




*"I have decided to  
stick with love..."*



*Hate is too great of a burden to bear.”*

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear Neighbor,

More than half a century has passed since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Abbott House. He praised our work in helping families, and his legacy of love and service are never far from our thoughts. Through unrelenting dedication to those relying on us, we strive to live up to his faith in our organization.



Family comes first at Abbott House, as you undoubtedly agree. You stepped forward in many ways this past year to help us positively affect the lives of thousands of families, children and adults who struggle with trauma and crisis, often losing their sense of place in the world. We could not have met their unique and often urgent needs without your partnership.

2020 challenged us in unimaginable ways, yet we continued to find strength in powerful constants – our mission to serve and the extraordinary public spirit of all who support us. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that this collective capacity for doing good will not surrender to social distancing, stay-at-home mandates or other societal restrictions. We are profoundly grateful for your selfless support, knowing that your family and loved ones somehow felt the tragic impact of COVID-19.

The human spirit is resilient. We find ways to navigate. We adapt – and we do it because we know people are counting on us. It is just that simple. Our heroic staff serve courageously on the frontlines of caregiving, while our foster parents open their hearts and homes to children in need. Volunteers explore creative ways to reimagine art projects, meditation and self-care through virtual technology. Donors like you respond generously to calls for personal protective equipment and other critical supplies to keep everyone safe and improve the lives of those in need.

**Together, we fulfill the Abbott House mission and continue to do so much for so many.**

In the pages to follow, you will read about how your support preserves the dignity of all individuals in our care, whether that means securing furniture for group homes, donating meals for families suffering from food insecurity or sharing your time and expertise to help improve a child’s math or reading skills. Your investment in every family, child and adult relying on Abbott House makes a difference.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. challenged all of us to step forward for the good of society when he said, **“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?”** We are grateful that with your help, we never have to look far to find the answers.

Thank you for doing much, much good for those in our care and for being part of our Abbott House family. We hope you will feel inspired by the smiles and stories you helped create.

James L. Kaufman, LCSW-R  
President and CEO

Walter Montgomery, Ph.D  
Board Chairman



Main Headquarters  
100 North Broadway  
Irvington, NY 10533

Dutchess Office  
1 Civic Plaza  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

New Windsor Office  
100 Commerce Drive  
New Windsor, NY 12553

New York City Office  
1775 Grand Concourse  
Bronx, NY 10453

Keon Programs of Abbott House  
2 John Walsh Blvd #1  
Peekskill, NY 10566

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Abbott House is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that builds lasting foundations under children, families and adults with complex needs.

Our work has far-reaching effects on families and beyond. By helping one individual, we know that we help countless others - biological and foster parents, siblings, grandparents, and others.

**With this in mind, this year alone we have touched the lives of more than 10,000 people in the New York Metropolitan area and Hudson Valley by providing safety, promoting healing and restoring hope.**

The heart of our work is dedicated to helping human beings recover from deep trauma or intervening to prevent trauma in the first place.



**For Children and Families:** At Abbott House, we support and strengthen families to keep them together. We also work with newly formed ones to help them thrive.

Our goal is to provide children and adolescents with a lasting sense of family, home and community, and prepare them for a promising future. We help them build a durable foundation of skills and experiences that allow them to thrive and become contributors to their communities as they come of age.

**Our Programs for Children and Families Include: Foster Care, Therapeutic Foster Care, Foster Parent Training, Transitional Resources for Children (TRC), Article 31 Clinic, Community Schools, Fair Futures, Preventive Services, Group Homes, Non-Secure Detention, Health Homes, Adoption, Child and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS), and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).** To learn more about these programs visit [www.abbotthouse.net](http://www.abbotthouse.net).

**For People with Developmental Disabilities:** The focus of our work with adults with complex needs is to help create enduring foundations of home, community and future in their lives. They often have capacities, strengths and goals that are overlooked by environments where ‘management’ overshadows growth. They are often hindered, unwittingly, by caregivers, from becoming their own person and developing their own notion of what their life will come to be.

