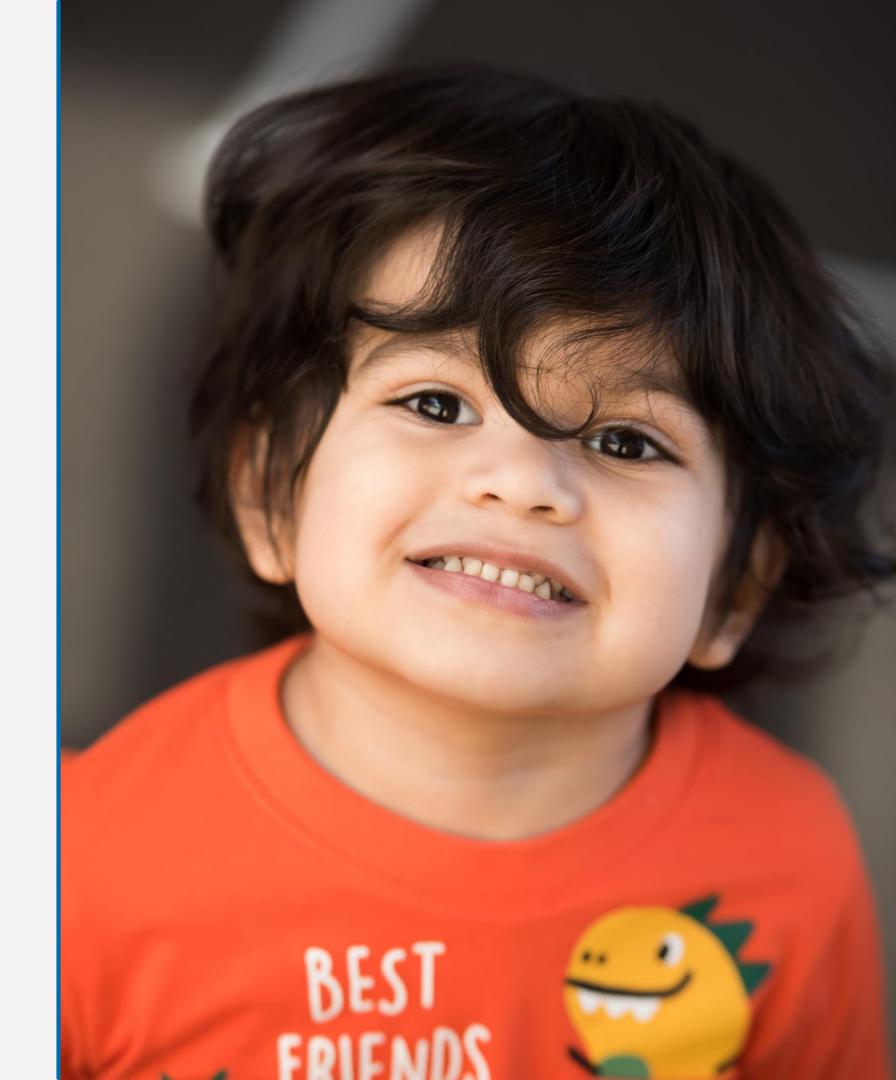




Creating Impact by Empowering Positive Change

2023

ANNUAL REPORT







Hello.
We Are Abilities First.

Message from our President & CEO

We are pleased to present this annual report to you. We consider 2023 to be the first full post-pandemic year. I am happy to say that not only has Abilities First survived, but we learned, evolved, and emerged even stronger than we were before. After several years of protecting people and our programs from unprecedented threats, we have returned to exciting growth and innovation.

In 2023, we launched the Community Connections program. This exciting and impactful program helps people with disabilities better engage their communities and learn independent living skills with the help of trained staff members. While we have always offered these services, we rebranded the program, so it properly reflects its authentic and non-clinical nature.

