

MEASURING GROWTH

ONE LIFE AT A TIME



MEETING THE CHALLENGES ONE LIFE AT A TIME

The numbers, while impressive, tell only part of the story. Because changing lives, in ways big or small, has a profound effect.

While our advocacy to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities reach their fullest potential led to millions in new funding, the real story is the people who found new opportunities to enrich their lives.

Individuals and their families depend on Birch Family Services for guidance, support, housing, education, and sometimes just a kind, understanding, empathetic voice. Call it a mission. Or a calling. Or, perhaps, understanding the value of every person—and every life.

140

individuals living full lives in our supervised residences

\$415K+

combined funds raised at the annual gala and the first Birch Family Services Golf Classic

506

preschool graduates in eight early childhood education schools

19

New Frontier participants gained employment, with more preparing to enter the workforce

26%

of preschool graduates enrolled in either general education or integrated kindergarten programs in district schools

11%

tuition growth and 5.4% Cost-of-Living Adjustment. Our collective advocacy efforts led to the largest investment of resources by the governor and legislature for children and adults with disabilities in quite some time



Matt Sturiale
President & CEO



Robin Keller
Chairperson of the Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Over the past year, Birch Family Services has continued to demonstrate great resolve, innovation, and compassion as we attain significant achievements in our field. These achievements start with our mission—empowering people with autism and developmental disabilities to lead fulfilling lives, one person at a time. Our profound impact this year has been evident in the lives of those we support, their families, our stakeholders, and our staff.

Our education program provided dynamic learning experiences to our students throughout the year while we continued to navigate the challenges presented by COVID-19. Students returned to our classrooms to learn, grow, and avail themselves of quality, individualized instruction in their educational journey.

Our Community Services team gradually introduced a “return to normal,” enabling our individuals to leave their homes and become active in their communities. Our residences and day programs continued to provide a safe and supportive environment for those we support and encourage to fulfill their potential.

Our New Frontier team supported more participants in re-entering the workforce than ever before. Our focus on customized employment and volunteer opportunities is paying huge dividends for the individuals and the employers who are creating options for them.

Besides our frontline work, we rely on our community to effect change. Our stakeholders remained actively engaged in public policy and advocacy initiatives with elected officials and oversight agencies. We are inspired by the activism of all our stakeholders, which has resulted in significant investments by our government partners at the city, state, and federal levels.

We owe our accomplishments to the unwavering support of our Board of Directors, staff, individuals, families, corporate and government partners, donors, and volunteers who enable us to advance our mission. As we continue to expand our reach to meet the rising need for our services, we look forward to working with all of you to effect change in the year ahead and continue to measure our progress, one life at a time.

Warm regards,

Matt Sturiale

Robin Keller



“OUR ACHIEVEMENTS
START WITH OUR MISSION—
EMPOWERING PEOPLE
WITH AUTISM AND
DEVELOPMENTAL
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FULFILLING LIVES,
ONE PERSON AT A TIME.”

GIVING VOICE TO EACH LIFE

Since 1975, Birch Family Services has worked tirelessly to advocate for people with autism and developmental disabilities. We are committed to ensuring that children and adults with autism and developmental disabilities have access to the resources and support to lead full lives at home, at work, and in their communities.

11%
tuition growth factor
for our schools



5.4%
Cost-of-Living adjustment
for our community
programs



ADVOCACY

Raising Our Voices

Our goal is to be a catalyst for change by participating in social justice initiatives that have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Over the past year, many of our staff, as well as the individuals and families we work with, advocated for increased funding to the governor and legislature.

The result was encouraging: a 5.4% Cost-of-Living Adjustment for our community programs and an 11% tuition growth factor for our schools, the largest investment in over a decade. This will affect the lives of those we support and the staff who work with them. Additional funding was provided for healthcare worker bonuses, recognizing the tireless efforts of our frontline staff to keep people safe. Finally, additional resources for research and reporting on autism detection, education, and tracking were included.

Our Partners

Our advocacy efforts are done with all our stakeholders in collaboration with sector partners and our trade organizations, including:

- InterAgency Council (IAC)
- NY Alliance
- NY Disability Advocates (NYDA)
- ANCOR



LOOKING AHEAD

Broadening Our Impact

Looking ahead, Birch Family Services is committed to ensuring that all children have access to a quality education in the least restrictive setting. We look forward to working with the city and state on their early childhood initiatives.