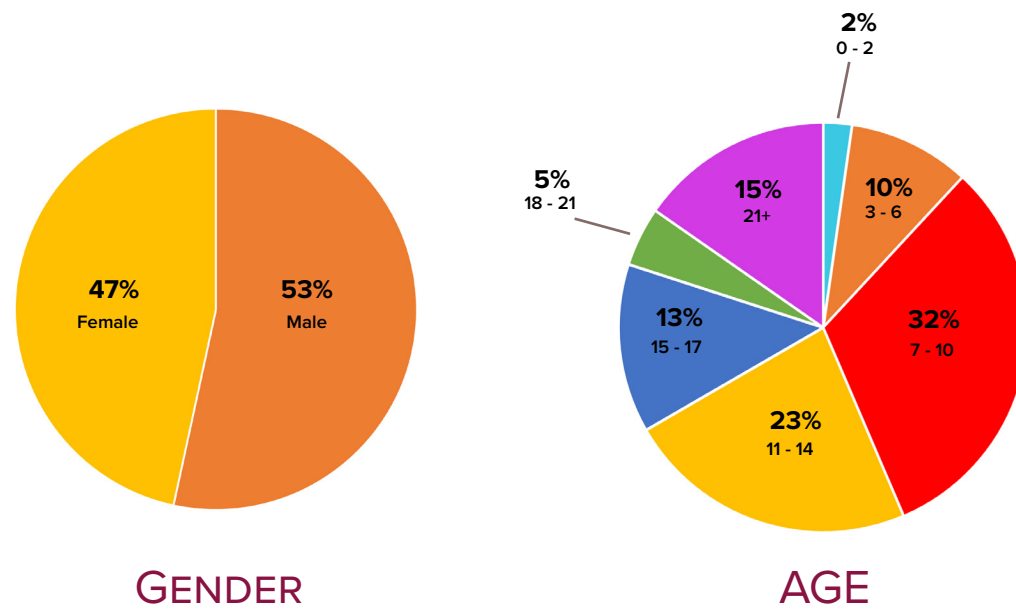
Regardless of their history or circumstance, our aim is to provide these individuals with an environment of healing, safety and opportunity to create their future.

Adults with complex needs will not “bootstrap” themselves out of their plight and into prospering futures. They critically depend on our professional intervention and partnership.

Through counseling, health care, life skills, employment training and other services, we help them find their place in the world.

**Our Programs for People with Developmental Disabilities Include: Day Habilitation, Keon Programs of Abbott House (SEMP, Pre Voc, Comm Hab, Access VR, Respite Services) and Residential Housing.** To learn more about these programs visit [www.abbotthouse.net](http://www.abbotthouse.net).

