



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023-2024**



CEO & BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

As we reflect on another incredible year filled with successes and learning opportunities, we are proud to share CCARC's achievements and plans for the future.

Our Team

Despite the industry's continuing staffing shortages, our dedicated employees, from Direct Support Professionals to senior management, have continued to provide quality, nurturing care while pushing the needle forward. This takes teamwork and passion, and the CCARC team has both. We are proud to work alongside these champions!

CCARC Ambassadors

Our board of directors has shown unwavering dedication in reviewing our governance process. With the invaluable support of the legal team from Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP and ProBono Partnership, we successfully updated our Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, enabling us to operate more efficiently, with focused leadership, reduced administrative processes, and increased flexibility. Our corporators can now focus on being ambassadors for the organization. They will have

new opportunities to participate more fully with CCARC through the legislative committee, family forums, president's council, founders' society, and an advisory board. Please contact Linda directly if you want to learn more about these opportunities.

Supported Housing

We've made significant strides in our Department of Developmental Services Residential Transformation Plan. Ten apartments in Supported Housing are set to open in March 2025, utilizing remote supports to offer independent living. Remote Supports is a real-time assistance that uses remote access, a cost-effective way to enhance staffing, ensure safety, and provide alternate community living options. This progress is a testament to our commitment to delivering innovative and effective solutions.

The Hess Center

We have officially assumed operations at 1103 Chamberlain Highway in Berlin, now known as the Hess Center. The Hess Center is home to CCARC's employment services, one of our day programs, and our newly expanded art program. We are excited to begin offering art classes and a unique micro-

enterprise course through our Transition Services for people with IDD. CCARC's growth in employment opportunities doesn't stop here, though. We have been awarded \$152K from the CT DECD – Manufacturers Innovation Fund to create an Inclusive Manufacturing Pilot Internship Program. The legal process to close on the grant is underway, and a curriculum specialist has joined our team to begin the innovative process.

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH has completed its first year with the Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC) as our host partner. Five interns completed the program: four are gainfully employed, and the fifth is in the final interview stages. The employment team navigated new territory, addressed challenges, and worked with the HOCC team



to make this experience life-altering for everyone involved. We look forward to the second year, a new class of interns, and to watching the growth and development of these fine young students.

Something Beautiful

Although we officially shut down our Something Beautiful store on West Main Street, the second location inside the New Britain Senior Center was revamped and reopened in July 2024. This transformation took months of reassessing and guidance from the employment services team. We look forward to this CCARC treasure continuing with renewed energy and creative ideas.

Partner of the Year

Stanley Black and Decker is being recognized as our partner of the year for their ongoing support of our programs through time, talent, and treasure! They sponsored our golf tournament as the signature sponsor, secured additional sponsorships and raffle items, and hosted our corporate philanthropy event. But that's not all.

We are excited to announce that they have graciously gifted us land in Farmington, CT! CEO Don

Allan and former CFO of Power Tools & Technology Chris Reuther have dedicated much effort and time to making this a reality. We are incredibly grateful to them and their team who all had a hand in completing this project. Fiscal Year 2025 will focus a great deal of attention on determining the best use of this generous gift with a newly formed Land and Building Task Force. If you believe you



have great interest or talent in this area and would like to be part of the conversation, please contact Linda.

We have an exciting year ahead of us and look forward to working with the people in our programs and their families. More importantly, thank you all for trusting CCARC to care for your loved ones and your support in making it all possible.

Linda Iovanna
Chief Executive Officer



Lynn Ricci
President, Board of Directors

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CCARC Foundation

The CCARC Foundation was established in 2008 as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with the mission of supporting the programs and goals of CCARC, Inc. The foundation serves as a distinct entity for charitable gifts dedicated to helping ensure the future of the agency. The CCARC Foundation is overseen by a separate Board of Directors.

Who We Are

CCARC has been a pioneer in providing services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) for the past 71 years. Today, our talented team of 270 employees support over 220 individuals with I/DD across central Connecticut through our essential programs. Our focus is providing them with fundamental life needs including community residential options, day programs, health and nutrition, social interaction, and gainful employment opportunities.

What We Do

We strive to enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by offering them and their families safe and fulfilling opportunities to grow in our community. With our expertise in day and residential services, the experiences we provide are always growing to fit their needs, and more importantly, their dreams. Thanks to the dedicated and caring employees here at CCARC, we support people to live at their personal best level of independence while creating meaningful memories with the services we provide.

Why We Do It

We believe a life full of connection leads to greater happiness and fulfillment. Everything we do is driven by our purpose to re-define living for people with I/DD so that it's better connected, compassionate and fully accessible.



EXPLORING ADAPTIVE & ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive and adaptive technology has revolutionized the way individuals with IDD interact with the world. These technologies promote greater independence, improved quality of life, and increase opportunities for social integration and employment.