Focusing on Key Issues

Finally, we look forward to the release of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) 5.07 Plan. This comprehensive plan will provide a strategy and focus on key issues for the future, including housing, employment, community inclusion, self-direction, and workforce development. We look forward to broadening our impact in all these areas.

“BIRCH TAUGHT ME TO FIGHT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AND ADVOCATE AND ENCOURAGE THEIR SUPERPOWERS. THANK YOU FOR BEING A BEACON OF HOPE FOR ALL PARENTS THAT HAVE WALKED THROUGH YOUR DOORS.”

- Jefferson Williams, Sr., Parent



8

early childhood programs
for children ages 3-5

12

students graduated from
our special education
program at the Phyllis
L. Susser School for
Exceptional Children



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Birch Family Services supports students who are referred by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) when public school districts and District 75 special education schools cannot meet their needs.

We offer 11 education programs for students ages 3-21 across New York City. Eight of those are early childhood programs for children ages 3-5, including:

- Pre-School Special Education (4410)
- Early Learn Programs
- Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)



SCHOOL-AGE SPECIAL EDUCATION

Personalized Instruction

Our 853-designated School-Age programs operate at three New York State-approved, non-public schools in Manhattan and Queens serving students with special needs. Each child receives personalized instruction in a year-round supportive and fulfilling environment. The program integrates literacy, mathematics, communication, and life skills into each student's education, along with music, art, and technology.

We also prepare students to realize their potential with tools for self-advocacy as they transition to adult life, constantly assisted by Birch Family Services.

Birch School-Age programs use the Unique Learning System Curriculum, a standards-based set of tools that allow students with special needs to access the general education curriculum. This year, 12 students graduated from our special education program at the Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children.

“I WILL NEVER FORGET
WHAT YOU HAVE INSTILLED
IN MY CHILD AND THE MANY
VALUABLE LEARNING
AND REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES
THAT WERE TAUGHT.
THESE ARE TOOLS THAT
WILL STAY WITH HER
AFTER SHE LEAVES SCHOOL.”

- Mamie Holland, Parent

LEARNING TO THRIVE FOR A LIFETIME

Birch Family Services has always believed that education holds the key to unlocking growth and a successful future. We provide a high-quality and dynamic education for all our students to ensure that they have equal opportunities to grow and reach their full potential.

In a return to normal, we reopened our schools for in-person instruction following state, city, and departmental guidelines for the 2021-2022 school year. For many of our students, who thrive in a safe, predictable environment, this was a major achievement.

We also offered hybrid and remote learning to provide an education that allowed each student to attain success. The generosity of the Gladys Brooks Foundation allowed the addition of Snoezelen (multi-sensory) rooms, relaxing spaces that reduce agitation and stress, which can also engage and refocus students. The rooms calm students so they can return to their classroom ready to learn.

11

education programs
for students ages 3-21
across New York City



HELPING FAMILIES GROW AND LEARN

Families are an integral part of everything we do at Birch Family Services. We help them become advocates for their children and their communities and ensure their voices are heard and included in everything we do.

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Student Enrollment

The pandemic not only made our students' lives more complex, but the lives of their families as well. For the second consecutive year, enrollment in our early childhood programs was down almost 10%.

This was due to several factors, including fewer families seeking early intervention, many children not seeing their physician and subsequent evaluations, and a number of families leaving the city.

Supporting Families

For these reasons, we provided additional support and training for families, especially parents, to help them navigate a rapidly changing educational and social environment. Those efforts included mental health support to help parents manage their children's needs.



ENCOURAGING PARENT ADVOCACY

We focused on supporting family and student well-being, strengthening parent-child relationships, and providing families with the necessary tools to encourage and engage their learners at home and in school. That engagement was based on our three core pillars:

1. Relational trust
2. Mutual respect
3. Cultural responsiveness

We continue to encourage parent advocacy through participation in our School Based Support Teams and Site Based Parent Advisory Committees.

