



# THERAYOUTH FOUNDATION

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear friends and supporters,

We are proud to present TheraYouth Foundation's 2024 Annual Report. It was our first full year delivering services and it was marked by action, impact, and measurable growth.

As I reflect on the year, my heart is full of gratitude for everyone who helped bring compassionate, personalized care to children who need it most. None of this would have been possible without your support and it is our privilege to share what we have achieved.



*Measurable Success* - We delivered treatment services and met needs that we set out to address. Our cost-efficient, by-appointment therapy clinic operates Monday through Thursday, 50 weeks per year. Every week, we're helping children develop the strength and skill to overcome challenges and foster greater independence.

*Team Growth* - We improved our capacity this year, coalescing a talented team to staff our clinic and welcomed a volunteer therapist. We expanded our board with energized members that have community volunteering and nonprofit experience.

*Operational Efficiencies* - From insurance credentialing to workforce development and media, establishing internal operations and improving communications were a priority.

*Fund Raising* - New and creative events occurred for supporters of all ages. Children and adults alike came together to raise funds and strengthen our ties to the community.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to our mission of improving the lives of disadvantaged children. The need is more dire than ever as seen by the hundreds of children on our waiting list. Your involvement is critical to making our efforts successful. We hope you continue this journey with us and we ask for your help to reach the hearts of others who can extend support to children in need.

Sincerely,

Irina Marcoff, DPT  
Executive Director & Founder



# ABOUT THERAYOUTH

TheraYouth was founded in response to the significant lack of affordable pediatric therapy in Union County, New Jersey. Our goal is to remove barriers to health for children from low-income families. We do this by providing occupational, physical, or speech therapy to high-need children for whom treatment is inaccessible due to cost, scarcity of providers, or space in government programs.

**TheraYouth's mission is to improve the lives of disadvantaged children by helping them overcome physical and developmental barriers to unlock healthier futures.**

Each year we put more than 100 children on a path to better health - whether that's speaking, writing, or walking.



## WHY IT MATTERS

➤ Few providers treat young children. Of the 40 outpatient clinics in Union County, NJ, only nine treat children. Just one other accepts Medicaid.

➤ Families with low incomes face steep barriers to securing needed therapies: high costs and limited insurance coverage.

