



# Annual Report 2018







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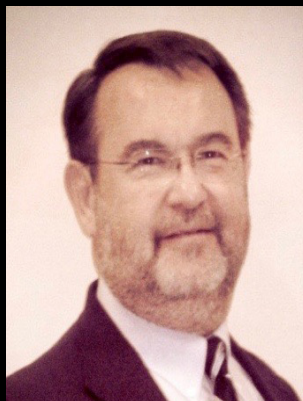
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# A Note from the Chair

To Governor Bill Haslam, the Tennessee General Assembly, and our valued partners and supporters



The Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Disabled is charged with providing oversight to the Community Rehabilitation Agencies of Tennessee (CMRA), the central non-profit designated to implement T.C.A. 71-4-701 --- 71-4-705. This statute directs state governmental entities to purchase products and services produced by Tennesseans with disabilities when competitive standards are met in the areas of quality, availability, and price.

We are pleased to report during fiscal year 2017 – 2018 the program has again experienced tremendous success; 444 individuals were employed in this program, many of who would not have had a job if it were not for this statute. About \$10 million in gross revenue was generated and as a result real jobs employing Tennesseans who otherwise, in most cases, would be dependent on public assistance in order to survive. This statute has given our fellow citizens the opportunity to be employed and able to have developed the dignity and self-sufficiency that goes along with being a contributing member of our state and communities, rather than living off tax dollars in the form of public assistance. These are real jobs including occupations like grounds maintenance, janitorial services, operating car washes, vehicle inspections, commercial grease trap cleaning, and very significantly providing facility management to all rest areas across the entire state of Tennessee. In addition to these services there are products sold under this program such as drug testing kits, laboratory services, incontinent products, female hygiene products and even premium coffee!!!

As we have previously noted every citizen of our state benefits from this program; first and foremost, providing our citizens with disabilities the deserved opportunity of meaningful, gainful employment in order to live more normal lives. Other beneficiaries of the program include support staff, state purchasers, and every citizen of our state as taxpayers.

The dedication of the Committee, CMRA, and all of our enthusiastic stakeholders working with this program are all to be commended for their hard work each and every day to make this program successful.

Hopefully, as you carefully review this report, you will again see what this program has accomplished for so many with no real added cost to state government. You will be impressed, as we are honored to serve as members on this committee, and to be involved with a program that is doing so much good for so many. This is one of those unique programs that is a 'win/win' for everyone involved. It is cost effective, saves tax dollars, and provides employment opportunities assisting in nurturing self-sufficiency for our Tennessee family now and into the future.

Sincerely,

President, Goodwill Foundation of Knoxville, Inc.  
President and CEO Emeritus, Goodwill Industries-Knoxville, Inc.  
Chair, The Committee for the Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Disabled

# TRUE DEVOTION



*Mark Edmonds receives the "You Rock" award from Easterseals CEO Tim Ryerson.*

Courage, drive, and dedication are what define Mark Edmonds. After his cancer diagnosis about a year ago, he has never faltered in his duties or responsibilities as the Rest Area Coordinator over the Grundy and Marion County Rest Areas on I-40. Others who know Mark from Easterseals Tennessee to CMRA to TDOT are astonished and proud of his efforts at maintaining a balanced lifestyle and his continuation to strive for excellence in his job over the past year.

Whether patiently waiting at doctor visits or undergoing cancer treatments, Mark continues routine communication with his staff through multiple texts or phone calls. He understands in order for an operation to run smoothly, certain tasks, inspections, and reports have to carry on. As such, he ensures that nothing gets swept underneath or pushed to the side. Consequently, Mark worked remotely when needed until he could be back on the job later that day, never changing or letting life faze him. To add, Mark had plenty of sick and vacation days available to him, but his focus was always to get back to work as soon as possible.

