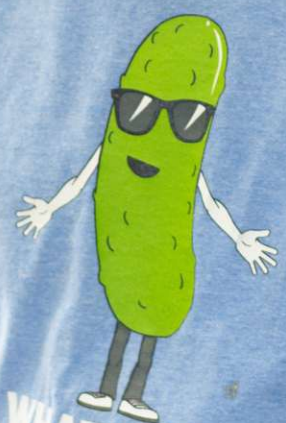


A close-up photograph of a young girl with light brown hair, wearing a red superhero cape with yellow trim over a dark blue shirt. She is looking intently at an adult woman whose profile is visible on the left side of the frame. The woman is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with light-colored walls.

THE CENTER FOR
DISCOVERY®

Annual
Report
2023



WHAT'S THE
BIG DILL?



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Our Mission

Our mission is to build a compassionate and connected community with cutting-edge care and education for the most medically and behaviorally complex individuals. Our team of innovators come from diverse disciplines in the fields of education, research, medicine, nutrition, farming, and the arts. Utilizing the latest science, data, and analytics, The Center for Discovery® has built a model that aims to improve the health and enrich life for all.

Our Vision

We embrace individuality, we create meaningful connections, and we inspire global change.

THE
CENTER FOR
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Letter from The Center for Discovery President & CEO, Dr. Theresa Hamlin

As I write you, I am filled with gratitude about the year past as well as focus and determination for the important years ahead.

I am humbled and grateful to have assumed the role of CEO of The Center. Patrick H. Dollard created a great legacy here and I am determined to build on it with the sole priority of creating a successful and exciting future for those who matter most: our students, residents, and the staff who care for them. And the only word to describe our start is – groundbreaking.

For starters, we have embarked on a major capital campaign to rebuild the infrastructure of our residences and pathways throughout campus. With help from a generous grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation we are repairing roofs, siding, painting – in short, fixing our homes that have felt the effect of many tough Sullivan County winters. The work going on has thrilled families, residents, and all of us on the team.

As part of our new focus, we are rededicating ourselves to the benefits and importance of our Lifestyle Medicine Approach, our HealthE6® Model. We are reminding everyone that this model is changing lives. We want our families to understand it and our community here at The Center to live by it. With the goal of having staff understand the thinking behind many of our processes, we have been promoting our “With Intention” series throughout campuses, so everyone knows why we use the colors we do, why natural light is important, or why we focus on a healthy diet.

All of our families know “food is medicine” is a vital ingredient of our work. And now we want our staff to more fully understand the benefits of our incredibly healthy, organic and biodynamic food – grown on our farms. We have turned our staff café into the “Farmacy” where food is the key to good health. Each person who goes to our new Farmacy can talk about what ails them or how they are feeling and see a suggested menu for them. The reviews have been incredible – where else can staff get delicious meals, perfectly tailored to their needs at affordable prices.

We are so excited about the progress we are making across the state in providing trainings and evaluations. We are currently in contact with 22 school districts and our small-but-mighty team travels hundreds of miles to share our expertise. With additional training partnerships and the needs growing, this program will only continue to expand. There is no doubt we are building on our motto “What happens here matters everywhere.”

What will matter everywhere is surely our soon-to-open Children’s Specialty Hospital. Construction has been completed on the beautiful facility, which will provide short-term assessments for children with autism and medical complexities who have an underlying medical condition. Our goal is to provide a treatment plan for our patients, get them back home with their families, and hopefully prevent the need for long-term residential care. This resource will provide answers for so many families who because of The Center now have a place to turn. As I said earlier – groundbreaking.

It truly has been a year of progress, focus, and building toward a future worthy of those we serve. Every one of us could not be more proud to be on this mission together.

With Gratitude,
Terry





THE
CENTER FOR
DISCOVERY[®]

Program
Highlights

Stories of Collaboration,
Innovation and Unlimited Promise

A Vital Resource for New York State: The Children's Specialty Hospital

The Center for Discovery's Children's Specialty Hospital (CSH), located in Rock Hill, New York, will be a place where families across New York State can turn for the treatment of complex disabilities and related medical conditions at first diagnosis and beyond. The Specialty Hospital is designed for children ages 5-21 who have developmental disabilities and a diagnosis of intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or neurological impairment, along with a medical condition that requires treatment.

The CSH will provide inpatient treatment and conduct comprehensive medical, behavioral, and clinical assessments over a maximum of six months. Through a collaborative approach, this program is designed to help children and adolescents thrive at home, in school, and integrated in the community over the long-term.

“The hospital has the potential to bring about positive transformation for families on a global level,” Dr. Terry Hamlin, the President and CEO of The Center for Discovery says. “The world needs new solutions and treatments to help this ever-growing population and we have the exceptional expertise to help.”



“We are grateful to The Center for its extraordinary combination of scientific rigor and compassion. They pursue new insights and data-driven solutions while surrounding their residents with boundless warmth and understanding, no matter how difficult and challenging their problems may be.”

- TCFD Family Member



When Good Things Take Time: New Heights Reached

Sweet Hill Farm, spread across 150 acres overlooking the Catskill Mountains, is a hidden treasure within The Center for Discovery campus. Daily activities for the individuals who live there, along with Dayhab groups and Center students who visit, consist of farm-based vocational work with beef cows, fiber sheep, and dairy goats. About 3 years ago, Sweet Hill became home to two goats, and now there are 15 in total. This has expanded into The Center's official dairy goat program, which reaches all corners of the organization.

One of the residents at Sweet Hill enjoy working on the farm taking care of the animals and ensuring they have fresh, clean stalls, as well as hay and clean water. He regularly participates in the milking of the goats as well as the cheese making process, while also utilizing the goat milk in other products – like lotion and soap. He and many other residents at Sweet Hill participated in several goat shows in 2023. Showing goats takes a great deal of effort and preparation so throughout the summer, the resident practiced with his goat, Albert. He also learned how to properly maneuver around the ring, how to appropriately stand for the judge's examination, and learned important facts to tell the judge. As the date of the show grew near, he also assisted in body clipping and bathing Albert so she could look her very best.

The duo traveled to the local Grahamsville Fair and not only won their class – they were named Best Goat in Show! It's hard to believe that he arrived at Sweet Hill Farm with an extreme nervousness around any animal. During his first few months there, he struggled in the barn as he worked through this fear. Slowly, he began with bottle feeding baby goats and cleaning the stalls after the animals were removed. He continued to make strides to overcome his fear, and worked hand-in-hand with the farm program coordinators to handle the animals – first with assistance and now, completely on his own. He is now able to walk with them in parades and helps his peers do the same. Once a place of trepidation and anxiety, the barn has become his happy place – a place where he often asks to go to see “his goats.”

What a triumph!



“My husband and I feel that The Center for Discovery has been a gift to our family. Loving our grandchildren as much as we do – The Center gives us peace of mind knowing that they are so cared for. Thank you for all that you do.”

- Joan and Irwin Robinson, TCFD Grandparents



The Power of Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Technology

The Center's Assistive Technology and Innovation team, in collaboration with the Clinical Services department, implemented the Tech It Out program where students were able to participate in tech-driven learning adventures. At The Center, we are constantly creating and adapting equipment to promote engagement, facilitate independence, improve safety, and enhance self-esteem for individuals in our care. Tech It Out is a natural extension of this mission.

The initial project was focused on modifying toys using battery interrupters. Through this process, students not only grasped the techniques involved, but also adapted three toys for their peers facing mobility challenges. The joy of the experience was evident as they personally delivered the adapted toys to younger students, making a positive impact on others' lives. This initiative exemplifies how students helping students through the power of technology can promote inclusivity and empowerment in education.

This initiative was an incredible example of the power of interdisciplinary collaboration, as it involved many staff members and departments throughout The Center. We see true magic here when we collaborate.



A Dynamic Team with a Humanity-driven Approach to Foster Growth and Support



Our Assessment, Training, and Learner Advancement Services (ATLAS) team at The Center ensures that everything we do is beneficial to the individuals, communities, families, and schools that we work so diligently to support.