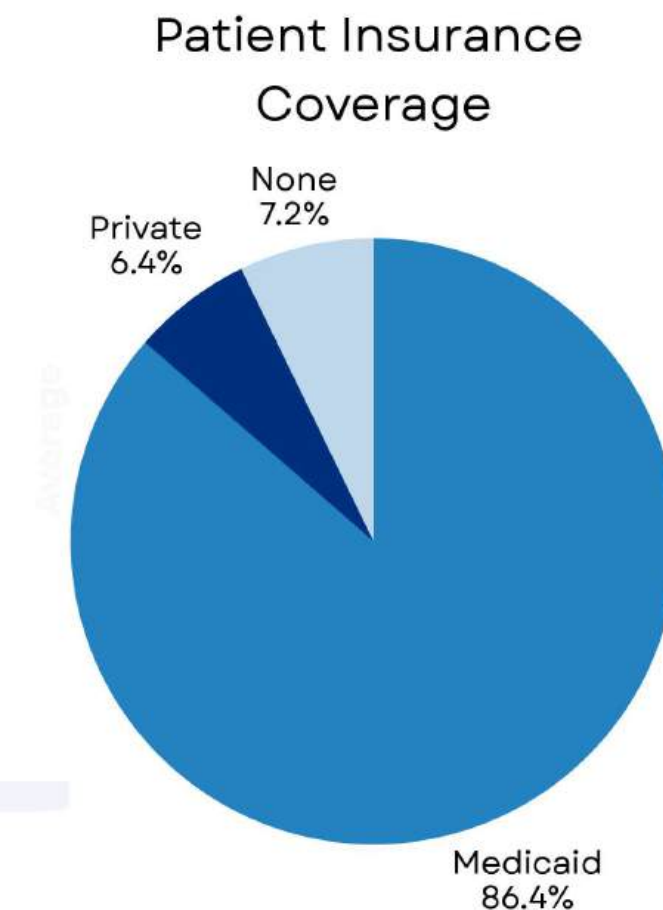
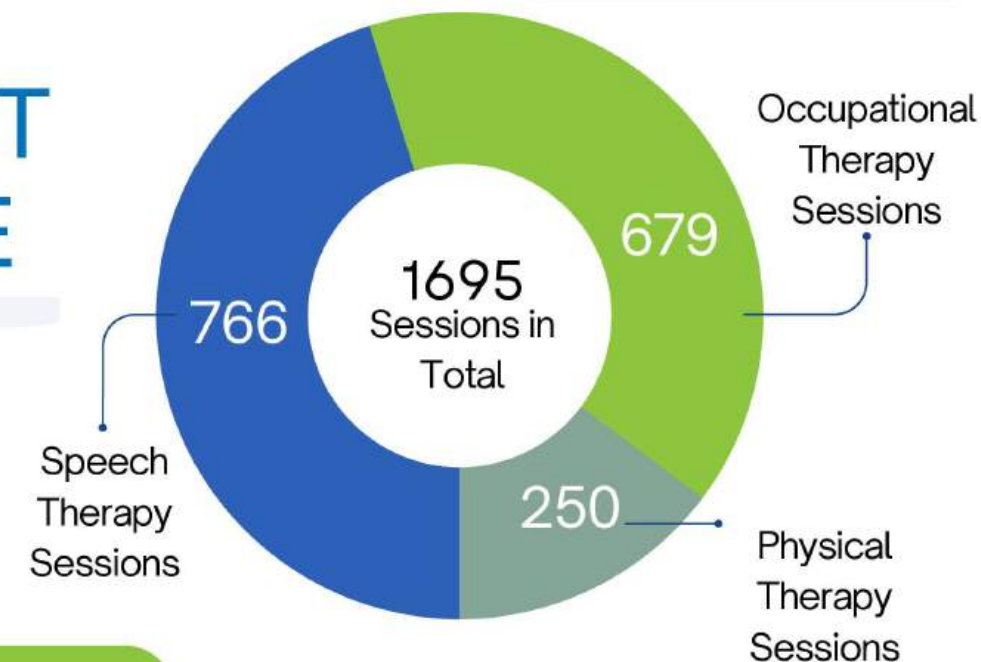
➤ Without timely therapy, delays in walking, difficulty speaking, or poor injury recovery can drastically affect a child's life.

➤ Therapy helps children improve mobility, motor skills, communication, social-emotional functioning, and recover from injuries. Children build the skills they need for daily life, increasing their independence and happiness.

**“Minority children from families of limited means are disproportionately affected in accessing care.”**

Magnusson DM, Mistry KB. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Unmet Need for Pediatric Therapy Services: The Role of Family-Centered Care. Acad Pediatr. 2017 Jan-Feb; 17(1):27-33. doi: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.06.010

## 2024 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

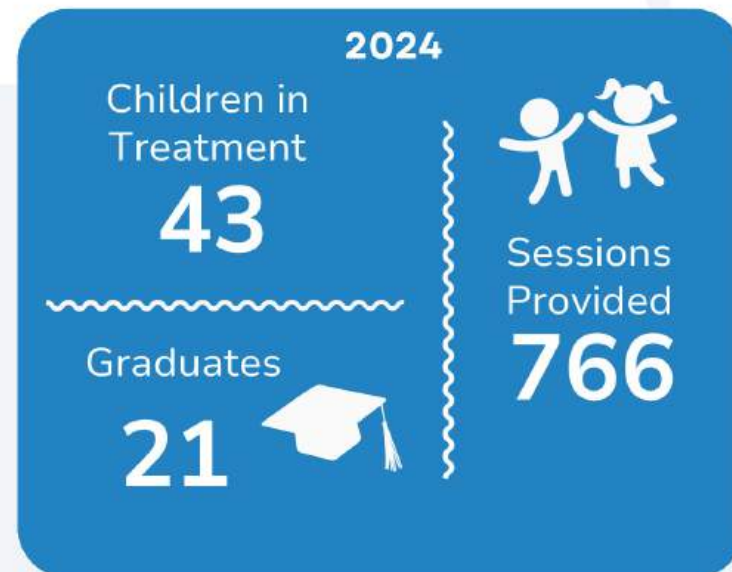




# SPEECH THERAPY

Speech therapy helps children develop effective communication skills so they can express themselves clearly and engage with others. We improve articulation, language comprehension and expression, fluency, and social interaction.

