



**MMI** **100**  
a century of caring

MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE | 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



***The Munroe-Meyer Institute's mission is***

*to be **world leaders in transforming the lives** of all individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs, their families and the community through outreach, engagement, premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.*



# The MMI Experience Pledge

**We pledge:** To pursue the following concepts in all our activities and to work with each individual's unique attributes – particularly their strengths – in order to personalize care that makes a meaningful difference.

## We will promote:

### FUNCTION by

- Partnering to work with you rather than on you.
- Respecting your way of doing things.
- Empowering you to understand your health care needs and make informed decisions.
- Providing support to reach your potential at school, work and throughout the community.

### FITNESS by

- Recognizing physical activity is important to health and wellness and comes in many different forms.
- Reducing individual and community barriers to movement and fitness.
- Advocating for policies to build a healthy inclusive community.

### FUN by

- Recognizing that EVERYONE wants to have fun.
- Promoting inclusive accessible leisure activities in the community.
- Expanding opportunities to enjoy time with the people you choose as friends.

### FAMILY by

- Supporting you and your family as you meet life's challenges and opportunities.
- Following your lead.
- Providing services and resources that are meaningful to you and your family.

### FRIENDS by

- Providing tools that promote and enhance meaningful healthy relationships.
- Encouraging peer connections.
- Recognizing you as a fellow citizen and neighbor.

### FUTURE by

- Valuing independence, inclusion, privacy, self-determination, employment and education.
- Keeping your expectations and dreams in view at all times.
- Challenging and supporting you in raising your own expectations in life.
- Embracing people-first language and principles.
- Embracing technology to improve services.

# A Transformational Mission



Transformation.

Evolution.

These are powerful words, words full of promise and hope. In this year's annual report, we are proud to share with you some of the Munroe-Meyer Institute's stories of transformation.

There's the literal transformation of MMI's home. The unique, family-focused building, which will host MMI's next century of caring, continues to come together as we ready for its opening in 2021.

There's the transformation in the lives of our young friend Addison and her family, who came to MMI looking for help and discovered a place that would be life-changing for them.

There's the evolution in technology that MMI develops and implements, allowing our providers and researchers to consistently be leaders in discovery and implementation of exciting new ideas to improve the lives of the families we serve.

And there's the evolution of care strategies showcased in our new integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, designed to make visits to MMI patient friendly and family-centric, while providing multidisciplinary and interprofessional services.

As our families know, transformation can be challenging and anxiety-producing.

We are here to help! At MMI, we continuously strive to be the most knowledgeable, the most proactive, the most forward-thinking, the most compassionate. We partner with families to provide their loved ones the tools they need to be successful at home, in school and in their community.

As you read this report and learn about some of these transformative efforts, I want to thank you all for partnering with us on this journey. Transformation and evolution have been, and will remain, constant features of MMI on which our mission is built. We not only grew but evolved and transformed over the last century, and in a century from now we will be almost unrecognizable. But the pillars of our labor will be foundational for their successes, just like today's achievements rest on the shoulders of builders who came before us.

Change in how we serve is inevitable, but the vision and mission endure centuries. Our core mission – caring for our families and serving them to the best of our knowledge – will never change.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Mirnics', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D.**

Director and Hattie B. Munroe Professor  
The Munroe-Meyer Institute

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Life-Changing Experience ..... 6

Putting It All Together ..... 8

Dream Home ..... 10

A Century of Caring ..... 13

Cutting-Edge Intervention ..... 16

MMI Highlights ..... 19

Board Highlights ..... 26

MMI by the Numbers ..... 28

Foundation Message ..... 31

**MMI Annual Report 2019**

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# A Life-Changing Experience

Early intervention services have huge impact on a small patient.

It was two years ago, in Tennessee, that Kelly first heard the three words that would change everything for her family:

## ***“Autism Spectrum Disorder”***

When 4-year-old Addison was born, she was not breathing. She spent two weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit before Kelly and her husband could take her home. As a result, Kelly was checking developmental milestones carefully, and she noticed when Addison wasn’t speaking at 10 months. But the family’s doctor told them, “We’ll wait and see how things go.”

So Kelly continued to monitor Addison’s milestones, and the gap between Addison and other children became more pronounced.

Addison wasn’t interested in playing with kids her age. She still wasn’t talking as she approached her second birthday and not making eye contact, either.

“She would cry for hours, and I didn’t know why. I’d take her to the emergency room thinking something was wrong, but it always ended up just being ‘behavioral.’ ”

Kelly took Addison to a day care, and the day care repeatedly would call within 15 minutes of her dropping Addison off – “You have to come get her, she’s been crying, and she’s hurting herself,” they’d say.

By the time Addison was officially diagnosed on the autism spectrum, it was no surprise.

“We received the diagnosis on May 30, two years ago,” Kelly said. “It was my birthday.”

*Addison works with her therapists at the Munroe-Meyer Institute during a recent, daylong visit to the institute that included feeding therapy (previous page) and occupational therapy (top and bottom at right).*

*Addison's mother describes the family's experience at MMI as "life changing."*

Addison was 2 and newly diagnosed on the autism spectrum when Kelly first heard another three words.

## ***"Munroe-Meyer Institute"***

They were at an appointment with an applied behavioral analysis (ABA) specialist, talking about how Kelly's husband, a service member, was about to be transferred from Tennessee.

"If you get the chance to get stationed in Omaha," the ABA specialist said, "you have to send Addison to the Munroe-Meyer Institute."

"And then a week later," Kelly remembered, "we got our list of possible transfer locations, and Omaha was on it."

When the family arrived in Omaha, Addison could say a few words and would only eat certain foods. Toilet training was an ongoing source of stress, Kelly said. Addison also was self-harming: head-bashing, biting herself, throwing herself against the wall or walking up to the kitchen's granite countertop and smashing her head against it.

"We had tried to make the transition as smooth as possible," Kelly said. "We unpacked her room first. We set her room up exactly the way it was in Tennessee.

"It was . . . very upsetting," Kelly said.

How far has Addison come since she first arrived at MMI?

Addison's usual day at MMI starts in the pediatric feeding department. She works with therapists in the MMI Early Intervention Department and alternates between occupational therapy and speech therapy sessions.

Speech has been a challenge, but Addison's vocabulary has expanded at MMI. When her mother tells her "I love you," Addison sometimes can repeat the words back.

And Addison's MMI care team continues to work with the family on achieving goals. Some skills have advanced quickly, while others are more challenging. Addison continues to develop in areas such as self-care and potty training.



Today, about two years after coming to MMI, so much has changed for Addison.

She is giggling. She's playing. She's eating.

Perhaps most importantly, she can tell people a little more about what she wants and how she feels.

Kelly sees the ability to communicate as the key to her daughter's happiness, a skill that will empower her to reach her fullest potential – at home, at school and in the wider world.

The family's MMI experience has been amazing, Kelly said.

"It's been slow, little things evolving and coming together to make everything better. She rarely has a meltdown or any self-harming behaviors anymore," Kelly said. "This has been life-changing for us."

# Putting it all together

Courtney Burnette, Ph.D., had been working for more than 20 years in the field of autism research and clinical care when Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI), approached her about taking over the reins of the institute's new integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (iCASD) as its inaugural director and the inaugural Yale Family Endowed Chair.

One thing that caught her interest immediately? The word "integrated."

"The i in iCASD is critical," Dr. Burnette said. "When you recognize all the components that go into a diagnosis and the challenges each particular individual manages, you need integrative care – for intervention, for diagnosis, for medical care. It takes professionals who not only have expertise in their particular areas but work within a team to know how each of those particular issues impact the other."

During her time in the autism field, Dr. Burnette has witnessed what she calls an evolution in the understanding of the diagnosis and treatment – seeing autism as a set of behaviors that can be different for each individual. The results of this evolution will be the foundation of the iCASD.

