



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





## OUR MISSION

Guided by evidence-based practice, we maximize life success for people facing developmental, social and behavioral challenges.



# A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends of Summit,

In my 26 years as CEO of The Summit Center, I've never seen such resilience in our families and our staff. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of evidenced-based programs for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. This is especially true for those with more significant needs. Our utmost priority, no matter the challenges we face, is the social and emotional well-being of the children and adults we serve.

During the 2020-2021 year, Summit provided services both virtually and in-person. We helped students in the Early Autism Program reach learning and behavior goals, fostered interests and skills in adults in the S.T.E.P.S. program, and supported the mental health needs of children in the Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic. The year culminated with a graduation ceremony at Summit Academy for eight students who we've had the privilege of serving since they were preschoolers.

Support for our fundraising efforts led to these successes, and many more. In 2016, Summit launched a capital campaign to bring new services to Western New York. Phase 1, completed in 2018, established The Children's Guild Foundation Pediatric Feeding Clinic and a brand-new conference room. In the fall of 2020, four classrooms were added to Summit Academy's secondary school as part of Phase 2. The final element is the highly anticipated Center for Autism Assessment and Treatment. Invest in Hope, a capital campaign event in September 2020, raised nearly \$30,000 for this intensive out-patient facility. The Center will open in the summer of 2022.

Our annual Autism Walk is a celebration of love for individuals navigating autism spectrum disorder. The 2021 Autism Walk – Virtual Challenge encouraged the community to take action in support of acceptance and inclusion. Approximately 2,000 donors and participants contributed more than \$230,000 for critical programs and services.

As I reflect on the past year, I see so much light in such a dark time. The trust of the people we serve, the strength of their families, the enduring commitment of our staff. And our generous and compassionate donors, who make it possible to achieve the extraordinary. I am proud of the work we do, together, to make lives better.

With sincere thanks,

Stephen R. Anderson, PhD., BCBA-D, LBA  
Chief Executive Officer



## SCHOOL AGE

\$16,757,362 | 62.74%



## PRESCHOOL

\$4,028,902 | 15.08%



## INFANT & EARLY EDUCATION

\$136,071 | 0.51%



## OPWDD

\$2,268,146 | 8.49%



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

\$1,291,487 | 4.84%



## FUNDRAISING & SUPPORT

\$1,383,285 | 5.18%



## OTHER (INCL. RENTAL)

\$844,948 | 3.16%

**TOTAL REVENUE**  
**\$26,710,200**

## EXPENSES

### PROGRAM SERVICES

\$22,221,606

### GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

\$3,668,491

### FUNDRAISING COSTS

\$400,024

### TOTAL

\$26,290,121

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GOAL: \$4,100,00

### RAISED SINCE INCEPTION

\$3,582,760

### REVENUE FY2021:

\$185,245



# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

## New Creekside Classrooms Open in 2020

Students have more room to learn, grow and explore their interests at our Creekside location with the completion of four new classrooms. Construction began in the summer of 2020 and was completed by the fall.

This expansion was part of Phase 2 of Summit's Building Hope Capital Campaign. The project included building four new classrooms, four new bathrooms, window installation, and enhancements to an existing classroom at the site.

Creekside's leisure library is part of the new space. Here students have the opportunity to learn new skills, such as self-expression and fine motor skills, all while having fun.

Sandy Looker, Creative Arts Teacher, said she uses the leisure library for her classes and to work one-on-one with students.

"I help students find their interests. Here they can explore art, music, books, video games, whatever it is that they enjoy doing," she said.

The leisure library is also home to Creekside's Video Game Club, which brings students together and promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, and socialization.

In the building's new wing, students can explore career interests in the prevocational classroom with Summit's transition specialists. They discuss what they would like to do when they graduate, develop work skills, and get hands-on experience, such as delivering mail to the classrooms.

Construction has started on the final piece of the capital campaign, the Center for Autism Assessment and Treatment. The new center will connect with Creekside's campus and is scheduled to be completed by summer 2022.