Our therapists work on prelinguistic skills that support a child's functional communication, reducing the frustration that comes from being unable to communicate basic wants and needs. We work on play skills and sharing with our younger patients. For elementary-aged patients, speech therapy supports cognitive skills such as attention and memory. Early, consistent support helps children thrive at home, in school and in the community.



# PATIENT STORIES

## A Voice Worth Hearing – Andres's Story

Andres is one of TheraYouth's bright, hardworking seven-year olds who, despite having noticeable articulation errors, did not qualify for school-based speech therapy. Because his speech did not impact his academic performance, he was told his needs were "medically-based." This left his family with few options outside of costly private therapy.

At TheraYouth, we believe that every voice deserves to be heard, clearly and confidently, no matter the financial barriers or insurance designations. Since starting therapy with us, Andres has made incredible progress improving his speech clarity. He shows up each week ready to work, supported by a dedicated family who practices with him at home and celebrates every gain.

Andres's story reminds us that educational impact shouldn't be the only measure of a child's worth. At TheraYouth, we meet children where they are and help them reach where they're meant to be.

"The progress we've seen in our child's communication skills has been life-changing. The therapists are not just experts, they truly care about making a difference."

## Finding His Voice – Edmund's Journey

Seven-year old Edmund is a child who receives school-based speech services where there is limited time and only partial attention. Sadly, Edmund's school therapy was often stretched across a wide range of goals not customized to his needs. At TheraYouth, he was given something different - a space that focused entirely on him.

At our clinic, Edmund receives speech therapy that is personalized to his unique issues and strengths. While he is making measurable progress in his articulation and speech intelligibility, his journey is about so much more than sounds and syllables. Edmund is learning to trust his therapist, to persevere through challenges, and to take pride in every small win. His confidence is growing with each session, and his voice is becoming clearer, not just in speech, but in spirit.

We are grateful to be able to provide the kind of support that helps children like Edmund not only communicate more clearly, but also believe in themselves.

\*All names have been changed for privacy.



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Occupational therapy helps children gain independence and build the skills they need for daily life. Our licensed therapists tailor interventions to each child's needs, using play-based, engaging activities to improve fine motor skills, emotional regulation, and daily functioning. We help children develop self-care and school-related skills, and social/emotional well-being.

Children come to us with a wide range of conditions, including neurologic and developmental differences, sensory processing difficulties, and orthopedic injuries. The treatment we provide promotes functional growth and confidence building, enhancing each child's ability to participate more fully in all aspects of life.

2024

Children in  
Treatment

55

Graduates

24

Sessions  
Provided

679



# PATIENT STORIES

## Michael's Milestone Year

When 4-year-old Michael first came to our clinic, he faced big challenges with small everyday tasks. Brushing his teeth, getting dressed, following directions, and



connecting with peers were all tough for Michael. He used minimal verbal language, struggled with attention, and found transitions overwhelming.

But Michael had something powerful on his side: a loving family, a strong spirit, and his TheraYouth practitioners who believed in him.

With consistent occupational therapy and home support, Michael made remarkable progress. He learned to fasten buttons, copy letters from his name, follow multi-step directions, and transition more smoothly between tasks. Most

importantly, he began to engage, playing with others and showing increased independence in activities of daily living.

TheraYouth shared parent-education tools with Michael's mom. These resources helped her support his emotional regulation and sensory processing difficulties. After 29 sessions with our team, Michael met every one of his therapy goals. His story is a beautiful example of the impact early intervention can have to build a child's skill and confidence, and relieve their family's worries.