Assistive and adaptive technologies encompass a wide range of tools and devices, each tailored to meet specific needs. Some of the most common types include:



Communication Devices

These include speech-generating devices, communication boards, and apps that help individuals with IDD communicate effectively. For example, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices enable non-verbal individuals to express themselves.



Educational Tools

Adaptive learning software and educational apps cater to the unique learning needs of individuals with IDD. These tools often include features such as customizable interfaces, interactive content, and progress tracking.



Environmental Control Systems

These systems allow individuals to control various aspects of their environment, such as lighting, temperature, and appliances, using voice commands or other input methods.



Sensory Aids

Devices such as hearing aids, visual aids, and sensory integration tools help individuals with sensory impairments process information more effectively.



Mobility Aids

Wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility aids help individuals with physical disabilities move around independently.

CCARC is exploring adaptive and assistive technology in many areas. We've received grant funding to purchase a remote support system called Grandcare. We will use Grandcare in our supportive housing model, as well as in In-home support. Grandcare includes a touchscreen system that offers immediate virtual connection, message center, reminders, and interactive features. The touchscreen can deliver cognitive assistance in the form of reminders for ADLs, medication, calendar appointments and more.

CCARC has a remote support office under construction that will enable us to provide remote support services to people with IDD who live at home or independently. We have also invested in many health devices and will be exploring their use and success with the people in supported housing. Examples include vital readings, recording them, and outreach to the support team if readings are not within the normal range. Activity sensors send information from wireless or door sensors that alert the team of unusual activity and allow if-then

responses. We are planning a MedMinder demonstration in the next few weeks. These medication reminders allow people living alone to have reminders and follow-up actions to remain on schedule with medications. Devices many of us have woven into our lives include Alexa and iPhones. These devices offer us the ability to control appliances and utilities remotely or from our living room chair.

The CCARC leadership team is experimenting with CoPilot in Microsoft, Chat GPT and Perplexity. AI assists with writing and editing text, summarizing documents, and analyzing data. AI allows us to decrease work time on any given project. We will search for grant funding in FY 2025 to enable us to utilize AI to aid in evaluating processes and further increasing productivity and efficiency. The team at CCARC is stretched very thin, as it is in many industries today. AI may help us make work demands more manageable and help decrease error, allowing us more time to do what we do best, spend time with and be here for the people we serve.

When someone joins CCARC and begins to receive services, they meet with their care team and together create a person-centered individual plan. We prioritize evaluating each person's desire for and ability to work. Now, CCARC evaluates assistive technology needs and makes suggestions. Technology offers so many different solutions that make life easier for us all. In FY 2024 we had ten employees complete FirstSHIFT training that includes an overview of enabling technology and how to complete assessments. Three of these staff passed Enabling Technology Navigators and four Integration Specialists.

We look forward to an exciting future where technology meets care and people are free to live their best, most independent lives.

A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT GOES A LONG WAY

A Success Story by Lori-Ann Hoberman
Director of Business Development

I first met Heather J. in January 2024 when CCARC partnered with the Newington Children's Theatre Company. This new initiative intertwined the arts with our Transition and Day programs, sparking curiosity and excitement among its participants.

As I got to know the participants, I noticed that Heather, who was in the Day program, could read well. I suggested she play Producer Penny, the narrator of our production "Something Strange About John."

Initially, she was discouraged, but I urged her to give it another try. Before long, Heather fell in love with her role. She enjoyed having control of her environment. She even started directing some of the scenes! Her enthusiasm and dedication inspired both of us.

Between our budding relationship and her newfound ambition, Heather started to dream bigger. "What if I spent a couple of days with you in the Transition program?" she asked.

Heather is an incredibly innovative craftsperson.



From crocheting baby turtles to creating sensory tools out of rice and pencil pouches for her peers, her ingenuity does not go unnoticed. The idea of turning her beloved crafting hobby into something more—a business—began to take root.

Heather embraced the idea of the Transition program at CCARC. It's a program designed for

individuals ready to take their skills and dreams to the next level, accepting new challenges and opportunities for career development. Despite the inevitable fears and uncertainties that came with change, Heather, myself, and our employment team proposed a phased approach.

She would split her time between the Day and Transition programs, a strategy that exemplified her



willingness to embrace change at her own pace.

Since beginning in Transition, Heather has flourished. She's honed her money skills, become proficient with technology, and now sells her hand-made products at CCARC's Something Beautiful store at the Senior Center in New Britain. Her creativity has shone through as she takes on new challenges, like designing

the store's window display and drafting labels for new water bottles as an interactive marketing idea.

Heather's journey is a transformative experience in which she was encouraged to take initiative, feel in control of her life, and align her goals with a more career-oriented vision. The persistent support from staff, the challenges of the Transition

Program, and her resilience and creativity all weave together into a tapestry of personal and professional development. This collective effort is a testament to the potential for growth in individuals with IDD.

