

Despite United Way decision, Schreiber will persevere

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The best part about having the privilege of working at Schreiber Pediatric is that you get to come to the most positive place in the world every day.

For nearly 80 years, tens of thousands of Lancaster County and Central Pennsylvania families have come through our doors after the birth of a child with a congenital disability, or after their child has been the victim of an accident or has been afflicted with a devastating illness.

We have worked collaboratively with those families, their health care providers, governmental agencies, schools and countless other nonprofits and businesses to help so many of those children get ready to start school with their peers and lead productive and fulfilling lives.

We knew there would be strong community reaction to news that the United Way of Lancaster County had rejected Schreiber's application to receive funding under their new grant award process. The United Way's decision puts an immediate end to the nearly \$100,000 in annual funding it had been providing in recent years.

While we were disappointed by the decision, the optimistic spirit of Schreiber and the thousands of children and families we serve every year refocuses our disappointment into a positive direction.

We will carry on with the community's help as we have since the Rotary Club of Lancaster and Edna Schreiber collaborated in 1936 to help children who had been afflicted with polio. That spirit of collaboration remains in place here every day.

We work with the Lancaster County Department of Human Services, Children and Youth and the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit. We work with more than 100 colleges and universities nationwide who send their speech, occupational and physical therapy students here to learn as part of



Schreiber Pediatric appoints new president

James W. DeBord

their rotations. And, of course, we work collaboratively with the thousands of families who want their children to be able to live out their dreams just like any other child.

I grew up here in this community learning to play basketball on the courts of the Boys Club and attending summer camp at the YMCA's Camp Shand, participating in Scouting, earning my lifeguard certification in the YWCA pool and working as a playground supervisor during high school for the Lancaster Recreation Commission.

So I have personally benefited from programs that received United Way funding over the years, and for that I am grateful. I also applaud the United Way on its four bold goals to achieve 100 percent kindergarten readiness, increase post-secondary achievement, reduce poverty and improve access to the health care system.

Our goals here at Schreiber are similar. Recently the mother of one of our Schreiber kids told me the story about why she brought her daughter to Schreiber. She said she had been working with a therapist outside of the area who had recommended that she have her 3-year old daughter fitted for a wheelchair to prepare for kindergarten. This therapist felt that the child would have an easier time with her cerebral palsy going on and off of a school bus in a wheelchair, via a specialized lift.

This little girl's mother was not willing to accept this as the only future for her daughter. Instead, she came to Schreiber, and our amazing therapy staff said this little girl was going to learn to walk up and down the steps of that school bus just like all of her friends.

After two years here, she was, in fact, going up and down those steps on her own, delighting herself, her family and, of course, everyone here at Schreiber. We helped this little girl become kindergarten ready. She tells everyone now that she wants to be a dentist someday, so she already has her post-secondary education plans lined up. Thankfully, Schreiber was here to make this all possible as part of her medical home. It's one example of many that shows how Schreiber prepares young people to lead independent, productive lives as adults.

And that work will continue, although now, of course, we need more help from our many friends across Lancaster County and beyond. For those of you who know Schreiber only through our Rubber Duckie Race, take a minute to visit our website and learn more about all that we do.

There are ways to give that don't cost anything. You can like us on Facebook, sign up for our email list or follow us on Twitter. You can raise your hand for one of the many volunteer opportunities we have available.

Schreiber's work is so critical to so many children that we simply do not accept the possibility that this community would allow such a valuable community resource to go without the financial and human resources it needs to help all children succeed in life.

Schreiber has seen difficult times before, and each time we have weathered them. With your help, we

will weather this new future together.

James DeBord is president of Schreiber Pediatric.