"My child now approaches daily activities with more confidence and independence. I have TheraYouth to thank for giving him the tools he needs to thrive."

Maria, Patient's Mother

\*All names have been changed for privacy.



# PHYSICAL THERAPY

Physical therapy supports children by enhancing movement, strength, balance, and coordination to engage fully in daily activities. Our therapists employ techniques to foster motor skill development and address delays or impairments, individualized for a child's abilities.

We serve children with a broad spectrum of conditions across neurological, orthopedic and sports injuries, genetic disorders, developmental delays, and mobility challenges. Through one-on-one care, we provide children the tools to move confidently and lead active, fulfilling lives.



2024

Children in  
Treatment

30

Graduates

14



Sessions  
Provided

250



# PATIENT STORIES

Three-month old Liam struggled to lift his head and hated tummy time. Born with weak neck and back muscles, he faced the risk of permanent developmental delays - and a severely misshapen head. Children with this condition are often prescribed to wear a corrective helmet, but insurance requires eight weeks of physical therapy prior to approval.

Liam's parents couldn't afford the \$4,000 that therapy would cost. They were stuck on a long waiting list for public services. At eight months, Liam couldn't sit up. Time was running out. Without prompt intervention, the window to help Liam improve would close. Then Liam's family found TheraYouth.

Our licensed therapists provided targeted therapy, helping Liam build strength where he needed it. In just eight weeks, Liam's efforts started to show results with him mastering the ability to roll over. He learned to sit without support. With another four months of therapy, Liam was walking - meeting the goals of his personal therapy plan.

Liam's worry-ridden parents watched in awe. Liam's physical improvements helped transform their child into a thriving baby, taking his first steps and saying his first words. Liam's improvement is not only a testament to his hard work, but also a reflection of the care he received at TheraYouth. Liam's path might have held lifelong challenges. Instead, it is a journey of recovery and resilience - one shared by many we treat.

“ I had and continue to have an excellent experience at TheraYouth. From the first few weeks, I could see great progress in my daughter. The entire team there is extremely talented and dedicated to what they do. I recommend it with my eyes closed!”

- Patient's Mother

\*All names have been changed for privacy.



## CLINIC STAFF

### Elisa Martinez, Clinic Administrator -

Elisa manages family-facing interactions and the daily functions of our clinic. With a strong command of written and verbal communication, and native fluency in English and Spanish, she delivers clear and empathetic engagement. She creates and publishes our quarterly newsletter and manages our social media. Her compassionate, supportive demeanor sets the tone for our clinic, creating a warm environment for those in our care.



## SPEECH



**Stephanie Caputo M.A., CCC-SLP**, is a licensed speech-language pathologist with a master's degree from West Chester University.

She has worked in hospitals, acute care, and rehabilitation settings, treating a wide range of communication and swallowing disorders. She helps those with dysphagia, social and cognitive-communication challenges, and speech-language impairments related to neurodegenerative conditions, learning disabilities, developmental delays, and autism spectrum disorder.

**Naya Hodge M.A. SLT**, is licensed speech-language pathologist. She has a master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from Kean University and splits her time treating children at TheraYouth and in the Elizabeth Public School District.

**Jennifer Allen M.A. CCC-SLP**, is a licensed speech-language pathologist with over a decade of experience working with children. She generously volunteers her time at TheraYouth. Jennifer specializes in articulation, fluency, receptive-expressive language, social communication and language-literacy disorders. She brings deep knowledge of New Jersey's special education regulations. She works in a middle school, serves on a preschool evaluation team, and mentors early-career SLPs. Jen is passionate about the lasting impact of quality speech-language services on children and their families.

**“Occupational, physical, or speech therapy yields improved health outcomes, particularly for conditions requiring early intervention.”**

McManus, Beth, PT, MPH ScD, et al.  
“Timing and Intensity of Early Intervention Service Use and Outcomes Among Children...”  
Published online 2019 Jan 25. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.7529

## OCCUPATIONAL

**Manshi Patel, M.S. OTR/L**, is a licensed occupational therapist, who received her Master of Science degree from Seton Hall University. She has experience working with toddlers, school-aged children, and geriatrics. Manshi splits her time between TheraYouth and treating public school students from preschool to 5th grade in Union County, New Jersey. Her work covers multiple learning disabilities, sensory processing disorders, developmental delays, cerebral palsy, and autism spectrum disorder. She has bilingual native proficiency in both English and Gujarati.