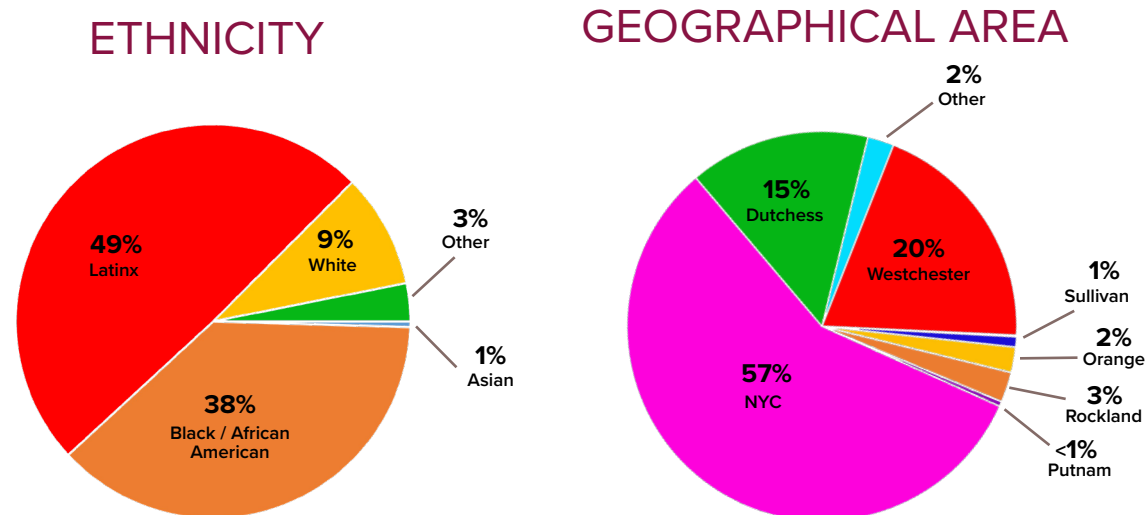
# Who We Served



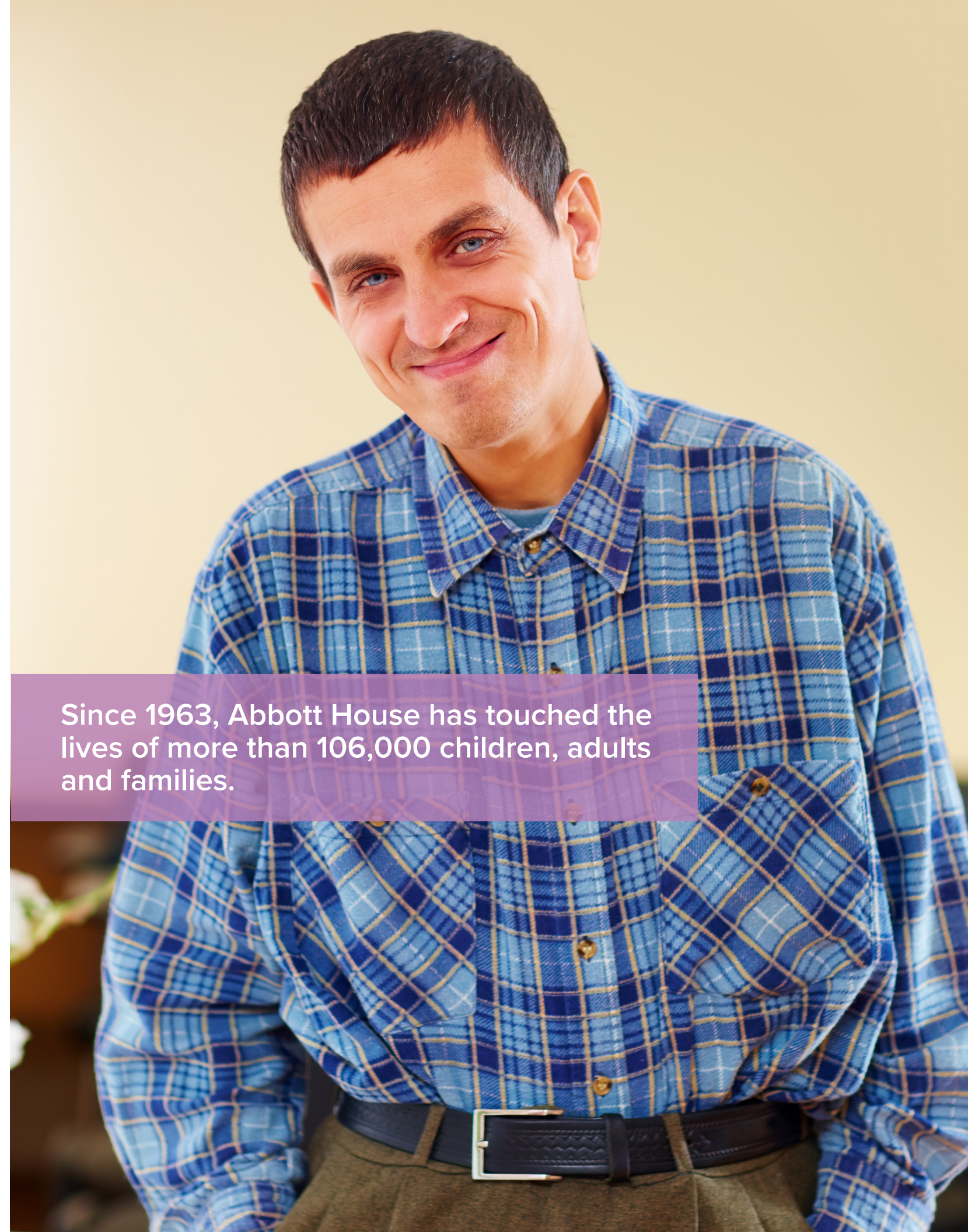
## Demographics

Total Individuals Directly Served in 2020:

**4,670**



Since 1963, Abbott House has touched the lives of more than 106,000 children, adults and families.