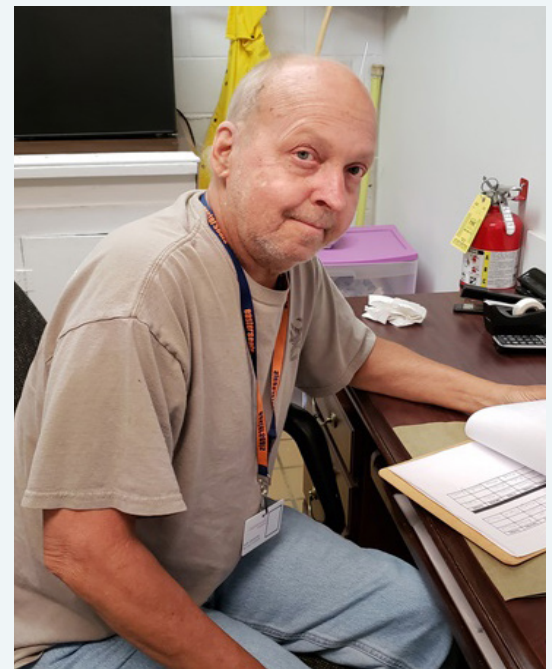
Even to the extent when wheelchair bound, Mark learned how to utilize a wheelchair, drive himself safely to the Rest Area, get out and utilize the wheelchair to get around the Rest Area to support others. Mark was so determined to not allow any limitations get in his way, he was only wheelchair bound for a short-period of time as he regained his strength.

Mark is a man of faith, whose mindset and actions are truly influential. His work ethics are a great inspiration to his staff, and in return, the respect that his staff has for Mark goes beyond just a role of a supervisor, they consider him a friend. When Mark has a hard day of treatment, the staff is very supportive of him- no questions asked. On occasion, Mark's staff has known him to be weak and tired; yet, they have discovered him mowing the Rest Area grounds so travelers can enjoy a stop off the highway and take in a little Tennessee nature. Now that is perseverance and loyalty! Our Director of Programs, Jennifer Wang, describes Mark's tenacity as "the truest form of dedication I have ever seen". She explains "his perspective on his life is absolutely amazing". Mark was bestowed with an Easterseals "You Rock" award honoring him as a role-model.

Smiling, Mark reflects that "he is not going to let cancer interfere with his life no matter what obstacles he has to jump through". Currently undergoing chemotherapy and improving, he basically faces his challenges stoically and with determination, 24/7. He truly epitomizes how commitment and fearlessness enable ability and success. What a fabulous example Mark is to all the individuals that Easterseals supports and serves.

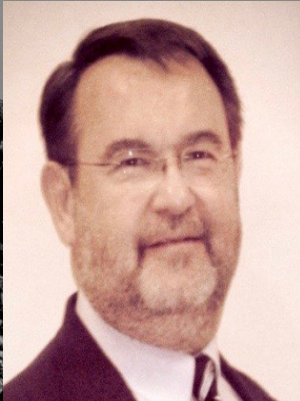
Remember, if you are heading up Monteagle Mountain towards Sewanee or on your way back to Nashville from Chattanooga, take a break at the Grundy or Marion County Rest Area and let Mark know how much you appreciate his true devotion to his community and job. You will be glad you stopped in.

*Mark Edmonds (Rest Area Coordinator for Grundy and Marion Counties)*





## The Committee for the Purchase from the Blind and other Severely Disabled



**Robert G. Rosenbaum, Ed.D.**  
Chairman  
Representing work centers that support people with disabilities



**Michael Barbour**  
Representing the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



**John Bissell**  
Representing the Department of General Services



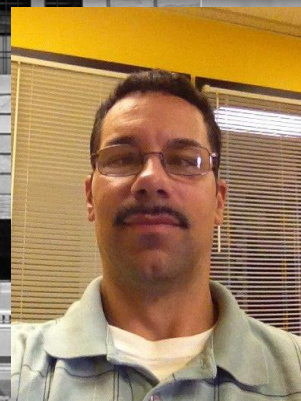
**Conya Mull**  
Representing the business community