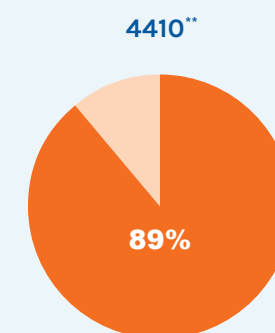


PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

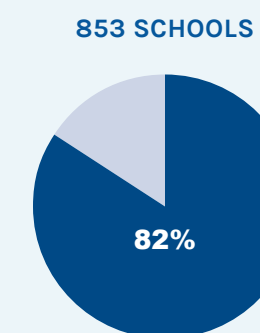
In April 2021, we launched our Parent Advisory Committee to ensure that every parent has a voice in their children's educational development. Parents obtain and share critical information, learn advocacy strategies, and participate in school and agency activities, such as science fairs and bake sales. Parents take part in milestone events, including:

- 100 Days of School celebration
- Read Across America Day
- Read for the Record
- Bring Your Parent to School Day

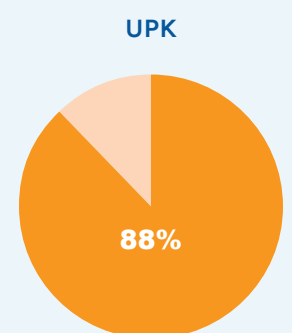
2021-2022 STUDENT ENROLLMENT*



Capacity: 868
Actual Enrollment: 766



Capacity: 130
Actual Enrollment: 106



Capacity: 126
Actual Enrollment: 112

* For the second consecutive year, enrollment in early childhood programs was down almost 10% due to the pandemic. Some families relocated temporarily, others chose not to seek early intervention, and many children did not see physicians or have subsequent evaluations.

**Includes integrated special need students.

SUPPORTING LIVES AND GROWTH

To help every individual reach their full potential, our Community Services division supports and empowers individuals to manage their own lives. We help every person live as independently as possible at home, at work, and in the community.



CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Our dual-support Children's Residential Program (CRP) integrates education with residential services with residents ages 10-21 receive caring, comprehensive, 24/7 support.

Staff works with the Phyllis L. Susser School for Exceptional Children to integrate services across both environments, coordinating with families every step of the way. In spring 2021, we welcomed five new adolescents.



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Facilitating Independent Living

We teach children, adolescents, and adults to live independently while receiving 24-hour care in either our Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) or Individual Residential Alternatives (IRAs). Using a personalized approach, we help our 140 residents develop independent living skills, stay healthy and active, and pursue life goals.

Creating New Home Environments

In spring 2021, we transitioned six young men on the autism spectrum from CRP to adult residential services through Birch, facilitating their successful adjustment into their new home and community.

In July 2021, eight other individuals moved into our second IRA at 92nd Street, a barrier-free environment designed for their physical and medical needs.

In addition to the Snoezelen rooms in our schools, we introduced these multi-sensory spaces to some of our residences, thanks to the generosity of the Gladys Brooks Foundation.

Improving Living Environments

Finally, one of our Manhattan residences underwent capital improvements from September 2021 until May 2022. The renovations made the home more functional and enhanced the living environment for residents, who were temporarily relocated. "They are happy to be home," noted Resident Manager Maurice Coles. "Once they came back, they loved their rooms and the bigger space. It is a great place, and everything we could ask for was done."



HABILITATION PROGRAMS

Our home- and community-based programs support individuals and families as they develop life skills, including communication, socialization, self-care, and independent living skills, as well as desired community relationships. We help individuals become powerful self-advocates and make informed choices. Customized plans provide the support and training they need to thrive and grow.

Although Birch residents could not experience in-person Day Habilitation programs during the pandemic, many took part in remote day services via online platforms or received day program services at home from trained staff. We welcomed people back in September 2020, at half capacity, and at full capacity in January 2022.



HELPING EVERY LIFE IN THE FUTURE

PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- **Opening an eight-person IRA** for four individuals graduating from our CRP and four other young adults transitioning from residential schools into adult services in 2022
- **Developing a second eight-person IRA** to assist young adults transitioning from residential schools to adult placement in 2023
- **Developing a four-person IRA** for individuals living with aging caregivers
- **Supporting 10 individuals** as they move into their own apartment in the Bronx in August 2023*

* Partnering with OPWDD, NYC, and a developer, Birch will be the designated housing agency for 10 individuals capable of living independently in the Marion Creston apartments, an affordable housing initiative sponsored by OPWDD and NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE. AND LIFE.