**Erin Skotarczak, OTR/L**, is a licensed occupational therapist with over 15 years of experience helping individuals regain independence and quality of life. A Magna Cum Laude graduate of Temple University, Erin has worked in leading healthcare settings including Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Kessler Rehab, and Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Center. Her work spans a range of specialties – traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, hand therapy, stroke recovery, neurologic rehab, work hardening – all grounded in a deep commitment to empowering patients on their healing journeys.

## PHYSICAL

**Irina Marcoff, DPT**, is a licensed physical therapist with over 20 years' experience treating patients in private practice and public school settings. She has a successful history of working with children requiring different types of help whether from congenital or acquired disabilities. Seeing families in high-need communities struggle to gain access to care their children so desperately need has had a profound impact on her. She founded TheraYouth to offer treatment to families whose medical needs fall outside of private and government support systems.



**“Children from socially or structurally marginalized communities are less likely to receive therapy.”**

Sborov, K.D., Haruno, L.S., Raszka, S. et al.  
Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Pediatric Musculoskeletal Care. Curr Rev Musculoskelet Med 16, 488–492 (2023). doi: 10.1007/s12178-023-09860-0

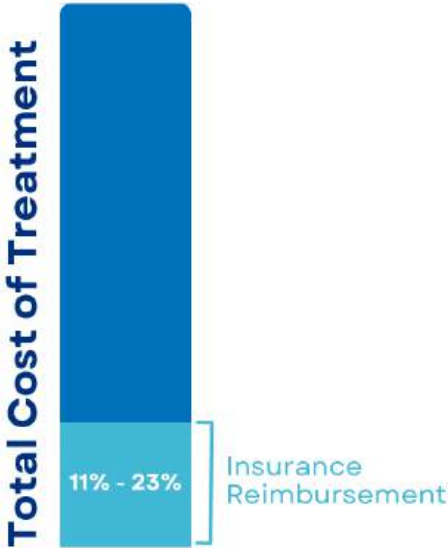
**Dhul-FiQaar Wadley, PTA, CMT**, is a certified physical therapy assistant and licensed massage therapist with more than 15 years of hands-on experience treating patients of diverse ages. FiQaar draws on deep knowledge of evidence-based manual techniques, corrective exercise, and therapeutic modalities. FiQaar's calm, compassionate manner is exceptional for working with children, making patients and families feel understood and at ease. He is a source of stability and comfort whose approach delivers measurable results that benefit the children in our care.



# OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Advancing TheraYouth onto insurance companies’ panels of accepted providers was an ongoing task in 2024. This means, on a pro forma basis, TheraYouth receives a fraction of the treatment cost (11% to 23%) of each session billed from companies that have approved us. We aim work with the broadest number of insurers to help us maximize the impact of every reimbursable dollar.

- ✔ Aetna Better Health - Medicaid
- ✔ Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield
- ✔ Horizon NJ Health - Medicaid
- ✔ Fidelis (Wellcare) - Medicaid
- ✔ Wellpoint (Amerigroup) - Medicaid
- ✔ United Health Care Community Plan - Medicaid



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Reach  
 41.2K

Reach  
 721

Newsletter Reach  
 456

Strengthening communication and connection with the families we serve, and the wider community that supports us, was another initiative for our team. Launching a quarterly e-newsletter marked a cornerstone communication effort, aimed at keeping families, supporters, and the community consistently informed and engaged with clinic news, events, and inspiring stories.

We also assigned ownership of our social media strategy, ensuring that our content is more consistent, informative, and engaging. With regular updates, we are now able to effectively share the impact of our work and highlight important milestones and events. These efforts reflect our commitment to transparency, community engagement, and allow us celebrate the progress made together.