**Tim Drown**  
Representing the Department of Finance and Administration



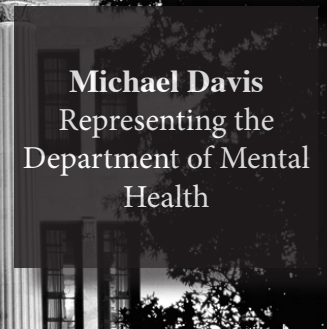
**Paula Knisley**  
Representing the Department of Human Services



**Louis Galbreath**  
Representing work centers for the blind



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**Michael Davis**  
Representing the Department of Mental Health

Since 1991, the state of Tennessee, and CMRA, as the designated central non-profit agency (CNA) selected to administer the program, have worked diligently to identify opportunities for workers with disabilities in local communities across the state. CMRA's partnership with various non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and advocacy groups across the state, have helped Tennesseans with disabilities play an integral role in the effective function of state and local government as a result of their meaningful employment contributions.





## **Providing Products & Services to State and Local Governments**

**- 65% of work hours performed by Tennesseans with Disabilities**

### **Our Customers**

Metropolitan Government of Davidson County  
Motlow State Community College  
Nashville State Community College  
Roane Community College  
Volunteer State Community College  
Tennessee State Departments  
Board of Regents  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Children's Services  
Department of Commerce & Insurance  
Department of Corrections  
Department of Economic & Community Development  
Emergency Management Agency  
Department of Environment & Conservation  
Department of General Services  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities  
Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
Department of Revenue  
Department of Safety  
State Parks  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Military

### **Our Business Partners**

Abbott- Gretna, Louisiana  
Dawn of Hope - Johnson City  
Easter Seals of Middle Tennessee  
Evergreen Life Services Tennessee  
Goodwill Industries-Knoxville Inc.  
Hilltoppers - Crossville  
Impact Centers - Columbia  
Independent Opportunities - Jamestown  
JLL - Global  
Journeys In Community Living - Murfreesboro  
Liquid Environmental Services - Nashville  
Madison-Haywood Developmental Services - Jackson  
Memphis Goodwill Inc.  
New Horizons - Nashville  
Pacesetters - Cookeville  
Progressive Directions Inc. - Clarksville  
Taylor Communications - Murfreesboro  
Woodard Brothers Distributing - Nashville

## **Our Products & Services**

Car wash and vehicle inspection services  
Commercial grease trap cleaning  
Custodial services  
Parks maintenance  
Dishwashing  
Facility management of 19 Tennessee Rest Areas

Grounds maintenance services  
Feminine hygiene products  
Incontinence products  
Premium coffee  
Drug testing kits/laboratory confirmation services  
Custom printed forms





## CMRA Board of Directors



Evelyn Robertson  
Chair



Rep. Johnny Shaw  
Vice Chair



Jennifer Krahenbill  
Secretary



Tonya Copeland  
Treasurer



Parke Pepper



Don Redden

Created by T.C.A. 71-4-701 – 71-4-705, the program seeks to employ Tennesseans with disabilities in providing goods and services to state and local government agencies. People with disabilities often face unemployment levels of 60 percent or more. Through this program, there are at any given time, over 300 people with disabilities employed statewide, providing products and essential services to state and local governments. In turn, these employees benefit through increased independence, involvement within their communities, and reduced need for financial and personal supports.





# WORKING TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY

**W**hile CMRA is committed primarily to the employment of people with disabilities, a paycheck isn't the only benefit for employees. Integration, in the field of disability services, means providing opportunities for interaction with non-disabled people at work and in their communities.

## INTEGRATION

**I**n *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999), the Supreme Court held that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits unreasonable segregation of individuals with disabilities, and both policies and legal decisions since then have supported the idea that in work environments it is inappropriate to segregate people with disabilities.

## DIVERSITY

**C**MRA makes it a priority to work with business partners to integrate all contracts as much as possible, with a goal of ensuring that an employee with disabilities will have the same level of interaction with non-disabled people as would an employee without disabilities.





