

BIRCH



45

Celebrating the Human Spirit

For 45 years, we've embraced one fundamental belief: All people, including those with autism and developmental disabilities, deserve to lead fulfilling lives.

Empowering every person and every family who comes to Birch Family Services to achieve that fulfillment is our legacy. And our future. Whether at work, school, or home, we're there, and we'll continue to be there for the people we support and their families.

20,000+

Individuals and families supported since 1975

2,000+

Children and adults supported daily in NYC

30

Locations across NYC supporting individuals and families

1,000+

Staff and volunteers committed to furthering our mission



LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Matt Sturiale
President & CEO

Dear Friends,

When I arrived at Birch Family Services four years ago, I was impressed by two things.

First, the commitment our staff demonstrated in their work with our students, individuals, and families. Their support for our mission and operations was both uplifting and humbling.

Second, the energy and commitment that has not only helped Birch Family Services continually grow its mission over the past 45 years, but also built a solid foundation to accomplish even more.

No year is ordinary in the field of autism and developmental disability, but this milestone year has been filled with challenges and opportunities none of us could have imagined. COVID-19 and its effects were unprecedented. But what has truly made this year remarkable is both how we have risen to the challenges and what we accomplished long before the virus began making headlines.

GROWING AND GROWING IN VISIBILITY

In July 2019, our community had a visible presence for the first time at the New York City Disability Pride parade, demonstrating our commitment to walk with, and advocate for, the full participation of our community. No doubt many parade watchers learned about Birch Family Services for the first time.

Over the summer, we expanded our Board of Directors by two new members, adding valuable resources and perspectives. And that was just a small part of our growth.

We adopted a new strategic plan, which we are now implementing. In response to the growing need for special education, we expanded pre-school opportunities for children with some of the most challenging needs and opened an elementary school extension. Every year our goal is to serve more individuals and families, and this was a critical step.

We also made capital improvements in our Manhattan residences, including upgrades to our technology and vehicle/community safety systems. Construction at two homes is about to begin, allowing us to support 14 more people. In addition, we are adding supported housing to our portfolio for individuals who do not require 24-hour supervision.


We invigorated our New Frontier program to create more employment training opportunities than ever before. To mark our renewed commitment to this program, we hosted a Night of Recognition dinner for all the program participants, families, and representatives from the businesses who hired them and celebrated their shared commitment to the diversity and inclusion that is the foundation of Birch.

While distressing and heartbreaking for our community, COVID-19 also brought out the best in our organization. Our frontline Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and other residential staff were true heroes, continually putting the needs of our individuals ahead of their own. They worked tirelessly to provide support, to keep people safe, to help individuals recover from illness, and to be there for individuals, staff, and families who were going through the grieving process.

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of our education staff, students saw their teachers and therapists each morning, from the safety of their computer screens. The bonds between our families and staff grew even stronger as they worked together for the best outcomes for the children. With no playbook for how to operate during a pandemic, the New Frontier staff was creative and nimble in meeting the needs of our clients in the workplace. As an organization, we worked hard to keep our staff as stable as possible, though unfortunately some had to adjust to working differently or being furloughed.

The pandemic, as well as the protests triggered by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and others, has had a profound impact on all members of the Birch community and beyond. It has required us to pause, reflect, and listen to one another. Our work, together, is based on our commitment to the concept that every individual is empowered to participate in, and have access to, the full benefits and protections of our society. The ability to recognize such moments as these — and to rise above them — is key to the Birch Impact, built on nearly a half century of commitment, expertise, and heart.

Sincerely,



Matt Sturiale, LCSW
President & CEO

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



Robin E. Keller, Esq.
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Long before I knew Birch Family Services as a visionary organization providing quality education, residential care, and other services for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities, I saw Birch in much simpler and more powerful terms: a godsend.

Like many who serve on the Board, I know firsthand what Birch means to families. My son, Gabriel, entered the Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children at the age of six and remained a student there until his graduation.

As a young adult, he continues to participate in Birch’s New Frontier program, benefitting from many job coaching services and social activities. Birch has been an integral part of our family’s lives and has made unique contributions to Gabe’s progress toward capable adulthood.

A lot has changed at Birch since I joined the Board in 2004, but two guiding principles have remained constant since the organization’s beginnings in 1975: continually growing services to meet the changing needs of our community, and a never-ending commitment to excellence in the delivery of those services.

During my tenure, I saw the organization, under the leadership of then-CEO Dr. Gerald Maurer:

- Open two Day Services programs in Brooklyn and Queens for adults graduating from school but not yet ready for employment
- Establish a Children’s Residential Program to support in-state placements for adolescents ages 10-21 with the most intense and complex needs
- Launch New Frontier to help young adults achieve their personal and career goals

Since 2016, under the leadership of our current CEO, Matthew Sturiale, Birch has grown by 30% to add more diverse programs for children and adults. Matt also launched the Corporate Advisory Network, a forum of potential employers who share our ideals of diversity and inclusion in the workplace for young adults with disabilities. In the past two years alone, he’s established relationships with 53 corporate partners committed to creating employment opportunities for people with autism and developmental disabilities.

Extending our founder’s vision, in November 2019, we adopted a new strategic plan after an extensive review of the organization. As a result of that review, which included input from all stakeholders, Birch embarked on a significant expansion of all of our program areas. We’ve added classrooms, residences, and employment programs and services, and significantly expanded the Board to provide more guidance, oversight, and expertise.

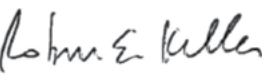
One thing hasn’t changed in 45 years. Growth and excellence are guided by our mission statement: Birch Family Services empowers individuals with autism and developmental disabilities to build fulfilling lives.