# Financial Overview

## Revenue

(7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019)

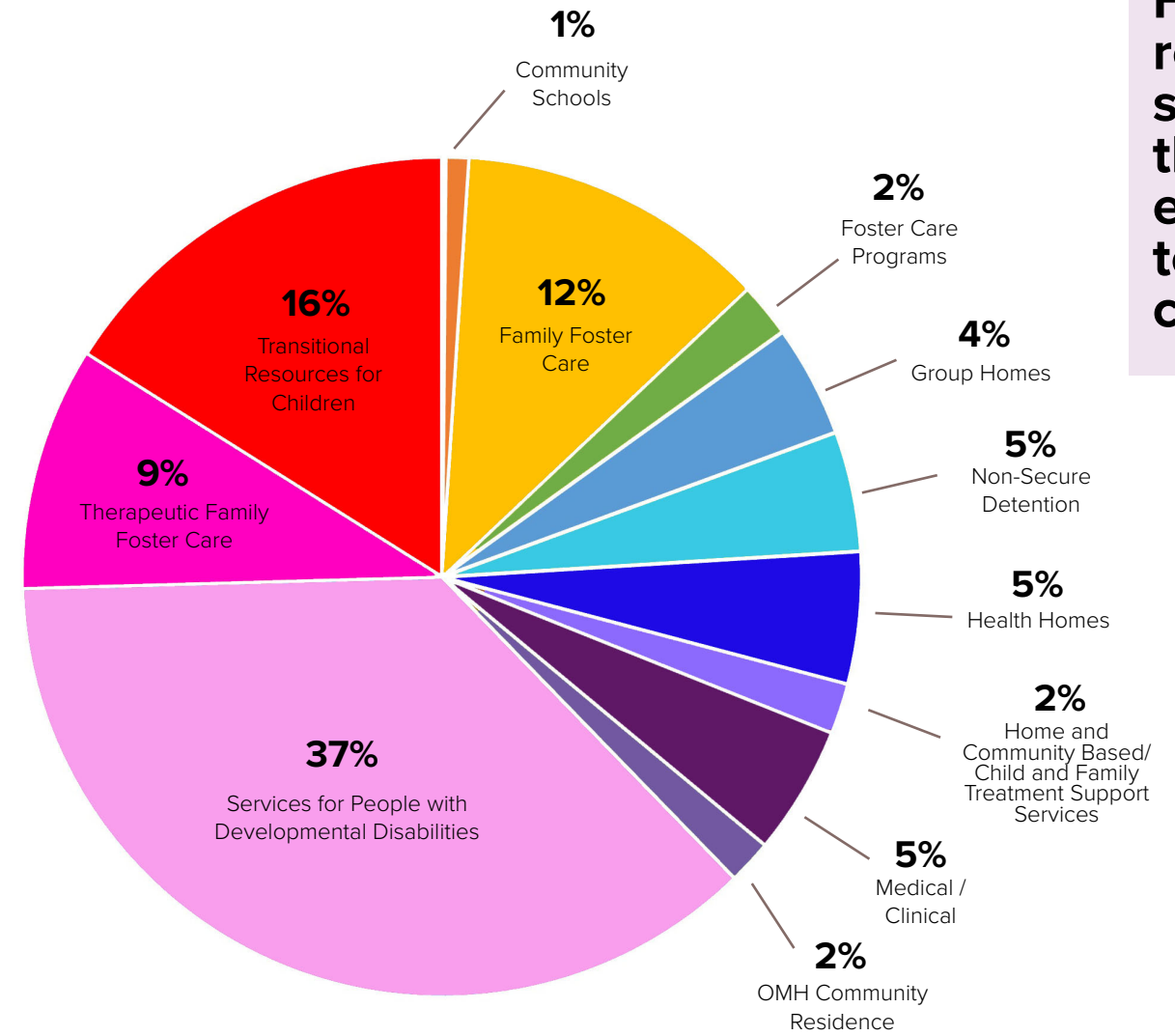
Government Contracts and Grants	\$47,981,604
Contributions	\$609,299
Rent Income	\$48,000
Other	\$489,154

