



## Children's Assistive Technology Service

2018 Annual Report



**CATS** serves as a **no-cost resource** for children with disabilities who need adaptive equipment and whose families have limited resources.

# Who We Are

***IRS designated as a 501(c)(3)  
Public Charity***

Dear Friends of CATS,

This photo was taken on the day I was presented with Virginia's "2018 Outstanding Senior Volunteer" award. Although this was quite an honor, I am but one of the more than 300 dedicated CATS volunteers. Additionally, there are hundreds of families who pass along the equipment their children have outgrown or no longer need. This Annual Report will highlight our successes and illuminate the opening of our first, true "full-service" place of business on February 1, 2019, in Richmond.

With a grant obtained through the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation, in April 2018, CATS was able to hire John Naples to work 20 hours per week as our first Administrative Assistant. John helps me juggle program management for Roanoke CATS, and also assists me with oversight of the organization's state-wide expansion. While CATS will always depend on volunteers for all of the "real" hands-on work, we needed someone to count on for the essential daily record-keeping and communication. We are all so grateful to have John on board!

With your help, we have demonstrated that the re-use model for providing adaptive and mobility equipment for children can and does work. However, for CATS to continue to grow, and not just be another good idea, we will need to adapt. Our Board of Directors needs to grow and our facilities need to expand. We've obtained additional vehicles for transportation of equipment, but found we cannot do what needs to be done without actual staff we can count on day in and day out.

Please make your suggestions, spread the word, and continue your support. If we embrace these new challenges, we will succeed.

Gratefully,

Cathie Cummins  
President and Founder



***Virginia Governor Ralph Northam (far right) greeting CATS board members (from left to right): Cathie Cummins, Beth Beach & Laura Alexander.***

# Key Successes

*To date, CATS has distributed more than 2,000 pieces of adaptive and mobility equipment to families throughout Virginia.*

- ✓ More than 300 volunteers contributed 4,092 service hours, not including Board Members who fill unpaid staff positions.
- ✓ Equipment valued at \$933,680 was returned to communities and reassigned to children with disabilities who needed it in 2018.
- ✓ Two transit vans purchased to solve equipment transportation problems and relieve our friends at NuMotion, National Seating & Mobility and Tycon Medical who have helped with transportation.
- ✓ Communication Loan Library In Hampton Roads flourishing with service to 22 children and plans to expand.
- ✓ Collaboration with University of Lynchburg on the Kids Equipment Palooza will receive recognition at the American Physical Therapy Association conference in Chicago, June 2019.
- ✓ Second annual Hallowheels Fun-raiser was a smashing success featuring a bevy of princesses and one scary character.





# Our Mission

*Lightly used equipment is refurbished and given to new, young owners.*

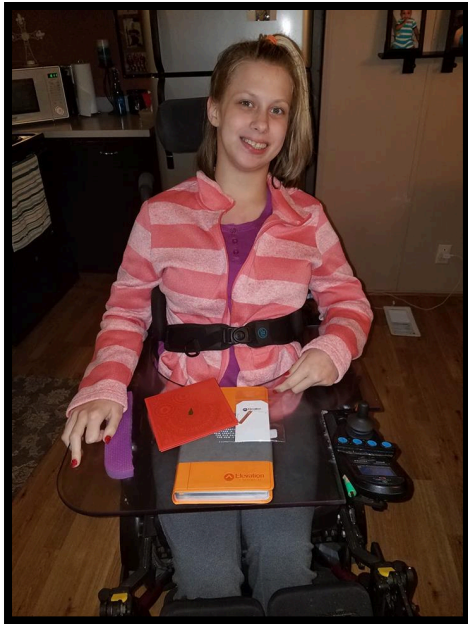
1. To ensure that **ALL children with disAbilities** can have access to adaptive devices which allow them to participate with others, achieve mobility, connect socially, and improve health.
2. To promote the economical and environmentally sound practice of assistive technology (adaptive and mobility equipment) re-use.
3. To advocate for policy reform so that assistive technology, as defined by the “*Individual with Disabilities Education Act*,” is **accessible** to all children who need it, **regardless of family income**.



# The Need

*CATS believes that a child challenged by disabilities deserves the same opportunities as a typical child.*

The cost of raising a child with a disability is **10x** the cost of raising a typically developing child.