Even today, in this frightening and uncertain year of pandemic, the staff of Birch Family Services have provided calm and assurance to those living in our residences, our many students, and their families. The work of our selfless Direct Support Professionals has been nothing short of heroic, as they crisscross the city to show up at work each day when others were told to stay at home for their own safety. Heroic, but not surprising.

As we mark our anniversary, we’re excited to have added two new Board members over the past year, with four potential members in the wings. Our Board Members are distinguished by their commitment to providing responsible stewardship to the organization, as well as their generous financial contributions. Their efforts have enabled Birch to thrive in an extremely challenging regulatory and economic environment. This process will continue to ensure a stable future for the organization and everyone connected to it.

Congratulations then, Birch Family Services, on 45 years — and many more to come — of excellence in serving our community, providing support to thousands of New York City’s most vulnerable residents to lead their best lives possible.

Sincerely,



Robin E. Keller, Esq.
Chairman of the Board of Directors

BIRCH

@45

Celebrating Community Impact

OUR ANNIVERSARY

Our 45th year is a milestone that provides two valuable opportunities: to look back at where we've been, and look forward to where we're going.

Birch@45 is a time to celebrate everything we've accomplished, the families we've supported, and the lives we've transformed since we began. Over the past 45 years, our vision has helped us grow in exciting ways.

This anniversary also offers an opportunity to reflect on the lessons we've learned over nearly five decades and how we can use those lessons to drive even more success and accomplishments going forward. What we've learned on our journey has positioned us to achieve even more in the years to come.



Phyllis L. Susser
Founder, Birch Family Services

LOOKING BACK @45 YEARS

When Phyllis L. Susser founded the Herbert G. Birch School for Exceptional Children in 1975, no one had any idea where it would lead. The 28 students and 11 staff members did not realize that they had joined a visionary pioneer, one who championed social change for those with developmental disabilities and social and behavioral challenges.

That modest beginning has evolved into Birch Family Services, an agency that now operates educational, residential, vocational, life skills, and family support programs at 30 different locations throughout New York City. Each day, more than 2,000 individuals and their families find the strength, resources, and care they need from Birch Family Services.

Today, Birch Family Services is recognized as a leading provider of early childhood and school-age education, residential, and community services for children and adults with autism and developmental disabilities.





STANDING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Since day one, we’ve worked to expand our advocacy well beyond our own programs and facilities.

We launched our residential programs in 1979 because we strongly believe that all people, including those with developmental disabilities, have the right to live in the community.

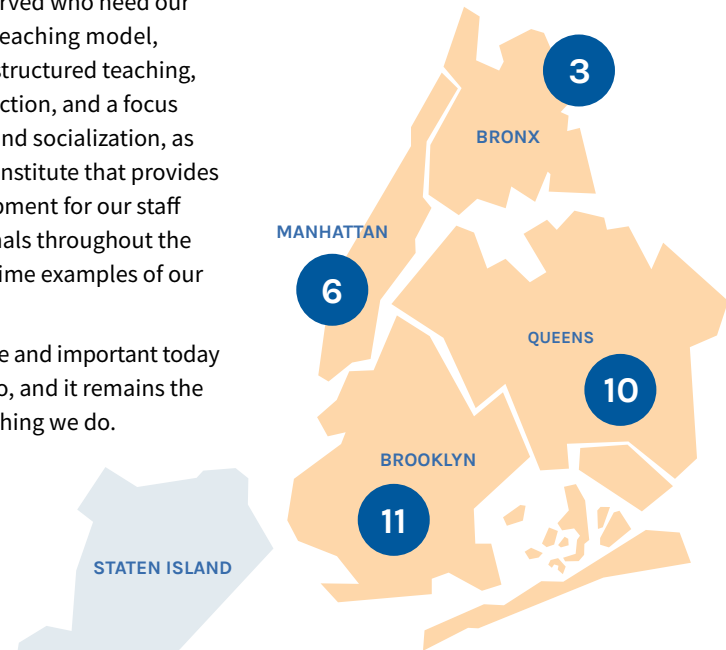
We embraced the federal Head Start program, using it as a springboard to expand our early childhood services to support more children in underserved communities.

When we saw the effect of HIV/AIDS on the community, we were one of the first organizations to establish a summer camp for families with children living with HIV, staffed almost entirely by volunteers.

When we recognized the challenges some families face in caring for children with complex needs in their homes, we established a Children’s Residential Program (CRP) for children ages 10-21, where they can develop life skills in a highly structured, integrated educational and home environment.

We continuously look for opportunities to serve the underserved who need our help the most. Our teaching model, which incorporates structured teaching, individualized instruction, and a focus on communication and socialization, as well as our Training Institute that provides professional development for our staff and other professionals throughout the Tri-State area, are prime examples of our steady expansion.

Our mission is as pure and important today as it was 45 years ago, and it remains the foundation of everything we do.



Birch Family Services operates educational, residential, vocational, life skills, and family support programs at 30 different locations throughout New York City.

Each day, more than 2,000 individuals and their families find the strength, resources, and support they need from Birch Family Services.

BIRCH@45

Birch Family Services started as a single school program, but over 45 years of stewardship from a highly motivated and engaged Board of Directors, we came to understand that the needs of the people we support don't stop at adulthood. They continue across the lifespan.

This understanding led us to start New Frontier in 2012, a program that helps adults with autism and developmental disabilities develop critical social, employment, and independent living skills. Through New Frontier, young adults receive vocational preparation, job acquisition training, and ongoing employment support. We further support them with social, wellness, and independent living programs so they can thrive.

Key to our recent successes was the appointment of Matthew Sturiale, a licensed social worker with 30 years of experience in the field, as CEO in 2016. His commitment to our vision has led to the expansion of many of our services for individuals and families, including early childhood, school age, housing, employment, and community support programs.