# BOARD EXPANSION



In the latter part of 2024, we took steps to strategically expand our Board of Directors. This growth was part of a thoughtful effort to strengthen the leadership of our organization as we continue to serve children through therapy services.

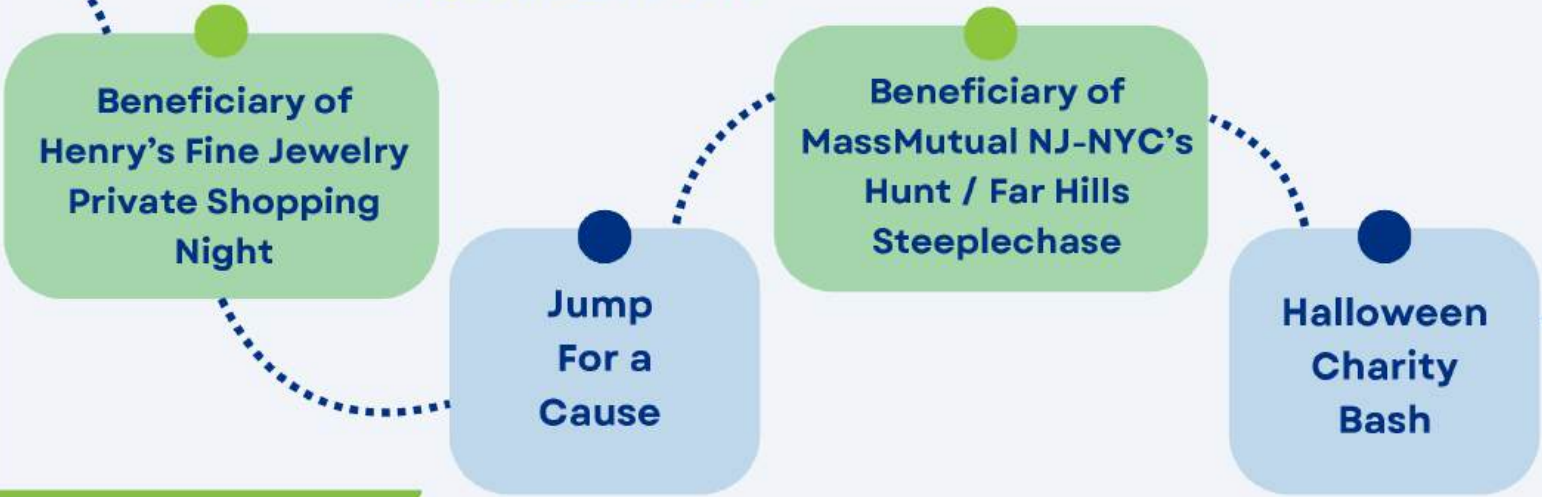
Our new members bring a wide range of professional expertise, and connected networks. Combined with our existing members, they enhance our ability to make informed decisions, plan for the future, and respond to the evolving needs of our organization. Our restructured board is better equipped to support TheraYouth’s mission and ensure the impact and sustainability of our programs.

# FUNDRAISING EVENTS



TheraYouth hosted a variety of successful fundraising events to support our clinic and the children and families we serve. Through partnerships and private events, we were able to raise funds that directly impact the services we offer.