**\$49,128,057**

## Expenses

Program Services	\$44,450,783
Management and General/Fund Raising	\$4,873,810

**\$49,324,593**



**How our revenue serves those entrusted to our care:**

## Thank You To Our Government Partners:

NYS-OCFS, NYS-OMH, NYS-OPWDD, NYC-ACS, NYC-DOE, HHS-ORR, DCMH-Westchester, Dutchess DSS, Herkimer DSS, Orange DSS, Putnam DSS, Rockland DSS, Saratoga DSS, Schenectady DSS, Sullivan DSS, Ulster DSS, Westchester DSS



# Stories of Hope

## John

For many young adults, leaving “the nest” is an exciting time of newfound independence whether that means beginning college, technical school, or another path to adulthood.

Now, imagine this moment without any parental support - no one to rely on if you cannot afford groceries or the rent. Beyond housing and finances, parents offer other kinds of support; they listen, and they give advice as you make critical decisions that may affect the course of your life. For young adults who age out of foster care, this moment is less of a transition and more of a leap. It is a stressful time filled with extraordinary challenges.

Abbott House works hard to prepare our youth to be ready for their futures. For one young man named John, who was aging out of foster care after living with us for eight years, this support truly was a lifeline.

***By remaining dependable and consistent, group home staff focus on healing, empowerment, and independence. Perhaps most importantly however, they offer hope.*** - Jeff Shapiro, VP of Programs, Residential & Group Home Services

For several reasons, John was under-prepared for his transition to adulthood. He was unable to save a significant amount of money, and due to his financial situation, he became withdrawn and hopeless as he began to imagine his future outside of the safety net of Abbott House.

At one point, he requested to sign out of our program and risk becoming homeless, because he swore he would never return to a shelter due to the trauma he had suffered while living at one as a child.



Our team, led by Program Director Richard Griffin, Unit Administrator Ieshea Green and Social Worker Andrew Lopez, knew this decision would affect John’s chances at the successful future he deserved and assured him they would do everything in their power to help.

Together, we found a rental that fits his financial needs and is within a seven-mile range of a significant adult resource and social worker.

Once John signed the lease, *we helped him create a home* through partnerships that enabled him to furnish it with a bed, dresser, nightstands and lamps. We made sure he had essential items like glassware, silverware, pots and pans. Thanks to his social worker’s contacts, he even secured a job with a moving company, which is located exactly 1.4 miles from his apartment! In fact, John has access to banking, the Metro-North Railroad, a supermarket, and shopping all within one mile of his apartment. Most importantly, he has a family at Abbott House. We are invested in his future, and we will never be far away.

The successful transition of our youth is one of the many ways we make promising futures a reality!