In 2019, in partnership with the Board of Directors, Birch Leadership spearheaded the adoption of a strategic plan that will chart our future course and advance our mission to empower individuals with autism and developmental disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.



LOOKING FORWARD

Our strategic plan will guide us in the months and years ahead. Birch is committed to working with all stakeholders to set industry standards for delivery outcomes to ensure that those who turn to us receive the highest quality of supports in the most person-centered way.

We will leverage technology to ensure efficiency of our operations and enhance the lives of those we support. Further, we will continue to expand our footprint in NYC through increased service options, recruitment of the finest talent, engaging new partners and expanding our Board of Directors to diverse the knowledge, expertise, and talent to effectively govern our future.

From two classrooms and a handful of children to the thousands we support today, we celebrate everything we’ve accomplished and look forward to even more milestones. Thank you for sharing our vision and our commitment.

BIRCH @ 45

Our Response to the Pandemic

When families were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, our mission of support and empowerment became even more important.

COVID-19 changed everything for New Yorkers, Americans, and the world. It deeply affected our families and staff.

There was no playbook for operating during a global pandemic, but our goal of supporting people with autism and developmental disabilities and to provide as much normalcy as possible didn't change.

COVID-19 may have altered how we delivered our services, but the dedication and compassion of Birch staff never wavered.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

As classrooms went dark across the city and families were disrupted, our families faced additional difficulties: younger students, especially those with developmental disabilities, are particularly sensitive to changes in their routines. For them, this was an unprecedented and difficult change.

Our staff saw the need and responded. Within hours of the mayor's order to close city schools in March, Birch Family Services Education staff were pulling together resources to support families at home. They began preparing virtual learning plans for our preschool and school-age students to return to "normal" as quickly as possible. The goal was to avoid disruption and to help our students and families keep as much of a regular routine as possible.

Thanks to the superhuman efforts of Birch teachers, teaching assistants, and staff, students were able to see their teachers each morning on their computer screens, and families received support as they adapted to the "new normal" at home.



ENGAGING ADULTS

When our residences were closed to all but essential staff and our in-person day services suspended, we worked around the clock to provide safety and support to 126 individuals with autism and developmental disabilities living in our residences. We strived to keep the "outside world" of COVID-19 from disrupting their lives.

Because these individuals were counting on us for their safety, we worked with partners to ensure adequate resources, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), for residents and staff to help them remain safe.

Thanks to our staff's selfless work during this difficult period, we had relatively few positive COVID-19 diagnoses among our staff, and the people we supported remained engaged and in good health. However, we are sad to report that, during the height of the pandemic, three people living in our residences passed away due to the virus. Our hearts go out to their families and loved ones as well as those who lived with them and our residential staff who supported them, often for many years.

The staff of our New Frontier program, which provides employment and social development workshops and training for people with autism and developmental disabilities, also rose to the challenge.

Staff continued to support current members and their families by:

- **Conducting** virtual group meetings
- **Hosting** a virtual mock-job-interview seminar with our corporate partner Virtu Financial
- **Providing** counseling, help with course and workshop materials, and encouragement.



LIVING OUR MISSION

The extraordinary efforts of our staff cannot be overstated. We thank them for their commitment, dedication, compassion, and outstanding professionalism each day throughout our schools, residences, and day habilitation programs. We are also thankful for the commitment of our greater Birch community of supporters, donors, sponsors, vendors, and corporate partners during this unprecedented time.

The financial and human costs of supporting our families and individuals far exceeded anything we ever anticipated. The continued support and encouragement of our Birch family has enabled us to continue to provide the high-quality services that have distinguished Birch Family Services for nearly five decades.

We have learned many lessons during the pandemic. Most importantly, we learned that when we work together, we are capable of achieving anything.



Responding to the Greatest Needs

Since launching some of New York’s first special-education schools, pre-schools, and early intervention services 45 years ago, we’ve supported more than 20,000 individuals and their families.

We began in a single classroom, and in 45 years have expanded to more than 30 locations across four boroughs. We have raised awareness of autism spectrum disorders. We have added residential, counseling, and many other services to help individuals with autism and developmental disabilities live, work, and thrive. Even in these challenging times, our mission continues to grow.

OUR PROGRAMS

EDUCATION Our Roots and Our Foundation

Our core belief is simple: All children have the right to a high-quality education that will help them reach their full potential. All children deserve to learn and grow in the way that’s best for them.

In fiscal year 2019-20, we offered 11 education programs for children ages 3-21 in four New York City boroughs. Of those, 8 were early childhood programs, including:

- **Pre-school Special Education (4410*)**;
- **Administration for Children’s Services Early Learn**; and
- **Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)**.

We also managed School-Age Special Education programs at 853-designated

**Not-for-profit school programs that provide special education services and programs for preschool children with disabilities.*

schools. These programs are designed so each child receives instruction tailored to his or her needs, capabilities, and potential. Students are referred by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) when school districts and District 75 special education schools cannot meet the student’s needs.

These programs showcase the mission of Birch Family Services: empowering individuals with autism and developmental disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.