A major component of the team's effort includes evaluation services that combine the expertise of all of the clinical and support departments at The Center. By leveraging our ongoing and progressive research projects, Center staff are able to translate findings into best practices to help students through a multi- and inter-disciplinary evaluation process that families and school administrators call second-to-none.

One such request came from a district that was concerned because their elementary-to-middle school transition team was working to support a student who had been struggling to retain placement across a number of programs. The student's parents were feeling defeated and frustrated as to what the next step for their son could be to help him, while also engaging him to progress successfully into adolescence.

In concert with this young man's school team, we developed a comprehensive, systematic, and flexible short-term evaluation that could test existing strengths, discover emerging talents, and mitigate the challenges

facing not only him, but the family and other support systems. Over the course of two days, the student was invited to The Center's campus to work alongside our psychologists, behavior analysts, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, behavioral health team members, and our Discovery Health Center staff to evaluate and support the young man and all of the systems around him. By leveraging the dynamically integrated expertise of our clinical staff, we were able to assist the young man through a variety of intensive evaluation scenarios that were thoughtfully designed with his needs in mind. These sessions were not strictly business, either; we worked diligently to support the family through all of the laughter and tears that comes from these struggles.

One thing that sets The Center apart is that our work doesn't stop when the student leaves our campus. Our ATLAS team continued their work by ensuring that follow-up interviews and observations were conducted with teachers, outside clinical staff, community providers, and extended family members to create a report that is representative of the whole-person across their life. The team then compiled the various reports and integrated the information into a detailed evaluation that is supported by in-home and in-school training models to support the student in each setting.

Cont.

For this young man, this included post-evaluation trainings with extended family, school staff, and even after-hours providers. The outcome? One that everyone can be proud of – a month following our evaluation the student was able to transition back into a well-prepared and flexible school with staff that knew they had the ability to support him in a meaningful way. His family felt reassured that the support of The Center for Discovery's team would create ongoing successes and transparent communication. And, maybe best of all, this young man was excited and confident for the first time in over a year to re-engage with the community he had been missing for so long. His mother described his first morning “as exciting as the first day he ever stepped on that school bus – he had a huge smile and didn't look back as the bus pulled away.”

“What Happens Here Matters Everywhere” is more than just our catchphrase here at The Center for Discovery – it is an ethos that we strive to embrace with every evaluation, every training, and with every interaction.

“The Center for Discovery impacts hundreds of lives by making possible what no one thought could ever be possible. You change lives for the better every single day.”

- TCFD Family Member





Education

Learning Through Exploration and Play

In September of 2023, The Center for Discovery opened its doors to 36 brand new five year old day students and for many of them, it was their first school-age educational experience. Teachers, teaching assistants, Behavioral Analysts, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Speech and Language Pathologists were tasked with welcoming these “Early Learners and Explorers” empathetically with open arms, while challenging each student to meet their full potential.

New to the program was a bright-eyed 5-year-old named Alena. Alena loved sensory input, playing with legos, and working independently within the classroom. She did not however show interest in following the daily schedule, and would often present challenging behaviors that greatly impacted her day – academically, emotionally, and socially.

Alena's Behavioral Analyst and Teacher worked with her to make small incremental progress through the utilization of timers, verbal countdowns, and visual cues to create transitional routines. Her Occupational Therapist found sensory objects that helped provide her with input throughout her day in order to reduce overall anxieties and sensory needs. Alena was beginning to make progress toward accepting schedule changes, accepting no when an activity was not on the schedule, and was able to build strong bonds and a level of trust with all of her caregivers.

Six months later, Alena was able to transition to and from a new area of campus with little to no challenging behaviors. She has continued to be able to experience more opportunities throughout her school day and across the TCFD campus by being able to transition more independently.

“Working with people with disabilities has shown me that the mind cannot limit what an able heart can do. Truly - what happens here, matters everywhere.”

- Michelle Guanzon, Physical Therapist

A Story of Perseverance, Friendship, and Pizza

Meet Jack. For as long as Jack has been a student at The Center, his dream has been to work at a pizza shop. When Jack first arrived at The Center, he presented with emotional regulation challenges that could have made working in the kitchen unsafe.

With expert educational and clinical support, Jack has grown tremendously in his ability to self-regulate and so, in 2023, it was time for his dream to become a reality. The team at The Center went to work to make it happen, and Jack's Pizza Pit was born!

Jack's Pizza Pit is run by Jack and his classmates and provides allergy friendly, whole food pizza options to the Thanksgiving Farm and Community School campus. Jack and his peers work together each week to take the orders and inventory, make and deliver the pizzas, and of course – have fun throughout the process. Through the establishment of the Pizza Pit, Jack and his peers work on their academic and socialization goals in a hands on setting that allows their talents and interests to shine—all while making delicious and nutritious food for their friends to enjoy.

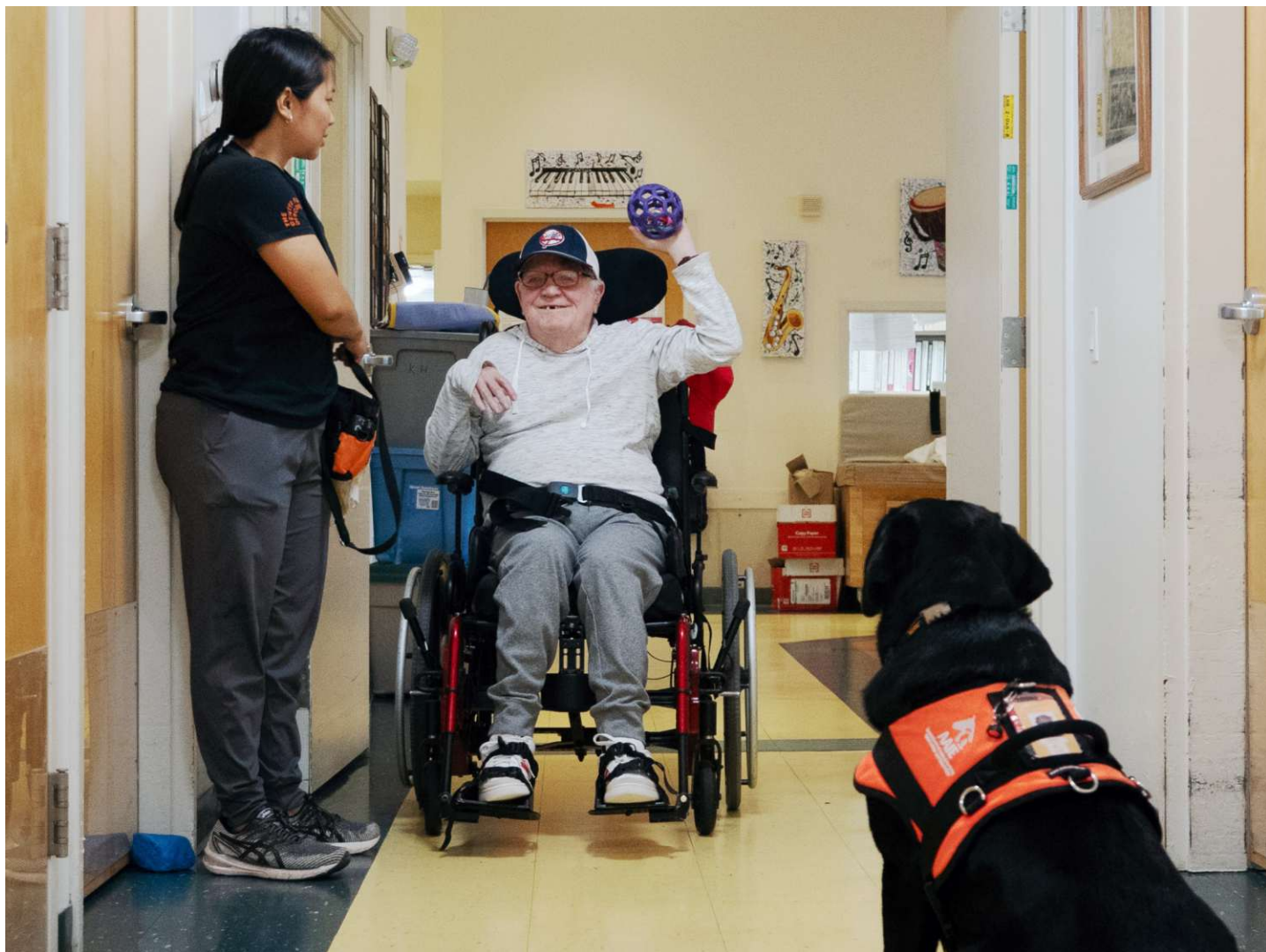
Like everything we do here at The Center, Jack's Pizza Pit became a collaborative effort between a team of educators, therapists, and our Department of Nourishment Arts® (DNA). The team worked hard to ensure Jack and his peers had the necessary supports to be as successful and independent as possible, which included Speech Language Pathologists providing visual and

communication supports, Occupational Therapists helping to provide tools and strategies to allow for independence and any needed adaptations, and the support of our DNA team to ensure the ingredients being used were high quality and fresh, because we all know that Food is Medicine® here at TCFD.