We are incredibly grateful to all the generous donors who supported Summit's Building Hope Capital Campaign. Your gift has made these new opportunities and experiences possible for our students.





# EARLY INTERVENTION

## Early Autism Program: Developing Communication

Two-year-old Cooper sounds out the word “yellow” as his teacher, Sara Baker, points to yellow Play Doh, one of his favorite toys. She works closely with Cooper every day on skills like vocalization to prepare him for a school setting.

In March 2021, Cooper enrolled in our Early Autism Program (EAP). Summit’s EAP is an early intervention program that uses Applied Behavior Analysis to help children learn how to play, socialize, communicate, and be more independent.

Molly, Cooper’s mom, said his communication delay was a major concern for the family. Since starting at Summit, Cooper’s skills have skyrocketed.

“He’s starting to learn some words. He makes eye contact and is building relationships with other members of our family,” Molly said. “He didn’t play with his sister at all, but now they play side by side. It’s a huge deal.”

Cooper receives daily one-on-one sessions with Sara where he works on gross motor skills, vocalization and safety by holding hands in the hallway.

“Learning new things is always challenging, but Cooper learns very quickly,” Sara said.

Michelle Siegel, Early Childhood Autism Specialist, is Cooper’s family consultant. She meets with Cooper’s mom once a week to provide updates on his progress and connect the family with any needed resources. Currently, Michelle is working with the family to teach Cooper not to run or leave the house by himself.

“We’re working on creating a social story with pictures. Visual cues accompanied with step by step instructions in the form of a story will help Cooper identify what is and isn’t safe,” Michelle said.

With the hard work of Summit staff and his family’s dedication, Cooper’s attention to learning and his interactions with other people have blossomed.

“I can’t say enough good things about his teachers,” Molly said. “It’s great that we have a resource like Summit to give Cooper the support he needs to be successful.”



## Summit Academy: Celebrating the 2021 Graduates

At Summit Academy, our goal is to provide an exemplary alternative education program to meet the needs of children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Summit Academy currently serves about 325 students ages 3 to 21 years old in preschool, elementary and secondary classroom settings.

Seeing each student progress and achieve new goals while attending Summit is something special to witness. When graduation day arrives, it is a turning point in their journey as they move on to a new chapter in their lives. It is an exciting moment for the students, families, and Summit staff to see their hard work come to fruition.

In June 2021, Summit celebrated the graduation of eight students from Summit Academy. The ceremony, led by Principal Sue Whittaker, Ed.D., honored students who have spent most of their childhood with Summit.

These students have worked hard to develop the communication, social, and behavioral skills they need to lead a full life, as well as the independence to continue to be successful after graduation. Many of these young adults will go on to participate in Summit's adult division programs, such as our S.T.E.P.S. (Success Through Engagement and Positive Supports) day program or P.A.C.E. (Prevocational and Community Experience).

We look forward to seeing all their future accomplishments!



**325**  
STUDENTS



**45**  
CLASSROOMS



**280**  
SUMMIT  
ACADEMY STAFF





## Respite: Learning to Wear a Mask

Learning to wear a mask has been a challenge for many of the children and young adults supported by The Summit Center. For Josh's mother, it seemed he would never agree to put a mask on much less wear it for an extended period of time.

Josh's mother told his staff he refused to wear his mask and would physically push her away when she tried to show him how to put it on. Summit provided her with materials and resources to assist, but these proved to be unsuccessful. When mask wearing was discussed in virtual sessions, Josh would become visibly upset.

When Summit began in-person respite services again, mask wearing was required. Concerned that Josh might have a seizure due to the stress of being upset over wearing a mask, his doctor provided a note of exemption. Unfortunately, this made Josh's time at respite vastly different.

To follow safety protocols, Josh needed to be in a separate area from other program participants, his staff had to wear extra PPE, and Josh was unable to visit with social distancing with other staff and peers. As someone who enjoys socializing with others, this was a new experience for Josh.