*Jennifer Bruington, high-school student, CATS volunteer, looking forward to a full and happy life*

A child dependent on a power wheel chair for mobility may have assistive technology **costing over \$500,000 during his or her childhood**, including, but not limited to equipment for:

- Independent Mobility
- Sitting
- Standing
- Eating
- Exercise
- Bathing
- Communication
- Vehicle & Home Accessibility



*Angela West, college graduate, employed full time, visiting CATS in 2015. Former "Miss Wheelchair Virginia."*

***Yet, with the opportunities this equipment provides, this individual could attend school, college, get a job, and be a contributing member of the community.***

# How We Work

*Receive, refurbish and re-assign gently used pediatric equipment.*

Hundreds of families whose children have outgrown or no longer need expensive adaptive devices and mobility equipment have continued to donate these items to CATS for re-use. Hand-me-downs for a hand-up -- CATS is filling the gap in Virginia healthcare for children with disabilities when third-party payers deny equipment or the process stretches into months or years before approval for needed equipment is finally achieved. Families have expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the work of college students and community volunteers who provide clean equipment, in good repair, in collaboration with a child's health-care team.

## **Making life easier . . .**

*"I want to thank you for the equipment I have requested and received from you for my son over the last few years. The shower chair a while back. Recently you gave me an extra wheelchair tray. It is the exact size he needed. This way I don't need to transport it back and forth to school all the time."*

## **Making the future brighter . . .**

*"My daughter Angel has been using your equipment for quite a while now and has made a tremendous turn around since she first started. I am so grateful that she is able to use the equipment and I look forward to a fun journey with all equipment that she is able to use."*

## **Making joy possible when times are tough . . .**

*"I was moved to tears this week when a simple inquiry led Beth to identifying, locating, and helping me acquire a critical piece of equipment for my daughter. THANK YOU!!!"*

# Watch Us Grow

*In 2018, CATS distributed 788 pieces of equipment – serving 696 kids and their families.*

## **CATS serves the entire state of Virginia!**



Children, from birth to age 18+, who need assistance for mobility, positioning and communication.

### **Roanoke Valley CATS**

The workshop at CATS headquarters at Smith Mountain Lake (SML) has continued to be a success, drawing in both volunteers and tremendous financial support. 120 volunteers worked on behalf of CATS at the SML Charity Home Tour. There is also a Communication Loan Library and a GoBabyGo program (adapting off-the-shelf motorized toy cars for young children who cannot walk). This location is also home to our Hallowheels Fun(d) raiser. CATS continues to enjoy working closely with Easter Seals/UCP in Salem, VA.

### **Hampton Roads CATS**

Receiving considerable in-kind support from Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, this is CATS' busiest location. Here is a successful Communication Loan Library with plans to expand this project. More volunteers are needed to work on administrative tasks and fund raising.



# Watch Us Grow

*With support growing to meet increased demand, CATS will expand to new locations.*

## **Richmond CATS**

A dedicated team of local therapists have been determined to develop a CATS location here. 2018 saw the group successfully recruit college students to help out, working out of storage units, with assist from DME vendors -- National Seating & Mobility and NuMotion. In 2019, CATS will be making the biggest investment yet, in Richmond, in order to serve a large metropolitan area more effectively.

## **Marion CATS**

Students striving to earn a doctorate in Occupational Therapy did preliminary research on the concept of bringing CATS to the Emory & Henry College campus at the Health Sciences building in Marion. At the end of the semester in December 2018, it was determined that the project is a go and will move forward in 2019.



*CATS' first "full-service" place of business opened on February 1, 2019, at 2545 Gayton Centre Drive, Richmond, VA 23238.*



# Providing Opportunities for Success

*CATS fills the gap when waiting through the months long insurance approval process, meeting a child's immediate needs!*

## Adilee's Story:

Before Adilee (Addy) turned two years old, CATS provided her with her first gait trainer. This piece of equipment allowed her to be supported in a standing position and facilitated her ability to practice walking.

Addy has been able to receive a new gait trainer whenever she has outgrown her previous one or her needs have changed.

Early and consistent opportunities to practice a skill leads to success. Addy is now in school and is beginning to practice using simple forearm crutches to walk.



# Providing Opportunities for Success

*If it weren't for CATS, insurance denials would be the end of the line for these kids. Instead, they are able to get the equipment they need, at no cost, because of the generosity of others.*

## Evan's Story:

Our family is very thankful we discovered CATS! If it weren't for them, our son, Evan, would not have a gait trainer at home or at school because his insurance denied our request for this equipment. Since receiving his gait trainer from CATS, Evan has been able to freely walk around our home and neighborhood, and enjoy time with our family.

At school, Evan is able to participate in the classroom, on the playground, and in physical education in the gym which allows him to interact with his peers and gain those wonderful school-day experiences.

On top of giving him his independence, the gait trainer allows him to strengthen his leg muscles and hone his walking skills. Hopefully one day, thanks to the assistance of his gait trainer and physical therapy, Evan will be able to walk independently.

We are very grateful that a nonprofit like CATS exists in our community!