To see Jack's growth has been nothing short of remarkable. He went from requiring extensive support in the kitchen, to a pizza chef who is now helping his peers develop new skills, interests, and friendships. None of this would have been possible without the collaboration throughout departments, our belief that anything is possible, and Jack's perseverance, spirit, and tenacity.



Achieving Milestones at Any Age



Age is just a number here at The Center for Discovery. For the adult population we serve, the possibilities are endless. Thanks to our Animal Assisted Intervention and Education (AAIE) team, many of the adults who are 60 years of age and older are participating in enriching experiences that vastly improve their quality of life. Take for instance, walks with our Miniature Horses that are helping the elderly population here at The Center develop a stronger gait. There's also the myriad of AAIE activities that these adults are regularly engaging in with the animals like grooming, adapted bowling, bean bag tosses, games such as Connect 4 and UNO, and more. They're now able to consistently perform specific tasks like filling food containers for the rabbits and water bottles for the barn animals.

Despite their age, they continue to exceed expectations. Their participation has increased, they have a sense of belonging and responsibility in caring for another living being, and their regulation and overall health has improved since working with the animals.

It doesn't stop there! Our adult population visits the therapeutic pool, goes on fishing trips with our Recreation Therapy team, and enjoys walks on the rail trail and in front of their residences during any season of the year.

Here at The Center for Discovery, if you can dream it, you can do it.



People Operations and Benefits

Learning and Growing at The Center for Discovery

In 2023, The Center for Discovery witnessed a remarkable display of courage, adaptability, and teamwork from its staff, highlighting the organization's commitment to excellence. This story centers on a staff member who not only embraced a new challenge, but achieved an accomplishment while transitioning into a new role with significant responsibility.

This staff member, who originally worked in an administrative position at The Center, was known for their dedication and attention to detail. However, in 2023, they were asked to support the People Operations team by assisting with pre-boarding new hires. Despite a demanding workload, the staff member enthusiastically embraced the challenge, valuing the opportunity to support colleagues and facilitate the seamless pre-boarding process for new hires to join the TCFD team.

Driven by determination, the staff member sought guidance from new teammates and quickly learned the

regulations and compliances related to bringing in new hires efficiently and effectively. Although the intricacies of pre-boarding were vastly different from their previous administrative duties, their dedication and willingness to learn enabled them to overcome challenges.

The success story of this staff member is not unique at The Center for Discovery. The People Operations department has welcomed new team members from different roles within the agency, displaying their commitment to learning new challenges and growing professionally. These team members are willingly supporting various tasks within the department, demonstrating a remarkable ability to adapt and enhance their skills.

Their collective efforts epitomize the best practices of The Center, reflecting a collaborative ethos and a willingness to push beyond their comfort zones. Not only do these team members benefit their immediate colleagues, but they also contribute positively to the entire organization. This

narrative from 2023 serves as a powerful reminder that with courage, determination, and teamwork, any obstacle can be surmounted, and meaningful progress can be made.

This spirit resonates throughout The Center, mirroring the collective dedication of TCFD staff who tirelessly support individuals every day, empowering them to reach their fullest potential.

Caring for Our Community: 1,700 Strong

We work hard to care for our energetic and compassionate staff, so they can care for the hundreds of individuals who live and attend school at The Center. In 2023, our Benefits team continued to support and assist staff through their many life stages and educate them on the benefits that would work best for them.

Just ask Caleb in Finance. Previously, he was paying over \$800 per month for health insurance. “During onboarding, I was happily surprised to learn that employee-paid health insurance costs (particularly family plans) were very affordable compared to that at my previous jobs. “This benefit contributes to my overall satisfaction as an employee at TCFD.” This is just one reason why we pay on average, 80% of the cost of health insurance for employees and their families.

Additionally, as we continued our work with Candidly in 2023, one staff member received her forgiveness letter stating that she was forgiven \$48,000 in student loans! “One of the great benefits of working at The Center for Discovery is their Student Loan Forgiveness program. It is super easy to apply and the Benefits team made it seamless!”

From health insurance packages and 401k plans, to staff daycare and summer camp, our Benefits team is always thinking of ways to care for our employees – and it shows. The quality of work they provide is second to none.

“As I reflect on my journey at TCFD, I am filled with gratitude for the experiences and growth opportunities provided to me. My time here has been transformative, shaping me into both a more capable and empathetic educator, as well as deepening my compassion and enriching my abilities as a human being.”

-TCFD Teacher



A Place Where Dreams are Born

"I know a place where dreams are born..."

These were the first words heard live onstage during our 2023 Discovery Dramatic Arts production of "Peter Pan." The words truly resonated in the hearts of everyone in the audience as the actors took to the stage. For the actors themselves, and for their families and loved ones, it was perhaps a dream they hadn't even considered or ever thought possible.

For ten years now, The Center for Discovery has produced a mainstage production where students and residents are given the opportunity to independently take on a role and perform onstage. The show only happens through the collaborative efforts of the entire TCFD community. The Music Therapy team tailors the script to the strengths of the actors, teaches the songs, and stages the show. Our Recreation Therapy team engages with our classrooms and Dayhab program to design and build our sets, costumes, and props. Choreography is handled by our Dance Therapy instructors, while our Teachers and Residential teams help ensure the actors make it to every rehearsal fully prepared, having practiced their lines and lyrics. Members of our Clinical Services team help to reinforce the skills the actors need to develop in order to be successful onstage. Our Innovation Lab and Rehabilitation Tech teams craft materials for the actors to use in the show that are adapted to their individual strength and comfort levels. And to cap it all off, staff members from various departments throughout TCFD support the actors

backstage, aiding with general support, to hair and make-up.

In our recent production of "Peter Pan," Ryan, a teenager from our school program, successfully made his stage debut. Taking on the part of one of the lost boys, he playfully hopped across the stage on an adapted pogo stick. His success came from the efforts of his Physical and Occupational Therapists, who helped him build the stamina to make it across the stage and back, and from his classroom staff, who gave him opportunities throughout the day to practice. Learning his lines and lyrics? That support came from the work of his Speech Language Pathologist. Singing along to the melody of the songs? His Music Therapist. The hat he was wearing as part of his costume? That was created on an adapted circular knitting machine by one of our Dayhab participants under the guidance of a Recreation Therapist and our Fiber Arts program. Last but not least, the assistant in his classroom served as his driver, making sure he made it to each and every rehearsal.

Helen Keller has been quoted as saying "alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Her words certainly ring true in each stage production at TCFD, where dreams certainly are born...and realized. Ryan, and his fellow actors, walked away from "Peter Pan" with a bit more confidence, with newfound friends, and with an exciting new sense of what he is capable of as he matures.



A Spirit of Camaraderie and Happiness



Imagine taking on a world-renowned Italian chef and beating him in a cook-off! That's what happened right here in 2023 at TCFD – all thanks to The Center's Self-Advocacy Group (SAG).