"We now know that the autism spectrum spans a wide range of behaviors and is often associated with additional needs," Dr. Burnette said. "An intervention team must involve professionals from multiple systems of care that support medical complexities, as well as developmental, behavioral, educational and vocational skills, to name a few. That's a very big shift."

*Integrating services will offer many advantages to families using the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, including at locations such as the Autism Care for Toddlers Clinic (at right).*







*Courtney Burnette, Ph.D., was named the inaugural director and the inaugural Yale Family Endowed Chair of the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders in 2019.*



*An architect's rendition of the check-in area at the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders.*

The evolution in understanding has led to a shift in the care paradigm, as well, which is why integrating services – such as speech, feeding or physical therapy – is so important. If one discipline is having trouble achieving a particular goal, that goal might be accomplished by involving other disciplines. With the iCASD's integrative model, an MMI clinician can access institute experts from many areas and explore how to shift or perhaps rework interventions.

“That easy access to information and services from multiple perspectives can better guide goals and treatment,” Dr. Burnette said.

MMI historically has been a positive force for transforming the lives of people on the autism spectrum. The original Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) was created at MMI in 2005, growing out of a psychology department initiative aimed at preschool-aged children called Project Best Case. With the backing of Gail Werner-Robertson's GWR Sunshine Foundation (now known as the Autism Action Partnership) and the Hattie B. Munroe Foundation, the center opened in 7,700 square feet of the institute's building.

Its impact was soon felt not only clinically – by 2017, the center was serving more than 500 children annually – but culturally as well. The center and its professionals were among the advocates who supported Nebraska's autism insurance reforms and the state's adoption of ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) savings accounts for individuals with developmental disabilities. In 2012, MMI opened the Autism Care for Toddlers (ACT) Clinic at 90th and Q streets in Omaha, and as the iCASD prepares to move into a larger space in the new MMI building, institute leaders are eyeing a second ACT clinic location to reach out to underserved families in North Omaha.

The iCASD also will take advantage of the new building's community partner space – collaborators such as the Autism Society of Nebraska and others can use the multipurpose office space to connect with MMI clients who may be in need of their services.

To Dr. Burnette, the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders will be, above all, welcoming.

**“My goal is that the iCASD becomes a home base for our families.”**

“We want families to know what to expect when they come to MMI,” she said. “We want to make sure that we're combining all the fantastic aspects of care in what our providers do.”

With the clinic space specially designed to optimize patient flow, everywhere families go will be an accessible, familiar space.

“My goal is that the iCASD becomes a home base for our families,” Dr. Burnette said. “When they come in, they know the space, they know us, and they are confident of our commitment to assist them with all of their individual needs.”



# DREAM HOME

New building is designed to help MMI transform lives.

In early November, MCL Construction moved its “calldozers” inside the building at 6902 Pine St. that will become the new home of the Munroe-Meyer Institute.

Not to protect them from the elements. The small bulldozers, working on the building’s first and third floors, were being used to raze the interior of the building.

Jim Fleissner, project superintendent for MCL Construction, said his team was excited about the job.

“Everybody has someone in their family who uses MMI,” he said.

The work in the fall of 2019 was the first physical act of transformation for a building that will itself be transformative. Walls came down to provide more open space. The entryway was moved and widened, two new entrances were opened to help patient access, new sidewalks were poured and a street was shifted – all to improve access for clients and their families to the new building.

And once inside?

“The vision is to transform – not improve, not help – but to *transform* the lives of the patients we serve and their families,” said MMI Director Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D. “It will allow for expanded and brand-new transformative services that are based on the needs of the community.”

One distinctive touch in the new building will be the wall finishes, as designers took into account the overwhelming sensory sensitivities of some members of the population being served. This involved a collaborative effort between Altus Architectural Studios, other outside experts and MMI personnel. Even features as subtle as the type of light that will be provided in certain patient care areas was specified by a team of experts in treating MMI’s client population.

“We’re going to give MMI the ability to have tunable white lights so some can be a warm yellowish color, some more bright,” said John Poulcek, the project’s manager from the UNMC facilities department. “We’ll also provide a few rooms with full color-changing capabilities, since some of the individuals who come to MMI react better to environments that are flooded with certain colors.”

One of the building’s two pools will be a warm-water therapy pool with a lift, making water therapy more comfortable for clients. A new assistive technology area will feature state-of-the-art communication and mobility technology, as well as MMI’s Virtual Reality Lab, which will pioneer virtual reality therapies for clients at MMI and beyond. An overhead “zero-gravity” harness system will provide new opportunities for physical therapies, and a “maker space” will be used for GoBabyGo! Nebraska! and future innovative programs.

Recreational therapy clients and others can use a full-sized gymnasium, an enclosed splash pad and other areas in the building, which is conveniently located alongside the Keystone Trail, making Wheel Club rides and other recreational therapy outings easy and accessible. An entire “apartment” located in the building will help clients learn to accomplish daily activities and work toward independent living. And the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders will allow for therapeutic collaborations across departments.

Dr. Willett also said she was “excited about the building’s ‘Discover and Explore’ spaces,” areas that will feature interactive wall displays.

“The building just invites people to move and to interact, providing both social and mobile opportunities,” she said.

The building is family-centric in other ways, as well, with the clinical areas arranged so that a client will not have to move from appointment to appointment. MMI specialists will come to the client, staggering their appointments to

## “The possibilities are just amazing”

“The possibilities are just amazing,” said Sandra Willett, Ph.D., director of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy. “We already have two team members being certified in aquatics so we can use the pools for mobility and strength-building therapies. Adaptive swimming lessons would be a program we’d love to support. And we’re really excited to have a full-sized gym – we plan to explore riding bikes or incorporating more endurance and fitness activities.”

The gym also will allow the department to grow its Healthy Athletes Program through Nebraska Special Olympics, which in the past has been coordinated through local school districts.

streamline a client’s MMI experience while enhancing clinical collaboration between departments. A viewing deck will be positioned above both the pool area, on one side, and the gymnasium on the other, so families can observe therapy or activities without distracting the participants.

Collaboration is another hallmark of the new space. Offices will be offered on a rotating basis to community partners and organizations that serve some portion of MMI’s client population, providing easy access for MMI clients and spurring increased collaboration and new initiatives. Even its location near the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s



*The new home of the Munroe-Meyer Institute will feature a large welcome areas for the families we serve.*



*A full-size gym, useful for adaptive sports leagues and therapeutic activities, will be featured in the new building.*



*Among its amenities, the building will house both a warm-water and cold-water therapy pool, each shown here in an architect's rendering.*

Walter Scott Campus offers opportunity for collaboration, particularly with the creative engineering students of the Peter Kiewit Institute, many of whom already volunteer for GoBabyGo! Nebraska!

"We hope that our health care partners will also come into our building and provide their services that would benefit our population," Dr. Mirnics said. "If someone has the capacity to provide us clinical services that we need, but which we do not currently have, we will welcome them with opened arms."

New initiatives will include the Caring for Champions program, an MMI program to provide dental, audiology, vision care and weight management to Special Olympics athletes. The project already has drawn international attention, with Dr. Mirnics highlighting the program during a presentation to the Special Olympics International board in Washington, D.C., in November 2019.

The building also will be much bigger than MMI's current home. The first-floor slab of the old First Data building is about 50,000 square feet, Poulicek said, and that's not including the expansion that will allow for the two new pools, enclosed splash pad and gymnasium. In all, the four-story building will encapsulate 220,000 square feet – more than double the 99,000 of the current MMI building.

It's a huge project. And from the beginning, Dr. Mirnics said, it has taken a huge team, from both MMI and the broader community, to shape the transformational vision.

