



THE CENTER FOR  
DISCOVERY®

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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On its 1,500 acre campus in the Catskill Mountains, The Center for Discovery has a unique approach, one that could be a model for the country.

Dr. Jon LaPook, Chief Medical Correspondent, CBS News





## Letter from the President and CEO

### Dr. Theresa Hamlin



Dear Friends,

The year began with the excitement and realization of campus-wide capital improvements – made possible by the generosity of the **Mother Cabrini Health Foundation**. Roofs were replaced, painting was completed at 24 locations, and over 150,000 square feet of paved pathways, sidewalks, and parking areas were significantly upgraded. We also launched a **fleet management initiative** – a four-year process to replace all 120 vehicles in our fleet – to enhance safety, efficiency, and sustainability across our transportation operations. These improvements not only strengthen the infrastructure of our programs, but also lift the spirits of our students, residents, staff, and families.

From the time I first stepped onto The Center for Discovery's campus as a teacher in 1983 to my role today as President and CEO, what has inspired me most is the excellence of our programs and the positive, life-changing impact they have on the individuals we serve. I'm thrilled that the children and adults at The Center continue to thrive, grow, and exceed expectations. Whether they are making gains in the classroom, finding joy with our animals on the farm, taking the stage in *The Wizard of Oz*, or reaching new athletic heights on an outing with our friends at World Team Sports – every day, what once seemed impossible, is made possible. That is thanks to **our extraordinary staff**.

Anyone who has ever visited The Center understands that our staff are the heart of everything we do. A constant question we ask ourselves is: *How do we support our team members in ways that truly make a difference in their lives and careers?* This year, that commitment was deeply felt. On ten separate occasions, we were able to provide raises to different segments of our well-deserving team. In addition to ongoing benefits like our daycare and summer camp for staff children, we introduced **IMPACT** – the *Immersive Mentorship Program and Collaboration for Teens*. This initiative was shaped by feedback from past participants and designed to help teens explore future careers in healthcare and human services. Our teenagers loved it!

In September, we were proud to welcome **five new members** to our Board of Directors:

- *Mimi Clarke Corcoran*, Former Executive Director of the Child Mind Institute
- *Lon Dolber*, Founder and Former CEO of American Portfolios
- *Ari Greenburg*, President of WME
- *Brian Harper*, Former Chairman of the Board of Autism Speaks
- *Veronica Sullivan*, Senior Vice President and Head of Global Production External Affairs and State & Local Government at NBCUniversal

Each brings unique expertise and deep passion for our mission. We are so grateful to have them by our side as we enter this exciting next chapter for The Center.

In December, we celebrated the long-anticipated opening of our **Children's Specialty Hospital** and Rock Hill Complex – a decade in the making. Designed to meet both medical and therapeutic needs, the facility includes classrooms, a health clinic, sensory rooms, a therapeutic gym for physical and occupational therapies, a café, and a training kitchen. The 15-acre campus also features walking trails, healing gardens, and – coming soon – a **Food is Medicine® greenhouse**, all supporting TCFD's holistic model of care. Following their short-term treatment, patients enrolled in the hospital return home with customized care plans that include training for families, caregivers, and schools – ensuring ongoing progress with continued support from our team.

Later in December, a vital piece of our long-term vision became reality when **Governor Hochul signed legislation** allowing us to establish an **Advanced Residential Health Care Demonstration Program** for aging adults with medical fragility and complex disabilities. This initiative will expand our capacity to deliver continuous, compassionate care across the lifespan, including engaging programs to increase healthspan. Families will have peace of mind knowing their loved ones are supported in a safe and familiar environment throughout their lives.

Whether it's the quality of our programs today or the promise of what tomorrow will bring, at The Center for Discovery, **we never rest on behalf of our families and their loved ones**. I have never been prouder to be part of this team.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa Hamlin".

Dr. Terry Hamlin  
President & CEO  
The Center for Discovery

## Our Mission

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  
DISCOVERY®





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The ways in which you love and support your families is inspiring, heartwarming and emblematic of your shared values.

TCFD Family Member



# 2024

## Program Highlights



## The Children's Specialty Hospital at The Center for Discovery

In December 2024, The Center for Discovery proudly opened its doors to The Children's Specialty Hospital in Rock Hill, New York. This state-of-the-art facility is the first of its kind in the region, dedicated to providing specialized inpatient care for children aged 5 to 21 with complex disabilities, including autism and other developmental disorders. The primary mission of The Children's Specialty Hospital is to create a new resource in the continuum of complex care.

### **A New Model of Care**

The hospital introduces an innovative approach to healthcare, focusing on short-term, inpatient assessment and treatment. Over a maximum stay of six months, a multidisciplinary team conducts comprehensive medical, behavioral, and clinical evaluations to better diagnose underlying issues affecting behavior and learning. The goal is to develop targeted understanding and interventions that enable children to thrive at home, in school, and within their communities.

### **Integration of the HealthE6® Model**

A central tenant of the hospital's approach is the implementation of The Center for Discovery's HealthE6® Model, a comprehensive framework designed to optimize health and functioning for individuals with complex conditions. This model encompasses six pillars: Evaluation, Environment, Eating and Nutrition, Emotional Regulation, Energy Regulation, and Evidence Based interventions.

By integrating these pillars into daily care, the hospital aims to reduce stress on the body and brain, leading to decreased maladaptive behaviors, improved health outcomes, and enhanced focus and attention. The HealthE6 Model of Coordinated Care is being developed to further support families and communities in integrating the tried-and-true methodology that is so successful within our programs across New York – and the world!

### **Comprehensive Facilities and Services**

Designed with the needs of children with complex needs in mind, the 18-bed hospital is equipped with:

- Thoughtfully designed educational spaces for learning
- A health clinic offering primary care, specialty services, and dentistry
- Sensory rooms to support therapeutic interventions and shared activities
- A gymnasium for energy regulation
- A café and training kitchen to promote nutritional education utilizing our expert Department of Nourishment Arts staff
- Outdoor walking trails, healing gardens, and a soon-to-be-built greenhouse as part of the Seed to Belly® curriculum



These facilities not only cater to the medical conditions of the patients but also emphasize the importance of nutrition, education, and therapeutic recreation in the intervention process.

### **Collaborative Approach: Empowering Families, Schools, and Providers**

A cornerstone of The Children's Specialty Hospital's philosophy is its collaborative and family-centered approach to care. Recognizing that true progress extends beyond the walls of the hospital, the program prioritizes partnerships with families, caregivers, educators, and healthcare providers to ensure long-term success for each child.

### **Empowering Parents and Caregivers**

We all know families play a crucial role in their child's development, and the hospital is committed to equipping parents and caregivers with the knowledge, strategies, and confidence needed to support their child's ongoing progress. Through structured parent training programs, hands-on coaching, and family workshops, caregivers learn evidence-based behavioral, communication, and sensory regulation techniques that can be applied at home. These sessions are designed to demystify complex needs, enhance advocacy skills, and provide practical tools for managing daily challenges.

### **Community Engagement and Professional Training**

Beyond individual families, The Children's Specialty Hospital serves as a hub for education and training for professionals across disciplines. The hospital offers:

- Workshops and training sessions for teachers, school personnel, and community organizations to help them better understand and support children with complex needs
- Outreach programs that provide guidance to local and regional service providers on best practices for working with children with autism and other developmental disabilities
- Strategic partnerships with school districts to develop individualized transition plans, ensuring children can successfully reintegrate into their educational settings with the necessary supports in place





### Statewide Consultation for Seamless Transitions

To maximize the impact of its specialized assessments and interventions, The Children's Specialty Hospital collaborates with healthcare providers and service agencies throughout New York State. This ensures that children leaving the hospital continue to receive consistent, high-quality care in their home communities. The hospital's multidisciplinary team provides:

- Consultation and training for pediatricians, therapists, and educators, bridging the gap between inpatient care and outpatient services
- Personalized discharge planning, including referrals and coordination with home-based service providers, school-based teams, and community clinics to maintain and continue
- A data-driven approach that allows families and professionals to track improvements and adjust interventions as needed, preventing regression

By engaging families, educators, community partners, and statewide healthcare providers, The Children's Specialty Hospital fosters a continuum of care that extends well beyond a child's stay, ensuring that each individual can thrive at home, in school, and in the broader community.

### Economic and Community Impact

The establishment of The Children's Specialty Hospital has far-reaching benefits beyond its direct impact on children and families. By bringing a state-of-the-art pediatric specialty hospital to the region, The Center for Discovery is addressing a critical gap in services for children with complex disabilities while also driving economic growth and workforce development.

- The hospital has created new jobs for healthcare professionals, therapists, educators, and support staff, further strengthening the regional healthcare workforce
- It has positioned New York State as a national leader in innovative, evidence-based care for individuals with complex developmental needs
- The investment in this facility encourages further research and policy advancements in pediatric disability care, serving as a model for other regions nationwide



**A Vision Realized: Gratitude to Leadership and Supporters**

The Children's Specialty Hospital would not have been possible without the steadfast support of key leaders and advocates who recognized the urgent need for this groundbreaking facility. Governor Kathy Hochul, Senator Chuck Schumer, The New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and other state and federal leaders played a vital role in securing the funding and policy backing necessary to bring this vision to life. Their commitment to improving healthcare access and outcomes for children with disabilities has set a new precedent for specialized pediatric care in New York and beyond.