Thank You,

The Jenkins Family  
Richmond, VA





# Our Volunteers

*CATS success is a result of communication, collaboration and coordination among professionals across Virginia.*

The largest group of volunteers are the students and community volunteers who clean donated equipment. Eaton Corporation was the first and only business this year who pitched in, but the list of colleges and universities grows:

- University of Lynchburg
- Radford University
- Jefferson College of Health Sciences
- Tidewater Community College
- Virginia Western Community College
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- ECPI University
- South University
- Ferrum College
- Virginia Tech
- Old Dominion University

The next longest list would be those who volunteer to donate gently used equipment, allowing CATS to facilitate this economical and environmentally responsible practice of re-use. **749 items were added to our inventory in 2018.**





# Our Volunteers

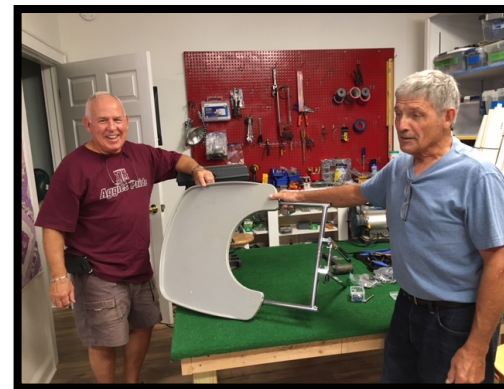
*College students and retirees make everything happen at CATS!*

Retirees at Smith Mountain Lake, community/hospital volunteers in Norfolk, assistive technology professionals (ATPs) at National Seating & Mobility and NuMotion in Richmond complete the repairs and refurbishing of donated equipment.

To responsibly ensure that the equipment fits a child correctly, CATS collaborates with:

- Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters
- Carilion Hospital System
- Children's Hospital at the University of Virginia
- National Seating & Mobility
- NuMotion
- Tycon Medical
- Physical, occupational and speech therapists all over the state

Some of this activity is conducted at the "Kids Equipment Paloozas" at the University of Lynchburg and Radford University by students in the Doctorate of Physical Therapy programs. This project won CATS recognition with the American Physical Therapy Association, where we will have a presentation at the National Conference in Chicago in June, 2019.



# Our Donors

*For every dollar spent on program and operational costs, \$12 worth of refurbished equipment was returned to the community.*

## Financial Sponsors

- Altria Companies Employee Community Fund
- Blue Ridge Chapter of the Society of Pediatric Nursing
- Blue Ridge Therapy Associates
- Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia
- FCIDD with Civitan International
- Hampton Roads Community Foundation
- Hollywood Restaurant
- Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund
- John Harrison Smith Memorial Fund
- Kroger Community Rewards
- Lions Clubs of Moneta and Smith Mountain Lake
- Marjorie Sutton Memorial Foundation
- Rotary Foundation
- Smith Mountain Lake Antique & Classic Boat Society
- Smith Mountain Lake Charity Home Tour
- Smith Mountain Lake Civitan Club
- Smith Mountain Lake Women's Club
- Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation
- Virginia Prosthetics and Orthotics
- Walmart

## In-Kind and Collaborative Sponsors

- Ablenet
- Beach-Stant, LLC
- Capps Home Building Center
- Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters
- Clarke Health Care Products
- Comfort Company
- Convaid
- CoughDrop
- Easter Seals / UCP of NC and VA
- KiMobility
- Lowe's Home Improvement
- National Seating and Mobility
- NuMotion
- Ottobock
- Rifton
- R82
- Shentel
- Sleepsafe Beds
- Tidewater Community College
- Tycon Medical

