



Impact Report

FY2022



resilience noun
re-sil-i-ence \ ri-'zil-yən(t)s

- 1 the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness
- 2 the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity

Letter from Mike

Resilience. That's the word that comes to mind when I reflect on the past year at Eden Autism. Despite facing continued challenges related to the pandemic, we continued to provide vital services and support to children and adults with autism.

My colleagues worked with dedication and empathy to always put the wellbeing and safety of the individuals we support first. Their work teaching children new life skills, safely bringing individuals back out in the community and job places, helping adults in our residences live independently lies at the very heart of what we do at Eden.

Not only did we continue to carry out our mission during the most difficult of times, but we grew to meet the growing needs of our families. We opened four new residences in FY22, allowing additional individuals to move into a home that provides them with 24/7 support.

As we look ahead, I am confident that Eden will continue to meet the growing and unique needs of our families while ensuring that every individual with autism is given the opportunity to live a fulfilling life to the best of their ability. Through our strategic plan, we will continually improve programs leveraging a person-centered approach with an emphasis on individualized services and outcomes achieved through the application of evidence-based practices and grounded in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Our programs will continually support a future where individuals with autism can exceed expectations throughout their lifespan. Thank you to everyone in our community who works alongside us to support this essential work.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Decker
President & CEO



Alina's success make us smile.

The Eden School

We served 77 students, ranging in ages from 3-21, during the 2021-2022 school year. From special events like Homecoming and Halloween to daily activities in the classroom, students spent the year working on their Individualized Education Program.

We spent the year celebrating our students' "little big moments." For many of the individuals Eden supports, their families and the staff who work with them directly, what others might think of as little moments are actually big moments. Learning how to communicate your own needs and mastering daily living skills like tying your shoes and brushing your teeth are huge milestones for those who attend our programs.

As a provider of services across the lifespan, we celebrate "little big moments" at every stage of an individual's journey. Moments like Alina's success make us smile. Alina gained independence after learning to believe in herself. While she used to look for teacher's top help her finish task that didn't go as planned, she is currently able to fully complete work on her own that neat and accurate. She now works at Piazza & Associates, Inc. five days a week performing clerical tasks!

Michael Continues to Master Daily Living Skills

Michael has a year filled of “big little moments!” He spent part of his year getting ready to transition to a new classroom. Teachers were impressed with well Michael handled the transition. Not only has he been enjoying his time in the new class, but he’s continuing to excel at a variety of programs.

From introducing new phrases to use on his iPad to responding well to modifications, watching Michael grow has been the highlight of the year for his teachers. He now is able to ask teachers for things, such as breakfast or an extra minute of time on the crash pad or web chair.

“It’s been great to see him generalize his communication skills into a new classroom as well as seeing him learn new phrases,” said Dara Blatt, Lead Teacher, High School 2.



Celebrating Our Six Exceptional Gradates

In June, we celebrated the graduation of six exceptional seniors, Thomas, Artur aka “Tuca”, Louis, Obinna, Chase, and Matthew. During their team at the Eden School, each student learned new life skills that will guide them through the next phase of their journey—from employment opportunities and adult programs and beyond.





School Staff Celebrate Major Milestones

Six staff members at the Eden School celebrated major career milestones in 2021, ranging from 20 to 40 years! Lead Teacher Ken Dorfman celebrated 40 years working at Eden, along with Lead Teacher Tyrone Burston who celebrated 30 years at Eden, Teaching Assistant Terry Kincs and School Counselor Dina Rizzo-Kormondy who celebrated 25 years, and Teaching Assistant Debra Dellasala and Assistant Director of Clinical Services Nikole Mauger who celebrated 20 years.

“It’s not just a job—this is a career that you want for the rest of your life,” said Ken.

All of the Eden School staff who celebrated a 5-year milestone were honored during the Homecoming celebration.



Cranbury House houses three individuals with autism.

Adult Services

Residential

Eden opened four residences in the summer of 2021, thanks in part to the commitment and generosity of community organizations.

Three individuals reside at a house developed by Cranbury Housing Associates (CHA)—a volunteer nonprofit organization composed of Township residents who effectively develop and manage high quality, affordable housing in Cranbury. CHA worked with Eden to develop and renovate the home. While the renovations turned the building into a house, Eden's staff took great care to turn the house into a home. From designing the home with each individual's service plan in mind to ensuring each individual's bedroom was filled with personal items from their parent's house to help ease the transition, the house feels cozy and welcoming.