Supported by a grant from the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, we launched the Teaching Kitchen in collaboration with Hudson River Housing and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The Teaching Kitchen series offers sensible culinary instruction to adults with IDD, imparting essential living skills around food and nutrition.

Throughout the year, our incredible employees continued to deliver excellent services that created inspiring stories of hope, perseverance, and caring. As one additional way to recognize staff members who inspire others, we created the Inspiration Awards program. On a quarterly basis, our management team and Board of Directors review nominations and select one staff member from Children's Services and one person from Adult Services to be honored with an Inspiration Award. Honorees meet with our Board and are presented with awards. Among other places, we convey these stories on our social media platforms and in our monthly newsletters. Please join us in celebrating these incredible employees.

Throughout 2023, we continued to develop our position as an innovator in our field by developing what is known as Abilibee. This will be a mobile app, free to anyone in New York State that will help guide people with special needs and their families through life transitions. It is funded by the NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities and is the only resource of its kind. The final version of the app will launch sometime in 2024.

It is only with your help and support that Abilities First can accomplish such tremendous things that shape our world and our communities to be more welcoming and empowering for people with disabilities and their families. Thank you, and we hope you find great value in this report.

Dr. Jeffery FoxPresident & CEO





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MISSION

To provide people with disabilities and their families support to attain independence, selfdetermination, integration, and acceptance by others through education, exploration, and experience

VISION

All people are recognized and valued for their Abilities First.

VALUES

Integrity – consistently truthful, dependable, professional, and ethical

Equality – fairness in all opportunities

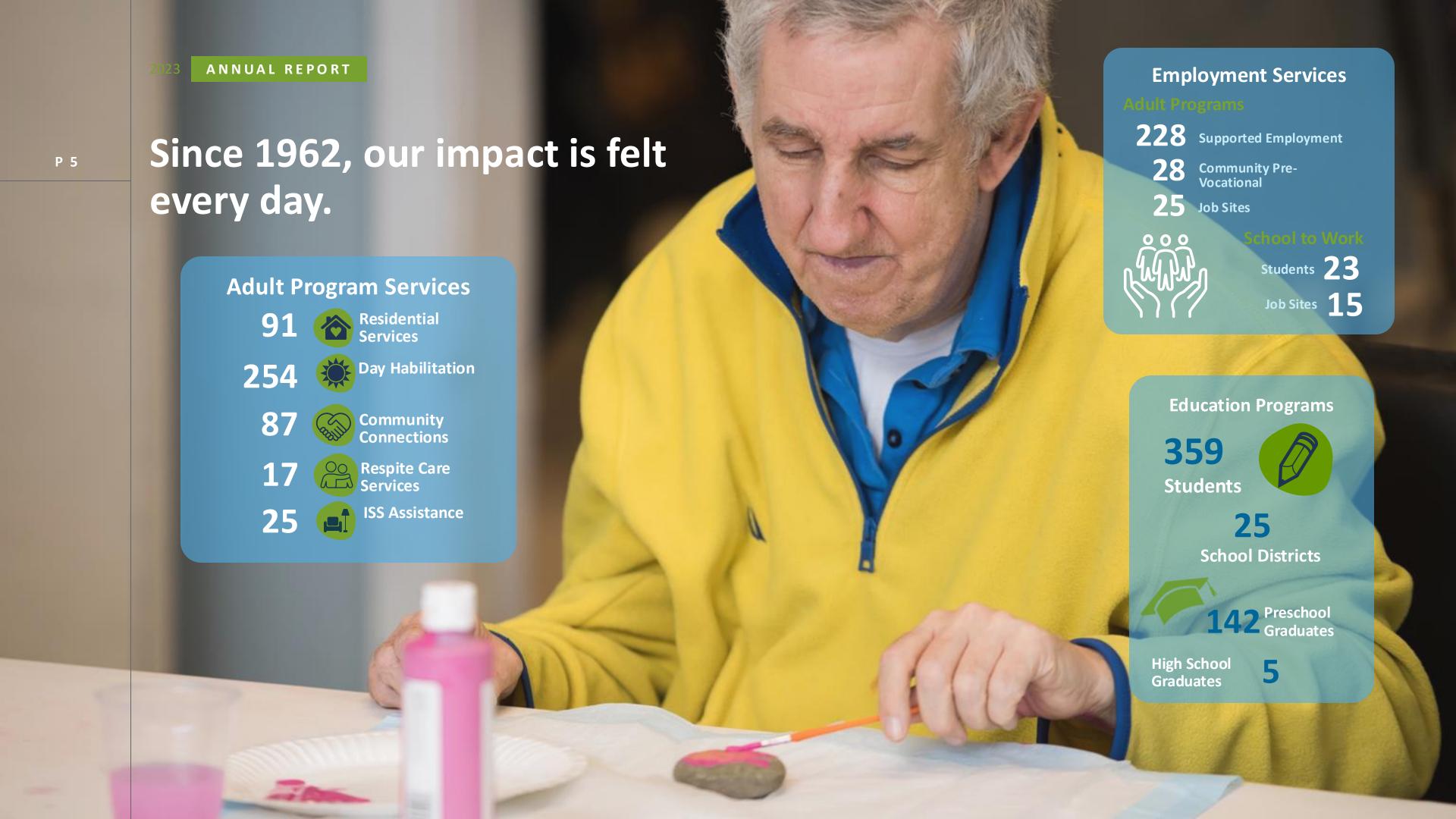
Dignity – deserving of respect and consideration