Additionally, The Center for Discovery extends its deepest appreciation to healthcare professionals, educators, researchers, philanthropic partners, and the families who entrust us with their children's care. Their collaboration and dedication have been instrumental in making this project a reality.

As The Children's Specialty Hospital embarks on its mission to transform lives through cutting-edge care, family engagement, and community collaboration, it remains committed to what The Center for Discovery represents: What Happens Here, Matters Everywhere!



AT THE CENTER FOR DISCOVERY

2024

## Education

# A Journey of Transformation: The Impact of Our School Program

At The Center for Discovery, we believe in the power of education to change lives. Our school program continues to provide innovative, individualized instruction that fosters independence, communication, and meaningful engagement. The impact of our approach is best illustrated through the journey of a remarkable young man who began with us at just 10 years old.

Before coming to TCFD, he was on home instruction, severely overweight, and struggling with intense behaviors that led to severe property destruction and aggression toward others. His physical challenges limited his mobility, and his difficulties with emotional regulation made it hard for him to form meaningful relationships.

His transition to TCFD was not easy at first, as it included new routines, new expectations, and a new environment – all presenting challenges. But with the support of our dedicated educators, clinicians, and the structure of our HealthE6® model, he began to thrive. Through personalized energy regulation activities, adaptive movement strategies, and an emphasis on nutrition and wellness, he developed the tools to manage his emotions and increase his mobility. Over time, he became more engaged in classroom activities, built relationships with peers, and for the first time, experienced the joy of true friendship.

Today, he is an active participant in our education programs, confidently contributing to the school community, and embracing a healthier, more independent lifestyle. His journey reflects the essence of our mission, helping students reach their fullest potential, both academically and in life. At TCFD, we don't just educate; we transform lives – one student at a time.





# Assessment, Training, and Learner Advancement Services

## Expanding Impact: Bringing Best Practices Beyond Our Campus

The Assessment, Training, and Learner Advancement Services (ATLAS) team at The Center for Discovery is committed to our guiding belief: What Happens Here Matters Everywhere. In 2024, ATLAS expanded its reach, ensuring that our best practices make a meaningful impact beyond our campuses by collaborating with school districts, healthcare providers, residential facilities, and community organizations.

Through consulting efforts across Sullivan, Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess counties and beyond, ATLAS has provided professional development workshops and training sessions that have strengthened local school districts, higher education institutions, government agencies, and a growing network of healthcare partners. In 2024, ATLAS also launched a key partnership with Elizabeth Seton Children's Center in Yonkers, delivering specialized consultation and training to enhance care for children with complex medical needs. Additionally, the team expanded behavioral consultation services to new school districts, while growing its expertise across clinical subspecialties.

Grounded in research, decades of experience, and our comprehensive HealthE6® model, ATLAS continues to elevate the quality of support and services for individuals with complex needs, proving that the impact of our work extends far beyond our own community.



# Pediatric Residential

## Life-changing Outcomes

When Ben first arrived at his new residence in the fall of 2024, he faced significant challenges around mealtime. His diet was extremely limited, and he struggled with sitting at the table for meals. Prior to arriving at The Center, Ben grazed throughout the day, would not sit to eat, avoided meats and mixed foods and insisted on a highly restrictive diet of dry cereal, fruit, plain pasta, and French fries. He only drank apple juice or water, and his family put locks on the refrigerator because he would leave it open after searching through it.

Through consistent support from his house staff, clinicians, and the Food Exploration and Discovery® (FED) team, Ben has made incredible progress. Today, he eats (and enjoys!) vegetables, chicken, and seasoned pasta, tolerates some mixed foods, including pizza, drinks a variety of juices beyond just apple juice, sits for at least 10 minutes during meals with less stress, is more engaged with peers and staff at the table, and has lost over 20 pounds, vastly improving his overall health.

Ben's journey highlights the power of teamwork and perseverance here at The Center and within our pediatric residential program. His transformation is a testament to the dedication of The Center's cross-collaborative teams, demonstrating how patience, structure, and teamwork can lead to life-changing outcomes for the individuals in our care.





## Adult Residential

# Building Confidence, Independence and Community

In 2024, the Adult Residential program saw incredible growth, resilience, and transformation among its residents. From overcoming personal challenges to discovering new passions, individuals have thrived in an environment designed to support independence and meaningful engagement.

Deirdre arrived to her new residence at the end of 2023, marking her first residential placement. Though her family was initially nervous, she has flourished in every sense of the word, expanding her diet, engaging in daily exercise, and embracing new activities like concerts, peer events, and fitness. Her confidence has grown tremendously, allowing her to participate in a wide range of activities with ease.

At another residence, Dana overcame a lifelong reluctance to enter the pool, and is now confidently stepping into the shallow end each week. Meanwhile, Kandi, who once lacked the strength to work a specific loom, dedicated herself to building her skills and is now crafting thoughtful gifts for friends and family – what a treat!

Another adult residence fostered a spirit of creativity and camaraderie by forming a holiday band caroling around the neighborhood and diving into hands-on projects, including remote control cars and plans for a soapbox derby. At one of The Center's other houses, Heather has deepened her love of music that has further enriched her daily experience. In fact, many of the adult residents at The Center continued to engage in community building, local events, concerts, theatre, parades, and so much more.

Each story, just a few of those we witness every day, reflects the power of a supportive community, structured environment, and dedicated team. They prove that with the right support, individuals can achieve remarkable milestones and lead fulfilling, engaged lives.



## Day Habilitation

# Sustainability in Action: Creating a Greener Future Through Innovation and Collaboration

At The Center for Discovery, our Day Hab program is making a lasting impact - not just in the lives of our residents, but on the environment as well. In 2024, Day Hab embraced sustainability initiatives that fostered teamwork, creativity, and community engagement while reducing our carbon footprint.

Through the NexTrex Recycling Program, six Day Hab groups and three Education teams worked together to collect and sort plastic from nine campus locations, engaging staff and departments in a friendly competition. Their dedication led to the collection of over 1,000 pounds of plastic, earning a free bench made from Trex recycling material. With continued efforts, they are now working toward their next sustainability milestone.

In addition, Day Hab launched the Discovered Again Thrift Shop, repurposing gently used clothing donated by staff. Participants took an active role in washing, sorting, and selling items at low-cost thrift sales across four campuses, with residents assisting customers and handling transactions. Unusable items were also given new purpose, as damaged textiles were sent for recycling, while blankets were donated to a local organization. Looking ahead, the program plans to extend clothing donations to organizations in need, such as the United Way of Sullivan County.

Also in 2024, creativity took center stage with the first-ever Upcycled Pop-Up Shop launched around Earth Day, where donated items were transformed into beautiful and functional pieces from handcrafted jewelry boxes, to reimagined lampshades. With overwhelming enthusiasm, the team is already preparing for another sale in 2025.

By weaving sustainability into daily activities, TCFD Day Hab continues to demonstrate that small actions can lead to meaningful change for our community and in creating a greener, more connected future for all.





# Discovery Health Center

## Compassionate Care and Life Changing Support

At the Discovery Health Center, we are more than just a healthcare provider - we are a trusted partner in the lives of the residents and students we serve, along with local community members. Every day, our dedicated team goes above and beyond to offer compassionate, individualized care, ensuring that every patient receives the support they need, when they need it most.

When John began experiencing persistent coughing episodes, our team worked closely with his family to explore every possible intervention. Over time, it became clear that his progressive neurological condition was affecting his swallowing. The discussion of a feeding tube was difficult, but after years of adjustments and careful monitoring, his family felt confident that every option had been explored before making the decision.

Beyond medical care, our impact extends to moments of kindness and support that truly changes lives. A patient in severe dental pain was scheduled for an emergency visit within 24 hours and left the appointment feeling relieved and grateful. A family struggling with food insecurity received a much-needed holiday meal, calling it a miracle at the perfect time. A long-time patient, overwhelmed by anxiety and grief, was seen by our psychiatrist at a critical moment, receiving the care she needed when she needed it most.

These stories reflect the compassion, dedication, and unwavering support provided by the Discovery Health Center team. Whether addressing complex medical needs or providing emotional support, we are committed to changing lives.



