





Dear Friends of Summit,

In 2018, we embarked on a new three-year strategic plan to guide us through 2021. In 2018-19, work began on this plan which focuses on four strategic areas:

- growing to serve the increasing number and changing complexity of individuals with autism and behavioral concerns;
- delivering innovative services that create exceptional outcomes for the people we serve;
- advancing toward a culture of engagement and strategic leadership and
- strengthening our financial resilience.

In addition to these strategic objectives, we have pledged to make an impact every day for the individuals we serve and their families. On the following pages you'll read about some of these successes, as well as the thinking behind our focus on evidence-based practice. You'll also read about two generous donors whose support has brought the gift of music to Summit Academy students.

None of our work could be accomplished without the commitment and expertise of our dedicated staff, the leadership of our dedicated operating and foundation boards, the financial support of our generous sponsors and donors, and the tireless efforts of the parents of the children and adults we serve.



beyond the walls of Summit

SummitUp helps teachers at St. Mary's School for the Deaf address student needs

Since 1853, St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Buffalo, NY, has provided quality education to its students, ages 3 – 21. While their language immersive curriculum is effective for most students, over the past few years, St. Mary's began serving increasing numbers of deaf students diagnosed with autism. Traditional teaching methods weren't effective and, looking for an evidence-based approach, they turned to The Summit Center.

"The Summit Center is known regionally as the gold standard in the education of students with autism," said Joy Higgins, Assistant Principal – Elementary, at St. Mary's. "We're proud to join our knowledge in the area of deaf education with Summit's knowledge in creating learning environments that follow best practices."

St. Mary's contracted with Summit to provide behavioral consultation services to two classrooms with students ages 5-11. Working with Summit's consultant, the classrooms were physically re-arranged to create improved centers for group learning and one-on-one instruction. Fundamental practices of Applied Behavior Analysis including proper use of reinforcement, daily schedules, and token boards were incorporated into the classroom management approach.

The teachers also began using Summit's web-based curriculum, SummitUp Learning. Developed by a team of Summit teachers, curriculum specialists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, and psychologists, under the direction of Summit CEO, Stephen R. Anderson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, SummitUp Learning provides an assessment tool, curriculum with corresponding lesson plans, data collection, and real-time progress monitoring.

Used in every classroom at Summit Academy and in Summit's Early Autism Program, the product is now available to other schools through licensing agreements with Summit. St. Mary's School for the Deaf is one of five schools currently using SummitUp Learning. After completing a student assessment, SummitUp auto generated a series of step-by-step lesson plans across multiple learning domains which gave the teachers a starting point for each student. "I thought it was important to start with a communication goal and a fine motor goal," said teacher Mary Wagner. "Everyone on our team - classroom aides, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech pathologists work toward these common goals. By collecting data as each skill is taught, we're able to decide - based on the data - what to teach next." Teacher Cailin Aiken agreed, "The individual lesson plans remind you that you do have to focus on the basics and that it's good to recognize when a student is or isn't ready to

learn something new."



As an example, some students don't necessarily have all the prerequisite skills to learn how to wash their hands. SummitUp lesson plans break down skills into small teachable steps. As a student masters one step, he moves to the next, and so on — until the skill is learned. Data is collected at each step for review by teachers and administrators.

To generalize a skill beyond the structured setting, lesson plans can be embedded in group activities. For example, a snow cone making activity becomes an opportunity for one student to practice color identification, and another student to learn the concept of hot and cold, while still another works on sequencing.

"SummitUp helped me get back to basics with my students and focus on more fundamental skills. I also love the ability to individualize the curriculum. Instead of using the same curriculum for the whole class, each student is now getting exactly what they need," Mrs. Aiken said.

Ms. Higgins agreed. "SummitUp is an exceptional tool: it provides a framework for individual instruction across all areas. Ongoing support from Summit's consultant has helped us in every aspect of implementation. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, teachers, and school districts speaks for itself, but the most important measure is student achievement. Our students are making tremendous behavioral, communicative, and educational progress with SummitUp.