## Individual Donor Honor Roll

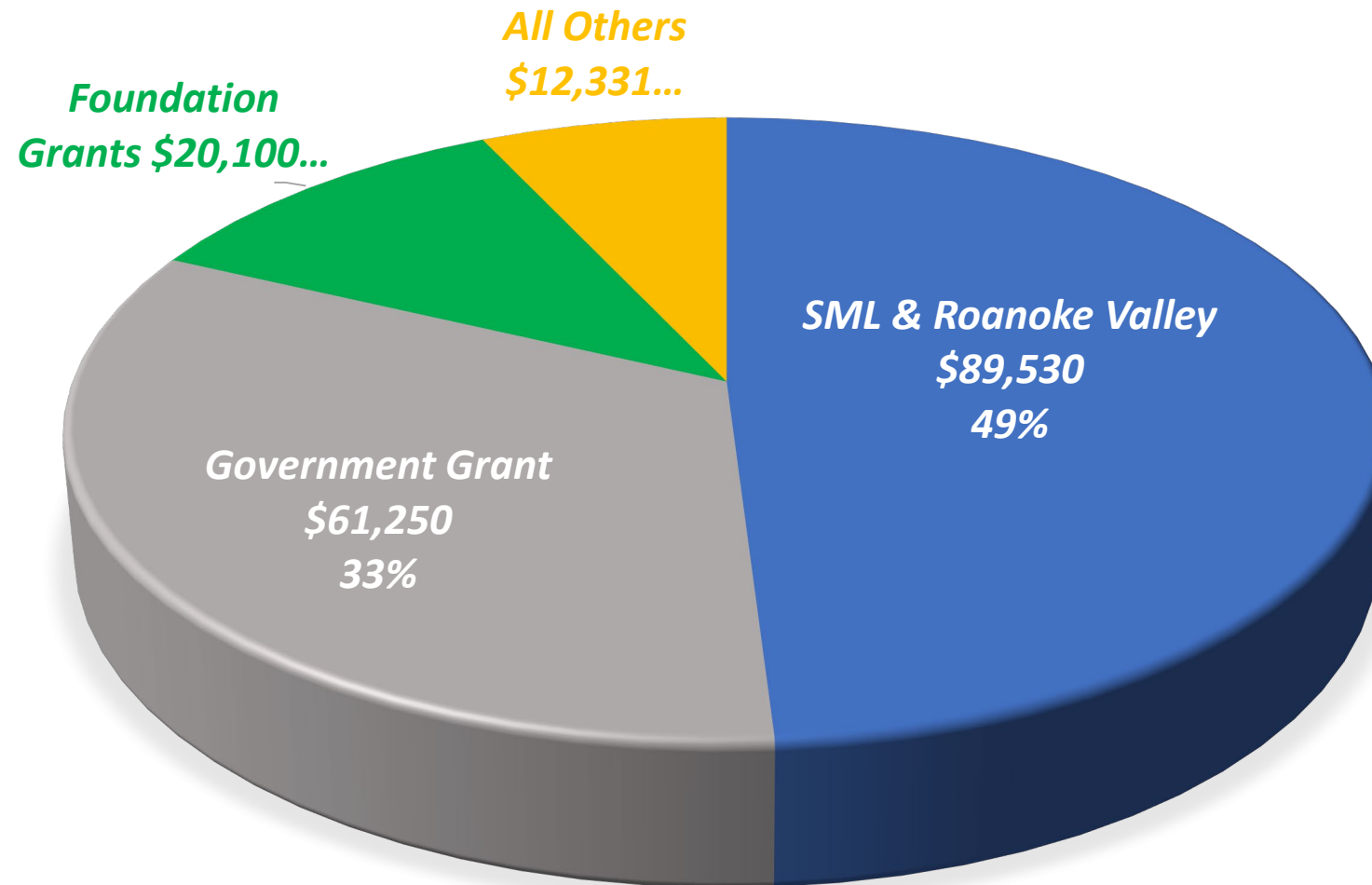
- Sarah Phillips
- Peggy Belmont
- Paola Pizzano
- Wanda Starnes



*Smith Mountain Lake  
Charity Home Tour Gift*

# 2018 Giving to CATS

*In 2018, it cost CATS \$96, on average, to provide a piece of equipment to a new user. But the average value of a piece of refurbished equipment is \$1,200.*



**2018 Total Gifts = \$183,211**



# Looking Ahead

*Assistive technology reuse creates communities where all available equipment is in use by children who need it.*



Five years ago, CATS began with no funding in a garage at Smith Mountain Lake. This community truly rallied around CATS' mission, and is the single largest funder of what is now a state-wide endeavor.

CATS is a labor-intensive, volunteer-run, non-profit organization. To meet the high demand for our services, it is essential that we acquire a small number of paid staffers by 2020.

In the coming year, CATS must develop the capacity to identify and secure additional funding streams in order to achieve sustainability.

# Contact Us

*Many children with disAbilities depend on assistive technology to be able to participate with their families at home, with friends at school, or in their communities.*

## Children's Assistive Technology Service (CATS)

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Hampton Roads -- (757) 763-8905

Richmond – (540) 420-0554

### Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/atdevicesforkids.org/>

## **Board of Directors & Volunteer Leadership Positions**

**Cathie Cummins**, PT, ATS, President & Founder,  
CEO, Roanoke Program Manager,

**David Bates**, CPA, Treasurer

**Beth Beach**, MS, OTR/L, ATP Vice President,  
Hampton Roads Program Manager, Website Manager

**Laura Alexander**, DPT, Secretary, Newsletter Editor

**Aven Alford**, Parent, Development Director

**Francie Mitchell**, DPT, Richmond Co-Program Manager

**Laura Connor**, M.A. CCC –SLP

**Phyllis Edwards**, ATP, CRTS