Success in the workplace gives individuals a sense of worth, self-esteem, and self-confidence beyond school and home. Thanks to our many workplace and corporate partners, we help people with autism and developmental disabilities achieve a milestone that many may have thought was unobtainable: a job where they contribute.



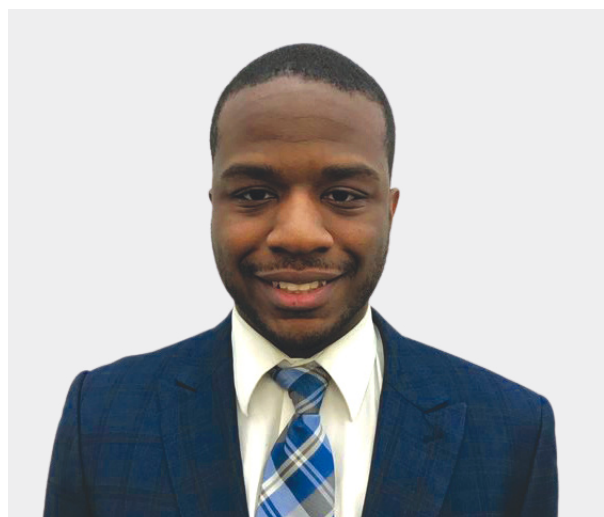
NEW FRONTIER

Enabling Independence

Many of the people we support strive to be socially active and productive members of their community, with more independence and responsibility in their lives. Through New Frontier, we assist them in achieving these goals through a variety of programs, including employment services, health and wellness, community living, social, and recreation.

Real-world Experience

Through the generous funding of TD Bank, 10 New Frontier participants participated in an internship program to explore their career interests, gain work experience, and develop skills to help them secure future employment. Three of those participants not only discovered fulfilling careers but also received employment offers.



Employment Placement

This year, 19 New Frontier participants were placed in employment, more than any other year, with all participants receiving ongoing employer and employee support. Participants gained employment in such places as:

- Aramark
- Bronx Zoo
- Greentop Farms
- ShakeShack
- Starbucks
- Zucker's

“I FEEL AMAZING. NEW FRONTIER HELPED ME GET EXPERIENCE WITH JOB INTERVIEWS AND HELPED ME WITH MY APPLICATIONS.”

– Kasean Robinson, Program Participant



CORPORATE ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN)

Removing Barriers in the Workplace

Corporate and organizational leaders who are committed to a more inclusive and diverse workplace form the backbone of CAN. Members of CAN create job opportunities for young adults (21 or older) on the spectrum who have completed appropriate training programs.

Members also participate in educational workshops on how to eliminate misconceptions and biases about working with people with disabilities. The goal is to continue to work toward removing barriers to employment for the community we support.

The network also provides professional development, training, and mentorship opportunities for New Frontier individuals.

Corporate Partners

Partnerships with corporations are an integral part of our growth and sustainability. Corporate partner **PNC Bank** was one of this year's CAN guest speakers. They shared PNC's accessibility strategy, which aims to grow their talent pool and consumer base to include individuals with disabilities. Our relationship with PNC also led to a partnership and employment path for New Frontier participants.



Other corporate events included CoreNet, a consortium of NYC businesses in the architecture and design landscape. Members of CoreNet learned about Birch and participated in mock interviews with New Frontier members actively interviewing for jobs.

Long-term corporate partner **Virtu Financial** continued its ongoing mentorship program, and a new corporate partner, **Two Sigma**, launched a quarterly mock-interview initiative.

Finally, **Ponce Bank** established a Financial Literacy series with New Frontier. We are grateful to all of our corporate partners and look forward to growing the Corporate Advisory Network.

Thanks to CAN support, participants in our New Frontier program volunteered for organizations such as:

- The Museum of Natural History
- New York Public Library
- Queens Botanical Gardens
- The Queens Zoo
- Stanley Isaac Senior Center

PARTNERS IN OUR MISSION

Many of the successes we celebrate would not be possible without our partners: individuals, families, and organizations that are dedicated to advocating for those with autism and developmental disabilities. The past year marked several milestones.