Distinction - pursuing excellence via world-class best practices

Diversity – encouraging inclusiveness

OUR IMPACT

Empowering Positive Transformation



"Music is a powerful instrument for empowering our students highlighting their strengths and abilities."

Music

As a music therapist, I have the privilege of witnessing a distinct facet of our students that may not always surface in the traditional classroom environment. We observe students who may not speak but find their voice through song, others who develop counting abilities through drumming, and many who enhance their social skills and turn-taking by engaging in musical activities with their peers.

One reason music is unique is that it is not processed in a signal region of the brain. Therefore, it helps bridge connections that may be more challenging for a variety of reasons. The Abilities First Foundation has been essential in helping provide the necessary equipment and training to help develop the music therapy program to meet the needs and interests of our students.

Neurodivergent children sometimes struggle with regulating their sensory experience, which makes it harder to engage in other activities. .

Since 2018, generous donations to the Foundation for Abilities First have significantly enhanced programs and services, including music therapy. In 2023, a generous donation enabled the expansion of the music program to address a new area of necessity, prioritizing the students' sensory needs.

Through the expansion, we've acquired vibroacoustic therapy chairs and a range of other sensory equipment. In partnership with the occupational therapy department, we're seamlessly incorporating these tools into students' daily schedules to support their success.

Noah Pomerselig, MS, MT-BC is a Board-Certified Music Therapist with the Abilities First Schools







Life Skills

Abilities First was awarded \$700,000 to launch the Life Skills Lab as part of OPWDD's Supportive Residential Transformation Program. Abilities First is one of 17 agencies statewide to be funded.

The Life Skills Lab includes three initiatives to help individuals build their skill levels for greater independence: a digital annotated cook book of healthy recipes for meal planning and preparation, a Teaching Kitchen to focus on healthy food preparation and nutrition, and enabling technology to add support and enhance communication skills.

Those who've joined the Teaching Kitchen sessions have not only gained kitchen skills alongside their peers but also nurtured a growing confidence in their ability to care for themselves in the culinary realm. All while indulging in the sheer joy and love for food!



2023 Advocacy & Achievement Highlights



SCHOOL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

In 2023 Abilities First was awarded \$870,000 in grant funding for capital improvements to our schools.