# Occupational Therapy

## Creativity, Collaboration, and Growth

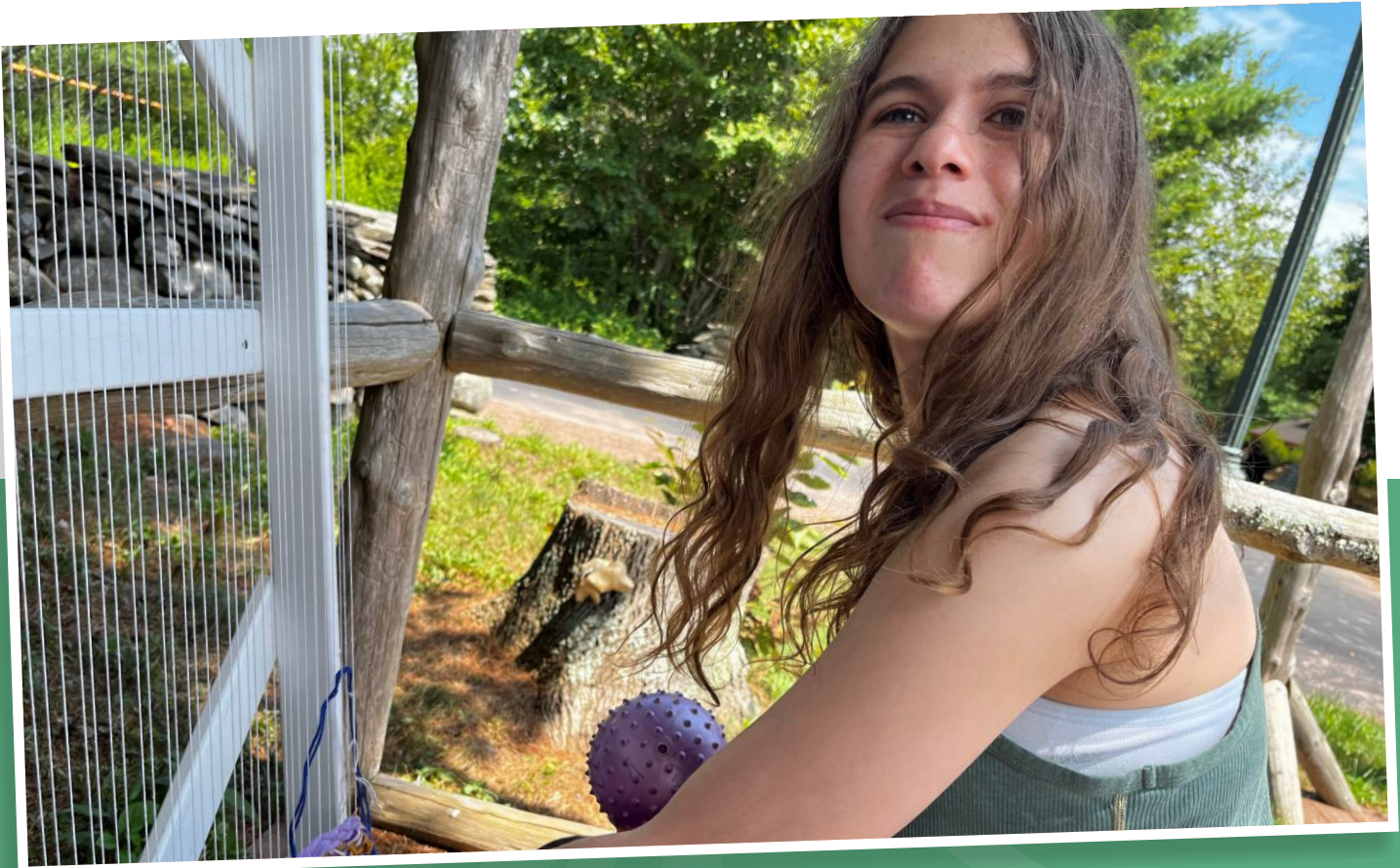
In 2024, our Occupational Therapy team continued to develop innovative, hands-on experiences that support growth in motor skills, emotional regulation, communication, and collaboration. One especially impactful initiative was the Summer Arts Trails, a new program designed to foster meaningful interactions through outdoor, arts-based learning.

Led by an Occupational Therapist, the Arts Trails project transformed five locations along the South Campus walking paths into interactive art stations. With step-by-step art instructions and visual samples, students and staff engaged in creative, skill-building activities that promoted:

- Emotional and energy regulation
- Concentration and memory
- Problem solving and creativity
- Fine and gross motor skill development
- Social collaboration and teamwork

Beyond artistic expression, the program aligned with individualized therapy goals, helping students improve communication, balance, coordination, and visual attention in a fun, supportive setting. The collaborative nature of the project - bringing together OTs, teachers, behavior specialists, and other staff - highlighted the power of group dynamics in learning and self-expression.

The Summer Arts Trails exemplifies how OT at TCFD goes beyond traditional therapy, using creativity and collaboration to make learning engaging, impactful, and inclusive.





# Physical Therapy

## Collecting Smiles Through Movement

At The Center for Discovery, our Physical Therapy team believes that movement is more than just a necessity - it's a source of joy that can lead to incredible progress. One therapist, inspired by the power of alternative positioning, developed a classroom-based program called "Lessons in Prone." This initiative encouraged students to lay on their bellies, with or without a vibration pad, to unlock a range of physical and therapeutic benefits such as:

- Improved breathing as it opens airways, enhances ventilation, and reduces breathing effort
- Better posture and mobility, which strengthens muscles in the back, neck, and limbs, stabilizes joints, and supports standing and sitting
- Energy regulation and engagement, which helps with body awareness and promotes interaction

Beyond just the physical benefits, the true impact of this program was seen in the students' expressions. As they stretched, strengthened, and regulated their bodies, their smiles grew wider, and laughter filled the room! A true testament to how Physical Therapy at The Center is not just about progress – it's about joy and connection, so important to every one of us.

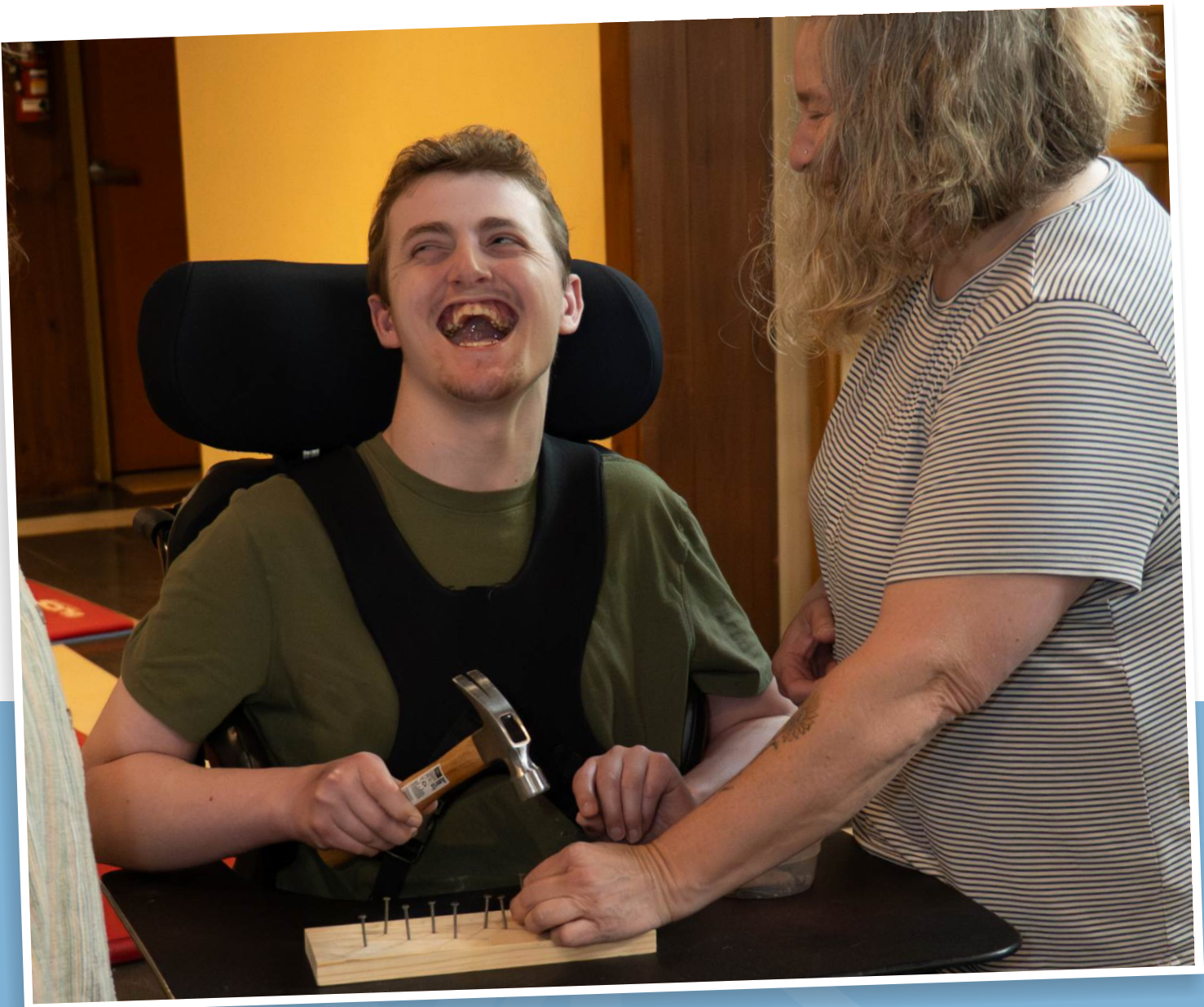


# Speech Therapy

## Communication Meets Creativity

In 2024, the Speech Therapy Department went full STEAM ahead, integrating science, technology, math, engineering, and the arts into therapy sessions in a way that enhanced both communication and collaboration. Inspired by the creative of one of our Speech Language Pathologists, students used their communication systems to brainstorm and vote on a meaningful project - building bug houses to support biodiversity in our outdoor spaces.