Heather is on track for complete enrollment in our Transition program. There, she will continue learning and honing new skills, preparing for the next part of her journey: her very own micro-enterprise.

Heather shines as a beacon of inspiration, a reminder that anyone can turn their dreams into reality with the proper support and a willingness to embrace change. Her journey from crafting in solitude to thriving in a community-oriented career path is a success story that continues to inspire and resonate with all who hear it.

EMPOWERMENT STARTS WITH PERSONALIZED CARE

Success Stories by Apree Airline Residential Manager

Ryan T.

When I first met Ryan three years ago, he had difficulty communicating. His vocabulary was limited to simple words like “juice,” “bathroom,” and “ride,” which allowed us to understand his basic needs. However, he required substantial assistance throughout the day. His mother helped us learn that playing his favorite tunes, such as “Jingle Bells” or “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” helped him stay calm and focused.

When we played these songs for Ryan, we noticed a remarkable transformation. Not only did he listen attentively, but he also began singing along. This was a defining moment that unveiled Ryan’s hidden capabilities. At this point, we began devising a communication strategy to unleash his potential.

Our primary objective was to enable Ryan to express himself effectively so that we could comprehend his needs and mitigate any challenging behaviors. Using flashcards and consistent practice, the word “Juice” evolved into the polite request, “Can I have more juice, please.” Witnessing him ask for food politely rather than taking it from others was a significant



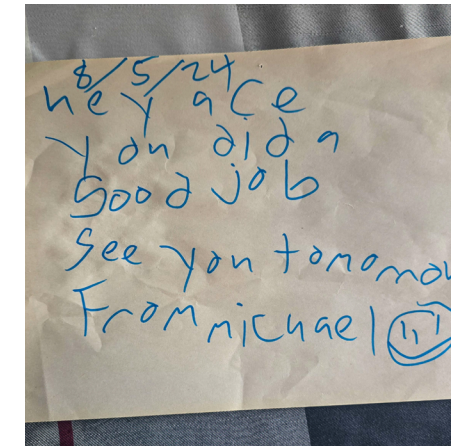
achievement! Ryan’s improved communication empowers him to articulate his needs and desires.

Previously, when asked if he wanted to go outside, he would simply echo the question by saying, “Outside.” Now, when questioned, he conveys his preference, even if it’s just a simple nod of yes or no. During visits to his mother, he indicates when he’s prepared to return to



Plainville. He grabs his backpack and tells her, “Back to Ryan’s house.”

The progress we have witnessed in Ryan’s communication skills fills our hearts with warmth and joy. We eagerly anticipate the further growth and development that we know Ryan is capable of, but more importantly, we are delighted to know he feels happy and safe in our care.



Michael M.

Over the past three years, I’ve also witnessed remarkable progress in Michael, Ryan’s housemate in Plainville. When I first met Michael, he often had behavioral issues and frequently got into conflicts with his housemates and staff. Due to his difficulty transitioning between places, we had to transport him



separately to ensure everyone’s safety.

Despite his challenging behaviors, I knew this wasn’t Michael’s true nature. I understood that helping him improve would require patience and careful attention. The residential staff and I took proactive measures through comprehensive training and trial-and-error methods. We tailored his activities to meet his need for

sensory stimulation, incorporating an electric Rubik’s cube, board games, outdoor activities, and workbooks into his daily routine to keep him mentally and physically engaged. Soon, completing workbooks and receiving stickers for his achievements made Michael genuinely happy. We then focused on and praised this activity, resulting in significant changes in his behavior, such as writing heartfelt letters to our staff.

Now, Michael is a completely transformed person—vibrant, expressive, kind-hearted, and humorous. He’s even open to trying new activities he had never attempted before.

I’m so proud of the Plainville team for their unwavering dedication and both Ryan and Michael’s remarkable progress.

WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS

A Success Story by Lisa Sabitini
Senior Vice President of Services

On March 31st, 2023, CCARC received the keys to the home on Kelsey Street. This home, which another provider previously managed, was now under CCARC's support again. At around 4 PM, the previous team left the residence for the last time and wished us well.

Kelsey Street is familiar to many at CCARC as "Bj's house." CCARC had managed it from the beginning until 2012. Even though the home has always been a part of our history, it felt different now. It had been almost 12 years since our last visit, and only two residents were left. When we gathered that afternoon, we thought about what the future might hold.

Some staff from the previous agency chose to stay with the home to continue providing services to the residents, but they only covered part of the staffing needs. Many were uncertain about their future.

What would it be like to work for CCARC?

What about the new individuals?

How would my new teammates be?

Despite CCARC team members having similar concerns, everyone understood the need to work together. One set of team members knew the individuals well, while the other set understood the organization and its care expectations. They couldn't function without each other.