SummitUp is cutting-edge, web-based software that gives teachers the tools they need to be more efficient and effective in the classroom. The software is one of four Toolkits which comprise a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that helps schools achieve the highest quality instruction for students with developmental disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder.

For more information about SummitUp Learning, visit SummitUpLearning.com.

for people who want to work

ACCES-VR opens the door to employment opportunities

"Going up?" Matthew asks.

His coworker nods and Matthew presses an elevator button taking them to the third floor. He steps out and cheerfully greets a nursing home resident waiting for him in the hallway. The pair exchange small talk as he helps her adjust her blue fleece jacket. Once she is all set, he transports her by wheelchair to their next location.

It's just another busy day at work for Matthew, an Activities Aide at Beechwood Continuing Care in Getzville. He is hard at work transferring nursing home residents from their rooms to the recreational activity of the afternoon.

"My favorite thing to help with is exercise. We do stretching and I help patients with fitness," he said.

Like other employees, Matthew clocks in and out, reports to his boss, and files any necessary paperwork. The only difference is that he receives employment support from The Summit Center which is funded by the New York State Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR).

"Summit is authorized to provide a number of employment services funded by ACCES-VR including job preparation, placement, and development, as well as soft skills training, among many others," said Wendy Loverme, Director of Community Services at The Summit Center.

To be eligible for ACCES-VR, individuals must be high school aged or older with a confirmed diagnosis of a disability. Each individual is assessed to determine the best course of action. After speaking with the individual and their caregivers, suitable jobs are identified as well as the length and type of support that would be required.

What makes The Summit Center's services unique, is this focus on soft skill development.

"The individuals we serve typically lack the social skills required for successful job retention. So, we focus a bit more on soft skills in employment, such as learning boundaries with coworkers or communicating with your boss," said Ms. Loverme.

ACCES-VR is part of Summit's expanding Adult Division. The number of individuals served in pre-vocational and employment services increased by 31% from 2018 to 2019. The Division's goal is to prepare individuals to successfully hold a job. Job placement is based on individual interests and strengths to help ensure success. So far, Matthew is thriving.

"I like my coworkers and I like coming to work every day," he said.

Matthew's job coaches and coworkers also say his employment skills have improved tremendously during his time at Beechwood. "At first, he was a bit nervous and it was hard for him to open up. Now, he sits with his coworkers and actively participates in conversations at lunch. It has been amazing to watch," said Rosemarie Anspake, Employment Specialist.

To learn more about Summit's ACCES-VR programs, visit TheSummitCenter.org.



with a gift of music

Generous donors carry on former student's legacy

Music. Field trips. But perhaps most importantly, ice cream. These were the things Charlie Rothman loved most. Charlie was a beloved student at Summit Academy for 16 years. Although he passed away in 2015, his legacy lives on through his parents Drs. Elaine Rinfrette and Ilene Rothman, who have found generous ways to bring Charlie's loves to current Summit Academy students. "It was very important for us to carry on the activities that meant so much to our son," said Dr. Rothman.

Because Charlie was so passionate about music, Drs. Rinfrette and Rothman funded a field trip to Kleinhans Music Hall. Summit Academy students attended a Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra workshop and watched the orchestra rehearse.

The pair also brought the BPO to Summit. Oboist/English Hornist Anna Mattix and French Hornist Sheryl Hadeka both performed at Summit Academy and presented on "Meaning, Mood and Movement in Music" and "Storytelling with Music."

"The students loved listening to the music. They were smiling and asking good questions. It reminded me so much of Charlie," said Dr. Rinfrette.

To celebrate the end of Summit Academy's summer session and Charlie's favorite treat, Drs. Rothman and Rinfrette brought an ice cream truck to the school. Students and staff at Summit's Creekside location enjoyed delicious treats from Chilly Billy's.

"Summit is a special place. We have met so many wonderful people who were invested in our son. We are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to give back," said Dr. Rothman.