## Grace

Grace is a third-grader, who loves all things pink and glittery. She enjoys playing with her peers and is a sociable, kind, and curious child. She draws pictures of herself, happily posing with a friend or one of her three sisters, usually in settings that she imagines to be far away such as a white sandy beach or castle on a hill. A word of praise from her teacher makes her smile ear to ear.



Though, there is more to Grace’s story. She has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and has difficulty interpreting the feelings and intentions of others as well as regulating her own emotions. She also suffers from seizures and several co-existing learning disabilities. All of this challenges Grace’s ability to cope and respond to the world around her.

Her parents do their best to care for Grace and her three sisters, but it is not always easy. Her mom faces her

own physical, emotional, and cognitive challenges, and Grace’s dad works long hours to provide a stable home life for the family of six.

Grace’s classroom setting doesn’t make things any easier. Her teacher must provide academic support to 12 kids in a self-contained special education class while half log on remotely. At times, peer-to-peer encounters result in outbursts.

During the pandemic, Grace’s parents were two of the many parents struggling to adapt to a virtual classroom. For Grace, who thrived on routine, the switch to remote learning and then back to a hybrid classroom setting was unsettling. Even the concept of wearing a mask and remaining socially distant created anxiety. When Grace began exhibiting aggressive behaviors both in the classroom and at home, her family was referred to Abbott House.

The Abbott House Community School Resource Program takes a holistic approach to advocating on behalf of families and connecting them to mental health support or community resources. Our team is dedicated to assisting at-risk students by stepping into classrooms and finding creative ways to help children succeed regardless of the circumstances.

*(continued on next page)*

Led by Program Director Rebecca Valenzuela and Clinician Fatima Amr, we began working with Grace's family and teacher to help her learn ways to regulate her emotions. Part of the classroom intervention plan included creating a de-escalation corner, a quiet area with bean bag chairs and soothing materials to help children calm down when they are upset. In addition, sensory bins, filled with tactile objects like silly putty or sand, were created to help children relax and improve concentration.



Fatima also began holding Meditation Mondays and Yoga Thursdays, which is a time for all children to practice the art of mindfulness. The kids excitedly grab their yoga mats and enjoy the sensory experience of spraying them with Eucalyptus mist. Grace is often leading the way.

In addition to the classroom intervention, our team connected Grace's family to mental health

***"When you witness a child having difficulty regulating his or her own emotions, the last thing you want is for that child to feel like they don't belong. It is our job to make sure that all students feel safe, valued, and wanted within our walls."*** - Rebecca Valenzuela, Program Director, Community Schools

resources. In a matter of weeks, we saw vast improvements in her behaviors, both at home and in school.

Through regular therapy and treatment, she is succeeding academically, socially, and emotionally, but Grace's story is far from over. Like so many children who rely on our programs, there will be good days and bad days, but one thing is certain: she will always have a support system at Abbott House – we will be there cheering her on every step of the way.

## Wayne

Caring for aging family members or an ill spouse is something many of us must face at one time or another – but for parents with a child who has developmental or intellectual disabilities, the future is always on their minds – and so is the worry. They often wonder what will happen to their adult child when they are no longer able to care for them due to their own age or illness.

These thoughts bring with them all the uncertainty and fear that one would imagine. Will my adult child feel loved if I'm not physically with them? Will he or she be safe?

For Wayne's mom, the decision to transition her adult son to residential care did not come without deep reservations. You see, this would not be the first time that Wayne had lived in this kind of setting. As a child, Wayne lived in a group home, but his mom decided to bring him back home because she felt it was not the right fit. However, a bright spot of that experience was a relationship Wayne's family forged with a caring young woman named Lindsey. They did not know it at that time, but their paths would cross again. This time, at Abbott House.

Wayne has autism. He exhibits many challenging behaviors and uses minimal words to communicate, but his smile will tell you how he is feeling. He loves animals, water and spending time with his family going on nature walks. In fact, these are the times when Wayne is the happiest. He thrives in the sensory experience of being outdoors in the woods – the crisp air on his face, the rustling leaves of the trees. The sights, sounds and smells of the earth instill in him a sense of wonderment, and being with his family is Wayne's comfort zone.