When he arrived on his first day back, Josh was able to wear his mask for less than two minutes to enter the building. Throughout the day, he continuously asked who else was there and if he could visit. He was reminded that if he wanted to visit others, he would have to wear his mask.

Josh was hesitant, but he expressed interest in visiting. During his next session, Josh was able to wear his mask for 10 minutes so that he could take a walk around the building and have short conversations with others. After just four program sessions, Josh's desire to socialize was enough to get him to wear his mask for half an hour at a time with only short mask breaks from time to time.

Now Josh wears his mask for the entire three-hour session and can be paired with three other individuals. His mom was able take him out into the community when the mask mandate was in place, and Josh has been able to rejoin his day program as well.





# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

## Pediatric Feeding Clinic: Serving More Children Through Technology

The pandemic caused all of Summit's programs to think differently. Changing guidelines meant services had to be adapted to continue meeting the needs of children, adults, and families in a safe way.

While Summit's Pediatric Feeding Clinic experienced some challenges, it supported more families with the help of technology. Jennifer Felber, PhD, BCBA, Director of Summit's Pediatric Feeding Clinic, said she used Telehealth, which enabled her to see more children and families outside of Summit's traditional service area.

"The pandemic actually made some aspects easier because families had greater availability and they could implement strategies sooner," Dr. Felber said.

The Pediatric Feeding Clinic serves children 1 to 12 years old who have behavioral feeding challenges. Dr. Felber explained that this includes children who developed medical issues that make it painful to eat, haven't learned to eat appropriately due to illness or developmental delays, have oral sensitivity, trouble chewing or swallowing, or only eat a small selection of foods.

With Dr. Felber's help and the added flexibility provided by technology, Summit's Pediatric Feeding Clinic was able to support 78 children during the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Although in-person sessions have resumed, Dr. Felber now conducts in-person and virtual meetings to provide flexibility to children and their families while ensuring they get the support they need.



## S.T.E.P.S.: Building Independence Skills

As the pandemic continued throughout 2020-2021, safety guidelines and protocols became a challenge for many of the young adults served by our S.T.E.P.S. day habilitation program. Wearing a mask, virtual meetings, and social distancing were all skills our S.T.E.P.S. participants needed to learn.

For Ryan, hand washing was a goal he had been working on before the pandemic. He would need to be prompted by staff after using the facilities to wash his hands. During lock down, it became even more important that Ryan learn when and how to properly wash his hands.

Through virtual sessions, our S.T.E.P.S. team would show Ryan hand washing videos. Some were upbeat and fun, while others provided step-by-step instructions on how to properly wash your hands. Staff even filmed themselves washing their hands, showing Ryan how to scrub all parts of his hands and how to count to 20.

When our S.T.E.P.S. programs resumed in-person sessions, Ryan's staff continued to work with him on this goal. Staff quizzed participants about the steps of hand washing, how long they should wash their hands for, and when to use hand sanitizer.

With the team's help and consistency, Ryan can now wash his hands independently without being prompted. He knows how to clean all parts of his hands and even counts out loud to make sure he is washing them for at least 20 seconds.

Now that Ryan has learned this skill, he is working on building communication skills and developing relationships with his peers. Ryan practices asking questions and having conversations with other adults.

We are so proud of Ryan's accomplishments and can't wait for him to reach his next goal!





# 2020 – 2021 EVENTS

## 2021 Autism Walk Raises More Than \$230,000

Funds donated through the 2021 Autism Walk - Virtual Challenge are vital to sustaining The Summit Center's exceptional programs and services. Through the support of nearly 2,000 donors and participants, \$233,856 was raised.

From Stiglmeier Park to the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge to Bald Mountain in the Adirondacks, participants found inspiring locations to complete their challenge. They walked, hiked, and ran in celebration of the children and adults served by Summit. One ambitious individual swam across Conesus Lake! Participants received snack packs, compliments of Tops, along with a bracelet and flag. Everyone was encouraged to wave their flag proudly in support of making lives better.