The first annual cookoff involved the SAG team splitting into two teams and cooking against each other with support from Cesare Casella, the Chief of our Department of Nourishment Arts (DNA) and a Michelin starred chef, the DNA team, and other clinicians here at The Center. With their confidence running high, they turned up the heat and directly challenged Cesare.

"I was so proud of these amazing teams. They worked very hard on their dishes in that first competition and the food was delicious, but more importantly the determination they brought to the kitchen, and their sense of joy in their accomplishment, was the true gift to us all," said Chef Casella.



The SAG Team divided up for their kitchen duel against Cesare. Five SAG members devoted their time to food prep with the Recreation Therapy team by their side. "Using both standard and adapted equipment, the team mixed, chopped, and cooked their way to victory. Each team member was assigned tasks that highlighted their ability in the kitchen," Recreational Therapist Erin Atkins said. "We used a switch activated environmental control unit (ECU) paired with a standard food processor and mixer, and an adapted pourer for those who rely on switch use to participate." Five additional team members did the cooking and plating.

In the final round of the cooking competition, our 10 member SAG Team took home the victory over our very own Chef Cesare Casella.



This event was an incredible example of what The Center is all about – bringing together our DNA team with Cesare as its Chief, our Self Advocacy Group, Residential Associates, and Occupational, Behavioral, and Recreational Therapists who facilitated in every way possible – including the use of adaptive equipment from our Innovation Labs Department. So much tenacity, drive, and talent from each individual who took part in this wonderful culinary adventure.



AT THE CENTER FOR DISCOVERY

SPEAK UP | LISTEN | HAVE RESPECT | GET INVOLVED | WORK TOGETHER

Empowerment through Education: Big Barn Buddies 4H Club Wins the Hearts of the Community

In 2023, students from The Center's Thanksgiving Farm and Community School (TFCS), also known as the "Big Barn," formed the Big Barn Buddies 4H club. 4H is a nationwide organization where club members "complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles."

The club was the brainchild of our Farm Program Coordinators, who partnered with Teachers, Teacher Associates, Clinicians, and Families to support the participants in projects of their interest, ranging from art and photography, to plant science, cooking, and our favorite...animal husbandry!

Students spent time at our very own Sweet Hill Farm each week with their favorite goat, caring for them and learning how to show, along with learning facts about goats, and studying the parts of the goat. Although all of the 4H members gained confidence through working with their goat, one in particular stands out.

Enter Aevary. Aevary has an obvious love for goats. She had previously spent time interning at Sweet Hill Farm, caring for the variety of animals there. However, when it came to handling a goat, she was a bit shy and nervous. Staff and mentors at The Center worked with her to practice the balance and coordination needed to present a goat in the show ring. She formed a special bond with Albert, a Lamancha doe, and together they learned how to work as a team.

The Grahamsville Little World's Fair was the weekend of the year that everyone was waiting for, as it was a chance for the students to display all of their hard work. Members of the 4H club spent the weekend caring for their goats, while also educating the public who were in attendance during the event. The students even did a milking demonstration.



When it came time for the goat show, the students went in front of a packed house of family, friends, community members and many Center staff that came to cheer them on. When the day was done, Aevary, who was once apprehensive, swept the Lamancha division and took home the honor of best in show with her goat Albert! Aevary's impressive win was not the only time the TCFD Big Barn Buddies rose to the top when competing against other members in the 4H Community. Another student entered a beautiful hand painted mural and not only garnered a blue ribbon, but was also asked to participate in the artisan market where his mural was sold to the public. The team ended the 4H year winning the 4H window display contest against all Sullivan County entries.

It was a great weekend of inclusion, empowerment, and education that displayed how hard the individuals at The Center work to accomplish things they never dreamt possible!



Residential Program

It Takes a Village

One of our schools - the Sports and Social Academy - hosted the 1st annual holiday tree lighting celebration in 2023. It was a celebration that captured the magic of the holiday season for all who participated, and one that took careful planning, attention to detail, and a team like no other to fully execute.

In preparation of this enchanted event, many of The Center's departments from residential and education, to integrated arts and security came together, along with the help of a local Fire Department. Each team's commitment and dedication to the individuals cared for at The Center was vividly demonstrated on that crisp winter evening.

During the event, each individual had the opportunity to place a personalized ornament on the tree while listening to holiday music that was performed by The Center for Discovery's drumline members, along with holiday songs being sung by the Integrated Arts team, alongside our TCFD staff.

Holiday lights were hung, hot chocolate was served, and you could hear the sound of the fire truck approaching in the distance. Upon its arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus jumped out of the fire truck - bringing joy to all. The evening ended with a countdown to the lighting, the tree was lit and the start of the holiday season had officially begun.

This night captured not only the spirit of the holiday season; but the effortless collaboration among the team members we have here at The Center for Discovery.



“My son just celebrated his 10th year here at The Center for Discovery. The opportunities afforded him in his work and social life are outstanding. The Center for Discovery turned his world around...and mine too! We are beyond grateful.”

- Cris Spinner,
TCFD Family Member

Expanding Our Reach

This year has been one of innovation, new friendships, and expanded audiences for The Office of Strategic Outreach and Partnerships. But, of course, our success is rooted in the collaboration and passion of our longstanding supporters, our families, and those newly acquainted with The Center. It is their unwavering dedication that fuels our achievements on behalf of those we serve. As winter turned to spring and the weather warmed, we launched our Spring fundraising campaign "A Season of Renewal." The campaign raised funds for all of the unique programs at The Center that exist solely because of the generosity of our donors. We secured vital support for the farming and food programs, aquatics, assistive technology, animal-assisted therapy, and our creative arts program.

Later in the spring we travelled to Palm Beach, Florida, for the first time to share The Center's groundbreaking work with a brand new audience. On April 2nd, World Autism Day, we celebrated the lifetime commitment of Bob Wright, the founder of Autism Speaks and a TCFD family member. His efforts in raising awareness have greatly benefited us in so many ways in Washington, Albany, and in the homes of our families who have loved ones with autism. We raised essential funds for The Center, and the work of our facility dogs was a highlight, capturing the hearts of everyone present.

Our advocacy efforts took us to meetings with agency heads at OPWDD, the Departments of Budget and Health in the state capital, and multiple trips to Washington, D.C. We engaged with partners at the USDA regarding our Children's Specialty Hospital (CSH) and continued our outreach with elected officials, including Senator Schumer and his office, who consistently seek ways to support The Center.

Through regular webinars and newsletters, we kept our community informed about the progress of the new CSH as construction neared completion. We offered behind-the-scenes glimpses of the dedicated individuals who keep our organization running and provided updates to our staff and families as life returned to normal post-pandemic.

As the year came to an end, our efforts intensified. **Thanks to so many of you**, we had our most successful annual fundraising appeal ever, with the theme "Today is the Day to Change a Life." Our campus saw significant improvements, from new rooftops and pavements to fresh coats of paint, made possible by a generous grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.

This year, we strived to reach new heights on behalf of those we serve. However, none of this would be possible without the passionate support of our families, friends, and dedicated advocates. Your collaboration ensures that our work here at The Center for Discovery truly matters everywhere.

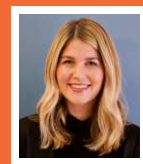
The Strategic Outreach Team



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Executive VP,
Marketing, Development &
Strategic Communications



Helena Le Roux Ohm, Ph.D.
VP of Strategic
Partnerships



Gabrielle Scott
VP of
Development



Courtney Gold
Director of
Marketing



Dean McManus
Senior Graphic
Designer



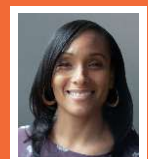
Jesse Wall
Multimedia
Specialist



Kevin Mesa
Graphic
Designer



Jessica Calabrese
Development
Manager



Carmen Williams
Development
Coordinator

“Reflecting on my time here at The Center for Discovery, it's been incredible to witness the growth and evolution of those in our care. It truly is rewarding to be a part of their journey. Whether it's on campus or in the community, we strive to create unforgettable experiences for everyone.”