"We've worked with everyone, from the senior UNMC administration to the University of Nebraska Foundation to communities, clients and families, various boards, the philanthropic community – many stakeholders provided feedback, everyone chimed in, everyone helped us in some way," he said. "We've been blessed by everyone's involvement and insights offered."

Poulicek said work on the building, which began in September 2019, should be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2021. Once construction is completed, he said several inspections will need to be done before the building can begin serving patients.

Then, with one transformation complete, so many others will begin.

"This building is being built to align with our mission of transformation," Dr. Mirnics says. "The excitement is tremendous, because we will have many new things that we don't have in our current building, and these new opportunities and all these new features are geared to serve our population better, provide better health care and to transform lives."



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# A CENTURY OF CARING

**MMI pioneers embody the institute's mission.**

As a longtime member of the Meyer Foundation for Disabilities' board of directors, Henry Cordes was familiar with the Munroe-Meyer Institute when he agreed to write a book about its history. Still, as he delved into the project, following MMI from its inception in 1919 to its 100th anniversary in 2019, the award-winning journalist was continually surprised by how much he didn't know.

"It was a fascinating history for me to write, because it isn't just the evolution of MMI," Cordes said. "It's really the evolution of how we as a society deal with, treat and help people who have disabilities."

Originally focused on polio in the wake of a nationwide polio epidemic, the institute eventually expanded to treat other physical disabilities, then intellectual disabilities and behavioral health.

"MMI was there every step of the way, advocating and pushing for this more expansive look at how society should be recognizing and addressing the needs of people in the developmentally disabled community," Cordes said.

Cordes pointed to the September 1919 inaugural meeting of the Society for the Relief of the Disabled in Omaha as the genesis of MMI, an occasion that would begin a stream of philanthropic efforts that would wend its way across MMI's history.

"They were seeing that there were a lot of kids with polio, many of them coming from impoverished families, who simply were not getting treatment or services," Cordes said. "This is before we had a social safety net in this country."

A lot of the people involved in that first meeting were University of Nebraska orthopedists who had taken an interest in this issue.

"They ended up being some of the early leaders of this organization," Cordes said. "They provided, free of charge, a lot of the services that were initially delivered. In many ways, it truly was the birth of MMI."

As he looked through pre-published histories, some as short as three pages, some missing dates or with inaccuracies, Cordes came across a series of remarkable people who would change the face of MMI:



**Greta Paulsen:** Cordes calls Paulsen essentially one of the first trained pediatric physical therapists in the country. The Society for the Relief of the Disabled, looking for nurses who could perform needed after-surgery therapies for the children in its care, sent Paulsen to train at Boston Children’s Hospital, under Robert Lovett, M.D., who would

later go on to treat President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he contracted polio.

“She learned all the latest methods of what we now call physical therapy,” Cordes said. “And she came back to Omaha and began practicing these methods with the children of Omaha. She also would later go on to become the head of the Hattie B. Munroe Home – a very important figure in the history of MMI.”



**Clara Elder:** Often mistakenly identified as Hattie B. Munroe’s sister, Elder was her longtime secretary and companion after Munroe suffered a health event – probably a stroke, Cordes surmised. Following Hattie B. Munroe’s death, it was Clara Elder’s passion that

became a driving force in creating a permanent home for children, the Hattie B. Munroe Home, in 1922.

“Although Hattie B. Munroe’s name rightly is the one that was memorialized, and it was John Munroe’s and his wife’s fortune that ended up funding this charity, Clara Elder’s contribution can’t be overlooked,” Cordes said. “By all indications, it was really her impetus to form this home for children with polio, in memory of her friend... it’s very clear that she was the active passion behind this. She was the one who ended up volunteering hours and hours at the home on a weekly basis, helping the kids, making sure the kids had everything that they needed, even painting rooms when they needed to be painted. It elevated her in the history of MMI becoming what it is.”



**Peggy Cowdery:** Cordes calls Cowdery another unsung hero in the history of MMI, relentless in her drive to ensure therapeutic services for children with disabilities.

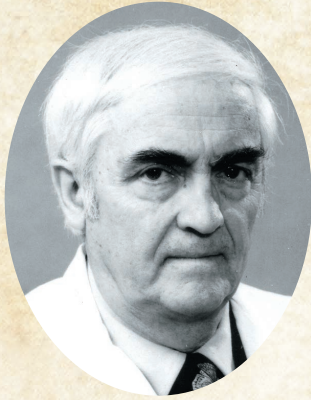
“She was the wife of a World-Herald newspaper executive, and they had a daughter with cerebral palsy,” he said. “She became very interested in the subject and felt the city needed to do more for children.”

The result was a new center for children’s therapy on the campus of what would become the University of Nebraska Medical Center. “Peggy Cowdery got that initiative going, and the university was a partner in it from the beginning,” Cordes said. “Then, the decision was made to relocate the Hattie B. Home to the UNMC campus and pair it with a new center for children’s rehabilitation that became the Meyer Center. Now, we have the roots of what became the current Munroe-Meyer Institute.”



**C. Louis Meyer:** The namesake of the C. Louis Meyer Memorial Therapy Center for Children was an industrious businessman in Omaha, Cordes said. The center was dedicated in 1959, located at 44th Street and Dewey Avenue, near the Hattie B. Munroe Home and the J.P. Lord School.

“Again, this was a case where although the name C. Louis Meyer goes down in history, you really have to credit his wife, Mary Luman Meyer, because she was the one who gave the money. Her husband believed in children – he had helped establish the Children’s Hospital – and she thought it would be fitting in his memory to fund this new center.”



**Paul Pearson, M.D.:**  
Dr. Pearson arrived in 1967 to run what was then called the Meyer Children’s Rehabilitation Institute.

“Since he was an active doctor with the medical center, he saw the opportunities for education and training and treatment that could be provided by having

the medical center partner with this private institution that was located on the campus,” Cordes said. “It didn’t take long for everyone to realize it just made sense to have the medical center take over the whole institute. So that is how Dr. Pearson became, in effect, the first director of what we now know as the Munroe-Meyer Institute.

“The late 1960s was a time when society was waking up to both the needs and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities,” Cordes said.

Cordes doesn’t think Dr. Pearson’s appointment was a coincidence.

Dr. Cecil Wittson, M.D., who recruited Dr. Pearson, knew that tremendous change was coming when it came to the way society treated people with intellectual disabilities, Cordes said. “And so when all those changes came about in the late 1960s, early 1970s, that’s when MMI truly began to flourish under Dr. Pearson.”



**Bruce Buehler, M.D.:**  
Cordes called Dr. Buehler another case of a person arriving at just the right time.

“Research at MMI really took off under Dr. Buehler,” Cordes said. “He arrived at MMI in the early 1980s, right as the genetic revolution was getting ready to take off, and he recognized how important

genetics was going to be in the future, not just for MMI but for medicine. So he convinced the chancellor to bring all of the genetic programs within the medical center and consolidate them within MMI.”

Cordes pointed to the addition of the genetics programs as proof of Dr. Buehler’s vision.