A special thank you to our presenting sponsor, West Herr, and to our top fundraisers: Claudia Rosenecker, Tammy Nicholson, Tony DeSimone, Melissa Attea, and Candace Richardson. Their commitment to advocating for autism acceptance is remarkable.

## Invest in Hope Supports Center for Autism Assessment and Treatment

Invest in Hope, a virtual event to inspire donations to the Building Hope Capital Campaign, took place on September 16, 2020. Nearly \$30,000 was raised in support of the Center for Autism Assessment and Treatment (CAAT), an intensive day program for children in crisis. We are so grateful for the generosity of Summit families, friends, and staff to realize this ground-breaking project.

Construction began on the CAAT in August 2021. When completed in the summer of 2022, Summit will be able to serve adolescents with significant behavior challenges through four specialized treatment rooms and five classrooms. The Center for Autism Assessment and Treatment will be connected to Summit Academy's secondary school at 165 Creekside Drive, Amherst.



# OUR SUPPORTERS

Through the generosity of our donors, individuals with autism have the therapy and support they need to maximize their potential. Gifts to The Summit Center are an investment in a future where everyone can achieve their purpose. They mean so much to our faculty and staff, and to the families we serve. We have only listed certain monetary gifts because of space constraints. And yet, each and every donor makes an impact on our work.

**The contributions listed were made between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.**

## **\$100,000+**

Estate of Robert Hansman

## **\$10,000 - \$99,999**

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# BUILDING HOPE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Summit Center's Building Hope campaign is bringing a new model of care to our community in the form of an intensive out-patient treatment facility in Amherst, NY.

Gifts from the following donors, made between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, will enable Summit to expand services for individuals with the greatest need.

## \$100,000+

Margaret L. Wendt Foundation

## \$10,000 - \$99,999

Anonymous

The Baird Foundation\*

Grigg Lewis Foundation Inc.

M&T Charitable Foundation\*

Odd Fellow & Rebekah Benefit Fund, Inc.

## \$2,500 - \$9,999

Lawley\*

Stephen and Tammy Nicholson

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American Eagle Fireplace & Playsets

Roy and Patricia Jordan

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John and Sandy Shaflucas

## \$500 - \$999

David and Kimberly Aston

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\*Indicates gift was a part of a multi-year pledge.

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# MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

*"Théo is currently attending Summit through the Early Autism Program with NYS Early Intervention. We are incredibly grateful for the progress that he has already made with his team. We know that with hard work, a great support team, acceptance and love that Théo will continue to grow and thrive."*  
– Laura and Andy, Summit Parents

*"I cannot put into words what a difference not only did this school have on my son's advancement, but the staff that he interacts with every day. He is not just another number, another student. They treat each one of their kids like their own. They have not only transformed my son, but me as well."*  
– Jenn and Charlie, Summit Parents

*"One of the most powerful ways The Summit Center has changed our lives is by helping Antonio learn to talk. Summit's staff has profound autism expertise. If we ever have questions or concerns, we know we will always be met with guidance and understanding."*  
– Anthony and Lisa, Summit Parents



**Summit Academy & Corporate Offices**  
A: 150 Stahl Rd. | Getzville, NY 14068  
P: 716.629.3400

**Summit Academy Paddock Vocational Training Center**  
A: 165 Creekside Drive | Amherst, NY 14228  
P: 716.810.7700

**The Summit Center Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic  
& Pediatric Feeding Clinic**  
A: 75 Pineview Drive, Suite 200 | Amherst, NY 14228  
P: 716.629.3400

**The Summit Center Community & Adult Division Offices**  
A: 75 Pineview Drive, Suite 200 | Amherst, NY 14228  
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**Learn more at [www.TheSummitCenter.org](http://www.TheSummitCenter.org)**

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