Family members play a critical role in supporting and advocating for loved ones with autism. While Wayne's parents are separated, they remain active in his life, along with his big brother and his mom's boyfriend. His support system was about to grow even bigger.

When Wayne's mom, his primary caregiver, became ill last year, his behaviors became extremely difficult to handle and she needed additional support to care for him. *As fate would have it, mom ran into Lindsey Emmerich, that caring young woman from years before*, who is now the Director of Services for People with Developmental Disabilities at Abbott House.

Over a six-month period, Lindsey spent a lot of time advising his family and planning for the challenges ahead. Creating a new home environment had to happen gradually if it were to be successful – and it would be just as much a transition for his family as it was for Wayne.

The plan involved a number of coordinated visits including family-style dinners around the table with his peers. He adapted well, and eventually, the day trips turned into sleepovers with the assurance that his family would never be far away.

Lindsey led our team of specialists at Abbott House in developing a Social Story, a tool to help Wayne identify important cues in social situations, rules, routines, and expectations. And they always made sure to have his favorite snack on hand - Gatorade and chips.

This was the beginning of a new chapter of independence for Wayne; a moment for him to continue to grow and thrive. More importantly, a moment that gave his mom the comfort of knowing that he would never be alone or forgotten.

Wayne's mom can now focus on caring for herself with less stress while continuing to be a strong advocate for him. The entire family gets together in person twice a month. They come to Wayne's new home for dinner and go on nature hikes just like they did before. They are making new memories, *and just being together as a family*. They trust he is in good hands at Abbott House and that no matter what lies ahead, he will never have to face it alone.







Thank you to  
our essential  
worker warriors.



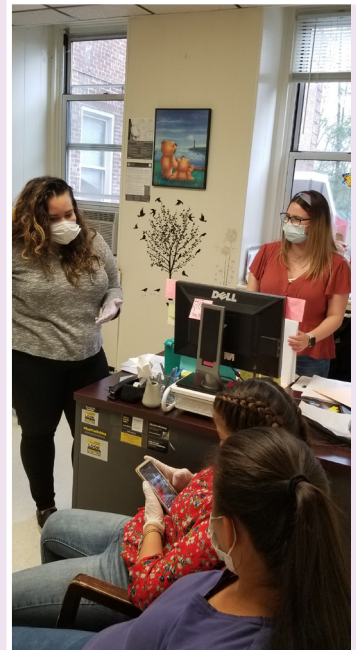
*In Loving Memory:*

Howard Anders  
Dwayne Foreman  
Giovanni Freda  
Sheila Saintia

*We pause to remember four beautiful members of the Abbott House family who lost their battle with COVID-19. Their spirit lives on in our tireless commitment to caring for those most in need.*

# Heroes Work Here.

Abbott House is incredibly grateful to our dedicated staff for continuing to provide around-the-clock support for unaccompanied minors, children in foster care, struggling families and adults with developmental disabilities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize the incredible strain they are under themselves, resulting from school cancellations and the responsibility of caring for their own children and family members. We are so appreciative that they soldier on in caring for those in need in our Abbott House family. Their commitment is both humbling and awe-inspiring.