## CMRA Staff



Robin Atwood  
Executive Director



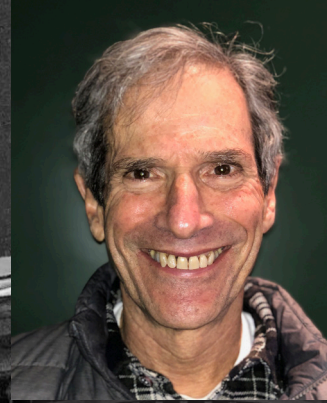
Amanda Dean  
Finance Director



Kevin Scarborough  
Contracts Manager



Tara Lawson  
Administrative Assistant



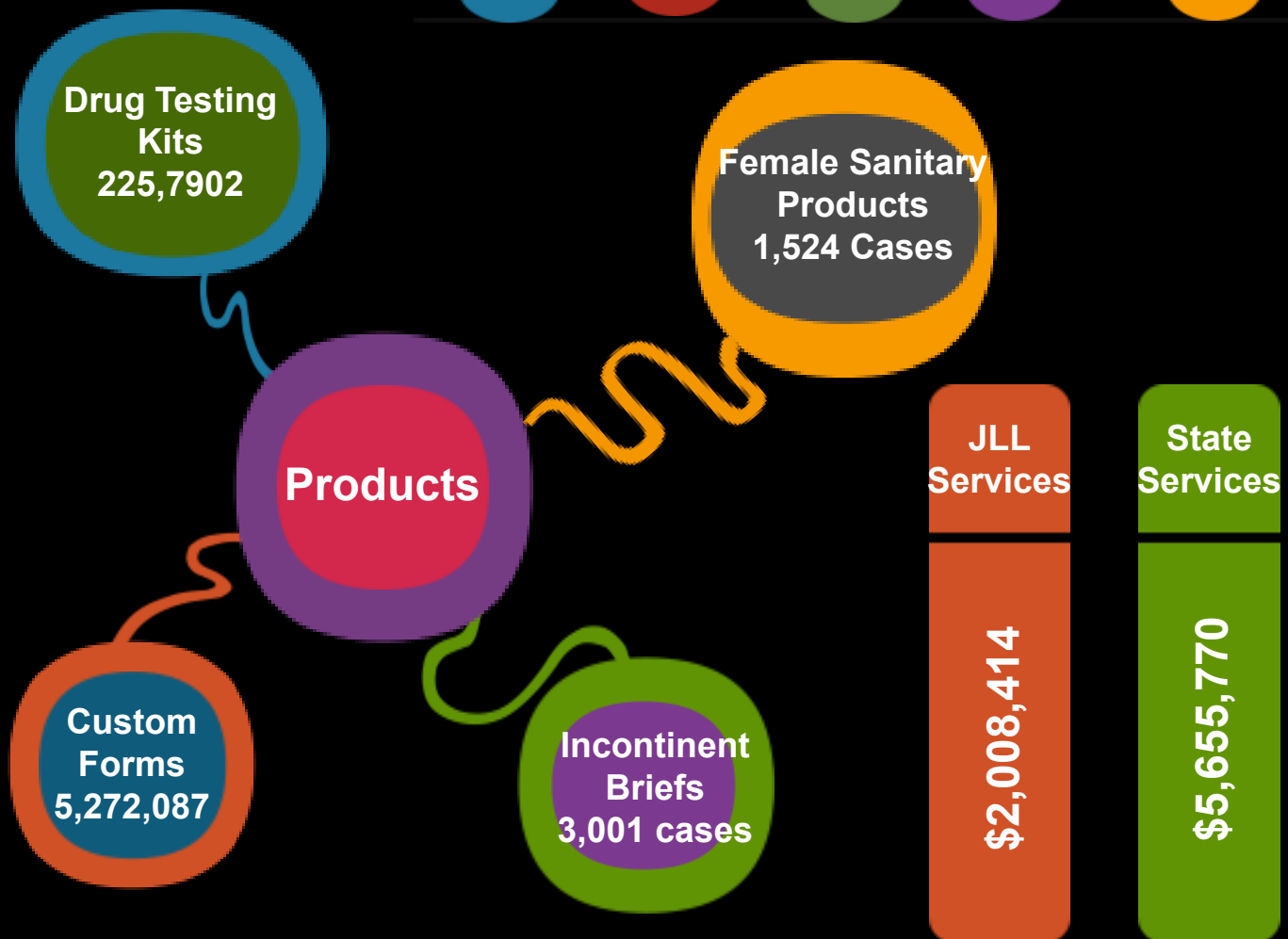
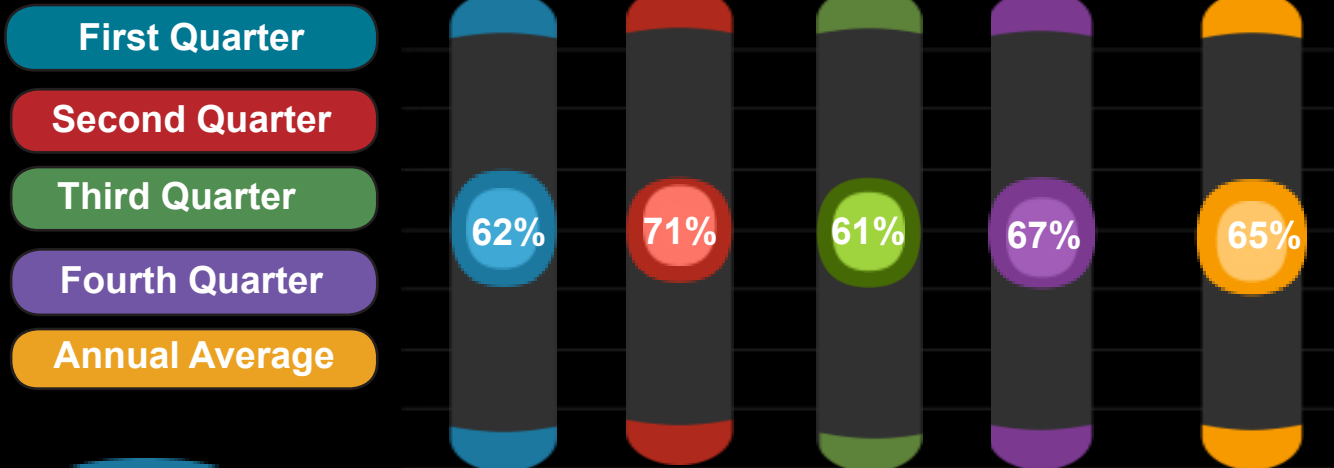
William Hubbard  
Legal Counsel