- Devon Degrote, Program Educator



2023

Year in Highlights

January

- The Center for Discovery heads to The Capitol to meet with key leaders to share the innovative work, mission, and plans for the future.

February

- The Center for Discovery hosts Transforming Lives through Assistive Technology and Innovation, a virtual conference highlighting The Center's groundbreaking work and advancements in the field of Assistive Technology.
- The Center for Discovery is named Best Place to Work in the River Report's 27th Annual Readers' Choice Awards, an incredible recognition from the local community.

March

- The Center for Discovery kicks off its first annual Self-Advocacy Group cook-off competition, alongside the Department of Nourishment Arts® Chief, Cesare Casella.

April

- The Center for Discovery honors Bob Wright, Founder of Autism Speaks, on World Autism Awareness Day in Palm Beach, Florida. Bob was saluted for his Lifetime of Commitment in helping individuals with Autism.

May

- The Center for Discovery celebrates its first post-pandemic Discovery Dramatic Arts production of Peter Pan. The production involved residents, students, and staff from across The Center's campus.

June

- Scout, a 2 year old Beagle mix, joins The Center for Discovery as its newest Facility-Dog-in-training. Scout was adopted from Catskill Animal Rescue (CARE) in Sullivan County, NY.

July

- Songs of Discovery for Music Therapy: A Practical Resource for Therapists and Educators hits shelves. Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, this rich collection of 32 original songs was born of clinical work by Music Therapists at The Center for Discovery.
- Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer announces a federal grant of more than \$620k from the USDA to further support the Children's Specialty Hospital at The Center for Discovery.

August

- The Center for Discovery launches its new website, featuring a fresh design, enhanced content, and simplified usability.

September

- The Center for Discovery launches its new school program, the Early Learners and Explorers School Program, to address the unique educational and developmental needs of children, primarily in grades K-2, who were diagnosed with autism spectrum. The curriculum within the program emphasizes early literacy, numeracy, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, executive functioning skills, and more. It marks a pivotal moment in the provision of essential education and therapy services to the underserved rural communities in Sullivan County, NY.

October

- The Center for Discovery announces two new statewide appointments for Dr. Terry Hamlin that will help shape the future for the disability community, and also for those looking to enter the healthcare workforce. Dr. Hamlin was named a representative to New York State's Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC) and appointed to the Healthcare Workforce Industry and Innovation Workgroup.
- The Center for Discovery announces Dr. Terry Hamlin as its incoming Chief Executive Officer, effective January 2024; Patrick H. Dollard, former CEO, retires and moves into a Senior Advisory Role.
- The Center for Discovery hosts its annual Harvest Festival, the first since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Center honored Paul Guenther with the Thomas P. Morahan Lifetime Achievement in Healthcare award, and David and Pat Atkinson, who were awarded the Green Shovel for Sustainability and Environmental Leadership.
- The Center for Discovery receives the David T. Cocks Award for Commitment to Community from the Community Foundation and Orange and Sullivan Counties during the Foundation's annual awards ceremony.

November

- A team from New York University's College of Dentistry visits The Center as part of an ongoing outreach program designed to promote inclusive oral health care practices for individuals with complex disabilities.
- The Center for Discovery hosts the annual Passages Conference of the student organization of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Music Therapy Association in Hurleyville, New York.

December

- The Center for Discovery receives a \$2,000,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to support capital improvements across our campuses, including 23 new roofs; exterior painting and related repairs at 19 different locations; and over 150,000 square feet of pathway and paving repairs.
- The Center for Discovery surpasses its goal for the 2023 Annual Appeal – the highest in TCFD history!



For more Center for Discovery news, scan the QR code.



Government and Organizational Partnerships

Government Partnerships:

TCFD is a New York State designated Center of Excellence for complex disabilities, the largest Children's Residential Project (CRP) program in NYS, and the preeminent leader in innovative models of care. Government partners include:

NYS Department of Health (DOH)*	Empire State Development
NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)*	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
NY State Education Department (SED)*	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
NYS State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)*	Sullivan County Public School Districts
NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council	Sullivan County Public Health

*Regulatory Bodies

Organizational Partnerships:

TCFD partners with various national and local organizations to advance assistive technology, expand access to adaptive sports and recreation activities, support environmental and farmland conservation, improve community health outcomes, and foster vocational work. Organizational partners include:


Northwell Health (Affiliation)	Open Space Institute
Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS)	Catskill Mountainkeeper
Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS)	Sullivan 180
SUNY Sullivan	Cornell Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture
The Homestead Collaborative College High School	Main Street Mews
American Portfolios	A Single Bite
World T.E.A.M. Sports	

Academic and Research Partnerships


The Center for Discovery has engaged in innovative research for more than a decade. Ongoing areas of study include: the microbiome and gut health as it relates to autism; the influence diet has on complex disabilities; learning about sleep in complex patients with the use of advanced sensors and technologies; the effect that exercise, movement, and balance have on the brain; and virtual reality content for training and autism awareness. Academic and research partners include:




University at Buffalo
Center for Integrated Global Biomedical Sciences




George Todd, M.D.
Professor
Vascular Surgery
Mount Sinai





Eric London, M.D.
Psychiatrist
The Center for Discovery



Gari Clifford, Ph.D.
Biomedical Informatics at Emory University and Biomedical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology





Sridevi Devaraj, PhD, DABCC, FAACC, FRSC, CCRP
Director, Clinical Chemistry and Point of Care Testing, Texas Children's Hospital

Orrin Devinsky, M.D.
Director of the NYU Comprehensive Epilepsy Center and the Saint Barnabas Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery (INN)

Tor Savidge, PhD
Associate Professor, Pathology & Immunology and Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine and Principal Investigator, Neuroimmune-Microbe Interactions, Texas Children's Hospital





Juergen Hahn, Ph.D.
Professor & Department Head, Biomedical Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute





Terry Katz, Ph.D.
Department of Pediatrics, University of Colorado School of Medicine




Jeffrey Lombardo, PharmD, BCOP
Associate Director of the Empire State Patient Safety Assurance Network, Research Assistant Professor at the University at Buffalo

Ruth Ann Luna, PhD
Assistant Professor, Pathology and Immunology, Baylor College of Medicine and Director of Medical Metagenomics, Texas Children's Hospital




Kara G. Margolis, M.D.
Associate Professor, New York University; Associate Director for Clinical and Translational Research; Director for Gut-Brain Science, NYU Pain Research Center





Rune Simeonsson, Ph.D., MS.PH

Professor Emeritus and Chair of Psychology Department, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill



Michael R. Cummings, MD

Vice Chair and Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo; Medical Director, APIC Program.



Nicole Withrow, Ph.D.

