



AJ Foundation

Empowering the Autism Community

The AJ Foundation and
Comprehensive Learning Center
2021-2022 Annual Report



**Comprehensive
Learning Center**
For Individuals with Autism

Thank You!

2021-2022 proved to be an exciting and productive year for both Comprehensive Learning Center (CLC) and The AJ Foundation (AJF)! At CLC, we saw 3 students graduate and move on to their next journey in CLC's Adult Life Skills Program and, we welcomed new students and their families into the Education Program. This past year was the smoothest we have seen since prior to the pandemic for both CLC and AJF. It felt great to reintroduce more in-person home and community learning opportunities for our students and adult learners and, get back to being together for our fundraising events!



CLC and AJF are busy organizations and everything that is accomplished is only possible through the on-going community support received by all of you! AJF, and then CLC, were formed to give opportunities to individuals with autism to maximize their potential by having as much autonomy in their daily lives as possible. Our work requires dedication across so many from the learners, families, staff, Boards of Directors and Committee members, to our ever-growing network of community members, and all of our donors! Thank you for making CLC possible and please enjoy a look into what made 2021-2022 a great year!

-Joanne Corless, President-The AJ Foundation
& Cindy Murphy, Executive Director-CLC

Student Success Stories



We celebrate the accomplishments of our learners every day at CLC. Each Friday, our Directors share some of those highlights in a message to our staff. Sharing these accomplishments helps to reinforce how important the work our team is doing in changing lives. Below are a few special highlights!

"Michal (Module B) was lucky enough to win a special tricycle to teach her the leisure activity of riding a bike. With Maddie's help via home programming, Michal's parents were simply blown away by how well she did. This is so exciting as it is an activity that Michal can do with her sisters!"

"Curtis (Module E) recently began his first volunteer opportunity at ReStore. He truly loved it and Brandon and Patrick were such great models that it really added to a positive experience for Curtis."

"Jacob (Module B) has made such tremendous progress with his communication. If you know Jacob, then you know how hard he works to develop discrimination skills. Over the summer, we were able to introduce the use of an augmentative communication system with Jacob and his response has been amazing. We are so proud of Jacob and the wonderful team he has behind him!"

Celebrating Our Graduates

Graduation is a huge accomplishment for our students! It is a milestone that honors all of their hard work during their time at CLC. They get to take their skills learned over the years and display how they have become more independent, self-sufficient individuals who get the opportunity to give back and participate meaningfully in their homes and communities. We are so proud of this year's graduates!



Introducing Patrick! Patrick's hard work has led him to hold an employment position at a local cafe in his hometown, in addition to remaining successful in his volunteer positions over the years, including Restore, Ableforce, The Birches, and Cradles for Crayons. Patrick is a great mentor to our younger students and incredibly valued by his friends and peers. We wish Patrick good luck and success in his journey to the Adult Life Skills Program!



Introducing Michael! Michael has prepared for graduation by volunteering at several organizations over the years, including The Birches, ReStore, AbleForce, and Pediatric Care Group. On the days that Michael is not volunteering, he enjoys his trips to AFC Gym. Michael works incredibly hard every day and always with a smile. We wish Michael much success in his journey to the Adult Life Skills Program!



Introducing Madison! Madison has learned various skills, academically and vocationally, throughout her time at CLC. Madison has prepared for post-graduation life by learning numerous daily living skills, as well as vocational task so she can be productive wherever she is while also enjoying recreational activities during her free time. While in the Adult Life Skills Program, Madison will continue working at CLC, helping with tasks such as collecting materials to shred, taking inventory of AJF merchandise, and completing other helpful tasks throughout the building. We look forward to seeing Madison's smiling face each day!

Adult Life Skills Program - *Art in The Pod*

In September of 2022, Will M. became the fourth adult learner from CLC to join the, 'Follow Your Art' class at *Art in the Pod*, a small studio in Churchville, PA. For an hour and a half each Friday afternoon, Will joins other adults from the autism and special needs community, including three of his friends from CLC's Adult Life Skills Program, to draw, paint, and sculpt with clay. Within this welcoming environment, Will and his fellow artists are free to explore their creativity, socialize with friends, and learn new skills. With the gentle guidance of the art instructor, Nina, the learners are able to design their own masterpieces while learning about various artists and techniques. There is no judgement here, and the only prerequisite is an interest in spending time with friends and having fun with art.