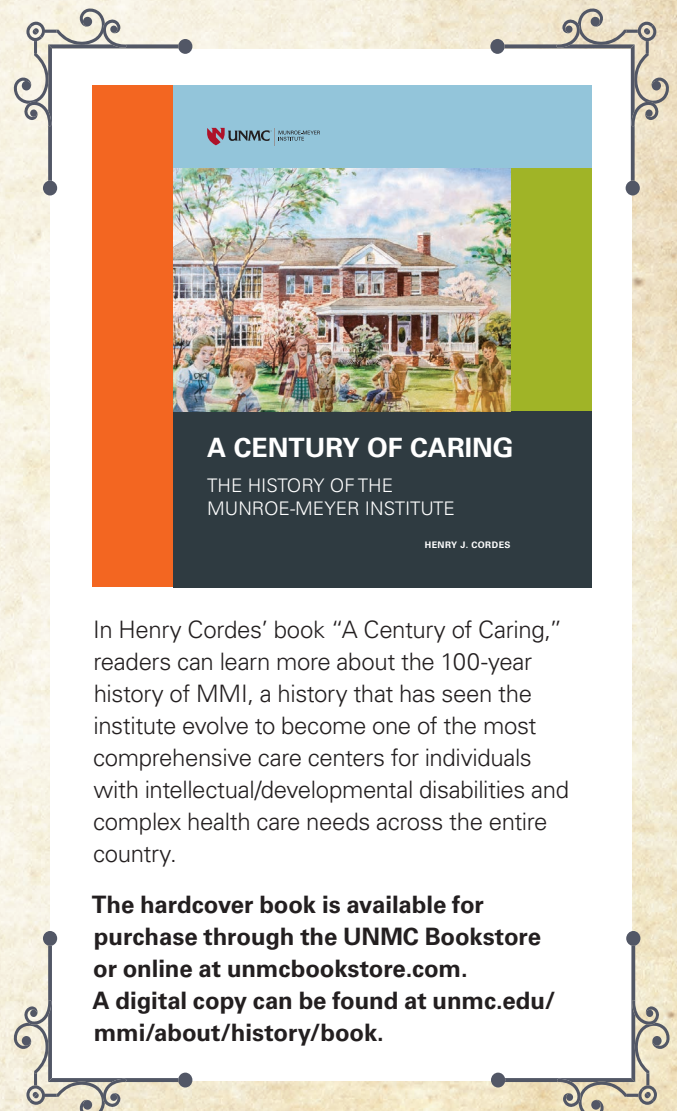
“He knew that genetics was going to generate tremendous amounts of revenue, which he could then turn around and put into MMI’s programs to really expand its reach,” Cordes said. “That money didn’t just go into genetic programs. It went into physical therapy, it went into behavioral health, it went into other efforts.”

Cordes calls the 100-year history of the institute a transformational journey.

“It’s an amazing evolution,” he said, “going from a group of private citizens, concerned about children with polio who weren’t getting treatment, to what MMI is today.”

Still, some things have stayed constant:

“MMI has been from the beginning, and continues to be, a tremendous advocate for families who have been touched by disability,” Cordes said. “That has never changed.”



In Henry Cordes’ book “A Century of Caring,” readers can learn more about the 100-year history of MMI, a history that has seen the institute evolve to become one of the most comprehensive care centers for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and complex health care needs across the entire country.

**The hardcover book is available for purchase through the UNMC Bookstore or online at [unmcbookstore.com](http://unmcbookstore.com). A digital copy can be found at [unmc.edu/mmi/about/history/book](http://unmc.edu/mmi/about/history/book).**

# Cutting-Edge Intervention

Emerging technologies lead to innovative advances at MMI.

Rich McIntosh, who has been receiving services from the Munroe-Meyer Institute for more than 40 years, got his first communication device when he was 8, more than three decades ago.

He remembers the device well.

"It was a big sucker, almost bigger than me," he said. "It had an 8-track cassette to make it talk, but half the time it didn't work – the cassette just spun. One time, I appeared on Channel 7 to talk about the J.P. Lord School, and it didn't work – the reporter had to tell the audience what words I was pointing at. It was a little embarrassing."

Today, McIntosh uses a state-of-the-art alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) device chosen with the guidance of MMI speech therapist Korey Stading.

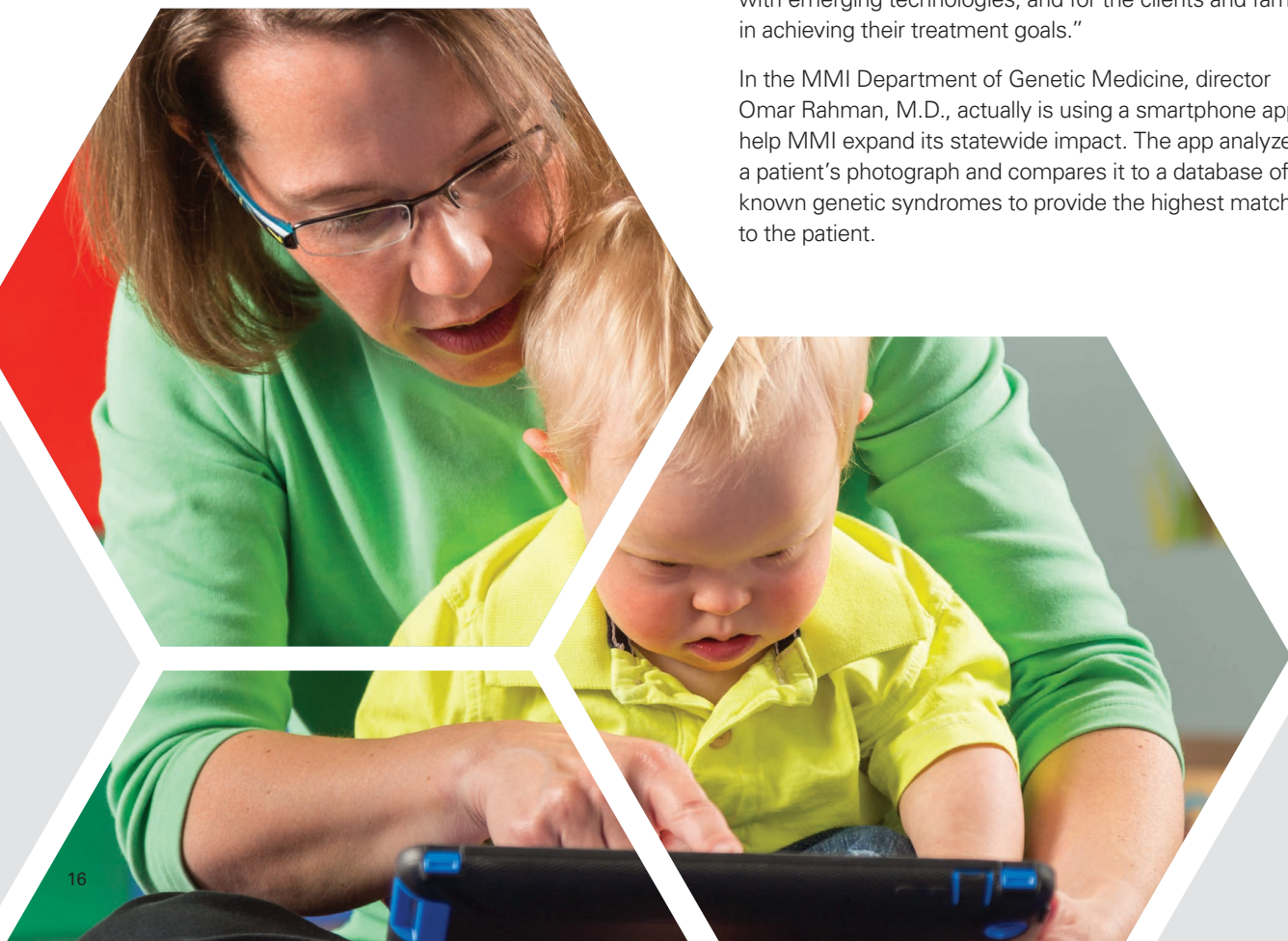
"Without Korey, I don't know what I'd do," he said. "MMI stays on top of the new technology."

Keeping up with technological advances helps MMI maintain its commitment to cutting-edge clinical service. McIntosh's ever-evolving communication device, along with phone apps that allow geneticists to pinpoint specific genetic disorders and innovative uses of virtual reality in physical therapy, represent some of the technologies that allow MMI to offer transformative services and therapies for individuals with disabilities and complex health needs.