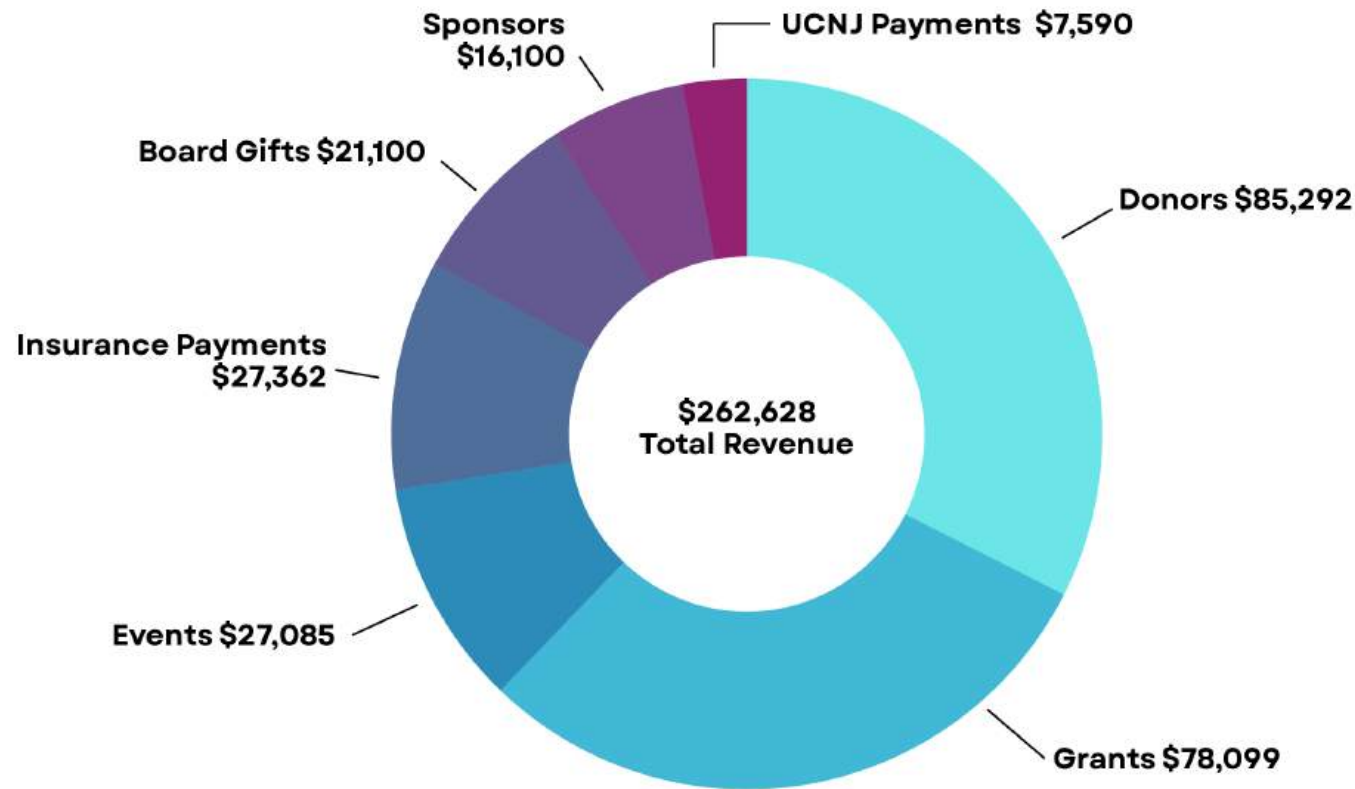
Each event, from local collaborations to special gatherings, helped support our mission of providing therapy to children in need. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support from our partners. Their generosity plays a vital role in making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.



