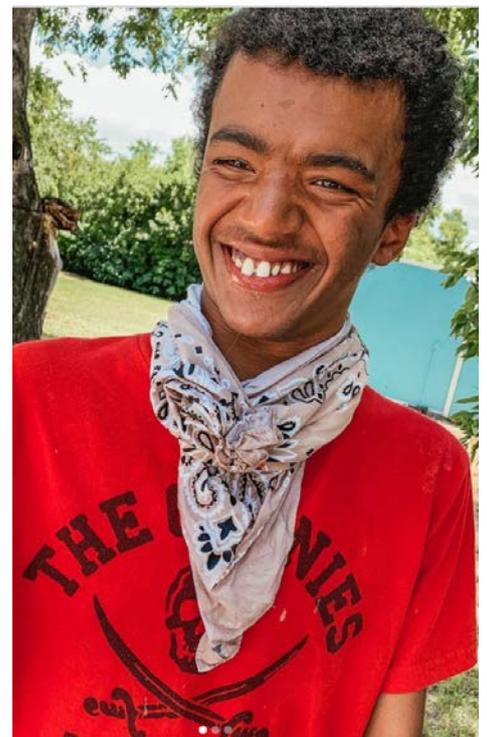


As a newly founded non-profit The New Transitions Center enhances the lives of young adults with special needs and the loved ones who support them by offering structured daily education and life skills programming at our community center.

We are small but mighty and this inaugural year was one for the books!

We have a lot to be grateful for despite all of the challenges we faced in 2020. For our first year of being open we learned lessons of resiliency and how important it is to support one another in our community.

We hope you enjoy reflecting on 2020 and look forward to what's to come in 2021!





## In Memory

### of Mr. Duncan Bender

Duncan had a laugh that bounced off the walls and loved playing piano – sharing his talent with his family and friends as often as possible. He was a great hugger and always had a smile on his face.

Duncan was the inspiration behind our mission. Dr. Jay and Risa Bender founded The Center to ensure that young adults with special needs, like Duncan, had a safe space to continue to learn and grow.

It is important for the Bender's that The Center honors the potential and contribution that its members have on the community with dignity and creativity.

As we grieve this heartbreak we also build upon our foundation in Duncan's memory. We are grateful for the time we did have with him and will always remember his spirit.

At the request of the Bender's we have established a [Founder's Fund](#) in honor of Duncan.

You can donate directly in honor of Duncan on our website: <https://www.newtransitionscenter.org/founders-fund.html>

## Reflections & Resiliency

### A Message from Amber Caldwell, MSc - Acting Executive Director

As I look back on 2020, the inaugural year for The Center I reflect on what it took to open our doors in January. Getting our "little blue house" up and running was challenging to say the least. Renovations, recruitment of staff and members, all of the logistics and back office management was overwhelming but we made it to opening day! The smiles on our member's faces made all of the blood, sweat and tears for the past few years worth it!

Just as we were getting our rhythm COVID-19 forced us to close our doors in March to keep our members, staff and families safe. We were fortunate to receive a payroll protection loan and maintained our team during the closure pivoting our services to support at-home learning and weekly bingo games! We took advantage of the closure to build out activities, reinforce our staff training, implement COVID-19 safety precautions and reopening protocols for June.

We reopened in style with new "wheels" thanks to a grant from The Heart Space Initiative. Our bus was the perfect symbol to remind us to stay positive as we stay resilient under this "new normal".

The summer brought us big staff changes. Our Program Director Cristin left to pursue career opportunities and our Life Coach Izaiah left to return to school – we gained a new team in Operations Director Laranda, Team Lead Tira and Life Coach Savannah. The transition was challenging as local school closures and COVID exposures caused schedule changes but the team remained flexible and invested in making The Center work!

The Fall was filled with creatively engaging our community participating in virtual North Texas Giving Day and hosting a COVID-19 safe "Trunk or Treat" event with great success.

As we settled into the winter we were faced with the devastating loss of our Founding Member Mr. Duncan Bender, the son of Founder's Dr. Jay and Risa Bender. This loss was unexpected and we are all still grieving as Duncan was the inspiration for creating The Center.

If I have learned anything from this inaugural year it is that our true north – our mission – is the foundation upon which we can lean on. It is the basis of our highs and provides guidance during our lows. We are here and hope to remain here to provide critical daily programming and care for those with significant developmental disabilities. We support their families and without our "little blue house" they would not have options. We could not do this without the support of our Founders, our Team, our Board, all of our Donors, the Families and Community we serve.

Thank you for having faith in our resiliency and Happy New Year!

# 2020 Highlights

## JANUARY

- Opened our Doors Jan 6, 2020!

## FEBRUARY

- Explored nature and learned about science

## MARCH

- COVID-19 Closure to keep our community, staff and members safe

## APRIL

- At home learning and Weekly Bingo!

## MAY

- Staff training and implementation of safety protocols

## JUNE

- Reopening with COVID-19 safety precautions in place June 1, 2020

## JULY

- Welcome New Staff Team!

## AUGUST

- Arrival of our "Wheels for The Center"

## SEPTEMBER

- Back to school, more learning & life skills!

## OCTOBER

- Community engagement "Trunk or Treat"

## NOVEMBER

- Gratitude and remembrance of Founding Member Mr. Duncan Bender

## DECEMBER

- Safe Holiday Fun!



This year has been filled with exciting highs and challenging lows but we came together as a team to make this inaugural year one for the books!

We could not have made it through all of the unexpected twists and turns of the year without the generous support of our community.

Special thanks to The Heart Space Initiative for their generous grant to fund our "Wheels for The Center" - we are so grateful for this valuable resource for our members.



# HELP US GROW

WHAT'S TO COME IN 2021!

## New Year - New Growth!

The New Year brings growth to our programs!

We are actively recruiting for new members and have updated our services to reflect the needs of our community.

Our "little blue house" is in need of some updates to the foundation and we hope to build our garden to provide flowers, veggies and produce this coming summer.

As the risk of COVID-19 lessens we plan to offer more community outings and events to share our space, advocate for our community and expand our reach.

We hope to build a network of volunteers and advisors to help assist us in reaching our goals.

2021 will be a year to stabilize our programs and ensure we maintain momentum.

As we learned from our inaugural year and adapting to the coronavirus - our space is limited. We must be creative in maximizing the use of the space but long term, in order to be financially viable, we must expand our space.

Our Board and leadership will be exploring options for expansion in the coming year but for now we are working hard to make sure we grow our program to its maximum potential.



## Support The Center

### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

At The Center we offer monthly membership options and for some the membership rate is not accessible. We hope to be extend at least 1 full-scholarship and up to 3 partial scholarships in the coming year to members. 100% of the Founder's Scholarship Funds goes to reduce membership rates for families in need. You can pledge to provide a 1 month scholarship or generously support an annual membership. Every dollar counts and every dollar means more access to the critical services we provide at The Center. Donate to the Scholarship Fund: <https://www.newtransitionscenter.org/scholarship-fund.html>

### YOU SHOP - AMAZON DONATES

When you use Amazon Smile to shop for your everyday needs, the holiday and for special gifts a portion of your sales is donated to The Center! All you need to do is link your Amazon Account to Amazon Smile and designate The Center as your charity of choice.

Visit our Website to Learn More: <https://www.newtransitionscenter.org/donate.html>

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