MMI Director Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D., points out that the impact of technological advances can be life-altering.

"Think about how the smart phone changed your life and how you interacted," he said. "At MMI, we need to be aware not only of technological advances, but also creative uses for existing technologies. This can prove helpful for the provider, in diagnosis and care, for students who work with emerging technologies, and for the clients and families in achieving their treatment goals."

In the MMI Department of Genetic Medicine, director Omar Rahman, M.D., actually is using a smartphone app to help MMI expand its statewide impact. The app analyzes a patient's photograph and compares it to a database of known genetic syndromes to provide the highest matches to the patient.







*The Munroe-Meyer Institute makes innovative use of technology throughout the enterprise, including during speech therapy (previous page), physical therapy (at left), and in designing virtual reality scenarios to help children on the autism spectrum (below).*



Dr. Rahman was the senior author on a 2017 paper that showed that in cases of alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder, a difficult diagnosis to make visually, the app outperformed geneticists in making that diagnosis.

And, there are new advances on the horizon for the app. Phones that now have multiple cameras are able to create three-dimensional images that may help providers better diagnose and treat patients.

“You would imagine it’s going to give you a much better resolution and better accuracy,” Dr. Rahman said.

Amy Nordness, Ph.D., director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology, doesn’t have to seek out new technologies – because of MMI’s expertise in alternative and augmentative communication, the most prominent companies in the AAC field come to MMI with their latest devices.

“Companies allow us to have loaner devices within our facility, so that we can do evaluations and tests to see how they work,” Dr. Nordness said. “We have such a high volume of people who come to see us – because we’re so good at what we do – that these companies want us to have their most up-to-date products.”

The MMI Department of Physical Therapy has created a Virtual Reality Laboratory, run by Jamie Gehringer, Ph.D., to explore the use of the technology in physical therapy, creating games in which the players mimic common therapeutic movements. Other programs address sensory issues by simulating the experiences of getting haircuts or riding on an airplane in an effort to accustom children to the experiences.

The department also recently added a technological component to a powerlifting study, evaluating how powerlifting affects the mobility and brain activity of youth with cerebral palsy, being conducted in the lab of Max Kurz, Ph.D. Researchers added a screen that provides instantaneous feedback on a subject’s power output that both the therapist and patient can see.

Dr. Kurz said that homegrown innovations such as the virtual reality lab and the powerlifting meter are possible because of MMI’s commitment to exploring new uses for technology.



*A physical therapist works with a client as part of a powerlifting study.*

“These integrations between technology and physical therapy can only be accomplished in this unique environment that we’ve created,” he said. “We have physical therapy happening in a lab that is integrated with research. Blending it together allows the engineering applications to be rapidly prototyped, tested and then implemented into a clinical trial.”

All of which needs to happen before MMI can get technology into the homes of the clients. And at MMI, the most important aspect is the needs of the client.

“A lot of what drives technology is engineers coming up with creative ideas and saying ‘Hey, where can we use this tool?’” said Brad Corr, D.P.T., who works with Dr. Kurz on the powerlifting study. “We’re coming at it from the other end: ‘This technology is out there – what does the user think? Is this helpful, and if so, how do we tweak it to integrate it?’”

That’s part of the reason that MMI’s relocation near the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Scott Campus, near the Peter Kiewit Institute and its pool of engineering students, is so intriguing, especially since the new building will feature an assistive technology department.

“The talent pool will be incredible for collaborations between MMI and the Peter Kiewit Institute,” Dr. Kurz said. “There will be more synergistic interactions and brainstorming. And, just being neighbors, we can test these protocols far faster, so they can be launched into the broader community to benefit movement, cognition, or whatever the case may be.”

The new building also will have a space dedicated to technology designed to facilitate personalized patient care, Dr. Kurz said.

“There will be a full makerspace-electronic shop,” he said. “Having accessibility to large-scale 3D printers, computer numerical control (CNC) mill, technology for building custom printed circuit boards and other state-of-the-art technology will allow us to do more rapid prototyping.

“With the technology we’ll have, we could potentially scan someone’s leg and build a 3D-printed model of an ankle or foot orthotic that is directly fit for the patient, which would not only allow us to try different styles to gauge effectiveness, but drop the overall cost for the client.”

And that’s just one example, Dr. Kurz said.

“The sky’s the limit, really.”

# MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

### Key Recruitments

- Courtney Burnette, Ph.D., was named director of the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Brenda Bassingthwaite, Ph.D., joined the MMI Department of Psychology as an associate professor. She will run the department's school-based applied behavior analysis (ABA) consultation service.
- Jessica Cox, M.A., was hired as a behavioral health professional and will provide services in the MMI Department of Psychology's school-based ABA consultation program.
- Beatrice Egboh, M.D., became the first fellow in the new Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics Fellowship.
- Grace Winningham, M.D., joined the MMI Department of Developmental Medicine as an assistant professor.
- Carey Ronspies, M.D., and Danita Velasco, M.D., were hired as clinical geneticists and appointed assistant professors, MMI Department of Genetic Medicine.
- Jessica Nicoll, M.S., Alexandra Wallgren, M.S., and Brittney Haskovic, M.S., were hired as genetic counselors, MMI Department of Genetic Medicine.
- Quinn Gaffner, M.S., Megan Tripp, M.S., Jessica Sharp, M.S., Jessica Thompson, M.A., Emma Farrell, M.S., and Sydney Norton, M.S., were hired as pediatric speech-language pathologists in the MMI Department of Speech Language Pathology.
- Jessica Gormley, Ph.D., was hired as a faculty researcher in pediatric augmentative and alternative communication in the MMI Department of Speech Language Pathology and was appointed assistant professor, MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology.
- Sara Garcia, D.P.T., was hired as a board-certified clinical specialist in pediatric physical therapy in the MMI Department of Physical Therapy.

### Key Appointments

- Gail Svagera was appointed interim director of the MMI Department of Occupational Therapy.
- Nicole Giron, M.P.H., was appointed interim director of the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy.
- Bethany Hansen, Ph.D., was appointed associate director of the MMI Department of Pediatric Feeding.
- Jennifer Sanmann, Ph.D., director of the MMI Human Genetics Laboratory, was promoted to associate professor. Dr. Sanmann also was named to the Cytogenetics Steering Committee of the Children's Oncology Group (COG) as the lymphoma liaison.
- Amanda Zangrillo, Psy.D., was promoted to associate director of the MMI Severe Behavior Program.
- Joanna Spaulding, M.S., was appointed assistant professor, MMI Human Genetics Laboratory.
- Beth Conover, M.S., Gwen Reiser, M.S., Terri Blase, M.S., Drew Cratsenberg, M.S., and Sara Fisher, M.S., were appointed assistant professors, MMI Department of Genetic Medicine.
- Christina Edelbrock, M.A., was appointed coordinator of the Pediatric Occupational Therapy Fellowship in the MMI Department of Occupational Therapy.
- Brandy Clarke, Ph.D., was promoted to UNMC associate professor, MMI Department of Psychology. Dr. Clarke also was named interim director of equity for the Office of Academic Affairs at UNMC.
- Erika Franta, Ph.D., Lisa Neitzke, Ph.D., Whitney Strong-Bak, Ph.D., and Christian Klepper, Psy.D., were appointed assistant professors, MMI Department of Psychology.
- Dr. Franta also was named project coordinator for youth corrections in a collaborative project with the UNMC Department of Psychiatry, the Douglas County Youth Corrections and the Sherwood Foundation.