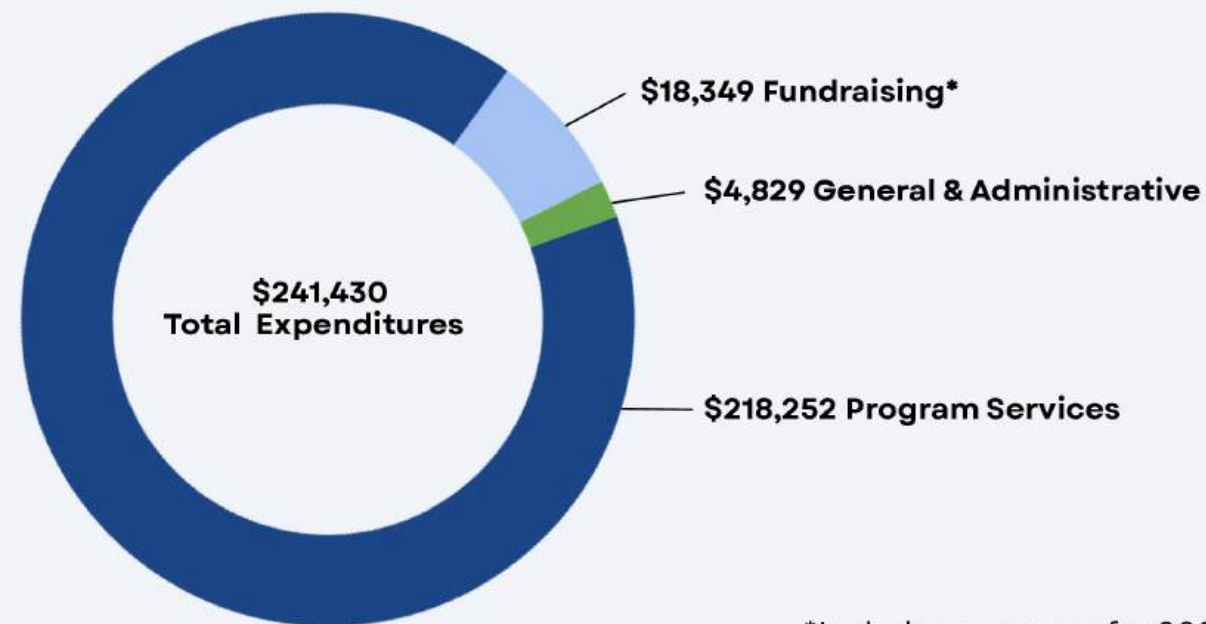


# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## 2024 REVENUES



## 2024 EXPENSES



\*Includes expenses for 2025 event

# SUPPORT TEAM

## Board President

**Korie Caruso**

## Board Vice President

**Igor Berin**

## Board Treasurer

**Svetlana Kozlova**

## Board Secretary

**Nipu Patel**

## Board Members

**Andrea Aprahamian**

**Jennifer Allen**

**Karen Hughes**

**Rekha Mandel, MD**

**Margery Ostrow**

**Jennifer Richter**

**Sue Seto**

**Sharon Schetelick**

**Lucy Schwartzman**

**Jaslynn Vesuvio**

## Advisors

**Marian Cunningham**

**Karen McLaughlin**

**Mila Teshler**

**DhulFiQaar Wadley**

## Executive Director

**Irina Marcoff, DPT**

## 2024 Donors

Katelyn & John Bauma

Karen Bookchin

Diana Burakov

The Caruso Family

Nancy & Miguel Carvalho

Arlene & Marvin Chasek

Virginia Coccia

Lisa Conklin

Bill Cunningham Junior

Marilyn Dovey Kasen

William Draper

The Efraimov Family

Cheryl Eggert

Catherine & Kenneth Ellis

David Feldman

Daniel & Thomas Gallo

Jeanne & John Hambright

Patricia Hargil

Louis Harraka

Astrid & Robert Hasbrouck

Larisa & Amilcar Henriquez

Michelle Higgins

Erica Levey

Pavla & Michael Levin

Sue Lombardi

The Marcoff Family

Noreen C. Martin

Kathleen & Donnie Miller

Ruthanne Mirchin

Helene & Martin Myers

Jonathan Myers

Joan Officer

The Ostrow Family

Brenda Palacios

Kala & Jim Paul

David Potter

The Richter Family

Patricia Riley

Suzanne J. Schneiderman

The Seto Family

Edward Tokar

The Tomaich Family

Nathan & Jeddica Umbriac

The Vesuvio Family

Barbara & James Ward

Jeanette & Chris Warren

Susan Watts

Emily Woolfrey

Joan White

Irina Zavertan

## 2024 Funders

Dumbal-Vogel Foundation

E J Grassmann Trust

Elizabethtown Healthcare Foundation

The Hyde and Watson Foundation

MassMutual Foundation

Northfield Bank Foundation

Phillips 66 Social Impact Fund

Rotary Club of Elizabeth

## 2024 Sponsors

Cardiology Associates of Morristown

Direct Designs NY

Fertility Institute of New Jersey & New York

Henry's Fine Jewelry

MassMutual New Jersey-NYC

Scarinci Hollenbeck Attorneys at Law

WizKids Daycare Center





## **TheraYouth Foundation**

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