

Executive Summary: In 1953 a Mom wanted her 8 year-old daughter with Down syndrome to receive an education and public schools were simply not an option – the little girl was not welcome there. Leona Receveur, with support from the community and Advent Christian Church, started the first school in Indiana for children with disabilities initially serving six students. With time, that humble beginning grew into Rauch, Inc. which now provides an array of support services to approximately 1000 individuals per year - in our homes in the Hawthorn Glen subdivision, in day programs in our Charlestown Road facility, in our workshop and lawn care enterprises, in any place that a deaf or hard of hearing person needs interpreting services, in transitioning high school students from school to life, in all seven counties we serve where people are looking for employment and in our children's services. The primary way we have continued our support for children is through the First Steps program in seven counties in Southern Indiana with our 50+ therapists assisting over 500 children each year ages birth to three years of age in a one on one setting in the child's home. In this program, multiple therapies are offered including Developmental, Speech, Physical and Occupational. While there is no disputing that this program is effective and the therapists do a great job improving children's skills and ability to learn, First Steps is challenged to offer much assistance to children that need help with their communication and socialization skills with other children in a group setting. Without support in these areas, many children with disabilities will struggle to adjust to this situation in their first pre-school or school experience.

In an effort to address the need for training in these areas, Rauch created the Grow and Learn (G&L) Program at our facility on Charlestown Road. Rauch has worked to directly assist thousands of children over the years in overcoming physical, mental, emotional, medical and developmental challenges. The children served through the proposed expansion of our intensive clinical developmental therapy services are all facing one or more of these types of challenges. This program is making a real and measurable difference in children's lives by improving a variety of skills, addressing their challenges, and boosting their abilities to achieve each individual's best, most meaningful life. No other programs of this specific format are currently offered in Rauch's immediate geographic area. Rauch offers this program because of its great importance and relevance to the families we serve. Services target children with identified developmental delays; diagnosed physical, mental, medical, or emotional conditions; and those who, without services, will have a substantial potential for negative developmental outcomes.

The goal of the program is for participants to demonstrate significant and sizeable benefits in at least one of these developmental domains: Cognitive, Communication/Language, Fine Motor, Gross Motor or Social Sensory.

The 2005 High Scope Perry Preschool Study demonstrated a correlation between the impact of quality early intervention programs and their long-term effect on participants. The study divided the subjects into two groups. One group received a high-quality preschool program and the comparison group received no preschool program. The results revealed that **97% of the study participants who had the high-quality preschool experience did better than the non-**

participating group. These statistics become even more compelling when you consider that children with a disability are often already at a developmental disadvantage. During the critical first three years of life, the brain is making essential synaptic connections that lay the foundation for cognitive development in childhood and into adulthood.

Service Location: Services will be located at Rauch's original location at 2525 Charlestown Road, New Albany, Indiana 47150.

Referral Process: Rauch, Inc. partners with local physicians, First Steps of Indiana, service coordinators, Maternal Child Health Services, Women Infants and Children's (WIC) Program, Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS), and other community agencies to identify eligible participants in need of services.

Eligibility: Eligible participants include those with a diagnosed or verified developmental delay of 25% in one area of development or 20% in two areas of development as determined by a developmental assessment. Also included are those with a suspected/biological risk factor for poor developmental outcomes.

Rauch, Inc. respectfully requests \$50,000 over two years to expand the G&L program to mitigate and reduce the factors that place children at risk for developmental challenges by increasing clinical group developmental therapy services to children from two days per week to four days per week. Rauch breaks the year into four, thirteen-week segments offering morning and afternoon sessions (four hours each) to small groups of four to five to maximize the number of children benefiting from the services. For example, one group of four to five would go on Mondays & Tuesdays and an alternate group of four to five on Wednesdays & Thursdays – children under the age of three going four days per week would not be beneficial. For the two year proposed expansion of services, Rauch will provide a total of 416 group sessions to a total of 80 participants. With the expansion, the number of children impacted by G&L will grow to approximately 160 over the two years and will provide the amount of statistical data necessary to definitively demonstrate the benefits of small group intensive therapy. Our hope is that the data resulting from the expansion of the G&L program, will validate the value of providing small group therapy sessions to funders like Metro United Way and the Crusade for Children leading to the community wide expansion of small group therapy sessions for young children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities face substantial challenges with school and through G&L we have seen that by significantly improving the foundation on which all of their future learning will be based offers them their very best chance to lead the life that they desire and deserve. Metro United Way recently presented a study which revealed that 2/3 of students who reach 4th grade without proficient reading skills end up on welfare or in prison. Let's do all that we can to build a strong foundation for success in school and significantly reduce the number of children with disabilities that are included in that large percentage of students with poor reading skills in the 4th grade.