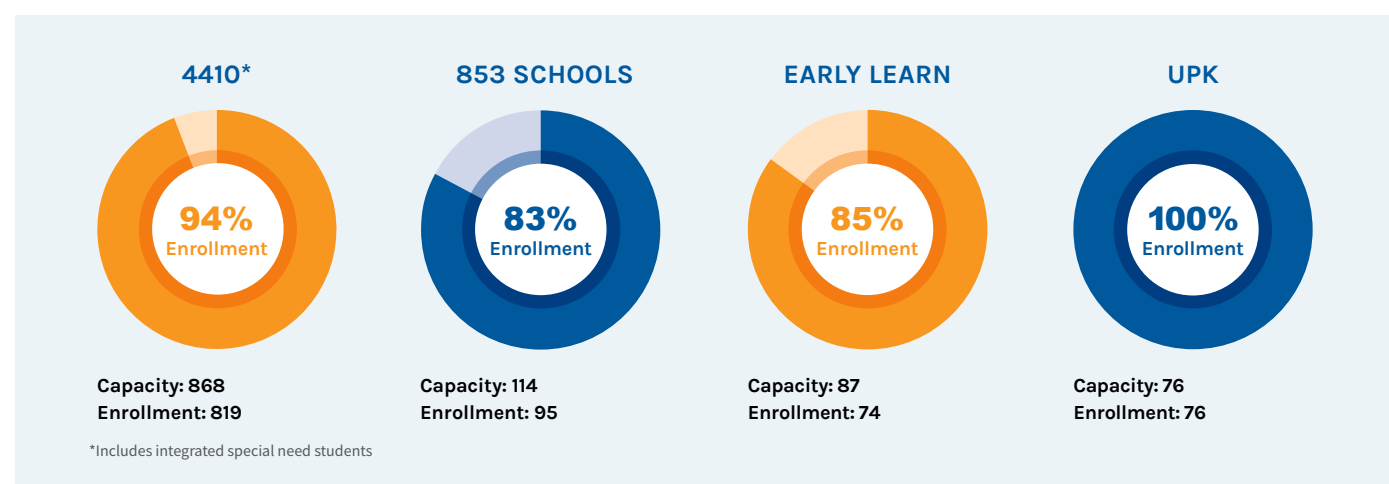


EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We believe that children will blossom when given the opportunity. We will always remain committed to that ideal, and the results support our belief:

- Last year, our classes enabled **27% of pre-school graduates** to enroll in either general education or integrated kindergarten programs in district schools.
- In addition, **48% of pre-school graduates** progressed enough to move to a less restrictive setting.

EDUCATION PROGRAM ENROLLMENT





7

New classrooms
were opened in
Brooklyn and Queens
for 52 additional special
needs students

DOING MORE FOR MORE STUDENTS

Our pre-school special education program is continually expanding, and in FY2019-20, we added three 8:1:2 pre-school classrooms and two 6:1:2 classrooms at **Springfield Gardens Education Center** (SGEC). We also added two 8:1:2 classrooms at **East Flatbush Early Childhood Center**. With the closure of our Head Start program in 2019, we increased our capacity to help special needs students by 52.

SCHOOL-AGE SPECIAL EDUCATION

Our programs for older students are continually growing, and 2019 was no exception. In September 2019, seeing the

needs identified by NYC Department of Education (DOE), we expanded our school-age program at our **SGEC** for students ages 5–11. This program now serves 24 students referred by local public school districts that cannot provide free and appropriate education settings for them.

We also manage a 12-month education program for students ages 10–21 at the **Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children**, an 853 designated school as well as a 12-month program for 14 students ages 5-8 at **SGEC**. The schools are funded by local school districts at no cost to the families.

DYLAN'S STORY



Dylan (left), an energetic 19-year-old student at Birch Family Services Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children, came to the school in February 2018. He had multiple diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental delays.

When Dylan arrived, he couldn't sit still. He was anxious and unhappy. Today, he walks into the classroom every morning with a big smile, ready for occupational and speech therapy, art and music therapy, riding his bicycle, and swimming.

After school, Dylan returns home to the St. Nicholas Residence in Brooklyn, a Birch Children's Residential Program. "Since Dylan was placed at Birch, we have seen Dylan become more relaxed and happy," say his parents. "Dylan is now able to work on life skills and is becoming more social with his peers and community due to the patience, hard work, and loving attention he has received from his staff at school and home."

COMMUNITY SERVICES
Helping People Live Fulfilling, Independent Lives

Birch Family Services Community Services division empowers individuals to live as independently as possible at home, at work, and in the community. Our services include Residential Services, Day and Community Habilitation programs, and New Frontier.

RESIDENTIAL: SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING

Committed to providing a lifetime of services, we give adults the opportunity to live independently in Birch residences, starting at age 18. There, they receive 24-hour supervision in either **Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs)** or **Individual Residential Alternatives (IRAs)**.

Each of the 126 individuals living in our residences has a personalized plan. We help every resident:

- **Develop independent living skills;**
- **Become an active member of the community;**
- **Stay healthy and strong; and**
- **Pursue their life goals.**

They live in a safe, home-like environment, while working to achieve their full potential.



Responding to community needs, we are developing four new IRAs within the next 12-24 months, including:

- an eight-person residence in Ozone Park, Queens, for those with ambulation and health challenges (under construction);
- a six-person residence in Ozone Park for students graduating from our **Children's Residential Program (CRP)** (under construction);
- a six-person residence for students who will graduate from our CRP in 2022; and
- a four-person residence that responds to the needs of aging caregivers.

We are also participating in a supportive housing initiative in the Bronx that will provide integrated housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This residence will help individuals who don't need 24-hour supervision enjoy a more independent living arrangement. Ten apartments will have a tenant preference for people with developmental disabilities.

Many of our residences were built because of requests from families. We are honored that families whose children attend one of our schools have asked us to continue to support them and their children once schooling ends.



Dual-Support Program

We understand the challenges some families face in caring for children with complex needs. We support them at the **Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children**, an all-inclusive school, which is part of our **Children's Residential Program (CRP)** for children ages 10-21. Students develop life skills in a highly structured, integrated educational and home environment.

"Many of our
residences were built
because families
asked us to support
their children
beyond school."

OUR PROGRAMS

DAY AND COMMUNITY
HABILITATION: TEACHING AND
SUPPORTING LIFE SKILLS

At Birch Family Services, we are committed to empowering individuals to thrive and families to remain together. To do that, we offer a wide variety of Life Skills and Family Support programs for adolescents and adults to help them develop the skills necessary for greater independence.