MS, RD, Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Northern Colorado



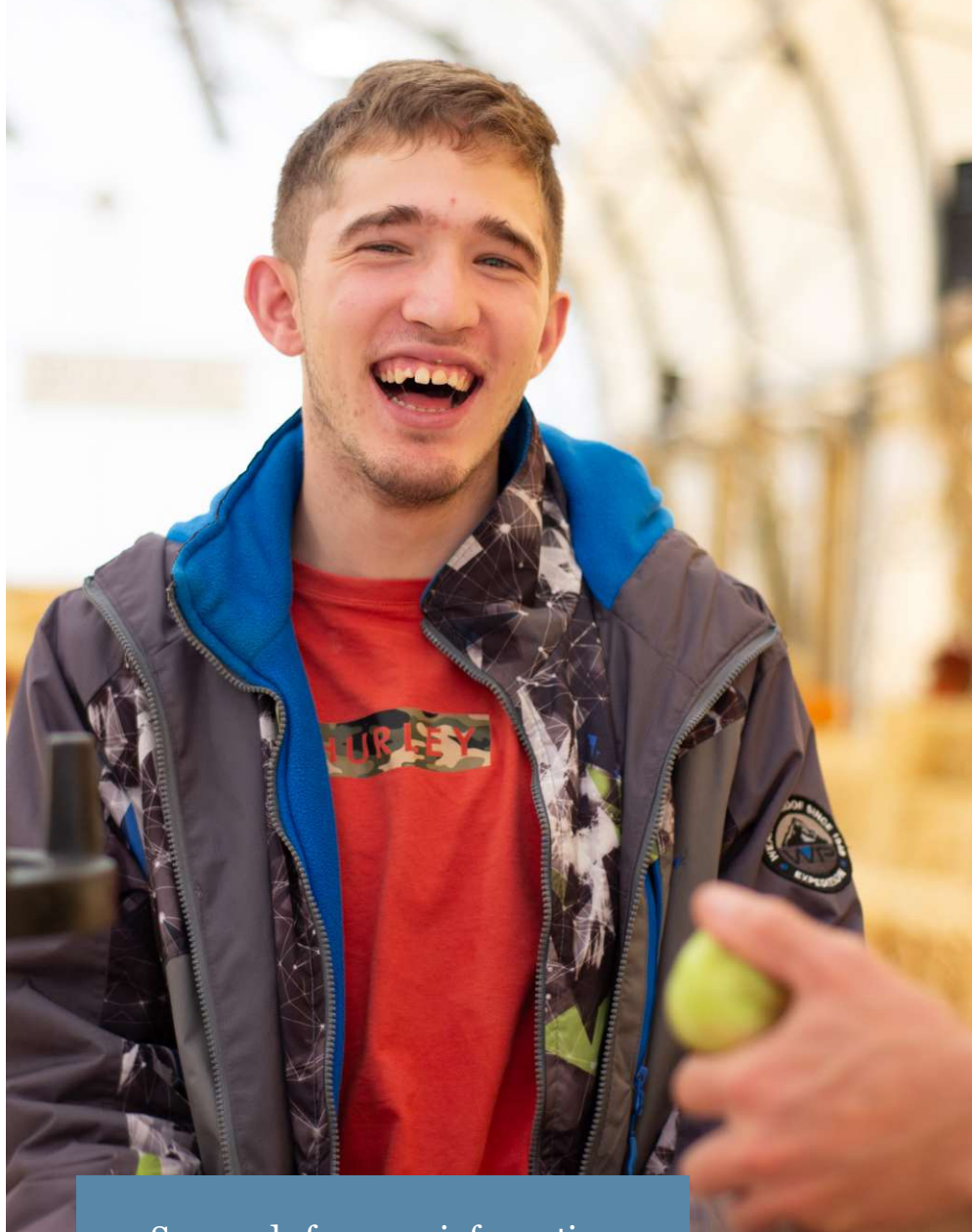
Gene D. Morse, Ph.D., FCCP, BCPS

Professor, University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences; Director, Translational Pharmacology Research Core; Co-Director, SUNY Global Health Institute.



Nancy M. Wells, Ph.D.

Professor, Human Centered Design, Senior Associate Dean, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University.



Scan code for more information on TCFD's research



SCAN ME

2023

Research Highlights

The Center for Discovery has engaged in innovative research for nearly two decades. Ongoing areas of study include:

Understanding and Treating Stress

- We established the Discovery School Evaluation Program over 15 years ago to evaluate and treat factors that contribute to stress and anxiety in learners with severe and complex forms of autism. Throughout the years, we have leveraged innovative technology to better understand internal and external stressors that result in challenging behaviors and impact health and wellness. Our high-tech video system captures classroom activity that we synchronize with wearable bio-metric sensors. Currently, with our research collaborators, we are working on using off-body sensing technology to achieve the same goals. Many of the projects described below are based on data obtained through the Discovery School initiative.

Prediction of High-Risk Behavioral and Medical Events

- This past year, we collaborated with researchers from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and Emory University to explore the use of artificial intelligence models to predict episodes of challenging behavior based on co-occurring conditions and environmental events. For some individuals,

the AI models were able to predict aggressive or self-injurious episodes with up to 90% accuracy using data from previous days. Our article highlighting results of the RPI study, entitled “Predicting Problematic Behavior in Autism Spectrum Disorder using Medical History and Environmental Data,” was published in the Journal of Personalized Medicine. Several additional papers from our Emory collaboration are currently in progress.

Therapeutic Benefits of Nature for Individuals with Autism

- We are partnering with researchers from the Wells Lab at Cornell University to examine the effects of the natural environment on the health and functioning of individuals with severe and complex forms of autism. In addition to evaluating nature-based therapy for people with autism that will benefit those with disabilities beyond TCFD, we are also hoping that our research will influence policy makers to protect open space and natural areas for use by those with disabilities.

Diet, Microbiome, and Gut Health

- In an initial multi-site study, a significant association was identified between diet and GI problems, and behavioral outcomes across three cohorts; a TCFD ASD cohort, a comparable ASD cohort, and a cohort of



neurotypical individuals. The TCFD ASD cohort was found to have the best outcomes compared to other study participants with autism. In a cross-sectional study, it is not possible to show whether the gut microbiome or the GI/behavioral issues take precedent, which is why we are currently conducting a follow-up longitudinal study using only individuals from TCFD. This follow-up study is investigating how diet, GI status, and behaviors change following admission. Initial findings indicate a significant reduction in behaviors and a healthier diet, in the first 3-6 months of the TCFD Program.

Other Areas of Research

- TCFD staff are encouraged to better understand areas of interest through research. Examples of topics under exploration are as follows:
 - Effect of exercise, movement, and balance on behavior and functioning

“I find each day at TCFD an enlightening experience, constantly learning more about myself and my capabilities. This journey is deeply intertwined with my work with our students, whose resilience and unique perspectives continually inspire me.”

- Kate Hinds, Teacher

- Use of virtual reality for training and autism awareness
- Understanding the relationship between pain, health, and behavior

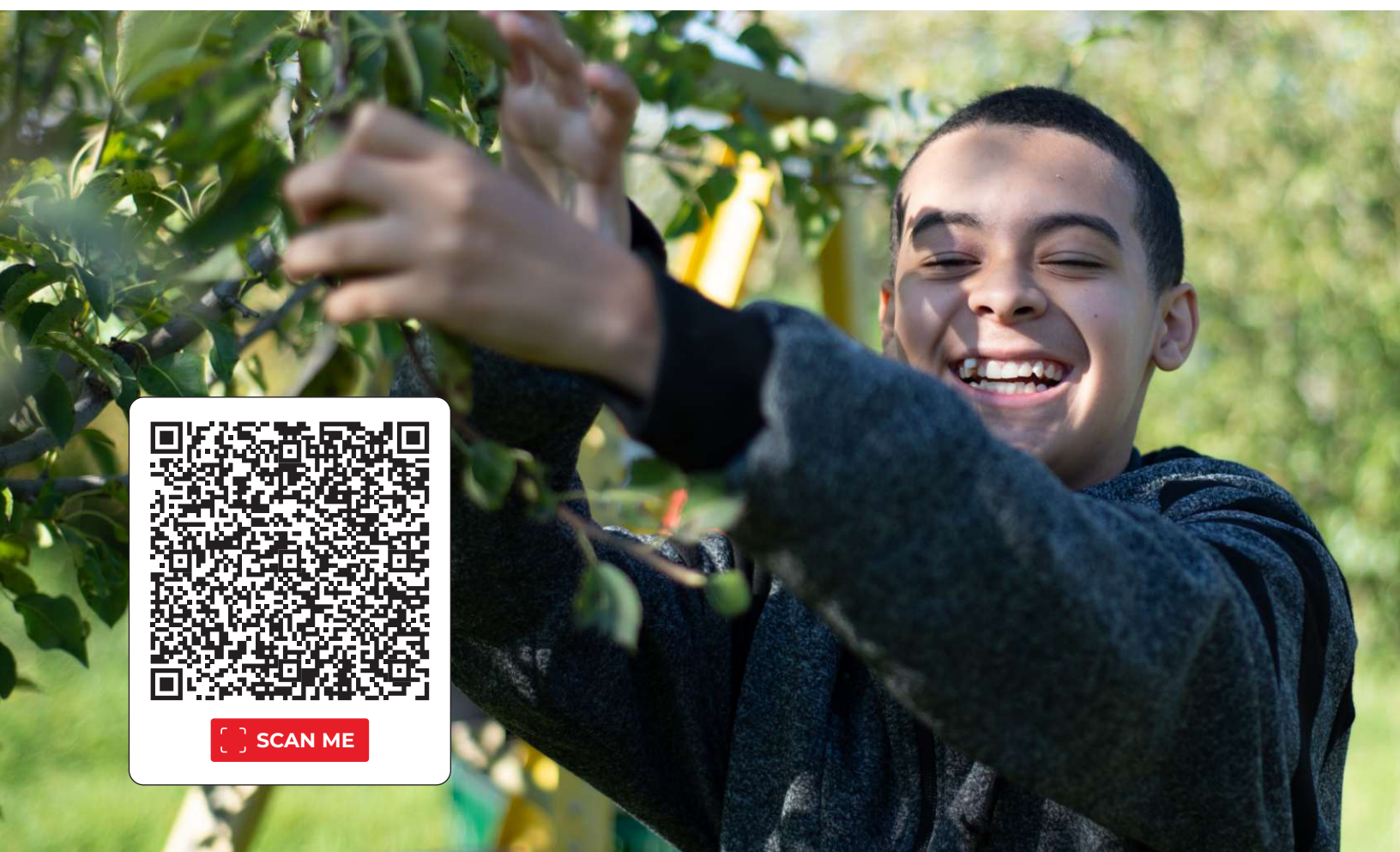
Predicting Aggression and Self-Injurious Behavior with RPI