For Lucas, Dan, Derek, and Will, their time at *Art in the Pod* is a much-anticipated highlight to their week. Each of these learners holds multiple volunteer positions within the community, enjoys a variety of social opportunities, and fully participates in home and family life. They are ever increasing their independence, giving back to their communities, and living happy and fulfilled lives. And like other adults, their success is often measured by the hustle and bustle of their involvement in these activities. In fact, 'work' is often the definitive characteristic of adulthood. Work provides a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and belonging. But it's also important to find this sense of purpose, fulfillment and belonging in other ways and in other places.

At Art in the Pod, participants are given artistic and personal freedom within a structured, guided lesson. Our learners are able to practice the skills they've previously mastered at CLC, and are able to continue to build upon those skills leading up to and during these lessons. The learners attend these classes with their Life Skills Coaches who help to facilitate the learners' involvement in the class; but in this class, Nina is the teacher and the learners follow her direction. Each time a learner completes a piece of art, there is an obvious sense of accomplishment and pride—felt by the learners, of course, but also by their parents and the ALSP staff. The pride we feel has less to do with the final product and more to do with the hard work these learners have done to accomplish their goals of community involvement, socialization, and independence. The years of quality programming our learners have received, and continue to receive, from CLC has brought them to this class and at *Art in the Pod*, everyone succeeds!



Staying Up to Date

Comprehensive Learning Center was created 22 years ago to offer a school for individuals with autism to learn through interventions proven through scientific research as most effective. This science is called Applied Behavior Analysis or, ABA. ABA, like all scientific fields is ever evolving and it is incumbent upon CLC staff to be up to date with advancements in our science to ensure our services are consistent with best practice.



Part of intervention for individuals with autism may involve helping to find appropriate, alternative responses to replace challenging, and sometimes dangerous, behavior. Research published by Dr. Greg Hanley, et al.¹ offers improved strategies for intervention of challenging behavior called, Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis (IISCA) and incorporates Practical Functional Assessment (PFA) and Skills-Based Training (SBT). CLC's Directors have been learning about the IISCA/PFA-SBT through conference presentations and completed an intensive 10-hour training this past summer.

By incorporating new knowledge learned from these trainings into existing intervention plans for our students/adult learners or by creating entirely new plans, benefits are already evident to some individuals served by CLC. These procedures involve teaching learners that, rather than engaging in challenging behavior, they can easily and effectively affect their environment, to get their needs met, through a simple communication response. While teaching functional communication responses as a replacement to undesired responses is certainly not new in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, the nuanced procedures outlined through Dr. Hanley's work streamlines the process and proves very effective for some individuals.

As with any intervention for individuals with autism, the process must be individualized. There is no "one size fits all" and through our experience with implementing the PFA/SBT, this certainly holds true. We gain new information through each experience with our learners and refine our processes, as one would expect with a scientific approach. It is exciting to offer new strategies for our instructional staff to add their skillset and even more exciting to see some of our students and adult learners benefit from a more efficient way of learning new skills!

¹ Hanley, G. P., Jin, C. S., Vanselow, N. R., & Hanratty, L. A. (2014). Producing meaningful improvements in problem behavior of children with autism via synthesized analyses and treatments. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 47, 16-36.

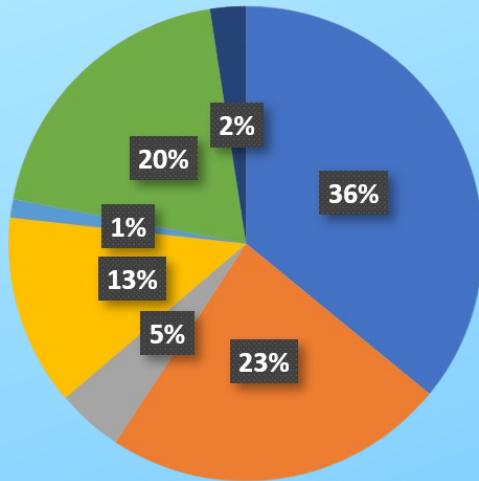
Rajaraman, A., Hanley, G. P., Gover, H. C., Ruppel, K. W., & Landa, R. K. (2022). On the reliability and treatment utility of the practical functional assessment process. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 1-23.