Our Day Habilitation program provides on-site and community-based support. In a nurturing environment, individuals attain life skills, increase independence, and learn to advocate for themselves. They also volunteer at many not-for-profit community locations, developing critical social skills and enjoying the satisfaction that comes from giving back to the community.

Through our Community Habilitation program, individuals who do not live in a residence certified by the **Office of People with Developmental Disabilities** (OPWDD) gain the ability to live as independently as possible. Participants learn life skills and pursue social and leisure interests in the community. They also engage in travel training activities and develop self-advocacy skills.

During the pandemic, Day Services staff members continued to support individuals and their families. We provided face-to-face visits, engaged individuals with virtual technology, and offered other non-face-to-face supports, such as delivering groceries and supplies and assisting with outdoor chores.

NEW FRONTIER: TRAINING FOR
THE WORKING WORLD

The people we support want what most of us want. They want to feel productive. They want to accomplish something of value and to be proud of their contributions. They want to work, have social connections, take part in their community, and be more independent.

New Frontier helps transition-age young adults on the autism spectrum achieve those goals and prepare for the adult world through four areas of focus:

- **Employment Services;**
- **Health & Wellness;**
- **Community Living; and**
- **Social & Recreation.**

Although they may no longer be in school, these young adults continue their educational journey, developing the skills they need to succeed in the working world and to increase their independence.



JENNIFER'S STORY

Jennifer lives at the Birch Family Services Irwin Place Residence in Queens and loved to exercise, move, and dance. But over time, she stopped listening to music and dancing, and she began to withdraw from her housemates.

Formerly sunny and happy, she grew increasingly anxious and less interested in being with peers or doing those things she once enjoyed.

Through discussions with her care team, it appeared that changes in her diet and decreased physical activity were preventing her from doing the things she loved. Working with the residential staff, Jennifer made changes to her diet and began a daily exercise routine.

Today Jennifer feels great about her newfound energy. She's much less anxious and frequently seeks to do more, both with peers and out in the community. And when the music starts, so does her dancing.

Through the New York City Council's Autism Awareness Initiative, New Frontier offered support groups and recreational and educational workshops for young adults with autism throughout the year.

We assisted with vocational preparation, job acquisition, customized employment, and ongoing support to help participants find and maintain employment. Because adulthood is more than just work, we also offered workshops on yoga and mindfulness, friendships and dating, nutrition and social skills, and organized the Social Leisure Club.

With public and private support, we:

- **Increased the number of people** we support in employment;
- **Helped staff** build their professional skills, including corporate mentoring and the development of updated marketing material; and
- **Conducted seminars/workshops** for young adults on school-to-workplace transitions, neurodiversity in the workplace, and other topics.

We also expanded our services, thanks to our partners in our **Corporate Advisory Network** (CAN). Virtu Financial conducted interview coaching and job skills training workshops, while CAN founding partner Lloyd's Bank conducted a job skills mentorship program. With their help, we supported 105 individuals in the New Frontier program in FY2019-20, and 19 were placed in jobs or volunteer positions. We celebrated this success with a recognition dinner at which corporate partners/mentors, New Frontier staff, and members — as well as their families — spoke of the achievements of the members that became volunteers and joined the competitive workforce.

In May 2020, we expanded New Frontier's services portfolio with two new programs, the **Employment Training Program** (ETP) and the **Work-Try-Out** (WTO) program, supported through ACCESS-VR.

- Supported through the OPWDD, ETP helps individuals with autism and developmental disabilities gain real work experience with community businesses through paid internships while building skills through job readiness classes. New Frontier job coaches help program members to find opportunities that match their skills, abilities, and interests. While most participants lost their jobs due to COVID-19, ETP has helped them find new opportunities.

- WTO assesses individuals to help match them with suitable part-time or full-time job placement with a business. The program offers a paid opportunity to assess skills, abilities, and interests for a particular job.

New Frontier continued to support program members during the pandemic through telephone and virtual meetings. Many of these 100+ individuals have participated in our NYC Council Autism Awareness Initiative through social skills training, socialization opportunities, and health and wellness classes.

RONELL'S STORY

Ronell joined Birch Family Services New Frontier program in February 2019 with a simple goal: to join the workforce.

Soon after receiving workplace readiness training and interview coaching from New Frontier staff, he landed a group interview with about 12 other people seeking the same position at clothing retailer H&M.

During the interview, he answered multiple rounds of questions related to how he would handle certain job-related situations, which was "really tough," recalls Ronell, because he had very little job experience. But he nailed it, and just an hour later while on the bus home from the interview, he received a call offering him the position at H&M's flagship location in New York City's Herald Square.

"Being a sales advisor is a lot to handle, because there are a lot of different things to do," says Ronell. "But I really like it. It's like a dream come true."

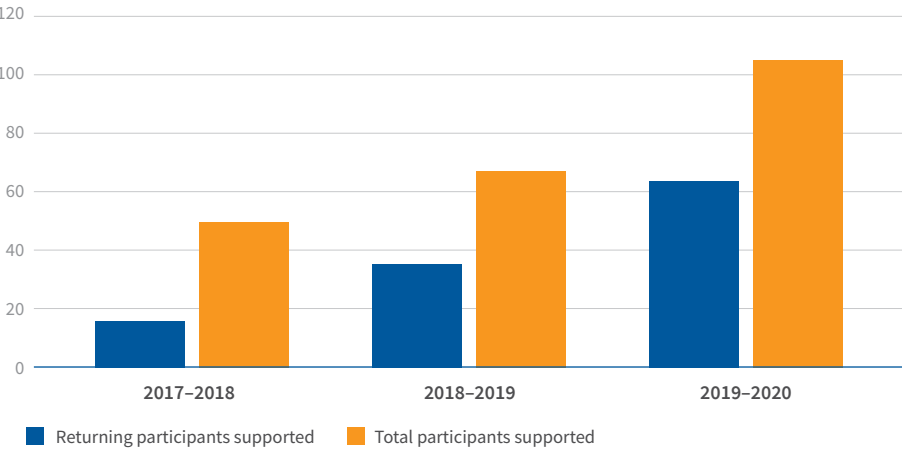
When the store shut down and furloughed him after COVID-19 hit, Ronell continued to attend workshops and meetings with his job coach at New Frontier throughout



the summer until September, when his manager told him to get back to work.