In November, Drs. Rinfrette and Rothman were honored by The Summit Center at the Association of Fundraising Professional's National Philanthropy Day Luncheon. Each year, non-profits and organizations throughout Western New York come together to honor special individuals who support local organizations and the community. The pair say they are grateful to celebrate Charlie's legacy.



with Applied Behavior Analysis

A Q&A with Amy Jablonski, Psy.D., BCBA-D, LBA

Vice President – Education & Behavioral Health Divisions

In a 2019 survey of key stakeholders, including school districts, medical professionals, charitable foundations, and care coordinators, The Summit Center's focus on evidence-based practice was identified repeatedly as the organization's point of differentiation from other local agencies. But what does "evidence-based" really mean and how does this commitment impact the people we serve? Read our Q&A with Dr. Amy Jablonski, Vice President – Education & Behavioral Health Divisions, to learn more about Evidence-Based Practice and Summit's commitment to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).



Why does Summit use ABA?

Summit takes pride in its use of evidence-based practices. Evidence-Based Practice is the current focus of many national professional organizations in the United States and is included with their ethics codes.

In 2001, Evidence-Based Practice moved into education realm with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. This federal mandate called for the use of Evidence-Based practices in the classroom. Right now, interventions that have been found most effective for autism are those based on principles of ABA. Effective ABA programs are those that begin early in life, target all areas of development, and are delivered intensively.

Have individuals seen success through ABA?

The children and adults we serve have seen significant success through ABA. It is important to realize that success will look different in everyone. Many young children diagnosed with autism who have participated in our intensive Early Autism Program (EAP) for at least 20 hours per week have made so much progress that they can attend typical schools without needing any supports.

One of our earliest EAP students, who had no language when she started at Summit, just graduated from college with high honors. She is active in theater and music and is always giving back to her community. No one who meets her could ever imagine she has an autism diagnosis.

Other children in our school continue to have obvious symptoms of autism but are more independent because they have learned fundamental adaptive skills through ABA.

Does Summit ever consider other methodologies?

Evidence-based practitioners take steps to determine which interventions have the highest quality research base to support their use. What we're doing now could certainly change in the future. As the field continues to grow and develop, new evidence-based treatments may emerge, and common practices may be determined to be ineffective.

Our staff stays up-to-date on the newest advances through membership in professional organizations, reading professional journals, and attending conferences. If there is a compelling reason to consider another methodology that may not have solid evidence, our staff can consider implementing the procedure in the context of a research study, thereby collecting data that will add to the existing body of evidence.

What would you say to someone who is unsure about ABA?

In my experience, someone who is unsure of ABA has likely heard negative things about it. Unfortunately, as with all practices, ABA can be poorly implemented. If someone sees or hears those stories, it leads to misconceptions and biases.

I would provide the person with objective resources (such as the New York State Department of Health Report of the Recommendations on Autism Spectrum Disorders) so they can come to their own conclusions about what works. I would also invite them to observe ABA in action so that hopefully their misconceptions can be dismissed.



in 2019



Education Division

Including Summit Academy and our Early Autism Program

- 36 Students served in the Early Autism Program
- 359 Students served in Summit Academy (ages 3-21)
- 72% Preschoolers who moved to an integrated setting from Summit Academy
- 85% Summit Academy school age students (5-21) diagnosed with autism

Behavioral Health Division

Including Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic, The Children's Guild Foundation Pediatric Feeding Clinic, Summer Programs, Professional Consulting Services, and Children's Health Home

- 30 Number of WNY school districts with Summit consulting service contracts
- 100% Parents who would recommend Summit's Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic and Pediatric Feeding Clinic to other families





Adult Division

Including community-based day programs and vocational and employment services

- 30 Number of adults served at STEPS (Success Through Engagement and Positive Supports)
 - 3 Number of STEPS locations

Community Division

Including afterschool, evening and weekend respite programs, and parent training

- 90 Number of children served in Summit Adventures (afterschool program)
- 45 Number of children served in Summit Expeditions (evening and weekend respite)





Parents are satisfied!

- 100% Parents who say Summit staff understands their child's needs
- 100% Parents who would recommend Summit's programs to other families

with Events

Supporters Dance the Night Away at Summit 54

Thank you to the 450 party attendees who were transported back to the '70s and supported The Summit Center at Party for Summit – Summit 54 at Salvatore's Italian Gardens on Friday, November 2, 2018. The event raised more than \$200,000 for the Summit Foundation.