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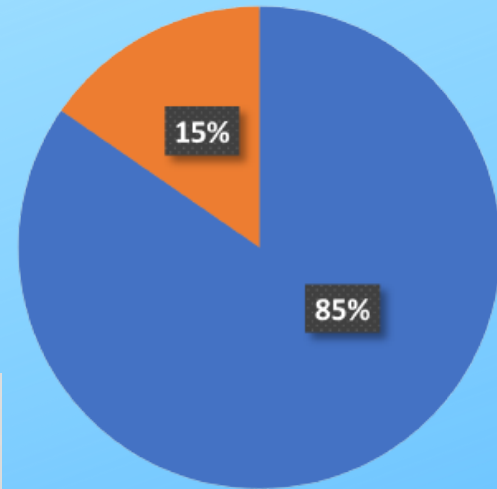
Financial Overview

AJF Revenue



Total Revenue- \$420,423

AJF Expenses



Total Expenses- \$459,747*

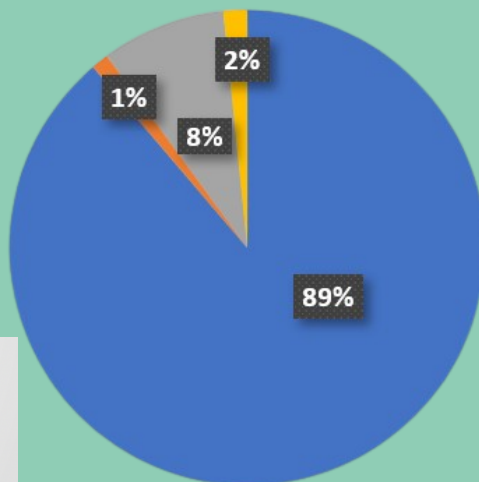
*AJF was able to provide an additional \$50,000 grant from its reserve funds to CLC in 2021-2022



Comprehensive Learning Center

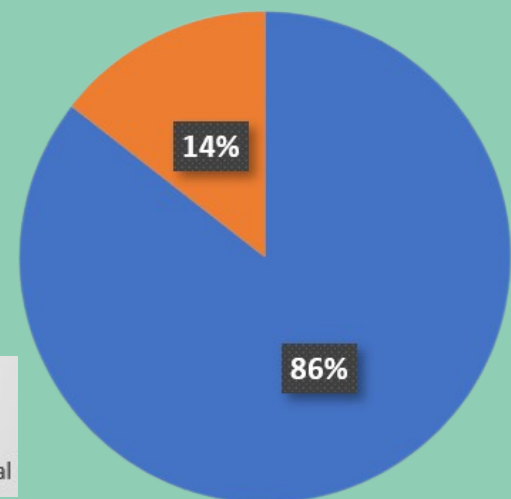
Financial Overview

CLC Revenue



Total Revenue- \$4,407,870*

CLC Expenses



Total Expenses- \$4,227,233

The AJF Foundation Events

AJF held its 14th Annual **AJF Ride 4 Autism** event in September of 2021. We surpassed our goal of \$125,000 and raised over \$150,000, making it our most successful event yet! A special thank you to our 2021 Team Challenge winners: Teams Hub International & Blackthorn Rugby Bicycle Club!

AJF held its 25th Annual **AJF Golf 4 Autism** event in October, 2021. This event raised over \$96,000! A special thank you to Makefield Highlands Club for hosting a wonderful day of fun and to all of those who came out in support of our mission!

This year's **Annual Drive Campaign** surpassed its goal of \$51,000 with over \$54,000 raised!

AJF hosted its second ever **Virtual Texas Hold'em Tournament** with the help of our partners at Poker4Life. We raised over \$18,000 and had so much fun doing it!

AJF brought back the **AJF AMRAP 4 Autism** this year with the help of our friends at Central Bucks CrossFit. This event raised over \$5,000!

With COVID restrictions lessened, AJF brought back the **AJF Casino Night** for the first time in two years! We were so excited to see everyone in person once again. This event surpassed its goal of \$54,000 with over \$85,000 raised!

The AJF 21-22 Sponsor Community Showcase



Thank you for supporting our mission, students, adult learners, and families in the 2021-2022 program year!

Thank you to our event coordinators and volunteers, as well as the vendors who make these events possible. Thank you to our community partners who provide opportunities for volunteer work, vocational practice, and work placement for our students. And thank you to the community of supporters who help us spread the word!

Supporters who gave \$10,000 or more

County of Bucks	T.J. Kavanagh Foundation
Johnson & Johnson	Terrapin Care Station

Supporters who gave \$5,000 - \$9,999

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Mark your calendars for our upcoming events!

The AJ Foundation conducts fundraising activities to help support the ongoing operations and growth of CLC along with supporting the growing needs of children and adults with autism within our community. All donations are tax deductible.



Annual Drive

Now until January 31, 2022



Texas Hold'em Tournament

February 4, 2023



Casino Night

April 22, 2023