In partnership with Project Freedom—a nonprofit organization that develops affordable housing designed for people with disabilities and their families—Eden opened three apartments in Freedom Village at Robbinsville's Town Center South. The brand-new apartment complex is located a walkable community featuring restaurants, shops, and medical offices. The location of the apartment complex was a key factor in Eden's decision to open the residences. Six individuals from Eden are now happy to call the apartments home.

"Whenever a new home opens, no matter how many times you've done it, it always feels like Christmas morning. It's a feeling that never gets old," said Eden Autism Director or Real Estate Gia Gore.

We now operate 32 group homes and apartments throughout Central Jersey, providing 114 individuals with 24/7 care and support.



Six individuals from Eden are now happy to call the apartments home.

Liam Finds Success in All Stages of Life

Ante Change is difficult for Liam, as it is for many individuals with autism. But when he joined the Eden School, it only took a couple of days for him to come home and tell his dad how much he loved his new school.

“He’d say ‘I want to stay at Eden,’” said Sam Hendrickson, Liam’s father. “That was heartwarming and reassuring knowing he felt that he was in a good place.”

Liam faced another big change last year when he moved into one of Eden’s residences. It was a change not just for Liam, but for his entire family. “I would worry about who would care for Liam, and I don’t have that worry anymore because I know he’ll be taken care of by Eden. I trust them completely,” said Sam. “That’s a blessing beyond comprehension.”

The staff played a big role in helping Liam adjust to his new home. Staff from the



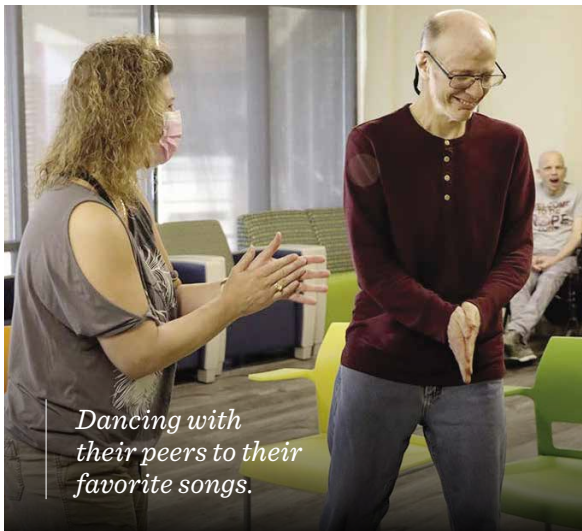
school were there on his first day to work with residential staff to ease the transition for Liam. “They didn’t have to be there, but they showed up to help Liam,” said Sam.

Liam has had a wonderful first year in his new home. Liam’s new room is all about Liam. It is filled with all the stuff he loves, including artwork and his art supplies. The staff keep Liam engaged in activities that he enjoys, and he volunteers at The Bridge Church in Hamilton.

“Eden is a place where hope is made possible,” said Sam. “Parents can begin to hope again about their kids with autism in a way they weren’t able to prior to going to Eden. It’s where hope lives.”

Day & Employment

Each of Eden's three Day Centers hosted a variety of activities, outings, and celebrations to keep the men and women we support engaged and active. Our Schalks Crossing Day Center for aging adults with autism hosted dance classes in partnership with Rutgers University Integrated Dance Collaboratory. The classes were part of a pilot to assess what works best with Eden's older population and give everyone a chance to get up and dance with their peers to their favorite songs.



NJACP Stars Award Given to Bobby Petrocchi

Bobby Petrocchi was the recipient of the 2022 NJACP Stars Award! The award, presented by New Jersey Association of Community Providers, is given to individuals for their ability to overcome obstacles and challenges in their daily lives. Bobby is a longtime member of the Eden family who made a successful transition to the day program in 2018. He is currently employed at two organizations, HealthQuest Fitness Club and Van Leeuwen & Company.





Employment & Vocational Program Resumes Full Operations

As more businesses returned to normal operations after shutting down due to the coronavirus, many of the individuals Eden supports returned to their jobs and volunteer placements. By the end of FY22, 130 individuals out of the 137 who were in our adult day program were engaged in vocational training and employment preparation.

