

PREFERRED EMPLOYMENT &
LIVING SUPPORTS
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Annual Report

FY 2021

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

The Ottawa County Community Mental Health “Empowerment Program” at the Macatawa Resource Center experienced significant growth throughout 2021 despite the ongoing challenges of the Covid pandemic. Additional space was developed and facility improvements were made to expand office and meeting space as well as add a new client run café that will become operational soon. This successful expansion was due largely due to the commitment of PELS leadership and staff to be “Make A Difference Everyday”. To support and problem solve in order to keep services open and to re-engage with the community as able.

Part of Preferred’s expansion efforts were in Allegan county working with individuals through supported employment services. While this has been very slow, we have opened opportunities with Allegan county CMH, MRS and BSBP agencies.


Preferred began working with MRS and BSBP on new supported employment programming under Griffin Hammis for new programming: Customized Employment. While this was relatively unsuccessful in 2021, Preferred will continue into 2022.

Addition and retention of staff was critical to support the expansion of services and addition of new clients’. Strong daily efforts were continued throughout 2021 to recruit and train staff. Included was a referral, hire on, and quarterly bonus program and the promotion of two internal staff, one for human resource support and the other for field supervisory visits Muskegon CLS leadership. A new ETS staff was added in the Ottawa county office. PELS was awarded technical assistance through Impart Alliance for 3 months to focus on recruitment and retention strategies. PELS began using a new recruitment program called MyApplicants and look to switch to a more digital platform for onboarding in 2022.

Participation with the SBDC Focus Four Consultants was initiated with PELS leadership and was successful in developing initiatives and improving meeting etiquette that substantially improved the productivity and quality of meetings and communication throughout the company. Inclusion of mid-level management in regular brainstorming and business development meetings is also occurring on a regular basis, usually about once a month.

Preferred became more regularly involved with a new membership with Incompass Michigan, an advocacy agency providing a variety of education and training sessions addressing current trends and practices in the field of rehabilitation. Preferred also became annual members of both the Lakeshore Museum Complex and the Hackley Museum of Art, which allows both staff and clients to use all of these facilities free of charge. Preferred continues to maintain membership with both the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and APSE.

The third company CARF review was conducted virtually this year and passed with excellent results and a 3 year accreditation.



An SEO/SEO marketing consultant team was recruited to support the increased virtual presence of PELS by identifying and implementing strategies to support recruitment of staff and expansion of services.

Participation in both MRS & DHHS provider rate studies was completed by both direct line and administrative staff. Likewise, Preferred instituted a new monthly Consumer Advisory Board for the Holland office that allows clients to provide input directly to the ownership team about things they would like to see implemented.

Succession planning to support the retirement of current president and owning partner Deb Tober was successfully implemented through her retirement on December 31, 2021. Samantha Scott was unanimously approved by PELS Leadership board to take on the role of President going forward.

After the reconstruction of Peck Street, Preferred completely re-landscaped the Muskegon office and also added a new, more efficient sprinkler system. In addition, PELS is continuing to get quotes on a new front entranceway at this office that will function more efficiently than the current set-up. In Holland, additional office space was acquired and furnished and a new vinyl flooring system was installed throughout the back half of the existing space. Two (2) new refrigerators and an additional microwave were also purchased as well as two (2) additional vans bringing to eleven (11) the number of small passenger vans owned and operated by PELS. Finally, a new internet service was installed in the Holland office and new ethernet cables to the front office area were run.



OUTCOMES

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Michigan Rehabilitation Services / Bureau of Services for Blind People

Throughout 2021, there were 71 overall referrals from Michigan Rehabilitation Services and The Bureau of Services for Blind People of which 58 were referred for Community Integrated Employment, CIE, in Muskegon, Ottawa, and for the first time in Allegan County as well. Services included Employment Preparation, Career Exploration, On the Job Evaluations, Job Development, Job Coaching, and 90 Day Retention Support. In addition, 9 people participated in Driver's Training classes with a 100% success rate in obtaining their Driver's License.

Preferred continued participation in a national pilot for Customized Employment for 3 people.

A new service, "Career Exploration" was offered throughout the year for 12 people. This service provides opportunities to actively participate and evaluate a variety of work setting to assist with development of a job goal. Preferred has worked with a variety of employers in Muskegon & Ottawa counties to develop these worksites and provide 1 to 1 job coaching support throughout the process.

Total numbers served and outcomes are as follows:

Referrals – 67 people, of which 58 were for Job Development, 35 were placed for a Placement rate of 60%. Of the 35 placed, 21 reached 90 Day+ for a 60% retention rate.

Long Term Employment Supports continued for 12 people sponsored by HealthWest in Muskegon and 10 by Ottawa County Community Mental Health. This service provided a seamless transfer of funding and allowed staff to continue providing support without interruption.

Pre-Employment Training Service, Pre-Ets was not contracted by Michigan Rehabilitation again this year due to a state mandate for the Centers for Independent Living, CIL, to get the contract.

COMMUNITY LIVING SUPPORTS (CLS) SKILL BUILDING

Health West Muskegon County – Preferred Living Supports provided 1 to 1 Community Living Supports for 20 people throughout the year, and continues to recruit staff to serve an on-going waiting list for services. 86 individuals served in 2021 across all programs

Skill Building Services were provided for both groups and individuals throughout the year, however participant numbers for Skill Building remain low in Muskegon.

Ottawa County Community Mental Health – The “Empowerment Program” at the Macatawa Area Resource Center offered services for * people throughout 2021. Community Living Supports, CLS, both individual and group were provided to promote independence and customized skill achievements. This was particularly challenging throughout the year due to the Covid pandemic. Skill Building services were provided for * people throughout the year. Skill Building goals were specifically designed to promote including ***. 105 individuals served in 2021 across all programs.

Preferred worked very hard to upgrade the areas of the building where services were offered this year including additional space, paint, floor tile, café counter, and additional equipment; computers, desks, chairs, stove, fridge, vacuums, and barista coffee machine.

COMMUNITY BASED WORK CREWS

Herman Miller - Preferred continued to provide training, supervision and support for 26 people working at 4 different Herman Miller Work Sites. The crews were successful in responding to the Covid protocol, while maintaining the necessary productivity for the company. The staff working at these sites went above and beyond throughout the year to assure the safety of our people and responding to not only daily but often hourly changes that needed to be made in schedules and transportation to meet our responsibilities.

Sunshine Cleaning – Custodial services were provided for three apartment complexes again this year five custodians were supported by Preferred staff with training, supervision, and transportation. This site provides transitional support to those interested in custodial work but not yet independent enough to work in the community. Workers are monitored and evaluated for promotion to Community Integrated Employment on an on-going basis creating new openings for others.

Hope College – Two individuals were supported throughout the year performing grounds and cleaning work. These people were determined many years ago to require 100% eyesight supervision. While they continue to be evaluated for an increase in independence, both have aged and continue to require this level of support to assure their safety