Make a Difference Program

As part of the Lloyds Bank Make a Difference program, Birch Family Services had the honor of being selected as their Charity of the Year.

Lloyds Bank will support Birch by participating in fundraising efforts and volunteer opportunities throughout the next two years. Since 2016, Lloyds Bank employees have partnered with Birch Family Services, including by volunteering as part of the organization's mentorship program.



Young Professionals Board

This year marks the launch of our Young Professionals Board (YPB), a network of professionals that engages a new generation of volunteers and supporters. The YPB helps Birch Family Services connect with a younger demographic through socially inclined fundraisers and events that emphasize peer recruitment.

The YPB allows young philanthropists to learn more about our mission while becoming ambassadors for Birch. Members volunteer their time and talents to bolster our fundraising and networking capacities and to assist in creating and managing fundraising events.

Birch continues to cultivate innovative collaborations and strategic partnerships with corporations that share our compassion and dedication to empowering individuals with autism and developmental disabilities. Together, we positively address the complex challenges facing those we support and their families.

JOINING AND GROWING TOGETHER

The year marked a return to in-person special events, an integral part of our fundraising and community-building efforts. We were fortunate that many of our supporters were as excited as we were to come together.



Resilience in Focus 2021 Gala

Our annual gala, held in person for the first time since 2019, was built around the theme of Resilience in Focus. At the event, we honored over 700 frontline staff members with the Birch Heroes Award to recognize their strength and dedication. One of those frontline workers, **Shannon Channer**, the assistant manager of our 92nd Street facility, spoke for many when she said, "It has been a great professional experience for me working for Birch Family Services, even though the past two years have not been easy. With constant support and great leadership, we have overcome the challenges we faced during the pandemic."

We also honored longtime corporate partner **TD Bank** for their support throughout the pandemic. TD Bank has been a steadfast supporter of Birch, specifically our New Frontier program. As members of our Corporate Advisory Network, they have mentored young adults and assisted with job placements. TD Bank is a true partner and advocate for the people we support.

Joining together for a remarkable evening that recognized our accomplishments, dedicated staff, and leadership helped raise over \$290,000.



Inaugural Golf Classic

Working closely with our corporate partner Lloyds Bank, Birch hosted the first Birch Family Services Golf Classic event. Beyond supporting Birch as Charity of the Year, this strategic partnership allowed Lloyds Bank to have a longer-lasting impact, helping us to build a golf classic as a continuing, sustainable fundraising event. The event was an overwhelming success, selling out all foursomes.

With support from over 40 corporate partners, board members, and dozens of volunteers, the golf outing raised \$125,000.

\$415K+

combined funds raised at the annual gala and the first Birch Family Services Golf Classic