From developing a materials list to venturing out to purchase supplies, students engaged in real-world problem-solving while strengthening their language skills, decision-making abilities, and teamwork. This was more than just a project. It helped students build confidence, friendships, and lasting memories, proving that communication isn't just about speaking, it's about connecting and creating - all while making a profound impact.





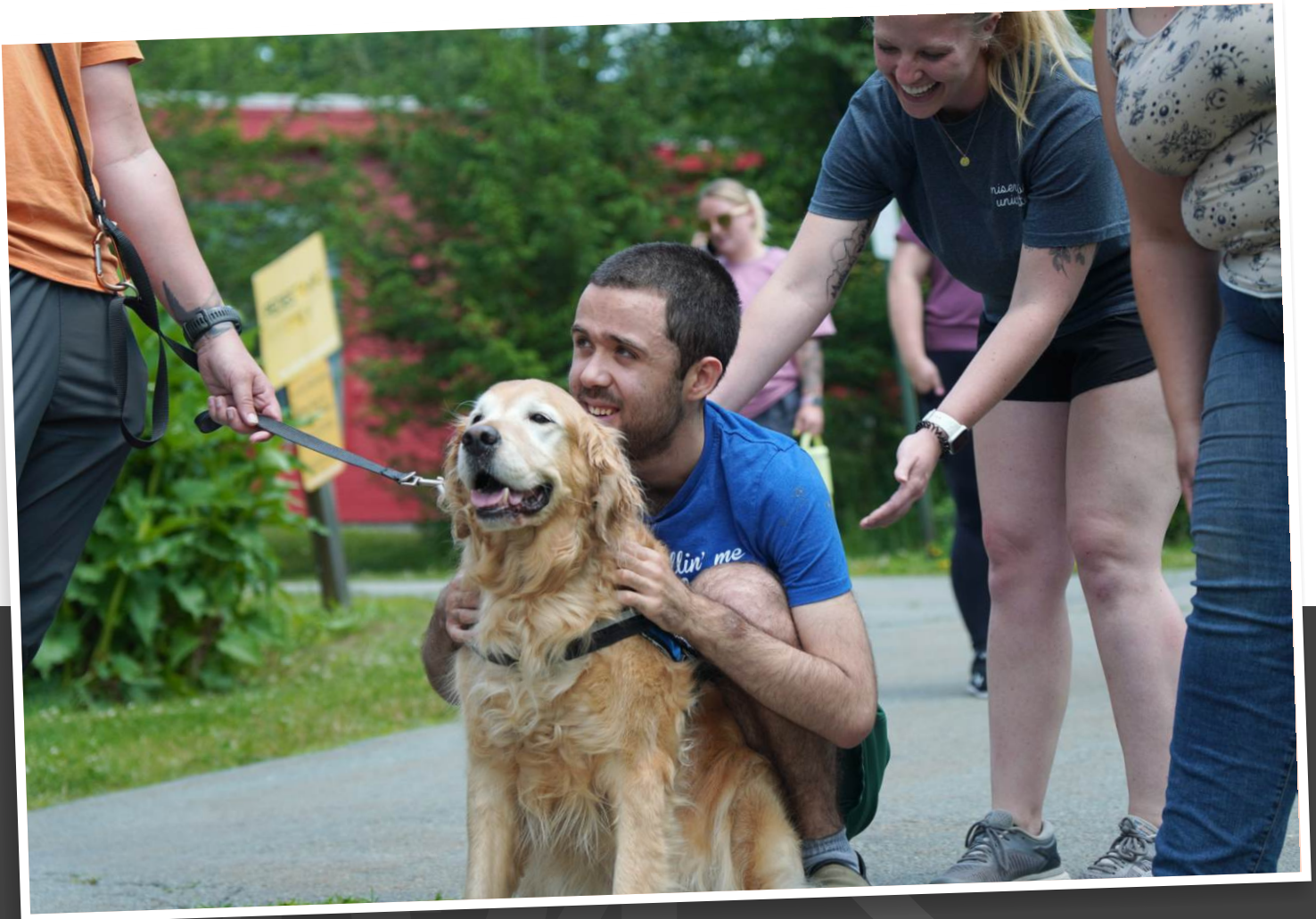
# Animal Assisted Intervention and Education

## Enhancing Therapeutic Outcomes

In 2024, the Animal Assisted Intervention and Education (AAIE) department partnered with our clinical and educational teams in 3,433 sessions, enriching therapeutic and learning experiences for the students and residents we serve. These collaborations fostered meaningful progress, supporting improved outcomes across The Center for Discovery.

Throughout the year, we embraced both new beginnings and heartfelt farewells. In June, we honored Leland, our original facility dog, with a joyous retirement celebration after eight years of dedicated service. Our team remains committed to expanding this legacy, working with local rescue organizations to identify and train future facility dogs.

Last summer, we welcomed Baxter, a Flemish Giant/Rex rabbit, who quickly became an integral part of our sessions. Additionally, Bell, our full-sized thoroughbred horse, played a pivotal role in revitalizing our therapeutic riding program, empowering students to achieve their goals. Through every interaction, our animals continued to provide comfort, confidence, and connection – while changing so many lives along the way.



# Food Exploration and Discovery (FED)

## Nourishing Growth, One Meal at a Time

The Food Exploration and Discovery (FED)® program is transforming lives here at The Center - and beyond - by helping individuals overcome mealtime challenges, developing a positive relationship with food, and expanding their diets to support optimal nutrition and wellbeing. Through personalized strategies, the FED team works to reduce stress and anxiety around meals, fostering confidence and independence at the table.

In August, FED welcomed Sarita Padu, a seasoned expert with over 20 years of experience, to the team. Having previously worked in both residential and educational settings at The Center, Sarita's deep understanding of the needs of the individuals in our care has been invaluable in training and supporting staff in implementing individualized FED protocols. Her expertise has already contributed to remarkable progress, with many individuals broadening their acceptance of nutritious foods and experiencing newfound enjoyment in eating.

By empowering individuals to embrace new flavors, textures, and experiences, the FED program continues to make a lasting impact - one meal at a time.





# Innovation Labs

## Innovation that Changes Lives

SCAN QR CODE  
to watch the Holiday  
Adapt-a-thon!



Our Innovation Labs team is committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, has access to play. Traditional toys can be challenging for children with disabilities to use, and adaptive options are often expensive or unavailable. Thanks to the creativity of our Innovation Makers, the dedication of our Day Hab residents, the support of our Recreation Team, along with a generous grant from the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation, we charged forward in 2024 with a project that transformed lives – the Holiday Adapt-A-Thon.

This late 2024 initiative proved that a simple act of innovation can create life-changing moments - not only for the children receiving adapted toys, but also for the individuals making them and the staff supporting them.

- For children and families: Residents and staff adapted ten battery-operated toys with mini-jacks and 3D-printed switches, making them universally accessible. These toys were gifted to children in Sullivan County's Early Intervention Program, many of whom had never had access to toys they could play with independently. When residents personally delivered a toy at the Discovery Health Clinic, they witnessed the pure joy these simple adaptations brought.
- For our day habilitation residents: The project was more than just modifying toys—it was an opportunity to learn technical skills like wire-cutting, soldering, and assembly. Many residents gained confidence and pride, knowing their work would directly impact a child's life. For some, it was the first time they saw their efforts make a tangible difference.
- For our staff: This initiative fostered teamwork across departments, including Innovation Makers, Recreation, and Day Hab. It reinforced the deep sense of purpose that drives our mission and highlighted the power of collaboration in making a meaningful impact.

Through the Holiday Adapt-A-Thon, families received the gift of play - free of charge - and our residents discovered new talents, built confidence, and experienced the joy of giving back.

This initiative is a shining example of how our work at TCFD transforms lives, demonstrating our commitment to inclusion, skill-building, and meaningful engagement.



# Nursing

## Compassionate Care at Every Stage

The Nursing Team at The Center for Discovery is dedicated to providing exemplary, personalized care that supports individuals across their lifespan. Whether caring for the youngest students in Rock Hill at our Children's Specialty Hospital, or our elderly residents at one of our residences, our nurses are at the heart of wellness, advocacy, and preventive care – and they consistently ensure that every individual continues to grow and thrive.

In 2024, our team of 130 nurses:

- Focused on preventive health measures to improve long-term outcomes
- Provided personalized, compassionate care tailored to each individual's unique needs
- Supported physicians, nurse practitioners, and residential teams in complex care coordination

With a commitment to lifelong wellbeing, TCFD's nursing team remains a pillar of support for individuals, families, and staff, ensuring that health and care go hand-in-hand.



THE CENTER FOR  
DISCOVERY

2024



# Integrated Arts

## Finding a Voice Through Music

At The Center for Discovery, music is more than just sound - it's a powerful tool for emotional regulation and self-expression. Ava's journey in Music Therapy is a testament to how the right support, creativity, and connection can help a child find balance, confidence, and joy.