The Kelsey Street team had to find their rhythm in the following months.

Under the leadership of Monica Joy, CCARC Residential Manager, the team experienced highs and lows, and success did not come overnight. They had to navigate their differences and meet the evolving requirements and expectations for supporting the residents. Team members learned to adapt to change and hold each other accountable, though sometimes challenging.

Since that day on March 31st, 2023, the team at the Kelsey Street home has worked diligently to improve communication, teamwork, and accountability.

Every team member has contributed to making Kelsey Street the CCARC home it is today. It is a well-maintained residence decorated for all holidays, where residents are engaged, and the aroma of baked goods often fills the air. It is a home filled with love, laughter, and joy.

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success."

The team at the Kelsey Street home truly embodies this with their communal efforts, prioritizing the residents' needs, and maintaining strong leadership.

We are incredibly grateful to you all: Monica Joy, Residential Manager; Staria Tillman, Lead Instructor; and each of the Direct Support professionals who have worked tirelessly over the preceding months to make Kelsey Street home.



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Lifetime Achievement

Gregory Stafstrom



Partner of the Year

Donald Allan, Jr., President & CEO, Stanley Black & Decker



Volunteer of the Year

Carol Courtney



Volunteer of the Year

Vince Stryeski



FINANCIALS

Income

Residential Services



Day Services



Fees: Towns, Individuals & Others



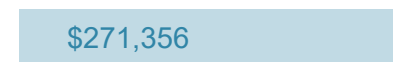
Fundraising



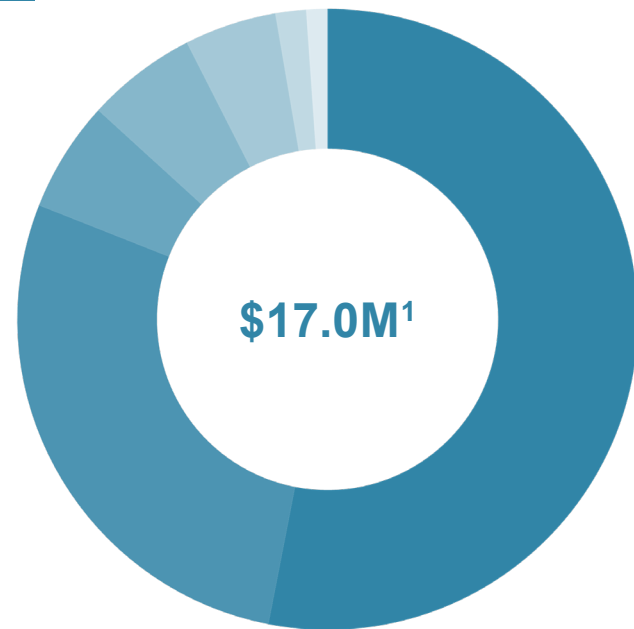
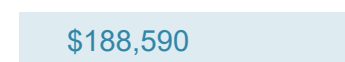
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CCARC Foundation, Inc.



Other²



Expenses

Community Living Arrangements



Day Services



Administrative & General



Other Programs



Supported Living Arrangements



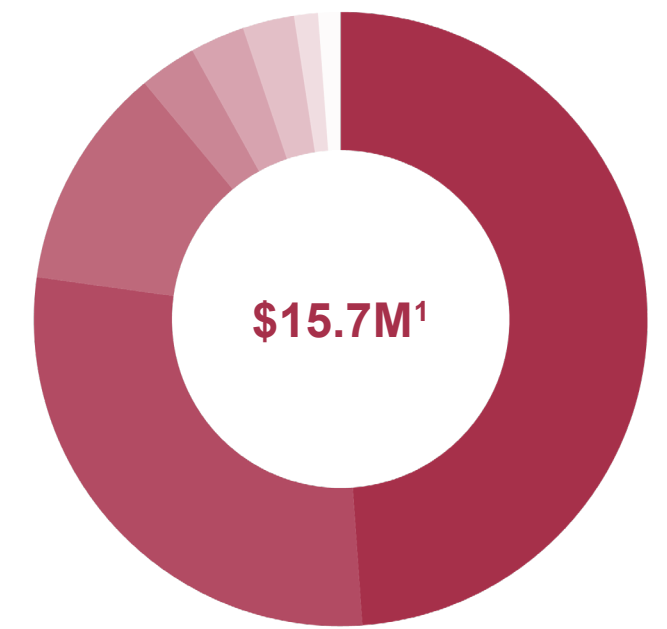
CCARC Foundation, Inc.



Fundraising



Individual Home Support





¹All financials are unaudited.

²Includes CCARC Foundation, United Way, Donations, Interest Income, Misc.



CCARC strives to be a recognized industry leader with an unwavering commitment to growing individual and person-centered services and opportunities by expanding partnerships and educating the community about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD).

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