"Ronell was not only super motivated to find work but went above and beyond to make sure the connections he made in New Frontier and in the community were fruitful," says Ludovica Alcorn, Employment Specialist Manager for New Frontier. "He's enthusiastic, witty, and very personable! New Frontier is so lucky to be able to support Ronell on his professional journey."

FIGURE 3:
Individuals Supported in New Frontier





Succeeding with Our Partners

Since our founding, our partners have been critical to our mission. Thanks to many donors, families, and corporate partners, we have been able to expand our services and build for the future.

For 45 years, we have partnered with our families, advocated for those with disabilities, and worked with other organizations to further our missions. Our partners have become increasingly important as we work together to expand our programs, our services, and our community.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS



45 YEARS OF PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

The families we serve are critical as we work together to support and learn from each other.

From day one, we have empowered and educated families by providing the resources they need to advocate, navigate, and access important support services for their loved ones.

We help people and families plan for their future in five critical ways:

- 1 **We embrace** a philosophy of partnership with every family we serve.
- 2 **We encourage** families to be fierce advocates and capable caregivers for their children and loved ones.
- 3 **We help** every family and individual we support make well-informed choices that best serve them.
- 4 **We support** families as they develop and manage their life plans.
- 5 **We empower** families by providing workshops and tools they need to support their loved ones.

WORKING WITH CORPORATE PARTNERS

In 2018, Birch Family Services began to bring like-minded corporate supporters together with the launch of the Corporate Advisory Network (CAN) to serve as both an advisory body and a strategic partner.

CAN members share best practices, expertise, and opportunities to help boost employment and internship opportunities for the people we serve.

In two brief years, CAN has grown from 14 to 53 committed members. The group regularly organizes breakfast meetings with partners from across the business community that share our commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

During this past fiscal year, participants of our New Frontier program were invited by CAN founding member Virtu Financial for a job interview workshop with the financial technology company's staff, where they received valuable advice and feedback to aid in their job search.

Participants also took part in workshops and mentoring programs facilitated by CAN founding member, Lloyds Bank. CAN's work is ongoing, and we expect to report many other programs and partnerships in the coming years.

BUILDING AND SUPPORTING ADVOCACY

Many of the services for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities have resulted from our advocacy and strategic alliances.

Our leadership works with all internal and external stakeholders (e.g., families, self-advocates, government, other providers) to help shape advocacy and program priorities for the agency. Birch Leadership are active members of major trade associations and advisory groups working on critical topics in the developmental disabilities field, including:

- **Care Coordination;**
- **Managed Care Readiness;**
- **Public Policy;**
- **Residential Services; and**
- **Early Childhood Education.**

Birch executives also serve in active leadership roles on the Boards of Directors for other organizations that help people with disabilities, as well as the educators and professionals who support them.





Fundraising, like many other aspects of life, pivoted from real-world to virtual in the wake of the pandemic. We were saddened to not be able to connect with our supporters in person, but rest assured, we are grateful for every one of you.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Special Events



In recent years, we celebrated our accomplishments, connected with supporters, and raised funds through two signature events: a 5K race and a gala.

This year, because of COVID-19, was not typical. While the 5K race took place as planned, the other events became a virtual, hybrid celebration of our 45th anniversary.

5K RACE

The annual 5K race was held in late October 2019 at Hudson River Park in Manhattan. In keeping with the season, we adopted a “Halloween Fun Run” theme with a children’s costume parade following the 5K.

More than 360 runners and walkers, many in costume, showed their support of people with autism and developmental disabilities and their families. Thanks to them and the support of Birch families, staff, board members and corporate partners, we raised more than \$111,000 to support our mission. The day included giveaways, awards and activities for the entire family, including a children’s dance party, pumpkin painting, and more. Following the event, corporate sponsors and running teams were invited to a celebratory luncheon.

This was our most successful 5K ever. We forged even stronger connections with supporters and raised funds that are critical to fund our programs and operating expenses.

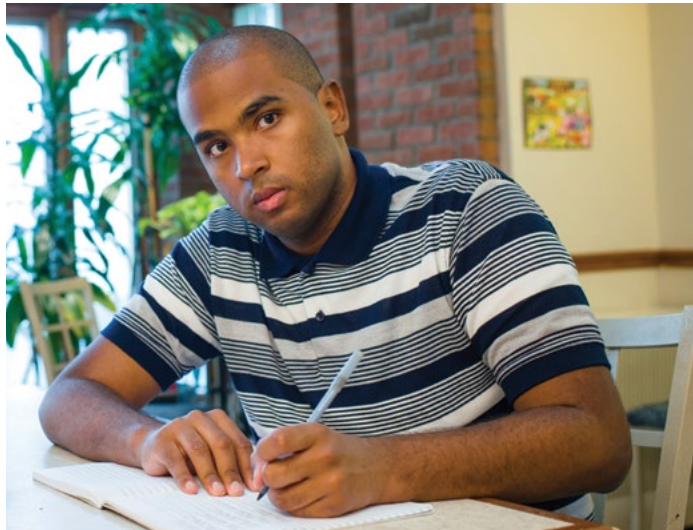
GALA

When Governor Cuomo announced the “New York on Pause” executive order at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, our annual Gala, typically held in May, was no longer possible.