When Ava first began music therapy, she struggled with emotional and physical dysregulation. She let out loud shrieks, stomped her feet forcefully, and often withdrew to a corner, seeking solitude. Yet, even in her discomfort, there was connection - whether a fleeting smile or a soft giggle, as she listened to the music around her.

Her music therapists always met her where she was, improvising music that mirrored her energy, letting her know she was seen and heard. As she became more comfortable, they introduced instruments as an expressive outlet. She responded by playing strong beats on the drum and tambourine, transforming her shrieks into expressive vocalizations woven into the music itself.

Over time, Ava embraced the joy of creation. She became more focused, more regulated, and most importantly, deeply connected to the music she was making. Today, she not only delights in her sessions but carries this newfound sense of regulation and confidence throughout her day.

Ava's journey is just one example of how our work in the Integrated Arts changes lives and helps individuals express themselves, build connections, and discover new ways to engage with the world.



## Psychology

# Breaking Barriers to Healthcare

At The Center for Discovery, our Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) do more than teach skills - they open doors to experiences and services that improve quality of life.

Individuals with disabilities often face enormous barriers to obtaining medical and dental care. The role of our BCBAs in helping our students and residents receive critical healthcare represents a highlight over this past year. Through a partnership with NYU Dentistry, our BCBAs along with other multidisciplinary team members, developed a compassionate, systematic approach to desensitizing students whose behavioral challenges often prevent them from receiving essential healthcare. One of the many success stories we had involved an 18-year-old student attending our community school program. He had not seen a dentist in over a decade due to extreme anxiety. Through gradual exposure techniques, he successfully completed a full dental cleaning and X-rays and subsequently was able to attend multiple follow-up treatments at the dental office—care that had previously been impossible for him.

This initiative not only improves individual health outcomes but also alleviates the stress that families face in securing critical medical services for their loved ones. Our collaboration with NYU Dentistry demonstrates the power of innovative partnerships in breaking barriers to care and ensuring lasting change.





# Department of Nourishment Arts

## Nourishing Health, Innovation, and Connection

The Department of Nourishment Arts' (DNA) team at The Center for Discovery had a transformative year, re-envisioning and refining key elements of the program to further TCFD's Food is Medicine® philosophy. From enhancing staff wellness to developing new approaches in nutrition, 2024 was marked by innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to improving lives through food.

One of the most exciting milestones was the opening of The Farmacy - a completely revamped employee café designed to support staff wellbeing through nutritious, high-quality meals. With a redesigned menu, an interactive nutrition guidance system, and a welcoming space to foster camaraderie, The Farmacy has become a hub for connection and health.

Another major achievement was the launch of the kitchen at the Children's Specialty Hospital, featuring a groundbreaking three-phase menu tailored to help pediatric residents gradually expand their diets. Starting with high-quality versions of familiar favorites, progressing to more complex flavors, and ultimately aligning with TCFD's whole-food-based menu, this approach has shown great promise in fostering better nutrition for all.

Beyond these initiatives, the DNA team also:

- Developed a lipid management protocol alongside the medical team to optimize health outcomes.
- Analyzed data on transitioning tube-fed patients to organic, plant-based formulas, showing potential for improved health markers and future research.
- Strengthened feeding therapy protocols with improved diagnostic criteria, data collection, and team collaboration.
- Hosted dietetic and culinary interns from Cornell, NYU, and the Culinary Institute of America.
- Updated seasonal menus, reopened the daycare kitchen, and reintegrated live DNA presentations into employee orientation.
- Expanded farm-to-table efforts, with Sweet Hill Farm providing fresh cheeses to The Farmacy and residential homes.
- Engaged middle managers in the harvest, reinforcing the deep connection between food, care, and community.

Through these advancements, the DNA team continues to set new standards for integrating nutrition into every aspect of life at TCFD - proving that food is not just sustenance, but a powerful tool for healing, growth, and connection.



## Farm Operations

# Cultivating Growth and Nourishing Our Community from Seed to Belly

At The Center for Discovery, our farm operations continue to thrive, providing nutrient-dense, sustainably grown food that nourishes our students, residents, and staff. In 2024, our dedicated farmers, students, and Day Hab group worked together to cultivate over 20 acres of vegetables, producing an incredible bounty. That bounty helps us to serve 2,000 healthy delicious meals a day to our residents and staff. It included:

- 42,000 heads of garlic
- 21,000 pounds of potatoes
- 22,000 pounds of winter squash
- 27,000 ears of sweet corn
- 13,000 pounds of tomatoes
- 13,000 pounds of apples and pears

2024 also marked our first major peach harvest, a milestone after years of careful orchard management. To further enhance our orchards, we launched a program focused on improving pruning techniques and grafting superior quality apple varieties, including those for cider production.

Our commitment to sustainability and food preservation reached new heights, with increased efforts to preserve tomatoes and peppers for winter and expand the production of lacto-fermented pickles, sauerkraut, and ginger carrots for the residents in our care. Additionally, our Oxymel (honey vinegar) was honored with the prestigious Good Food Award, reflecting our dedication to artisanal, high-quality food products.

Beyond serving these healthy meals for our own community, we strengthened partnerships, selling fresh vegetables to Northwell Hospitals and supplying our sought after tomatoes to renowned restaurants in New York City. Our CSA program provided 250 shares, ensuring that more families could enjoy the fruits of our labor – and healthy, fresh produce.

Collaboration was a key theme in 2024, with increased participation from students, Day Hab groups, and middle management in farm activities. We also worked closely with the Recreation Therapy team to establish a very successful structure for our residents to work on vinegar production, paving the way for future expansion.

Our farm continues to be a place of learning, growth, and nourishment - proving that food truly is medicine.





# Operations

## Strengthening our Infrastructure for a Brighter Future

With a generous investment by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, we were able to update the physical plant across campuses, including sixteen (16) new roofs, exterior painting of 27 locations, paving and sealing of 191,000 square feet of roadways, walkways, and parking areas. We were also able to complete the Rock Hill Playground at the Children's Specialty Hospital, add fencing to multiple locations, and complete therapeutic landscaping in Rock Hill.

In 2024 we also saw the beginning of a four-year replacement plan for vehicles in collaboration with Enterprise Fleet Management, Inc. With a focus on the oldest, highest mileage vehicles, we replaced 42 vehicles across various departments including five (5) new lift vehicles. We have further focused on the safety and security of our students, residents, and staff by installing access control at 43 entry points through a Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) grant and replaced 100 radios to upgrade to dual-function analog/digital units.

In another major advancement, the Operations Team created the Ops Center, a location at the Carrus Link, which is home to Vendor Management, Safety, Security, Operations, Admissions and Transitions, and Quality Improvement. Carrus Link supports effective vendor management and dispatch of resources for preventative, routine, and emergent tasks. The team completed a Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) in the Spring of 2024 covering 249 TCFD structures and creating a registry of 8,430 assets, systems, and components and created 810 preventative maintenance tasks based on this cataloging. Preventative maintenance tasks are prescribed tasks to maintain existing infrastructure, and physical plant and assets with the goal of extending the life of the physical plant and avert costly repairs and replacements. This new system enables the team to prepare and predict operations-related needs. The FCA will allow us to put together a capital improvement/repair plan based on the expected life of each asset. Additionally, Asset Essentials, a Computerized Maintenance Management Software (CMMS) went live in September. This CMMS accounts for the management of 6,785+ preventative maintenance tasks and is the interface for requesting incidental or emergent repair or replacement of an asset or location.

Through **innovation, strategic investments, and data-driven planning**, our **Operations Team** continues to ensure that TCFD's infrastructure supports our mission—creating safe, functional, and inspiring spaces for those we serve.



## Admissions and Transitions

# Supporting Transitions and Changing Lives

We are so proud that in 2024, the Admissions and Transitions Team made a profound impact, ensuring that individuals and families experienced seamless transitions into The Center for Discovery.

Throughout the year, 29 new residential admissions and 20 day student enrollments were thoughtfully coordinated to meet the unique needs of the students and residents in our care. There were 61 pediatric moves and 15 adult moves that all resulted in placements that best supported the individual's growth and well-being. The additional 26 residential discharges and 16 day program discharges celebrated each individual's transition to new opportunities.

Beyond admissions, the team provided critical family support, guiding them through Article 17A guardianship, hosting intakes, tours, screenings, and essential meetings while navigating complex regulatory processes. The team worked hand-in-hand with families, agencies and program teams to ensure every transition was person-centered and compassionate.

This work provided families with relief and reassurance, knowing their loved ones received the care, education, and attention that they need and deserve. Through dedication, collaboration, and individualized support, the Admissions and Transitions team played a pivotal role in shaping a successful and impactful year at The Center for Discovery.





# Information Technology

## Safeguarding Data, Strengthening Security, and Building Awareness

The Center for Discovery's IT Department plays a critical role in protecting our organization's systems and data as well as our employees who work here. Through innovative cybersecurity strategies, proactive risk management, and organization wide awareness initiatives, the team ensures confidentiality, integrity, and availability across all digital platforms.

In 2024, IT focused on enhancing cybersecurity awareness by continuing mandatory training for all employees upon hiring. Staff learned best practices for strong passwords, HIPAA compliance, and identifying phishing attempts.