Members of the Center for Discovery research team paired up with researchers from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) to investigate whether we could predict aggression and self-injurious behavior (SIB) by looking at previous-day data on gastrointestinal (GI), sleep, and environmental factors. Using machine learning and artificial intelligence tools, the team was able to look back on many years of routinely collected data— things like sleep duration and interruptions, and bowel movement history – for about 80 residents included in the sample. The team also included things like high and low temperatures and allergens, to try to account for environmental factors that might affect behavior. Researchers built and tested individual models to see which factors would be the most predictive for next day behavior.

The results, recently published in the *Journal of Personalized Medicine*, were striking – the models predicted the likelihood of aggression and/or SIB for all individuals at over 50% accuracy (i.e., better than chance).

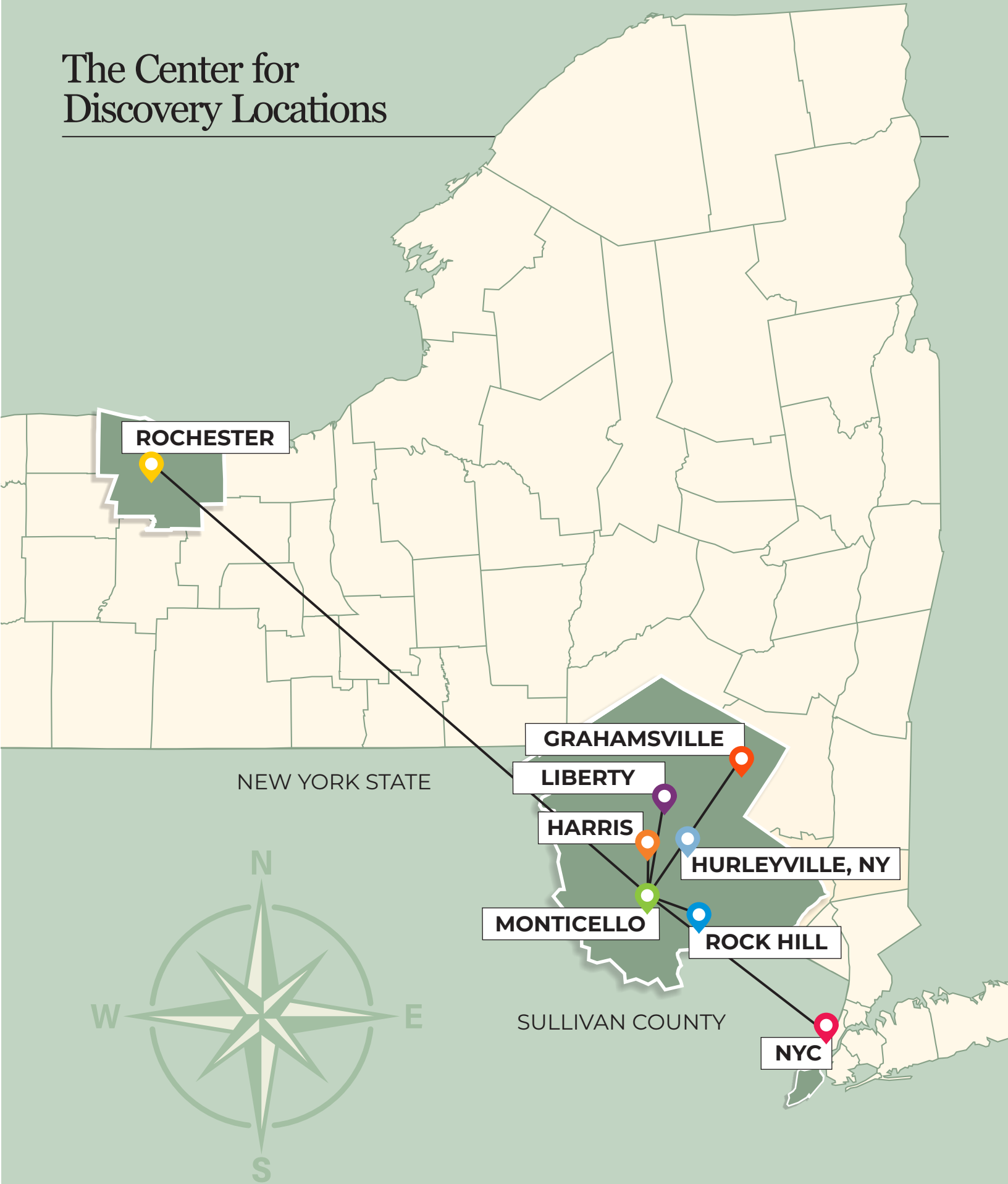
- Notably, for every one out of five people in the sample, the models predicted next day aggression and/or SIB with over 80% accuracy, which is clinically significant.
- Additionally, the models showed that GI factors (e.g. constipation or occurrence of diarrhea), were some of the most predictive features across individuals for next-day behavior.
- Quality of sleep (e.g., total sleep duration and number of interruptions per night), also contributed, while environmental factors like weather and allergens were somewhat less predictive overall.

Knowing in advance whether someone may struggle behaviorally means we can explore new ways to prevent or limit the impact of these behaviors – on the individual themselves and on others. The team continues to work on improving and testing these models. Ultimately, these findings open up many new possibilities for improving the health, wellness, and quality of life for the people we care for at TCFD.