To make up for the loss of revenue caused by canceling the Gala, as well as increased expenses related to providing PPE and other protective measures during the pandemic, we quickly launched an online crowdsourcing campaign, raising \$32,000.

Thanks to our incredible staff, we also were able to pivot to planning an additional fundraising event in the fall, which kicked off 45 days of activities to celebrate our 45th anniversary of providing services to the community.

Through the generosity of our supporters, we raised over \$360,000 after switching to a virtual event.



Ways to Give

PLEASE DONATE

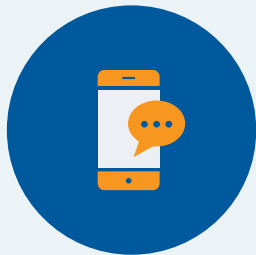
Birch Family Services relies on dedicated donors like you. Please help us empower and support individuals with autism and developmental disabilities and their families.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE



ONLINE

Make an online donation at birchfamilyservices.org/donate. Your contribution will be 100% tax-deductible.



TEXT-TO-GIVE

Text "BIRCH" to 414-44 to donate quickly and easily.



CHECK

Please make check payable to "Birch Family Services, Inc."

Birch Family Services
104 West 29th Street,
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10001

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Development Team at (212) 616-1832 or donate@birchfamilyservices.org.

Other Ways to Help

EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Help us continue our critical work by becoming an individual or corporate sponsor. We offer a variety of sponsorship benefits, including exclusive opportunities to feature and promote your brand.

PLANNED GIVING

Planned gifts provide an opportunity to support Birch in a meaningful way without giving a large outright gift. Planned gifts can offer substantial tax savings to donors, especially on appreciated properties and securities. Your gift can reduce your income tax and avoid capital gains tax.

STOCK DONATIONS

Donating stock is a great way to contribute to Birch Family Services and receive charitable donation credit for tax purposes for the full face-value of the stock. Securities can be gifted to Birch Family Services by electronic transfer. Please contact your broker to begin this process.

VOLUNTEER

We need dedicated volunteers like you to help manage events and support our programs throughout the year. If you would like to donate your time, we welcome your participation.

ADOPT A PROGRAM FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be a difficult time for people without families or with limited means. You can bring holiday cheer to an individual with a developmental disability living in a group home by donating a holiday meal or age-appropriate gifts. You can also donate clothing, toys, puzzles, and books to support students (ages 3-21) and their families in our school programs.

SPONSOR AN OUTING

Help children and adults with developmental disabilities engage with their local community as part of a fulfilling life. From a school field trip to a social/leisure to a virtual tour, you can help make these enriching life experiences more accessible for the people we support.

READ TO CHILDREN

Read to our students at one of our eight pre-schools and three school-age programs that support more than 1,000 children with and without developmental disabilities.

SHOP ONLINE

Support Birch Family Services every time you shop on Amazon. Visit smile.amazon.com and designate Birch Family Services as your charity of choice, or visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/11-2503193> and start shopping.

JOIN THE CORPORATE ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN)

Become part of a network of corporate partners that serves as an advisory body and strategic partner committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion in the workplace for people with disabilities. In addition to sharing best practices and expertise, CAN members provide valuable opportunities to help facilitate employment and internship opportunities for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.