Throughout the evening, guests bid on more than 120 silent and live auction items. Kevin Sylvester, auctioneer for the night, engaged the crowd in a live appeal to raise funds for a new classroom to serve additional students at Summit. At the end of the night, guests danced the night away on the LED dance floor to the sounds of DJ David Pfluke.

The event was chaired by Carla Todaro Pantano who led a dedicated and hard-working committee: Samantha Bailey, Sharon Bakshi, Marybeth Basil, Missy Cornish, Tony DeSimone, Bryan Hartmayer, Linda lantorno, Nicolle LoTempio, Sue Militello, Hillary Rifkin, Nicolas P. Saikali, M.D., Russell Salvatore, Jr., Liz Seefeldt, Michele Smith, Pam Smith, and Joey Todaro.

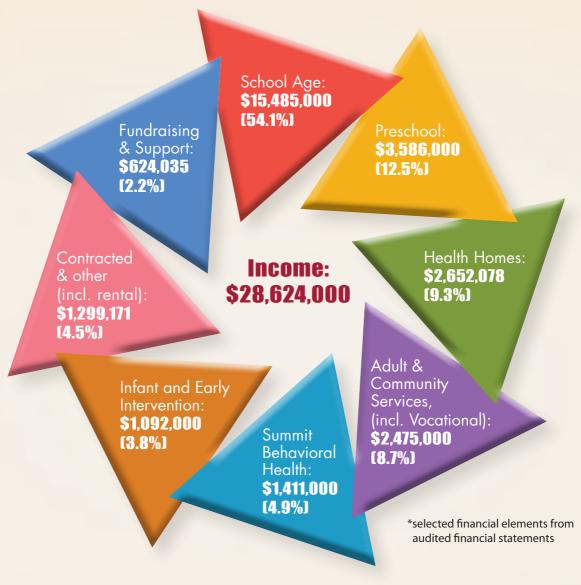
2019 Autism Walk raises \$275,000 More than 1,500 parents, staff, volunteers, and community supporters gathered together at The Summit Center's 20th Autism Walk on Saturday, April 27, 2019. The event raised more than \$275,000 in support of The Summit Center's programs and services. Participants had the option to walk the family-friendly short route around Summit's grounds or the 4-mile long route along the Amherst Bike Path. At the end of the Walk, both groups were welcomed back with games, vendors, and a delicious lunch provided by Tops Friendly Markets.

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Paddock Chevrolet, and Walk Chair Thomas Rosenecker, Summit parent, Foundation Board member, and owner of American Eagle Fireplace & Playsets.

We can't wait to see you at the 2020 Walk on Saturday, April 25, 2020. To register, please visit SummitWalk.org.



2019 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Financial Highlights:

Capital Campaign Goal: **\$3,700.000**

Capital Campaign To Date: **\$1,900,000**

Contributions and event revenues raised: \$498,000*

Expenses: \$28,248,000

Program Services: **\$23.625.000 (83.6%)**

General & Administrative: **\$3.681,000 (13.0%)****

Fundraising Costs: **\$347.000 (1.2%)**

^{*}Includes 2019 Summit Autism Walk and 2018 Fall Gala to cover gaps in funding for program initiatives

^{**}Below State-mandated percentage

DONORS

Our Supporters

Because of you, children and adults with autism have abundant opportunities to reach their full potential. Just as importantly, their families are encouraged and supported.

Every donation made to The Summit Center is meaningful to the individuals we serve, and to our staff. We have only listed certain gifts due to space constraints. Regardless of the amount, we are grateful to all of our donors for their commitment to making lives better!

All of the contributions listed were made between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

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Kindly contact Gabby Albert at (716) 629-3436 to ensure that your name is properly recognized in future publications.

BUILDING HOPE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Summit Center's Building Hope campaign began in 2016 to raise funds for new classrooms and therapy rooms at 25 Woodridge Dr. in Amherst.

Gifts made between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 from the following donors have brought us closer to our dream of a specialized facility to serve individuals with the greatest need.

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