To strengthen endpoint security, TCFD partnered with a leader in cloud-delivered endpoint protection that allowed us to leverage advanced threat detection systems to identify and neutralize risks in real time; endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) tools to proactively monitor and protect devices; and a unified cloud-delivered platform designed to prevent breaches before they happen.

IT also championed the "**Secure the Human**" initiative, helping to educate our staff on ways to recognize and prevent cyber threats. Through ongoing training and real-time simulations, staff learned how to avoid malicious links and reduce phishing incidents, making security a shared responsibility across the organization.

By educating employees on cybersecurity best practices, we created a more secure workplace where staff can recognize and avoid potential threats, reducing the risk of cyber incidents.



# Quality Improvement

## Enhancing Quality and Safety across TCFD

In 2024, The Center for Discovery's Quality Improvement (QI) Department advanced the organization's services with a strong commitment to human rights, dignity, and respect. Throughout the year, the department worked to strengthen the agency systemically, environmentally, and programmatically while building relationships with federal and state oversight bodies and upholding the highest ethical standards.

Key initiatives in 2024 included updating policies and procedures, providing education and training, auditing and monitoring compliance, managing incidents, and leveraging data and emerging trends to drive proactive improvements.

In addition, QI spearheaded a collaborative effort of departments (residential, nursing, psychology, safety, and security) to share elopement data in real time throughout the year, educating the agency on elopement safety and emergency response. Most importantly, this collaboration yielded a decrease in elopement situations in 2024.

Through collaboration, education, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the QI Department has remained dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of care, safety, and respect for those we serve.





# People Operations

## Our Work Changes Lives: Empowering Careers Through Education

In 2024, the People Operations team at The Center for Discovery continued its mission of transforming lives through our Tuition Assistance Program. This program supported over 25 employees in pursuing higher education and professional certifications, opening doors for career growth while enhancing the quality of care and services we provide.

One standout success story is Angelee, who joined TCFD as an Administrative Coordinator in the Executive Office and Media department, now known as Strategic Outreach and Partnerships. Already holding a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management, Angelee brought a strong foundation to her role, where she supported the board and executive team. With the support of TCFD's Tuition Assistance Program, she pursued and earned her Master of Science in Palliative Care, Aging, and Applied Thanatology in late 2023.

Shortly after completing her Master's degree, Angelee transitioned into the role of Director of Aging and Lifespan Supports in 2023/2024. In this position, she aims to develop innovative care models tailored to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), implement forward-thinking support plans for aging populations, and bring comfort and understanding to individuals at the end of life. Her goals align closely with TCFD's mission to improve outcomes for students and residents while creating meaningful change.

Angelee's career reflects the power of education to foster both personal and professional growth. Her deep understanding of lifespan changes and her passion for palliative care position her well to create lasting impacts for those we serve, and she can have an important impact at the planned Center for Advanced Medical Care in Rock Hill.

By investing in our employees' education, TCFD strengthens its foundation and inspires excellence across the organization. The Tuition Assistance Program is a testament to how TCFD's commitment to its staff leads to transformative impacts - one degree, one promotion, and one life-changing story at a time.



## Benefits

# Investing in our People with Benefits to Support Staff Well-Being

At The Center for Discovery, we know that when our staff are supported, they can better care for themselves, their families, and the students and residents who depend on them. In 2024, we took significant steps to enhance our already robust benefits offerings, ensuring our 1,800 employees have access to the best possible resources for their health, wellness, and future.

In 2024, we introduced a new health insurance partnership with Northwell Direct, securing a two-year rate guarantee to provide medical stability and affordability for our employees. Additionally, we transitioned to new broker relationships with PilotRB for medical plans and Alliant for retirement plans, an extensive process that streamlined and strengthened our employee offerings across medical, dental, vision and employer paid plans as well as retirement policies. And we are so pleased to share that for the 15th year in a row, there was no increase in employees' health insurance premium costs!

Recognizing the importance of physical wellness, we also completed the relocation, construction, and reopening of our Employee Wellness Gym, highlighting our commitment to encouraging a healthy and balanced workplace. As we continue to evolve our benefits, our focus remains on improving the lives of our extremely dedicated staff - so they, in turn, can provide the highest level of care and support to those we serve.





# Staff Engagement

## Celebrating Excellence and Inspiring Pride

Last year was the inaugural year for Staff Engagement initiatives across The Center for Discovery. We saw firsthand the impact that employee recognition and appreciation have on our workforce, and how it motivates and inspires our staff. We know that acknowledging hard work, dedication, and teamwork not only boosts morale but also strengthens relationships across our organization.

One standout initiative from 2024, Pop Up Props, was a campaign that empowered staff to publicly recognize the collective achievements of another department, classroom, office, or residence. Each honoree received a banner displayed outside of their location, a fun eye-catching air dancer, a certificate of excellence, and a shout-out in The Center's monthly staff newsletter.

This initiative amplified the impact of our teams and showcased the transformative work happening every day. One staff member said: "Seeing the 'Pop Up Props' and banner each day immediately put a smile on my face. It reminded me of the joy my work brings and the importance of the opportunities we create for our students. The recognition from my supervisor made me and my team feel truly honored."

Alongside department celebrations and recognition events, these initiatives helped to foster a culture of appreciation, ensuring every one of our 1,800 staff members felt valued and celebrated for their moving achievements.



# IMPACT

## Inspiring Future Leaders

At The Center for Discovery, we believe in investing in the next generation - and our IMPACT Program (IMMERSIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AND COLLABORATION FOR TEENS) is designed to do just that. This unique summer initiative provides meaningful opportunities for the teenage children of our staff, fostering growth, confidence, and career exploration.

In 2024, our character-building program for 14- and 15-year-olds engaged participants in hands-on activities rooted in our HealthE6® model, encouraging personal development and teamwork. For 16- and 17-year-olds, our paid mentorship program allowed them to gain real-world experience in departments such as the Discovery Health Center, Adapted Physical Education, Recreation, Finance, the Wild Turkey Bakery, and the Department of Nourishment Arts®.

One participant shared that her summer at The Center helped her discover a clear career path - a testament to the impact of mentorship and meaningful work. Many past participants have returned to build their careers with us, and we look forward to welcoming even more future leaders inspired by their time in IMPACT!





# Strategic Outreach and Partnerships

## A Growing Impact

For our team at the Office of Strategic Outreach and Partnerships, this year was one of impact, growth, and vision. We began by supporting a leadership transition that set the course for the future and ended with a bold vision for a continuum of care - one that is truly unique to our community.

At the beginning of January, we put out a nationwide press release announcing that Dr. Theresa Hamlin had assumed the role of President and CEO at The Center for Discovery. With a series of media interviews, Dr. Hamlin shared her vision for The Center's future.

In April, we were thrilled to be selected as the honoree at the annual Autism Speaks Celebrity Chef Gala where we showcased our life-changing work in front of a huge, new audience on World Autism Awareness Day.

There was certainly no slowing down in the spring as our office hosted and produced the Annual Evening of Discovery Gala, where we honored our longtime Board Chairman and champion, Edward C. Sweeney. The event brought in more fundraising dollars than any in our history and was an invaluable reminder of the incredible generosity of our families and friends.

Speaking of our families and friends, the summer brought a grant from the Lt. Gregg Atlas Foundation for two-way radios, a vital update of our communications and safety efforts agency wide. That same month, we received \$300,000 from the dormitory authority of New York to renovate our Day Hab facilities.

We love our fall traditions here at The Center and October brought something old and something new for our families. Our office produced the first Food Is Medicine® dinner highlighting the transformative power of food on the individuals we serve. Following that, it was on to our beloved Harvest Festival where our families celebrated the season's harvest and bounty with a delicious meal at the Michael Ritchie Big Barn.

The end of the year brought transformative news and awareness. We were honored to receive a 1.2 million dollar grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to support vast capital improvements across our campuses.

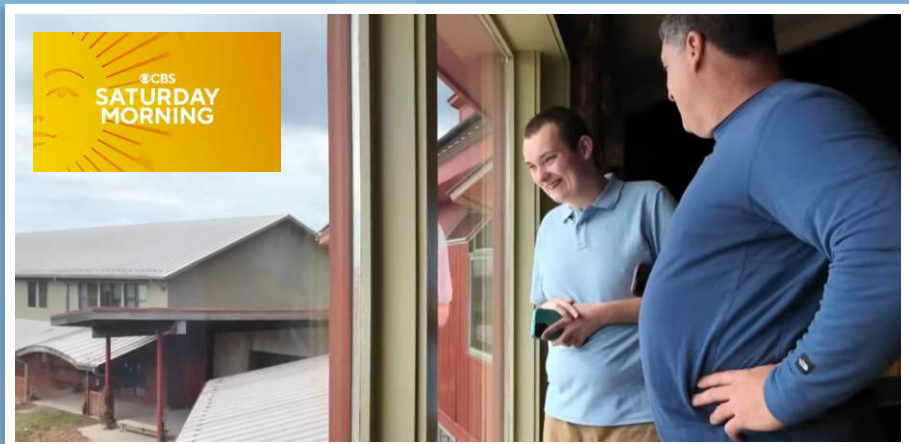
In Rock Hill, NY there was an opening a decade in the making. Our Children's Specialty Hospital began seeing its first patients and immediately began to make an impact. This hospital - with its early intervention for those with complex conditions and underlying health issues - will allow us to devise treatment plans for those in need of support. Then in late December, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law a demonstration project for the second floor of the Rock Hill building that we will develop into a skilled nursing facility for advanced medical care and aging adults. With this new project, our residents will be able to receive a broader range of medical treatments on site. These two groundbreaking advancements will allow The Center to create a lifetime of care for those who need us now more than ever.