Community Rehabilitation Agencies of Tennessee (CMRA), is the designated Central Non-profit Agency (CNA) managing operations according to the program's statute. CMRA's staff of five works with both non-profit and for-profit businesses to provide products and services to government purchasers, while ensuring that at least 51% of the direct labor hours is provided by employees with disabilities. CMRA staff members seek contracting opportunities, negotiate with prospective partners, seek competitive bids from vendors, assist in staffing contracts, create certification proposals, and implement the contracts once certified. In addition, CMRA inspects work sites, handles invoicing and payment distribution, ensures compliance with the program statute and all other applicable regulations and mediates any questions or differences between business partners and customers. As employment-related concerns and expectations for people with disabilities change, CMRA will continue to work with other agencies and advocates to help provide increased opportunities for employment and advancement.



# FINANCIALS

Percentage of direct labor hours  
Performed by individuals with disabilities.



Every certification proposal includes a detailed budget for review by the state Certification Committee, which ensures that every product or service will meet the standards for quality, availability, and fair market price. The Certification Committee then sends its recommendation to the state Procurement Commission before the contract is finalized. This can take longer than a conventional bid process, but it ensures that local and state government purchases will be competitively priced and that all costs are properly documented, which benefits everyone involved, including employees, purchasers, and ultimately Tennessee taxpayers.