- Melonie Welsh, M.S., was appointed assistant professor, MMI Department of Community Engagement.
- Jamie Gehringer, Ph.D., was appointed assistant professor, MMI Department of Physical Therapy.
- Dan Mitteer, Ph.D., was appointed an instructor in the integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Jessica McMordie, M.S., was promoted to lead hospital speech-language pathologist in the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology.
- Leslie Van Winkle, M.A., was promoted to supervisor for integrated speech services in the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology.
- Allison Kruse, M.S., was promoted to supervisor for hospital speech services in the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology.
- Nicole Hackendahl was promoted to digital media manager in the MMI Department of Community Engagement.
- Rebecca Gilbert, Kristin Hembree, Ph.D., Liz Konopasek, D.P.T., Kari Price, M.S., Anne Woodruff Jameson, D.P.T., Sarah Simmons, and Leslie Van Winkle, M.A., received the Silver U Award from UNMC.
- Kerry Miller, Ph.D., MMI Department of Education and Child Development, was selected as Nebraska's Act Early Ambassador for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Act for the 2019-2021 term. As ambassador, she is responsible for expanding the reach of the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" program and supporting Nebraska's work toward improving early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, including autism.
- Brandy Clarke, Ph.D., served as secretary/treasurer of the UNMC Faculty Senate.
- Janet Miller, M.S., University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), was selected by the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry to receive the annual National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices Spirit of Community Award.

## Awards and Certifications

- Heidi Reelfs, M.P.T., MMI Department of Physical Therapy, and Diane Pickering, M.S., MMI Human Genetics Laboratory, received the Gold U Award from UNMC.
- Rashelle Hoffman, D.P.T., MMI Department of Physical Therapy, was awarded the University of Nebraska Presidential Graduate Fellowship.
- Michael Trevarrow, MMI Department of Physical Therapy, was awarded a NASA Fellowship and a UNMC Graduate Student Fellowship.
- Brian Greer, Ph.D., integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, was the 2019 recipient of the B. F. Skinner Foundation New Researcher Award in the area of applied research.
- Paige Rivard, M.B.A., a member of the UCEDD staff and the MMI Board of Directors, received the Prader-Willi Syndrome National Award for Advocacy.
- Regina Harbourne, Ph.D., principal investigator of the Sitting Together and Reaching to Play (START-Play) Project, and her team were awarded the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine Gayle G. Arnold Award for Best Scientific Paper.
- Rachel Nagawiecki, M.A., therapist in the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology, and Srinivasa Chandra, M.D., UNMC Department of Surgery-Oral and Maxillofacial, won the poster presentation at the American College of Surgeons chapter meeting in Omaha for their poster, "Acute



**Max Kurz, Ph.D., MMI Department of Physical Therapy, received the UNMC Distinguished Scientist Award.**



A ceremonial groundbreaking was held to mark the beginning of renovation, redesign and new construction work on the new Munroe-Meyer Institute building, an existing building at 6902 Pine St., near the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Scott Campus, on Aug. 26.

Management of Swallowing in Patients Undergoing Partial Glossectomy with Reconstruction for Oral Cancer.”

- Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., was appointed co-chair of the American Society of Human Genetics’ Public Education and Awareness Committee.
- Sandra Willett, Ph.D., director of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy, received her Ph.D. in Clinical Translational Research, Mentored Scholars Program (CTR-MSP) from UNMC Graduate Studies, Medical Sciences Interdepartmental Area.
- Joanie Bergeron, Lynne Capoun, M.S., and Emily Drew, M.P.T., of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy, received recertification as board-certified clinical specialists in pediatric physical therapy.

### Community Engagement

- The Munroe-Meyer Institute and Millard Public Schools announced a partnership on new social and recreational skills development programs for special education students with autism and other forms of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), designed to decrease social isolation and prepare students for life after school.
- The Nebraska Legislature set up a process to plan and implement an Olmstead Plan, civil rights legislation passed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1990s to promote the de-institutionalization of individuals with disabilities. Wayne Stuberg, Ph.D., MMI associate director and director of the MMI University Center for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), and Mark Smith,

M.S., MMI assistant professor, were appointed by the director of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to serve on the steering and advisory committees, respectively, for the state plan.

- Dr. Stuberg also was reappointed to the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities by Gov. Pete Ricketts.



Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh joined leaders from MMI and Autism Action Partnership at the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge on April 2 to mark World Autism Day and see the bridge be lit up blue for autism awareness.

- Denise Gehringer, MMI Board of Directors, was named a 2019 National Resource Center Ambassador for Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE).
- The UCEDD staff chaired the Mayor’s Commission for Citizens with Disabilities, advising the Omaha mayor’s office and other city officials on disability issues in Omaha.
- The UCEDD staff is entering its third year of providing training across the state on leadership and improving disability-related services and supports to persons with disabilities and family members.
- The UCEDD faculty and staff were called on as participants and presenters at the national level in efforts ranging from improving systems of support for infants with disabilities and their families to individuals with disabilities who are aging.
- The MMI-University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Think College Trailblazer Program advanced from a pilot project to a full program, including a College and Career Exploration Program for adults from Ollie Webb Center, Inc., and transition students from Millard Public Schools and Westside Community Schools. Papillion-La Vista Public Schools will join in 2020.
- The Crisis Intervention Team training project trained 157 law enforcement officers from six counties in Nebraska and two counties in western Iowa on dealing with individuals with IDD. Additionally, three “Be Safe” trainings were conducted, and 37 individuals with IDD and their families and/or support staff were trained on how to appropriately interact with law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.
- The Nebraska Legislative League, an organization made up of spouses of Nebraska state legislators and constitutional officers, toured MMI in April.
- The MMI Department of Recreational Therapy created an adaptive sports league, featuring sports such as football, volleyball, soccer, T-ball and track, and an Art Excellence Club, which will expand services to include key quality-of-life enrichments and ensure that participants have access to quality arts programming.
- Letters to Santa, a program allowing young MMI clients to send letters to Santa and receive replies, was instituted.
- MMI staff took part in a Design Thinking Boot Camp, which included leaders from UNMC and the University of Nebraska at Omaha, to better understand and

improve how MMI provides care in the Autism Care for Toddlers (ACT) Clinic and how the clinics could expand to better serve the state of Nebraska.

- Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D., director of MMI, was elected to the board of Special Olympics International. Dr. Mirnics also was named a “Friend of the Scottish Rite” honoree. Dr. Mirnics also presides over the Pathophysiological Basis of Mental Disorders and Addictions Study Section through the National Institutes of Health.
- The Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program held its second annual leadership luncheon in March, hosting leaders from UNMC and the community.
- MMI hosted its first visit from a therapy dog, Captain Fred, and his partner, Lisa Fearnow.
- MMI staff participated in the Scottish Rite’s WalkRite for RiteCare, RiteCare Classic Golf Tournament and Friends of Scottish Rite Dinner; the Meyer Foundation for Disabilities’ Walk & Roll for Disabilities, Owl Ride and Denim for Disabilities; and the Munroe-Meyer Guild’s Garden Walk.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology expanded the Lincoln RiteCare Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Kids Club services to support training on use of AAC in the community.



**More than 425 people attended the third annual Trunk or Treat event held at the Munroe-Meyer Institute on Oct. 27.**



The Camp Munroe Theater Co., a partnership with the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy and WhyArts, held summer and winter productions.

- The National Core Indicators and National Core Indicators-Aging and Disability Project was expanded to 1,884 statewide surveys (up from 1,334 surveys).
- MMI participated in approximately 390 events at schools, agencies and in the community.