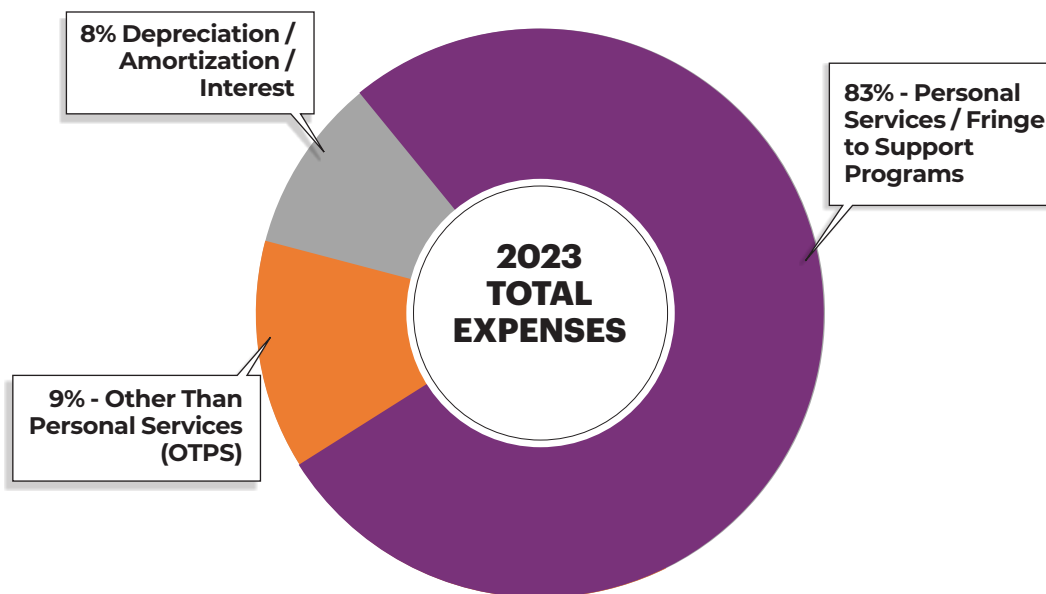
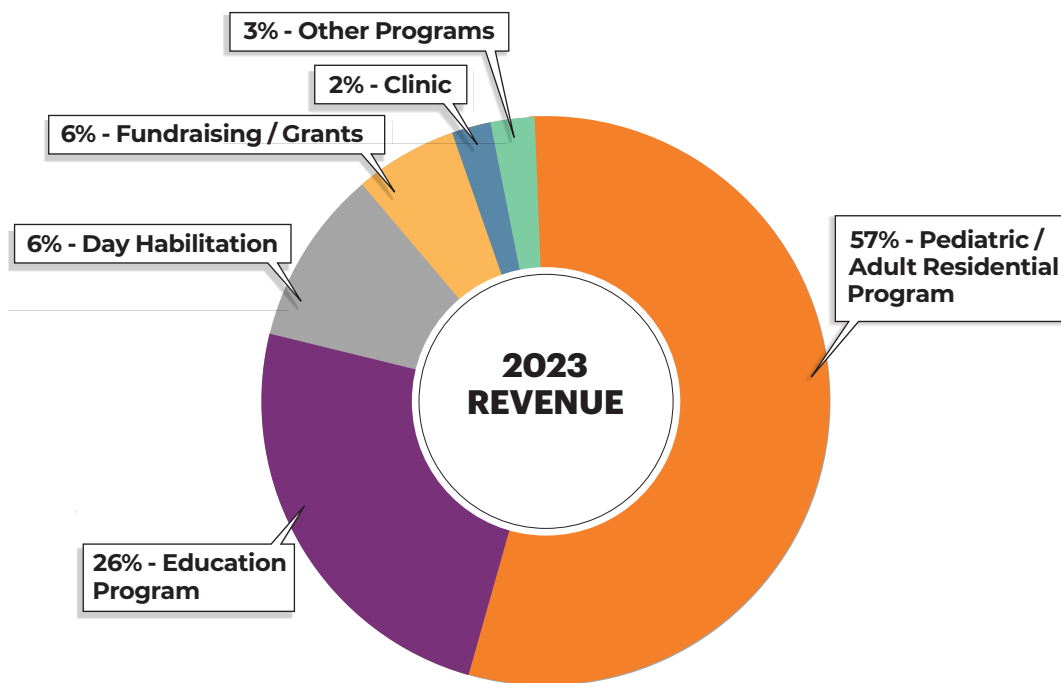


 SCAN ME

The Center for Discovery Locations



2023 Expenses and Revenue:



*These numbers have not been audited.

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“Through initiatives like it’s research partnerships and The Center’s Children’s Specialty Hospital, The Center has the potential to powerfully improve the lives of so many others.”

- Nelly Bly-Arougheti
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Co-Chair, Board
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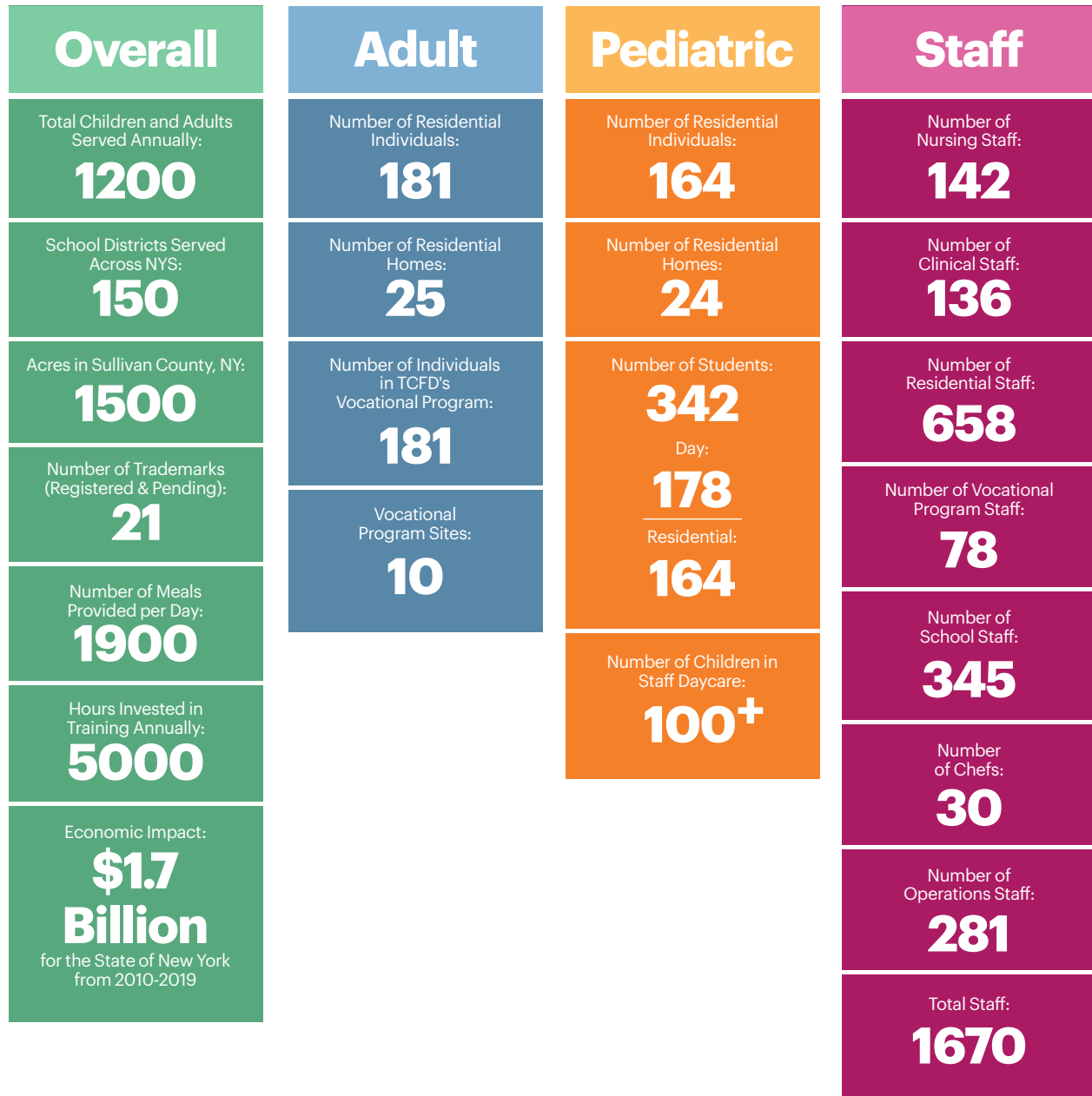
NEW YORK YANKEES BASEBALL

HITTING METRICS	
VELOCITY	105 MPH
LAUNCH ANGLE	25 DEG
PROJECTED HANG TIME	5.5 SEC
PROJECTED DISTANCE	435 FT

YANKEES

NY

The Center for Discovery Facts



2023

Champions
Thank you!

With Thanks

Our community of generous supporters and brilliant partners are behind every moment of impact and change here at The Center. We are deeply grateful to all of you who continue to make our mission possible and fight tirelessly with passion and love so that every individual we serve lives a life to their fullest potential.

Looking back at 2023, we thank you for being by our side – every step of the way.

Diamond Level (\$200,000+)

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MJS Foundation
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
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