ADULT DAY CENTERS ATTENDANCE

The attendance in our adult day centers returned to pre-pandemic levels, in our adult day centers returned to pre-pandemic levels, enjoying friendship, activities and the community.





ABILIEE APP

Introducing Abilibee! With a \$400,000 grant from the NYS Council for Developmental Disabilities, we're building an app to help families navigate systems of care.







Reflecting on the Foundation for Abilities First, FAFNY NY 2023 Year

The mission of the Foundation for Abilities First NY is to secure the financial resources required to meet programmatic needs and ensure the sustainability of Abilities First, Inc.'s mission. FAFNY is dedicated to establishing a stable commitment to philanthropic support to guarantee that programs, services, and quality-of-life opportunities remain robust and accessible. This commitment also ensures the organization's fiscal resilience during unexpected changes, providing stakeholders with a sense of confidence and security in their support.



Contributions



"Thank you to the Foundation donors who helped to fund my new computer." - Reece

"We had a great time at our parties this

year; thank you, FAFNY!" - Friends at

THANK YOU!

Community Connections



Holiday Helping Hands

Nurturing Generosity: Celebrating the Growth of our Holiday Helping Hands Tradition in 2023. Reflecting on one of our successful initiatives, funds surged from \$4,200 to over \$18,000, enabling us to extend our support to numerous more children, adults, and their families. Together, we cultivated generosity, making the holiday season brighter and more meaningful for all.



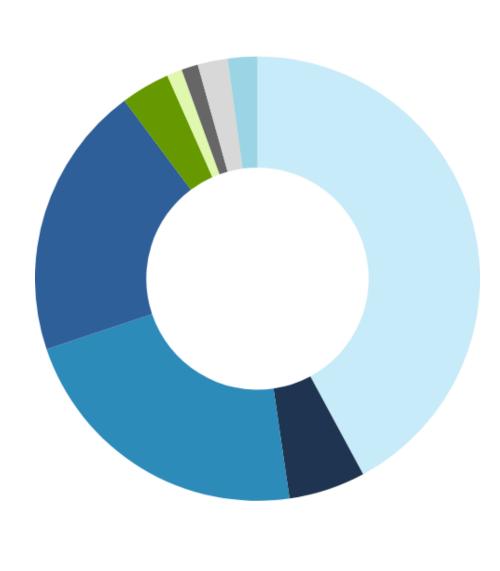
Gifts to the Foundation enable us to enhance community engagement through outings, holiday and classroom celebrations for adults and students, sensory equipment upgrades, and technology replacement, among other initiatives.