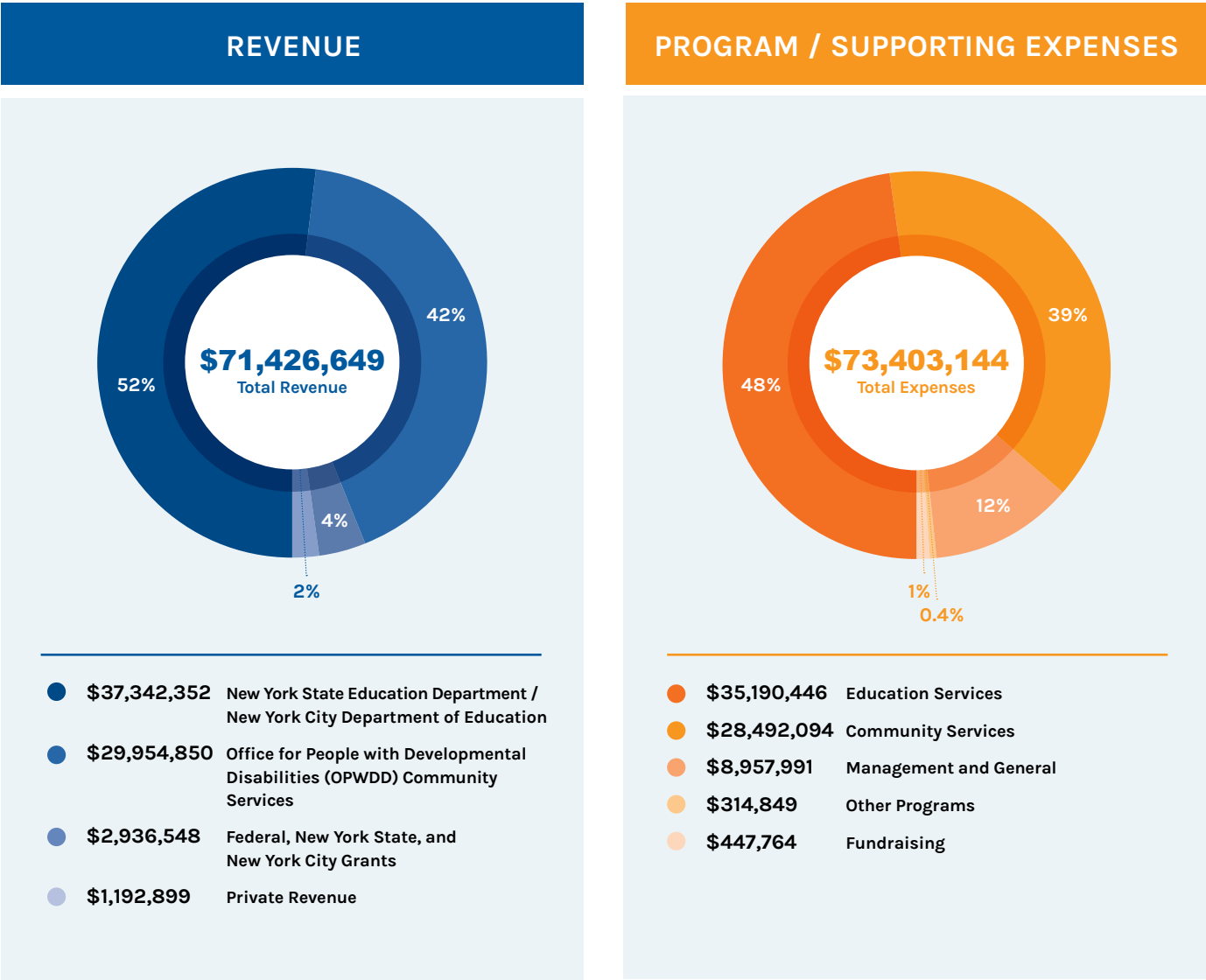
GET INVOLVED TODAY

If you or your company is interested in learning more about opportunities to get involved, please contact Samantha Nottingham, Chief Development Officer: Samantha.Nottingham@birchfamilyservices.org or (212) 616-1886.

OUR FINANCIALS

Birch Family Services empowers individuals with autism and developmental disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. Birch’s leadership remains committed to responsible financial stewardship and strives to ensure fiscal sustainability and quality in the services we provide.

This past year saw an increase in enrollment in our education programs. Our residential and community services programs declined in revenue due to COVID-19. We support over 2,000 children, adolescents, and adults with autism and developmental disabilities.



Birch incurred a deficit in FY20 due to spending on personal protective equipment and cleaning services necessary to keep the people that we support and our staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, we had increased expenses related to incentive pay and overtime for essential staff who worked in our residential programs throughout the pandemic. Birch also lost a significant amount of revenue due to mandated closures and changes to program operations in response to COVID-19.

OUR LIST OF DONORS

Birch Family Services Gratefully Thanks Our Generous Donors

<div>DIAMOND</div> <div>\$75,000 +</div> <div>NYC City Council Autism Awareness Initiative</div>	<div>PLATINUM</div> <div>\$25,000–\$50,000</div> <div>Judge Brian Cogan and Ms. Robin Keller TD Charitable Foundation The Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation</div>	<div>GOLD</div> <div>\$15,000–\$24,999</div> <div>Pfizer United Way of New York City George and Anitha Varughese</div>
<div>SILVER</div> <div>\$5,000–\$14,999</div> <div>Alliant Employee Benefits Bartel Construction Co. Dan Brecher Alicia DiCalogero Himani Ghoge and Sameer Gadre Jay and Andrea Indyke Lamb Insurance Services Kuberan Naganathan Dr. and Mrs. Ronald R. Rawitt TGI Office Automation United Health Oxford Virtu Financial</div>	<div>BRONZE</div> <div>\$500–\$4,999</div> <div>Frank Alfano George Andreozzi Howard Arkin Justin Bachman Briscoe Protective Systems Inc. Capalino + Company Capital One Foundation CDW Direct LLC Jacqueline Ceonzo Chem Rx Robert and Nikki Cilento Cooley LLP Driscoll Foods Patricia Etzold Judith Kauffman Fullmer and Robert James Fullmer G. Fazio Construction Co., Inc John and Lisa Gilday Jackie and Alan Goldberg Lila Gordem Carol Hong Nicole Hidalgo Lincoln Financial Linked Mechanical</div>	<div></div> <div>Lourdes Fuentes Slater Lucas Kane Dennis and Bernadette Mayer Denise Messemer Modern Sprinkler Corporation Moritt Hock & Hamroff LLP Richard Nardi Joseph Newman Charles and Hilary Parkhurst Josh Scher Christine Soljan Jane Steinberg Stephen Freeman Group, LLC Matthew Sturiale The Difference Card The Execu Search Group UB Green Supplies, Inc. Vassalotti Associates Architects Vincent J. DiCalogero, CPAs Arthur Webb Susan L. West Kerry Wright Randi Zeller</div>

Board
of Directors

CHAIR

Robin E. Keller, Esq.

FIRST VICE CHAIR

Dan Brecher, Esq.

SECOND VICE CHAIR

Sameer Gadre

TREASURER

Alan L. Goldberg, CPA

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Justin Bachman

SECRETARY

Nicholas Jerez**

MEMBERS

Andrea Belcher*

Georgiana A. Casimir-Magloire

Judith Kauffman Fullmer

Kimberly R. Hernas*

Jay R. Indyke, Esq.

Jean Rawitt

Faheema T. Rostom*

Lourdes Slater, Esq.

Keith Tamayo*

George Varughese

* Joined the Board in FY 2021

** Departed the Board in FY 2021

Executive Staff

Matthew Sturiale

President & CEO

Brian Celardo

CIO/Security Officer

Lisa Gilday

Chief Operating Officer

Samantha Nottingham

Chief Development Officer

Josh Scher

Chief Financial Officer

Bridget Waldron

Executive Vice President

Eileen Berg

Compliance Officer

Margaret Chiara

Training, Director

Espa Sergiou

Education, Director

Lisa Sterrantino

Community Services &

New Frontier, Director

Charmane Wong

Human Resources, Director



Birch Family Services

104 West 29th Street,
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 616-1800

Fax: (212) 741-6896

Email: info@birchfamilyservices.org



Empowering People. Building Futures.

birchfamilyservices.org