### Demographics of employed individuals with disabilities.

20.20%  
African  
American

1.3%  
Hispanic

71.52%  
Caucasian

1%  
Other

Grease Trap  
Services  
\$200,985

Rest Area  
Facilities  
Management  
\$4,107,283

Annual Gross  
\$9,991,542  
CMRA Revenue  
\$565,559

Janitorial & Lawn  
Services  
\$3,349,611

Products  
\$2,333,663





*James Perry is employed by CMS at the TDOT Region II facility*

## PIONEERING THE WAY

*A story by Alex Williams CMS Human Resources Director*

Certified Maintenance Service (CMS) is a Full-Service Janitorial Company based in Chattanooga Tennessee. We specialize in the cleaning maintenance of commercial property. We have been providing janitorial services in the Chattanooga Tennessee and surrounding areas for over 25 years. We have over 150 janitorial contracts and staff over 200 employees.

Over the past five years, our company has experienced tremendous business growth. One account that was unlike any other account that CMS has ever serviced was the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). We were awarded the janitorial contract through CMRA for the TDOT region 2 complex in Chattanooga Tennessee.

What made this accounts unusual for us is that we were required to staff the account in such a way so that at least 51% of the direct labor hours are to be performed by individuals with disabilities. This was very different for us and we were a bit reluctant about employing people with disabilities. We felt that we

already get enough complaints from contracts we have staffed with people that do not have a disability. So, this was very new for us as a company and we don't like losing accounts due to quality of service, because that is something that we can control in our industry. Issues in quality may come from a cleaner that is doing a poor job cleaning a building.

However, our experience with employing disability workers has been astonishing. As they have been a great addition to our workforce. We really appreciate their energy and excitement for work.

Our experience from employing people with disabilities has been a very interesting learning curve. In the beginning of staffing our accounts with people that have disabilities we were a bit unsure whether they would workout. We felt this way until after seeing how they worked. We were amazed by there attraction and motivation towards work. Also, by their consistency towards showing up on time for there scheduled shift. They have really shown us that they can work just as good or better than people we employ that do not have a disability.

We have learned that when It comes to employing people with disabilities the spectrum is very wide in terms of what task they can complete and what may be a bit overwhelming for them to handle. Some can read and understand instructions that are given to them without having the need of a guide (i.e. Job Coach), others not so much.

*"Pioneering the way" continued on page 11*



*Krystal Barker is employed by CMS at the TDOT Region II facility*





They will require guidance and a more hands on approach to completing an assignment. Despite this notion their work ethic is exceptional especially for our industry, which typically has very high turnover of more than 200% per year. We have not had much of any turnover with our current staff of disability workers. The agencies that helped us in the process of staffing our CMRA contracts were very understanding of our industry and what we expected from our employees. The agencies only sent us potential applicants that they felt can work in janitorial and had the interest to do janitorial work. This made the selection process much easier for us.

Another benefit that we found from employing people with disabilities is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). This was new for our company to understand. After learning about how the tax credit worked we soon realized the financial benefit for our business from staffing employees that qualify for the WOTC. This benefit was a great incentive for us and has encouraged our company to offer more opportunities for people with disabilities.

What we have found from employing the people with disabilities is that they just want to be treated just same as anyone else that we hire. Most other employer's in our industry may not be giving people with disabilities a chance. This notion is something that CMS now overlooks, and we are much more open to offering people with a disability an opportunity with us. This experience has made a significant positive impact on our company. Some of the disability employee's have been able to integrate with other employees in other accounts that we have outside of TDOT. This project with CMRA so far has been a great success for our company. Overall this has been a great experience for our company's growth. We truly value employing people with a disability.



*Ashlyn Giltraps is employed by CMS  
at the TDOT Region II facility*

*Aerial view of the Tennessee Department of Transportation Region II Complex.  
Certified Maintenance Service employs 18 Tennesseans with disabilities at the  
complex through the CMRA program*







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