A Lifetime of Support at Eden

Michelle first joined Eden when she was just two years old. Since then, she has graduated, secured volunteer placements, and moved into an Eden residence. Throughout her entire life, Eden staff were there to support not just Michelle, but her entire family.

“They were always there for us,” said Maria, Michelle’s mom. “No matter what our hurdle was, they were there to help us get over it.”

Staff helped Michelle with everything from haircuts and dentist appointments to her first communion. When she was struggling with getting ready for school in the morning, a teacher came over early in the morning to help her get on the school bus.

“As a parent there are a lot of things you just expect your kids are going to do, but not in the world of autism—everything is a challenge,” said Maria. “They helped her learn all those daily skills that are so important for a family. We can take her on vacation. We can sit in a restaurant. She does things with the boys in our family, and I don’t think that would have been possible without Eden’s support.”

From Michelle’s school years to adulthood living in an Eden residence, her parents know that she will



Michelle celebrates her birthday with her family.

always be supported at Eden. “Eden makes sure to get the most out of your child and make them the best they can be,” said Mark, Michelle’s father.

“The staff has always amazed us,” said Maria. “We’re parents. We don’t have a choice. Staff choose this path, and it just means the world to us. I know she’s in good hands,” said Maria.



Thank You!

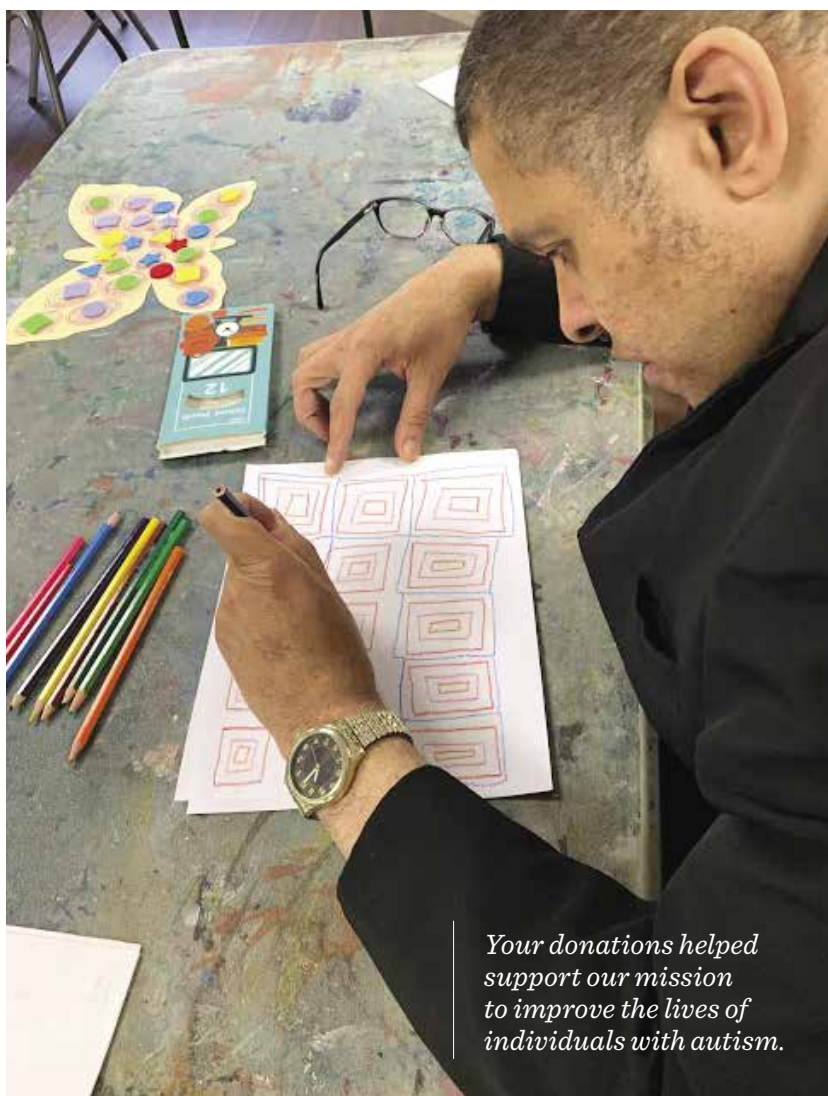
From a one-time \$5 donation to naming Eden in your assets through your living trust, every dollar given to Eden supports vital services for individuals with autism and their families.