Financials

Empowering Positive Transformation

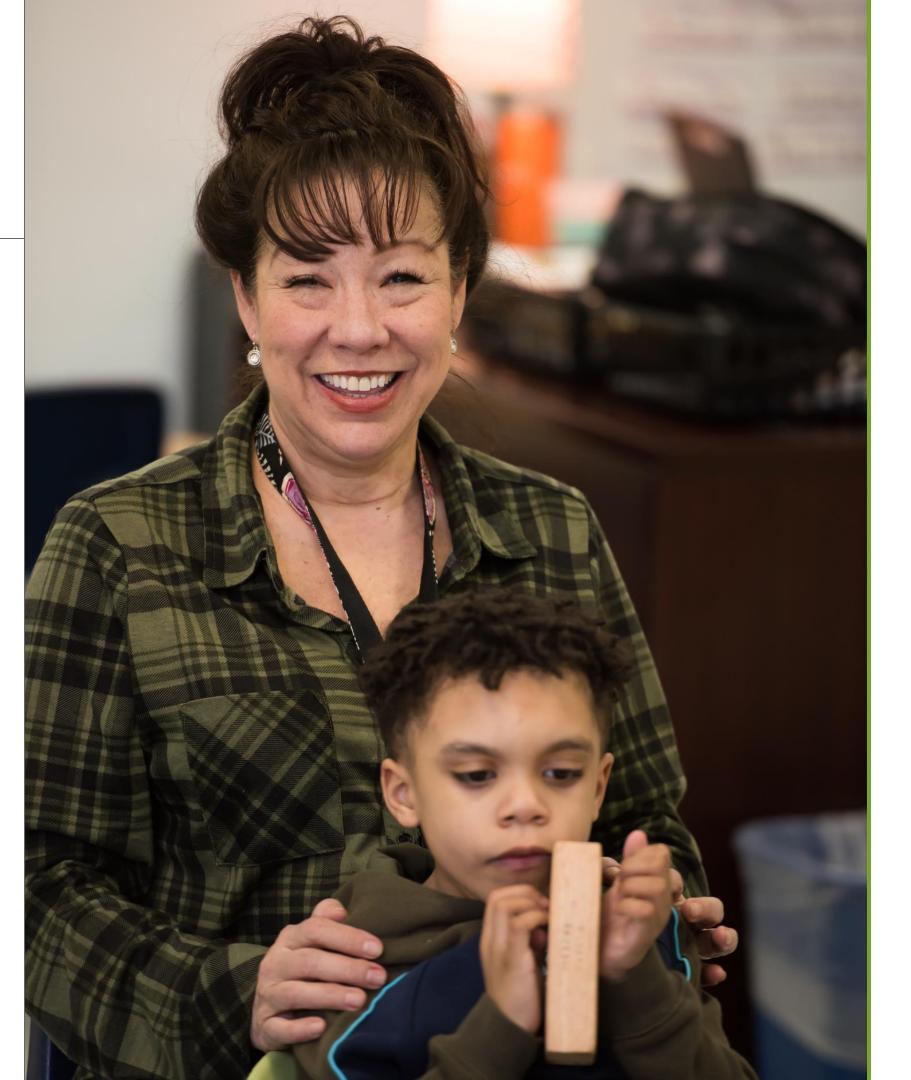
Revenue

- MEDICAID \$16,578,331
- NYS OPWDD \$2,191,785
- NYSED/LOCAL DISTRICTS \$8,717,746
- NYSED/LOCAL COUNTIES \$7,849,540
- FEES FROM INDIVIDUALS \$1,400,873
- PRIVATE CONTRACTS \$436,973
- DONATIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS \$474,180
- FEDERAL FUNDING \$861,785
- ALL OTHER \$841,833









Expenses

\$1,858,496

FRINGE \$6,569,343

SUBCONTRACT WAGES \$324,480

OTHER PROF SERVICES \$1,101,828

TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION\$1,9
70,196

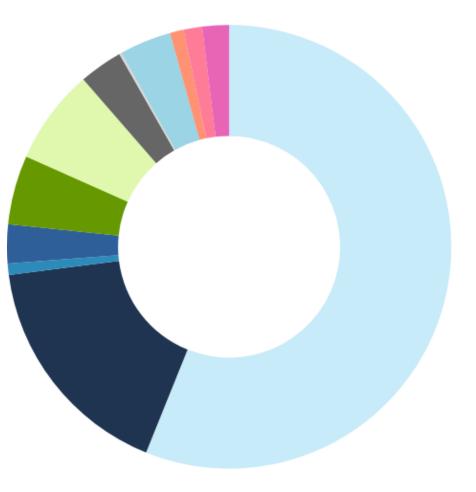
OCCUPANCY \$2,697,486

INTEREST/DEPRECIATION \$1,235,714

EQUIPMENT \$69,414

SUPPLIES/FOOD/PRINTING \$1,467,290

DEVELOPMENT/MARKETING 384,225



AGENCY INSURANCE \$528,456

ALL OTHER \$756,500

Empowering Positive Transformation

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Nancy Besio

Chad Binney

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Michael Bodendorf

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NYS Council for Development Disabilities

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Leadership

Empowering Positive Transformation



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Thank you for helping us make a positive impact!

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