OUR FINANCIALS

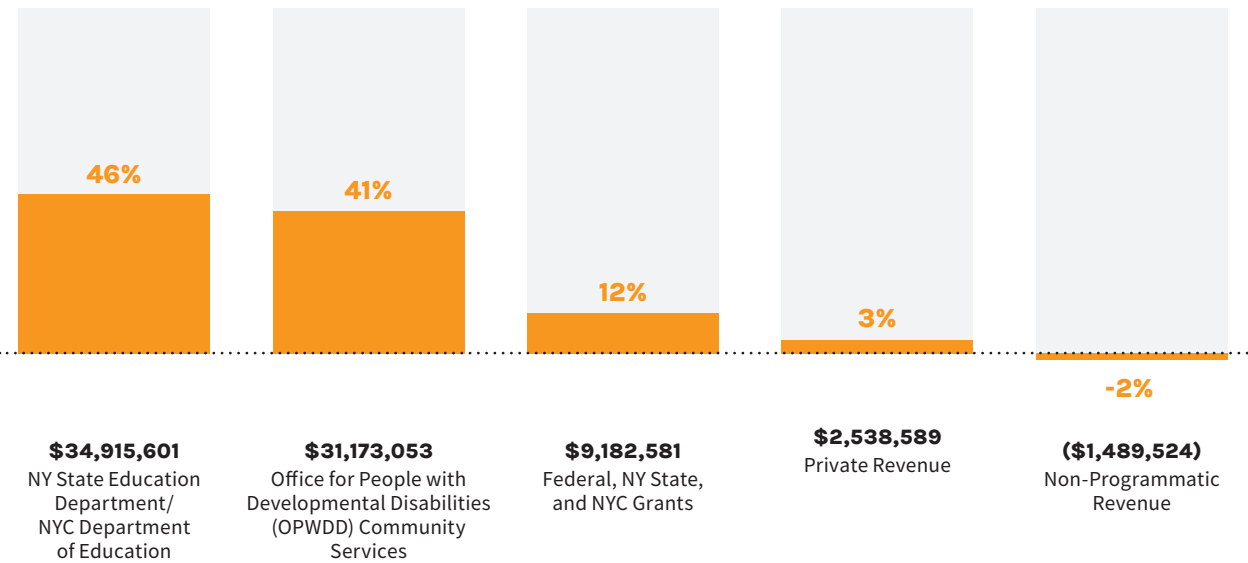
FY 2022

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.

The deficit in Fiscal Year 2022 was the direct result of an accounting anomaly that required the organization to recognize \$10M in grant revenue in Fiscal Year 2023 in lieu of Fiscal Year 2022 as planned. Birch Family Services would have ended Fiscal Year 2022 with a positive change in Net Assets of \$2,762,557 if not for this anomaly.

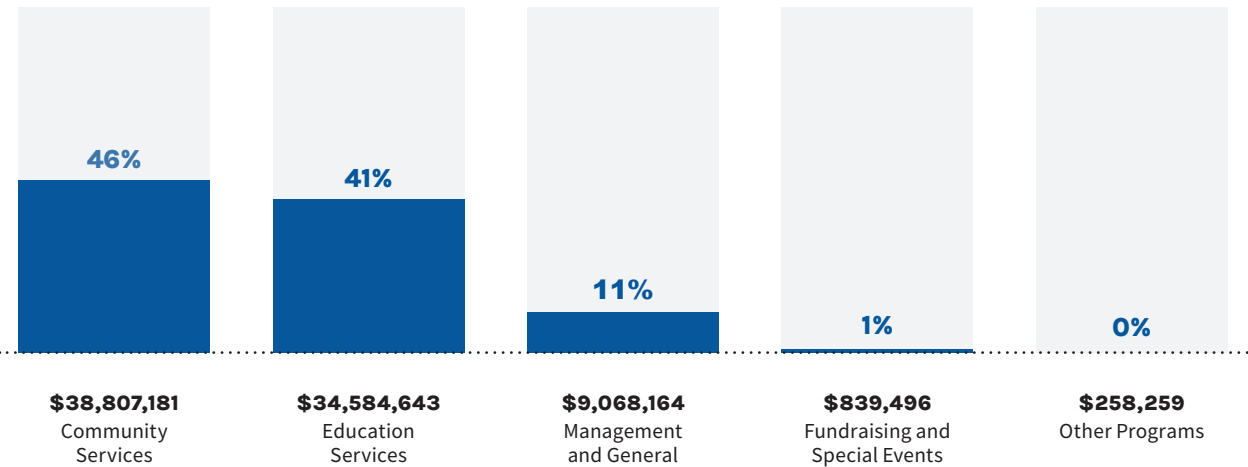
REVENUE

\$76,320,300



PROGRAM/SUPPORTING EXPENSES

\$83,557,743



OUR DONORS

DIAMOND

\$75,000+

The Edith Glick Shoolman Children’s Foundation

PLATINUM

\$25,000-\$74,999

Judge Brian Cogan and Ms. Robin Keller
TD Charitable Foundation

GOLD

\$15,000-\$24,999

Alliant Employee Benefits
JPMorgan Chase Foundation
Lamb Insurance Services
Lloyds Banking Group
The May Ellen and Gerald Ritter Foundation
Pfizer Inc.
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\$5,000-\$14,999

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BRONZE

\$500-\$4,999

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



Make Your Gift Today!



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

*Please consider a monthly gift. To make a recurring donation, select "Monthly" as your gift frequency.



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