Thank you to everyone who supported Eden Autism this past year. Your generosity has provided the individuals we support with community outings and activities, necessary renovations to residences, and nearly everything in between!

Your Support in Action

A \$10,000 grant from the C. Northrup and Alethea Marder Pond Foundation helped cover the cost of a renovation of the Winsten House bathroom, while a \$10,000 grant from Janssen for helped support community engagement programs for the adults in our program. And the thousands of donations we received from individuals and businesses alike helped support our mission to improve the lives of individuals with autism.

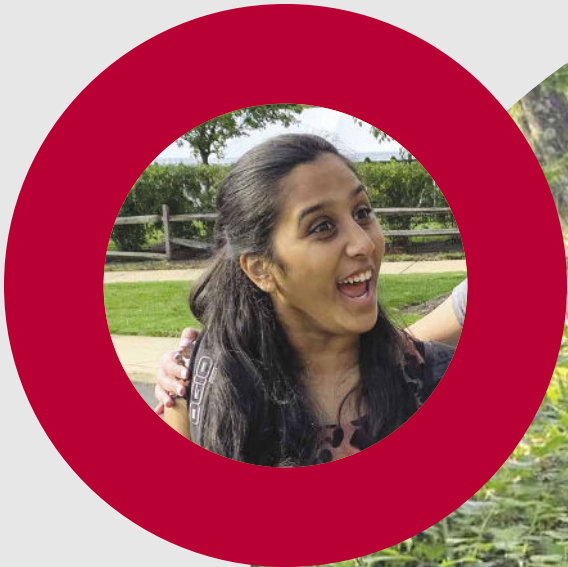
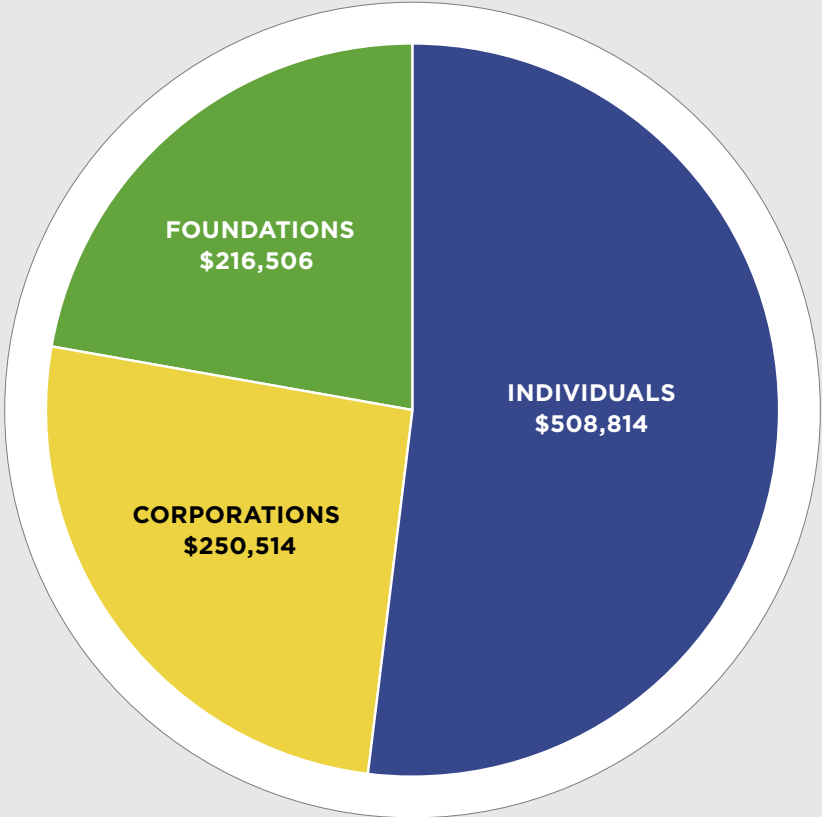
“The Church & Dwight Employee Giving Fund’s purpose is to support local charities where our employees live that better the human condition, especially for society’s more vulnerable members. Eden Autism is one such local charity that does all of that. The Church & Dwight Employee Giving Fund has been supporting Eden Autism in its charitable mission for a long time.”



Your donations helped support our mission to improve the lives of individuals with autism.

Contributed Income by Source

YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022





2 Merwick Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
609.987.0099
edenautism.org
info@edenautism.org