To cap this unforgettable year off, our groundbreaking work was featured on CBS Saturday Mornings - an eight-minute story that brought millions of viewers and interest from around the country and the world.

It was without a doubt a transformative year. But everything was done with one goal in mind - to support our community and help them thrive in ways never thought possible.



**SCAN QR CODE**  
to view the CBS Saturday  
Mornings Segment





“

Our daughter has been at The Center since she was 8 and is currently 25. Her time there has been a godsend and she's developed skills we never thought possible.

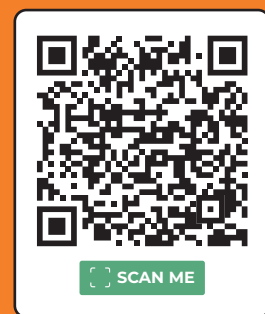
TCFD Family Member



# 2024

## Year in Highlights

For more Center for  
Discovery news, scan  
the QR code



# 2024

## Year in Highlights

### January

- Dr. Theresa Hamlin assumes role as Chief Executive Officer of The Center for Discovery.

### February

- The Center for Discovery is once again named *Best Place to Work* in the River Reporter's 28th Annual Readers' Choice Awards, an incredible recognition from the local community.
- Songs of Discovery for Music Therapy: A Practical Resource for Therapists and Educators' is named a Jessica Kingsley Publishers '2023 Favorite.'

### March

- The Center for Discovery welcomes Dr. Donald Landry to its Board of Directors, bringing decades of vital healthcare knowledge and experience to an already robust team.
- The Center for Discovery hosts its second annual Self-Advocacy Group cook-off competition, alongside the Chief of the Department of Nourishment Arts – Food and Farming, Cesare Casella and DaVinci Master Chef, Raffaele Solinas.
- Scout, The Center's Facility-Dog-in-training passes his behavioral assessment and Canine Good Citizen testing, making him an official member of TCFD's Facility Dog Team.

### April

- The Center for Discovery is honored at the annual Autism Speaks annual Celebrity Chef Gala, held in New York City on World Autism Awareness Day.

- The Center for Discovery's Executive Vice President of Development, Marketing, and Strategic Communications, Michael Rosen, is honored by Autism Science Foundation for a career devoted to fighting on behalf of those with autism.

### May

- The Center for Discovery visits government leadership in Washington, D.C. and Albany, NY to advance TCFD's priorities.
- The Center for Discovery hosts its first post-pandemic Evening of Discovery Gala, honoring TCFD Board Chair, Edward C. Sweeney. The 2024 annual gala raises over \$2,000,000 dollars.
- The Center for Discovery's 'Discovery Dramatic Arts' production showcases the Wizard of Oz – the program's 14th annual show, highlighting the theatrical talents of students and residents from across The Center.

### June

- The Center for Discovery kicks off its 14th annual Adventure T.E.A.M. Challenge: NY Edition, in partnership with World Team Sports and Osaic Inc.
- New York State Senate and Assembly overwhelmingly approve legislation authorizing an advanced residential health care demonstration program for aging adults with medical fragility.
- The Center for Discovery's first-ever facility dog, Leland, hangs up his leash and officially retires after nearly 8 years of spreading immense joy at TCFD.



## July

- The Center for Discovery receives a grant for two-way radios from The Lt. Gregg Atlas Foundation to enhance its communication and safety efforts organization wide.
- The Center for Discovery receives a \$300k Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program grant through DASNY to renovate its Day Hab facilities.

## August

- The Center for Discovery hosts SUNY Chancellor John B. King and his team for a visit highlighting The Center's proactive and preventive model of health and education, research opportunities, various partnerships, and more.
- The Center for Discovery's Self-Advocacy Group heads to the New York State Fair for the first time.
- TCFD completes significant upgrades to its financial, facilities, and vehicle replacement systems, enhancing reporting, coordination, and long-term planning capabilities.

## September

- The Center for Discovery announces five new board members - Mimi Clarke Corcoran, Former Executive Director of the Child Mind Institute; Lon Dolber, Founder & Former CEO of American Portfolios; Ari Greenburg, President of WME; Brian Harper, Founder and Managing Partner of 11North and Former Chairman of the Board of Autism Speaks; and Veronica Sullivan, SVP and Head of Global Production External Affairs and State & Local Government at NBCUniversal.
- The Center's community school program expands to include Early Learners and Explorers, a new initiative that provides educational services to students from Sullivan, Orange, and Ulster counties, starting with kindergarten through second grade.

## October

- The Center for Discovery hosts a Food Is Medicine Dinner, highlighting the transformative power of food and the remarkable health outcomes it has on the individuals we serve, based on data collected at The Center.
- The Center for Discovery hosts its annual Harvest Festival, honoring Blake Washington, NY Budget Director with the Senator Thomas P. Morahan Lifetime Achieve in Healthcare award, and Patrick H. Dollard, former TCFD CEO, with the Green Shovel Legacy Award.

## November

- 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.
- TCFD applies for 60 seat expansion of its community school program.

## December

- The Center for Discovery's Children's Specialty Hospital officially opens and begins admitting its first patients.
- NYS Governor Kathy Hochul signs the legislation authorizing the creation of an advanced residential health care demonstration program for aging adults with medical fragility. This initiative will allow The Center to address the urgent and growing needs of this population, while helping to resolve the challenge of adults remaining in pediatric beds.
- The Center for Discovery is featured on CBS Saturday Morning highlighting its transformative nutrition program and lifestyle medicine approach, generating awareness across the nation.
- The Center for Discovery receives a \$1,200,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to support capital improvements across our campuses.

# 2024

## Research Highlight of the Year

### Advancing The Center's Research for a Meaningful Impact

2024 was an exceptionally productive year for research at The Center for Discovery. Our Research team strengthened collaborations with leading institutions, including Emory University/Georgia Institute of Technology, Cornell University, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In 2024 alone, the team published three peer-reviewed journal articles, with six more in progress. We also secured funding for three grant proposals and have three additional applications under review. Our research team members shared groundbreaking findings through four presentations at international conferences, further positioning The Center as a leader in the study of profound autism and complex needs—an area historically underrepresented in scientific research.

#### Research Highlight of the Year: Harnessing AI for Predicting High-Risk Events

A key highlight of the year was the significant advancement of The Center's work in using artificial intelligence to detect and predict high-risk medical and behavioral events. Collaborating with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Emory University, we published three studies with additional publications forthcoming.

#### Key Research Findings

- **Behavior Detection Through Machine Learning**

- Two studies explored automated behavior detection using machine learning.
- We found that physical movement data from accelerometers outperforms other physiological measures, such as electrodermal activity and skin temperature, in identifying behaviors (Rad et al., 2025).
- Advances in video-based activity recognition enabled us to successfully detect behaviors in classroom settings from video recordings (Das et al., 2024).

- **Predicting High-Risk Behaviors**

- Sleep quality, measured via privacy-preserving bedroom sensors, was a strong predictor of next-morning behaviors (Kiarashi et al., 2024a).
- Patterns of lower-risk behaviors can be used to accurately predict the occurrence of high-risk behaviors such as aggression, self-injury, and elopement (Kiarashi et al., 2024b).
- Seizures can be predicted based on behavioral patterns from the previous 7 to 14 days (Kiarashi et al., 2024b).
- Using data on co-occurring medical conditions and environmental factors, we achieved 90% accuracy in predicting high-risk behaviors for a subset of individuals residing at The Center (Ferina et al., 2023), with gastrointestinal variables emerging as a particularly strong predictor.

By leveraging cutting-edge technology and interdisciplinary collaboration, The Center for Discovery was able to make critical strides in predictive care. Our research is not only advancing scientific understanding but also paving the way for transformative interventions that improve the lives of those we serve.

Learn more about  
The Center's research:



SCAN ME



# TCFD FACTS

## OVERALL FACTS

Children and Adults  
Served Annually:

**1200**

School Districts Served  
Across NYS:

**150**

Acres in Sullivan County, NY:

**1500**

Trademarks  
(Registered & Pending):

**22**

Meals Provided  
per Day:

**1900**

Hours Invested in  
Training Annually:

**5000**

Children in Staff  
Daycare:

**96**

Economic Impact:

**\$1.7  
Billion**

for the State of New York  
from 2010-2019

## ADULT FACTS

Residential Homes:

**25**

Individuals in ICF  
Residences:

**112**

Individuals in IRA  
Residences:

**70**

Individuals in TCFD's  
Vocational Program:

**182**

Vocational  
Program Sites:

**10**

## PEDIATRIC FACTS

Residential Homes:

**24**

Residential Students:

**164**

Day Students:

**256**

Total Students:

**420**

Children's  
Specialty Hospital:

**18**

## STAFF FACTS

Full-Time Medical Doctors,  
PAs, and FNPs:

**10**

Nursing Staff:

**151**

Clinical Staff:

**124**

Residential Staff:

**770**

Psychology Staff:

**45**

School Staff:

**393**

Chefs/Cooks/Bakers:

**35**

Operations Staff:

**252**

Total Staff:

**1800**

# Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations:

## 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)\*

NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)\*

NY State Education Department (SED)\*

NYS State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)\*

Empire State Development

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Sullivan County Public School Districts

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)

Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS)

Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS)

SUNY Sullivan

The Homestead Collaborative College High School

American Portfolios

World T.E.A.M. Sports

Open Space Institute

Catskill Mountainkeeper

Sullivan 180 and A Single Bite

Cornell Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture

Visit Hurleyville



“

We are so grateful for all the teachers, therapists, aids, dogs, every living being at The Center. Our son is happy, and healthy.