*“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”*

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

# Made Possible By You

- **YOU** helped us create a music and reading space for kids and adults to de-stress, feel the power of music and connect with their emotions.
- **YOU** helped ensure our staff and clients had ample personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies during the height of the pandemic and beyond.
- **YOU** facilitated virtual tutoring sessions for children in foster care and donated laptops to ensure a smooth transition to remote learning.
- **YOU** provided over 100 Christmas and Thanksgiving meals for families throughout New York City and the Hudson Valley.
- **YOU** raised the self esteem of kids and adults by decorating hundreds of homemade Kindness Jars filled with positive messages of hope.
- **YOU** reduced the hardship on our foster families, group homes and individuals by collecting donations such as new clothing, furniture, bikes, carseats, school supplies, backpacks and other essentials.
- **YOU** celebrated our frontline heroes by sending virtual messages of hope and supporting our first virtual gala, Hooray For Our Heroes.
- **YOU** helped ease stress on essential staff by offering virtual art therapy and health and wellness opportunities for self-care, an important method of reducing trauma.
- **YOU** used your creativity to come up with pandemic-friendly interventional activities for our adults.
- **YOU** made the holidays special for kids and adults in care by collecting more than 1,200 toys, games, gift cards and other wishlist items.
- **YOU** reminded kids in foster care that they matter by donating travel bags and duffels for them to transport their belongings with dignity.

**+ \$241,695 was awarded through grants to provide skill building, education, cultural enrichment, and recreation activities.**

**+ Over \$100,000 worth of in-kind donations were made that positively impacted the lives of all who rely on Abbott House.**



## 2020 Agency Achievement Highlights:

**100%** of all unaccompanied minors deemed “medically fragile” received personalized one-on-one care and supervision by youth specialists in the **TRC Program**.

We provided care and services for 94 additional people with developmental disabilities by merging with The Keon Center and opening **Keon Programs of Abbott House**.

The **Foster Care, Therapeutic Foster Care, and Group Home Programs** received multiple awards from NYC ACS (Administration of Children’s Services) for **excellence in service, excellence in practice, outstanding foster parents, and meeting kin-gap permanency and adoption goals**.

Attendance Mentors were introduced to families with children struggling with chronic absenteeism as a part of the **Community Schools Program**. As a result, both schools reached their goal of **94%** overall attendance within a year.

All staff received baseline trauma training, strengthening our commitment to being a **trauma informed care agency**.

We transitioned **volunteers** to “pandemic-friendly” activities including virtual tutoring, yoga, live-streamed meditation, and video guided art therapy.

“**Incredible Years and Safe Care**,” a preventive program for families that offers parenting skills training, has increased its participation success rate from **72% in 2019 to 96% in 2020**.

We developed a website to assist families during **COVID-19** that shared resources such as where to access food pantries, mental health services, housing assistance, and free internet. **This streamlined the referral process for teachers to assist in getting students the help they needed in the Community Schools.**



# Our Supporters

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 Jose Gomez-Miranda  
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 Jaime Gorelick  
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 Mark and Wendy Greenspan  
 Steve Greider and Vicki Kroviak

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## The story of Abbott House would not be complete without mentioning our important connection to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Edith and Grace Abbott were sisters with legendary reputations in the social justice and social service movements of the early 20th century. In 1963 a child-welfare agency bearing their name was opened in Westchester, New York on the bucolic grounds of what was once a 42-room Tudor Estate in Irvington-on-Hudson.

From the start, Abbott House has been in or near the vanguard of the theory and practice of social service, adapting its practice for children and adults with complex needs, as an understanding of optimal human development has progressed. From humble beginnings in the mid-50s, taking available space for children in the then “Irvington House,” another organization on the forefront, developing new antibiotic treatments for children with rheumatic fever.

Two days before Christmas in 1963, Abbott House formally became the sole occupant of the building and grounds and proceeded to expand and evolve its practice of caring for children with complex needs, from trauma-ridden environments, in group home settings - consistent with the gold standard thinking of the day.



**On October 29, 1965, Abbott House held its first annual dinner, with the invocation spoken by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Entitled, “The Dignity of Family Life,” King sounded themes of community, identity, and family particularly appropriate to the times and the abiding beliefs of Edith and Grace Abbott. “Who is my neighbor?” he challenged. “A great man (has) the capacity to project the “I” into “thou.”**

Dr. King’s words found common ground with the Abbott sisters, and common ground with the history of Abbott House yet to be written.

More than half a century later, with the memory of Dr. King’s words never far from our thoughts, we are proud to say that we have touched the lives of more than 106,000 individuals.

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