### Education and Research

- Max Kurz, Ph.D., of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy, received a two-year grant for more than \$400,000 from the National Institutes of Health to explore how children with cerebral palsy perceive pain.
- Rachel Valleley, Ph.D., of the MMI Department of Psychology, was awarded a three-year, \$1.35 million Health Resources and Services Administration grant for graduate psychology education training.
- Mindy Chadwell, Ph.D., Brandy Clarke, Ph.D., Erika Franta, Ph.D., Brenda Bassingthwaite, Ph.D., and Tara Sjuts, Ph.D., of the MMI Department of Psychology, teamed with teachers and administrators from Educational Service Unit 2 in Fremont and were awarded \$2.5 million in funding to train graduate students from UNO and Wayne State College in how to develop effective school-based mental health programs in rural and underserved schools.
- MMI parent resource coordinators received training as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mini-delegates by Jennifer Burt, Ph.D., Whitney Strong-Bak, Ph.D., both of the MMI Department of Psychology, and Kerry Miller, Ph.D., MMI Department of Education and Child Development and CDC Act Early Ambassador.
- With the 2019 graduating class, the Project SEARCH job-training program for adults with IDD has had a total of 46 students, with 44 graduating, since the program's first graduation in 2016. Eighty-four percent of those graduates found jobs within 11 months of graduation. The 2018-19 class of 12 young adults with IDD graduated on May 15.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology offered a 12-week newborn intensive care unit (NICU) follow-up training course, with on-site visits from seven professionals across the state of Nebraska.
- The LEND program launched a pipeline program to introduce undergraduate students to interdisciplinary opportunities in the health care field, with a focus on children and youth with developmental disabilities and/or complex health care needs.
- The LEND program developed a policy advocacy training program for individuals with disabilities to receive training, mentoring and firsthand experience in disability policy advocacy, and expanded its long-term interdisciplinary leadership program to include students from MMI's new genetic counseling educational program.
- The LEND program sponsored a Midwest retreat with students and faculty from the MMI LEND program and the LEND program at the University of South Dakota.
- The MMI Department of Education and Child Development's Mindfulness & Mastery grant team developed, piloted and trained educators from 13 Educare sites on mindfulness strategies for early



**GoBabyGo! Nebraska! was funded for builds from March 2019 through March 2024 by an anonymous donor, who contributed \$20,000 a year.**

childhood teachers to implement in their classrooms. A partnership with the Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Lab from the Harvard Graduate School of Education was established to develop brain games for toddlers and young preschool students with training and materials provided to multiple sites. Data and strategies from the M&M grant were presented at the national Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) Conference by Jolene Johnson, Ed.D.

- The MMI Department of Education and Child Development worked on more than 30 different local, statewide and national projects that serve families and children prenatally through high school. The team of 28 – including program evaluators, clinicians, data managers and administrators – collaborated with state agencies, private foundations, federal grant agencies, social service agencies, school districts and health care providers to support children and their families who may be at risk due to low income, premature birth, single-parent household or a variety of other challenging factors.
- Samantha Montemarano, M.O.T., MMI Department of Occupational Therapy, and Annie Woodruff Jameson, D.P.T., MMI Department of Physical Therapy, coordinated an “Askable Adult” training at MMI and spoke at the transition speaking series on

their upcoming sexual health program for adults with developmental disabilities. Dr. Woodruff Jameson, Montemarano and Carly DeBruin, MMI Department of Recreational Therapy, spoke alongside two self-advocates at the People First Conference on sexual health and healthy relationships.

- Dr. Woodruff Jameson also was awarded a Munroe-Meyer Guild Grant, “Embracing Women’s Health,” to develop a sexual health program for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Sandra Willett, Ph.D., director of MMI Department of Physical Therapy, was one of 21 researchers invited to the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy Research Summit in October and was part of the grant planning team for the academy.
- The MMI Department of Genetic Medicine’s inaugural class in the Master’s of Genetic Counseling program, a collaboration with the UNMC College of Allied Health Professions, recruited a full class in its founding year, an outstanding accomplishment for a new program.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology offered three new student experiences – NICU pre-extern, concussion pre-extern and a full-time outpatient pediatric externship.
- Carol Gaebler, M.S., and Allison Kruse, M.S., MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology, implemented a Memory Boot Camp at MMI to address changes in memory due to aging.
- Jennifer Woodward, M.S., and Paul Laikko, M.A., both of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology, worked with the UNMC Department of Radiology to obtain a new seating system for pediatric modified barium swallow studies in order to support children more effectively during a swallow study.
- The MMI Department of Pediatric Feeding hosted seven trainees, including international visitors, who came to MMI to learn about effective assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders.

## Clinical

- The MMI Department of Genetic Medicine collaborated with the UNMC College of Pharmacy to open the Pharmacogenetics Clinic at the 412 building, the first of its kind in the state. The clinic provides precision medicine for patients who have not been able to be managed by traditional medical approaches by using their genetic information to personalize what medications are being prescribed.



- Genetic counseling clinics are now being held eight times annually at Gordon Memorial Hospital in Gordon, Neb.
- The MMI Department of Genetic Medicine has grown in size since 2017 by 65%, going from 17 faculty and staff to 28 faculty and staff. The 28 faculty and staff include six physicians, 15 genetic counselors, three genetic counseling assistants and four administrative personnel.
- The MMI Department of Genetic Medicine created a dedicated Ehlers-Danlos Clinic for adults and another for children.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology expanded integrated services in behavioral programs, including the Early Intervention Program, the Autism Care for Toddlers Clinic, the Severe Behavior Program and the Starting Early: Eating and Developmental Skills (SEEDS) Program.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology began using a new alternative and augmentative communication device, the Noddle, in the Nebraska Medical Center's intensive care units to allow for communication while the patient is intubated and provide medical language content to allow patients to participate in their medical care and decision-making.
- The MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology collaborated with the Nebraska Medicine Music Therapy program to use a Pacifier Activated Lullaby (PAL) in the NICU. It supports the infant's ability to suck effectively by reinforcing sucking bursts with a musical or auditory reward, typically the mother's voice or music recorded by the music therapist.
- Six speech-language pathologists completed training in Project ImPACT (Improving Parents as Communication Teachers) and now offer an evidence-based program in Omaha and Hastings for caregivers of children with autism and other developmental disabilities to help caregivers improve their child's social engagement, communication, imitation and play skills.
- MMI's Family Care Enhancement Project now has parent resource coordinators (PRCs) in eight Nebraska medical clinics, including four locations in Omaha, two in Lincoln and one each in Norfolk and Kearney.
- The Integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders continued its Community Autism Resources and Education (CARE) program into a second year, with more than 75 clients served since the start of fiscal year 2018.
- The Human Genetics Laboratory passed the rigorous mandatory on-site inspection with no deficiencies to remain accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP).

Under the direction of Jamie Gehringer, Ph.D., MMI Department of Physical Therapy, MMI is developing clinical uses for virtual reality games for children with autism and cerebral palsy.



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

**Building on decades of support, MMI's supporting boards provided critical financial, organizational and public awareness support in 2019, with financial support of more than \$1.7 million. We are very grateful to them for their ongoing partnership and investment in those we serve.**



## **Meyer Foundation for Disabilities**

The Meyer Foundation for Disabilities (MFD) held two fundraising events in 2019. The Walk & Roll for Disabilities (above) was held on March 3 and drew approximately 500 people. The Owl Ride was held on July 13, with attendance of approximately 800. MFD provides more than \$50,000 annually to the recreational therapy department's adult programming, which in 2019 included such programs as MMI's Thursday Evening Respite Program, its Cooking Club, Wheel Club and other programs.

## **Hattie B. Munroe Foundation**

The Hattie B. Munroe Foundation donated 131 \$150 gift cards during the holidays that were delivered to MMI client families in need. The foundation also provides the funding for a psychology internship, Camp Munroe and related children's programs, a professorship for the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders and the MMI director totaling more than \$800,000.

## **The Munroe-Meyer Institute Board of Directors**

The board works closely with MMI leadership to inform the public of the breadth and quality of MMI's programs. The board annually awards the Rhoda Davis Blatt and Hattie B. Munroe Foundation scholarships. The board oversees the distribution of holiday gift cards to selected MMI families in need, as well as reviews and approves the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy budget before it receives final approval by the Hattie B. Munroe Foundation board.