TCFD Family Member



# Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations:

## 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, PhD,  
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.



Cornell  
Human  
Ecology

For more information on  
TCFD's research:



SCAN ME



“

The Center for Discovery is a welcoming  
and inclusive environment where both  
residents and staff can truly be themselves.  
The level of kindness and acceptance here  
foster creativity and success at every level  
of care. It's clear that everyone here deeply  
cares about our residents, their well-being,  
and their happiness.

Raven, Group Leader





“

Working with my students isn't just about helping them succeed in school; it's about empowering them to thrive in every aspect of their lives. The growth we see in the classroom extends to their lives at home with their family, building confidence, independence, and a future we are all looking forward to witnessing.

– Christopher, TCFD Teacher

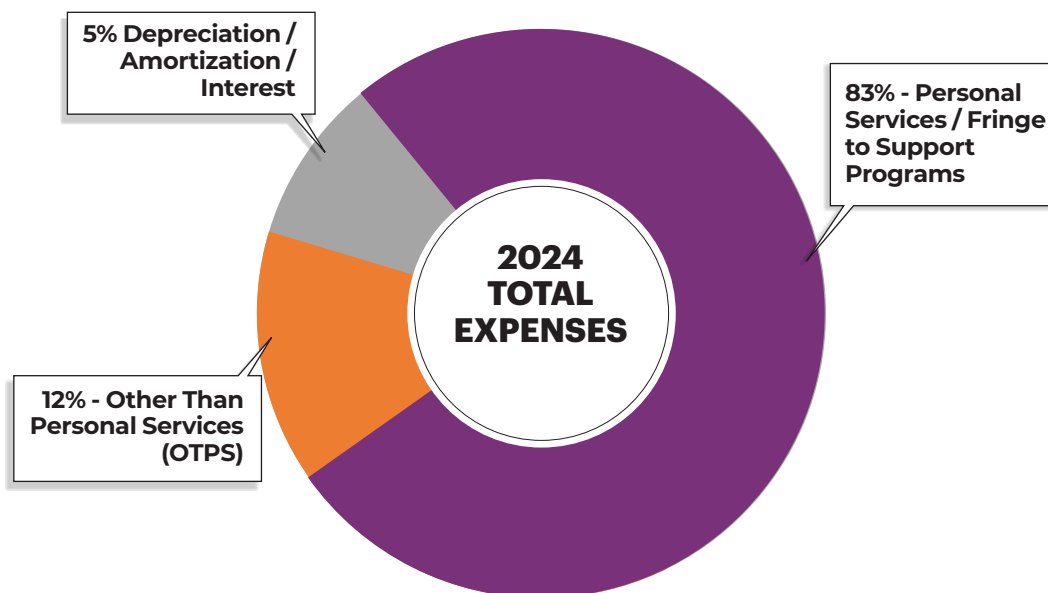
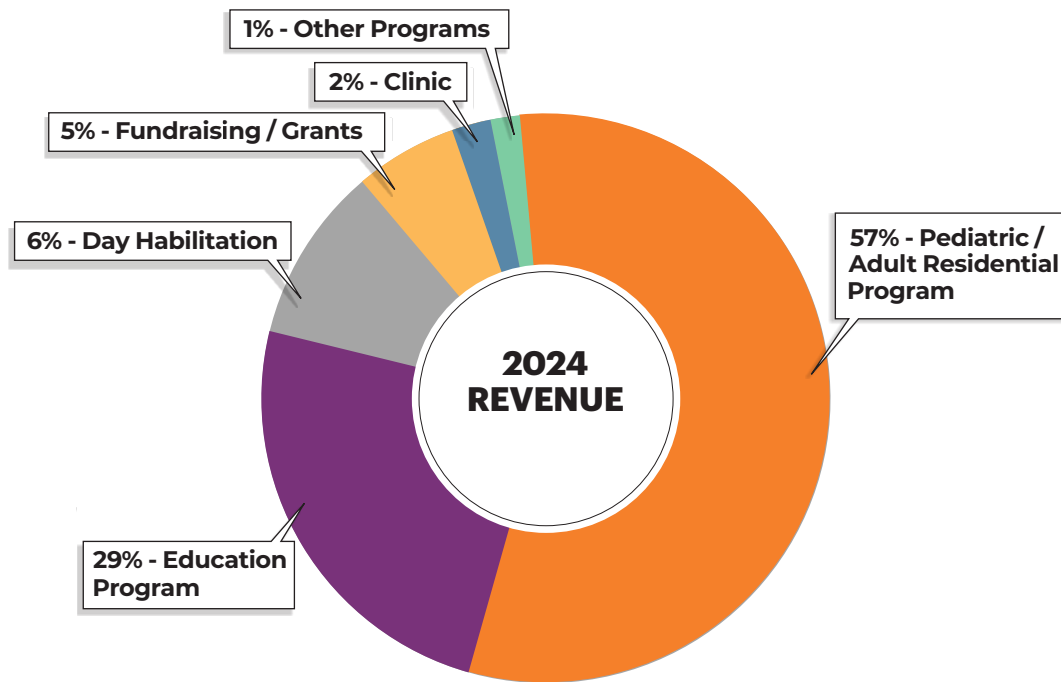


# THE CENTER FOR DISCOVERY

## LOCATIONS



# 2024 Expenses and Revenue



\*These numbers have not been audited.



# TCFD Board of Directors

**Edward C. Sweeney**, Board Chair  
Senior Vice President – External Affairs, NRS, Inc.

**Ellen Alemany**, Vice Chair  
Former Chairwoman and CEO of CIT

**Eileen Naughton**, Treasurer  
Former Vice President of People Operations at Google

**Michael Dubilier**, Secretary  
Managing Director, Dubilier & Company

**Nelly Bly-Arougheti**, Director  
Author/Editor

**Mimi Clarke Corcoran**, Director  
Former Executive Director, Child Mind Institute

**Lon Dolber**, Director  
Founder and Former CEO, American Portfolios

**Kevin Fee**, Director  
Co-Founder and Managing Director, Castlerock Asset Management

**Joel S. Forman**, Esq., Director  
Partner, Akerman LLP

**Ari Greenburg**, Director  
President, WME

**Brian Harper**, Director  
Former Chairman of the Board, Autism Speaks  
Founder and Managing Partner, 11North

**Donald W. Landry, MD, PhD**, Director  
Former Physician-in-Chief at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center

**Aidan Quinn**, Director  
Actor

**Kim Raisler**, Director  
Partner, Levine, Plotkin, & Menin, LLP

**Veronica Sullivan**, Director  
Senior Vice President and Head of Global Production External Affairs and State and Local Government at NBCUniversal

**George Todd, MD**, Director  
Professor, Vascular Surgery, Mount Sinai

**Allison Vella**, Director  
Former Managing Director, SunTrust Bank  
Director of Admissions, Saint David's School

“2024 stood apart for The Center for Discovery. With our Children's Specialty Hospital now open and the Governor's approval of our Skilled Nursing Facility, we've advanced our field with clear vision and steady resolve. This milestone fulfills our decades-long quest to provide quality and compassionate care for families whose loved ones have complex disabilities, from childhood to life's end. We are proud to offer a seamless continuum of care at The Center for Discovery for those we are privileged to serve.”

- Edward C. Sweeney,  
Board Chair

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## Directors Emeriti

**Norman Feinberg** - In memoriam

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# 2024

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Every act of generosity, every partnership, and every gift fuels the life-changing work we do at The Center for Discovery. Your unwavering support empowers us to create moments of progress, joy, and transformation for those we serve. As we reflect on 2024, we are profoundly grateful for your commitment, passion, and belief in our mission. Thank you for standing with us—every step of the way.

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“

Teaching students with complex developmental disabilities isn't just a profession; it's a profound dialogue spoken through patience, understanding, and the unspoken language of the heart. Their unique ways of being enrich my world immeasurably and for that I am grateful for TCFD.

Molly, TCFD Teacher

“

What I love about working at The Center is the compassionate care we share amongst colleagues, the students and residents in our care. What we teach each other extends beyond the classrooms and houses, reaching our hearts and our homes. That is a gift.

Amanda, TCFD Teacher

“

So blessed to have our son living and thriving here for the past 25 years. The Center is truly part of our family and we are so grateful to all that work so diligently every day to enhance the lives of those we love!

TCFD Family Member

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