### **Munroe-Meyer Guild**

The Munroe-Meyer Guild held its 51st Annual Garden Walk (left) on June 9, with approximately 900 in attendance. Using the proceeds from the walk and a grant from the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation, the guild was able to award \$67,000 in grants to MMI for projects such as the “Caring For Champions-Building Healthy Futures” initiative and caregiver training for children with autism and other developmental disabilities.



### **Scottish Rite Foundations of Nebraska**

The Scottish Rite held its RiteCare Classic Golf Tournament on June 12 at Pacific Springs Golf Course, raising a record \$19,500. On June 23, the 12th annual WalkRite for RiteCare (left) raised \$6,000. The Friends of Scottish Rite Dinner on Oct. 25 raised \$60,000 and recognized MMI Director Karoly Mirnics, M.D., Ph.D., for his leadership and vision in providing care for Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In total, the Scottish Rite Foundation provided nearly \$600,000 to support the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinics through MMI and approximately \$70,000 for RiteCare services through the University of Nebraska at Kearney.



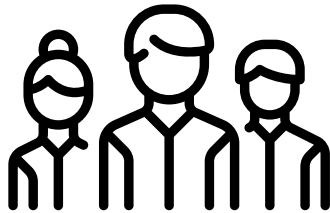
### **Community Advisory Committee**

In 2019, the MMI Community Advisory Committee provided input on MMI initiatives such as the new building project (left), programmatic planning and organization. The committee serves as a working partner in guiding the institute’s activities by representing the voice of the community and its local participants. They have provided a critical sounding board in shaping both the current and future path of MMI.

# MMI by the NUMBERS

**13** departments

**5** supporting philanthropic boards:  
MMI Board of Directors,  
Hattie B. Munroe Foundation,  
Meyer Foundation for Disabilities,  
Munroe-Meyer Guild,  
Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska.

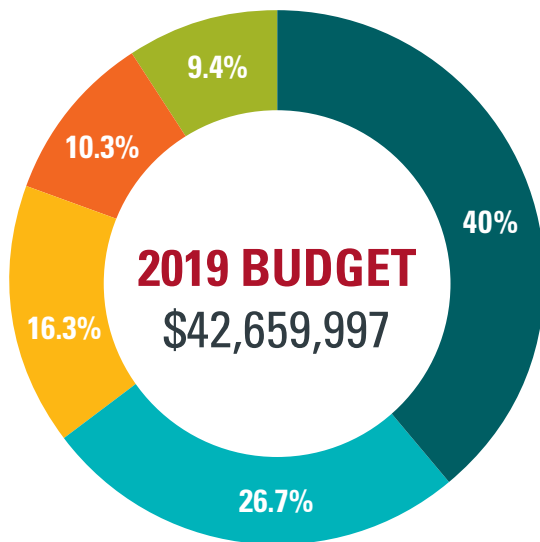


Approximately

**550** employees

**One of 67** federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD).

**One of 52** Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) programs.

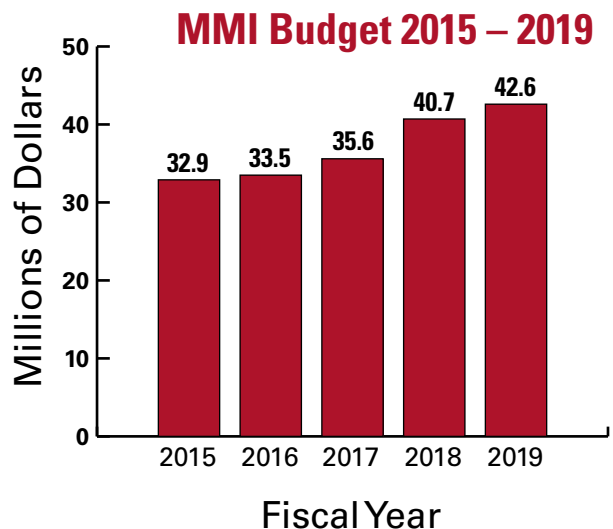


Annually, more than **\$42 million** budget, with more than **\$18 million** in federal, state and local grants and contracts and **\$4.3 million** in philanthropy.

## Financials

### Revenue Sources

- Clinical service reimbursement
- State/local/school grants & contracts
- Federal grants & contracts
- Philanthropic/other funds
- State appropriation



# Clinical Services

More than

# 70,000 yearly services

serving clients across the lifespan (75 percent take place in the community).

## 24 recreational therapy programs and clubs serving more than 500 families annually.



More than **520 volunteers** provided **11,702 service hours** in 2019.

More than **40 provider locations** across the state (more than **30 outside Omaha**).

More than **50 types of services** provided.

## History



**1919**

The Society for the Relief of the Disabled formed a new charity dedicated to providing therapy and braces to children impacted by the polio epidemic.



**1922**

Founded as the Hattie Baker Munroe Home for Convalescing Crippled Children.



**1997**

The Meyer Rehabilitation Institute (MRI) and the Hattie B. Munroe Pavilion become the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) for Genetics & Rehabilitation.



**2009**

MMI becomes an academic unit of UNMC.

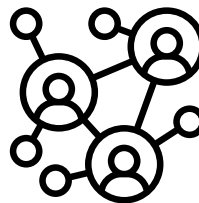


**2019**

MMI breaks ground for a new replacement facility. MMI celebrates its Century of Caring.

## Community and Outreach

Annually, **692 technical assistance services** (10,426 participants/3,599 hours) to community partners in LEND and UCEDD alone.



More than

# 90

 community training activities

**4,955 participants**

# 15,098



**hours of community engagement across the entire institute.**

# Laboratory Tests

Approximately

# 50,000

clinical genetics tests performed in 2019



More than **130 types** of genetics tests have been provided to **49 states** nationwide and to **four international locations**.

# Education and Research

More than **130 courses** and seminars taught by our faculty and staff annually.



More than

# 10,000

participants in workshops, conferences, teleconferences and other community education activities in domestic/international forums.

Students from more than **40 colleges and universities** nationwide.

## Interdisciplinary training in 2019:

222 students, interns, residents and post-doctoral fellows. Of those, 158 were long-term trainees who received more than 300 hours of training.

More than **150 clinical and research fellows** trained in the last 15 years.

More than

# 3,500



**long-term students received training at MMI in the last 15 years.**

Involved in education of medical students, residents, fellows, interns, allied health professionals, Ph.D. and M.S. students, college and high school students.



Approximately **45 faculty** involved in basic, clinical and translational research activities.

More than

# \$7 million

**in research funding annually.**





## University of Nebraska Foundation

The year 2019 marked the 100th anniversary of the Munroe-Meyer Institute, and 2020 marks the last full year in the institute's current location. In 2021, MMI will move to a unique, state-of-the-art facility that will continue to transform the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex health care needs. The success and longevity of MMI is a direct result of the generosity of its wonderful donors. We are thankful for their tremendous support!

Though the new facility will be completed soon, the quest for unparalleled programming and patient care is ongoing through MMI's "Changing Lives, Transforming Futures" campaign. To ensure the best for its patients, MMI will build on existing strengths, as well as add programs, departments and specialized providers. Financial support of any amount will have a lasting impact by enabling MMI to continue to offer the best, most comprehensive care to our patients.

Without your support, MMI would not be the force for good that it has been throughout the last century. With the continued support of the community, there is still so much we can do in the century ahead.

To learn more about how to make a gift to MMI, please go to [nufoundation.org/mmi](https://nufoundation.org/mmi), or contact Brian Anderson at [brian.anderson@nufoundation.org](mailto:brian.anderson@nufoundation.org) or 402-502-4113.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Medical Center



**UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute  
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