

Our House - Our Story



OUR HOUSE

Where Opportunity Lives!

ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016



A New Chapter



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MISSION



OHI: The mission of Our House, Inc. is (1) to provide healthy and stimulating environments for youth and adults with developmental and other disabilities through the provision of community residences, employment opportunities, social programs and other supports designed to help them achieve their full potential for living meaningful and productive lives; and (2) to provide affordable housing to low income individuals, consistent with IRS guidelines for low income housing programs, as a means of relieving the poor and distressed.

OHF: To provide private financial support to Our House, Inc., (OHI) a not-for-profit public agency that provides housing, employment, and other social services to individuals with developmental disabilities.





Message from our President and CEO

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

One year as President and CEO of Our House has been an exciting new chapter in the Our House Our Story. It is a privilege for me to report on another outstanding year. It is only through your support and all of us working together that we continue to make a significant difference in the lives of adults with development disabilities.

A new chapter...

Joe Medler joined us as Director of the Residential Program in May. He brings over 20 years of experience working with adults with developmental disabilities.

Patrick Kelly was promoted to the Director of Employment Services Program in May. Patrick has devoted the past 10 years of his career to the Our House Supported Employees.

Nicole Wehr was promoted to Director of Day Programs in June. She has been with the Our House family since 2012, when she began as the Director of Hope Autism Solution, Basking Ridge.

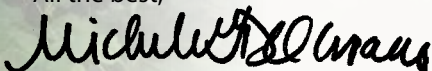
Each of these directors infuses passion and fresh ideas, making the services Our House provides even better. I am thrilled to introduce these members of our Executive Team.

A big thank you to Hope Autism Foundation for their continued support of growing the Hope Autism Solutions program and their generous funding of over \$50,000 last year. We are so grateful for this partnership.

Finally, Our House Foundation has again provided generous support of our programs. Because of your continued support, they were able to grant us \$456,000, which allowed us to enhance and expand many of the services that we provide. We have been able to renovate our well-loved homes and programs, provide recreational experiences as well as nutritional and wellness coaching and many, many other opportunities. On behalf of our residents, program participants and the community members served by Our House, Thank you! I look forward to another incredible year.

Together we change lives.

All the best,



Michele DelCorsano
President/CEO

Thank you from the Foundation 2016



Dear Friends,

Thank you! We appreciate your continued support which enables the Foundation to provide financial assistance to the Our House Inc. (OHI) programs for the developmentally disabled community. Here are some of the projects we funded with \$456,000 in donations:

- Health and Wellness Program for staff and residents
- Maintenance of all of our 37 residences (ramps, roofs, generators, furnaces, stonework, etc.)
- Recreation activities such as cooking classes, YMCA memberships, art classes, yoga classes, trips and the Annual Carnival

A special thank you to the Our House staff who wrote notes to our families and donors last November. The staff shared first-hand how they witness daily the difference your support makes in the lives of the residents, clients and community members we serve. This annual letter writing campaign raised \$159,000 for Our House, Inc.

We celebrated the third annual luminary fundraiser "Light the Way", held by our neighbors, Hugo and Janet Barth in December. It was a great success raising \$3,675, which was used to purchase holiday gifts for our residents without families as well as underwrite the residents' holiday party.

Thanks to Sandie Picon, who for the 5th year, has spearheaded a personalized writing campaign to benefit the Artie Picon Recreation Fund. (This fund was set up in memory of Artie Picon, an Our House friend and supporter). Donations made to the fund enrich the lives of the individuals we serve by allowing them to participate in a variety of recreation classes such as art, cooking, drama, computer, fitness, attend plays and sporting events, as well as underwrite the cost of the most anticipated event of the year held in June - the Annual Carnival. Thank you to all that contributed. The fund raised over \$6,000.

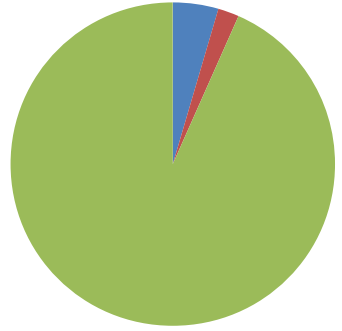
We are so grateful for the generous support we receive from the many friends of Our House. Together we will continue to make a difference to the many individuals with developmental disabilities in the Our House community.

Catherine B. Colford

Catherine Colford
Director of Development

FUNDING SOURCES

Our House Foundation	\$456,435.00	4%
Fee for Service	\$237,896.00	2.0%
State	\$10,625,878.00	94.0%



Alberto and Maria T. Luzarrago Charitable Trust

Autism Speaks

Capozzola Foundation

CR Bard Foundation

EJ Grassman Trust

Hope Autism Foundation

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Summit Area Public Foundation

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

A number of awards were given to employees this year for their outstanding service to Our House, Inc.

Employee of the Year 2015

Erin Higgins - Life Coach, Hope Autism Solutions

Louise B. White Award for Lifetime Service

Nicole Wehr – Director, Hope Autism Solutions

Outstanding Employee Award Recipients

September 2015 – Michelle Dalce-Nelson
Counselor, Glendale Group Home

March 2016 – Omon Ologdosele
Awake Overnight Counselor, Bound Brook Group Home

June 2016 – Joshua Thompson-Quartey
Awake Overnight Counselor, Windsor Way Group Home

HUMAN RESOURCES 2015 - 2016

Our House, Inc. has a total of 225 employees.

Our House, Inc. boasts 44 employees in the “Lifers Club”, who are employees with 5 years or more of service.

Lifer's:

2 Employees – 30 years plus

4 Employees – 20 years plus

4 Employees – 15 years plus

6 Employees – 10 years plus

28 Employees – 5 years plus



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES



Our House has 37 residential homes and apartments in five counties serving 89 people with developmental disabilities. We continue to strive to provide affordable housing and are looking to develop an additional home in 2017.

There are three types of living arrangements offered by Our House to individuals with developmental and other disabilities: Group Homes, where four residents share a home and receive 24 hour staff support; Supervised Apartments, where residents live with apartment mates, receive 24 hour support from staff and, based on their skills and abilities, may have hours of unsupervised time daily; and Supported Living Apartments, where residents live alone or with an apartment mate. On a weekly basis, staff provides each resident with varying amounts of support based on individual needs. Help is available through a 24 hour on call service.

Our Story...



Maria joined the Our House family in March of 2012 and moved into our West Orange group home. Three years later after working on her skills to become more self sufficient she moved into a supervised apartment in Westfield where she enjoys more independence and pals around with her housemates.

In Westfield, Maria has a very busy schedule volunteering during the week. She enjoys her time at Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank and Care One. In the evenings she participates in many recreation programs such as bowling, arts and crafts, and monthly dances. She loves to make gifts for her family, most of all Maria loves her family and friends. When she sees a family member, especially her mom, her eyes light up!

On weekends and some evenings, she enjoys going to the movies and spending time with her Mom and family.



HOUSING

We continue to be able to provide new housing thanks to funding from our local municipalities as well as State funders and the Our House Foundation. Many of the individuals, moving into our newest developments are returning to New Jersey from out of state providers or institutions.

Our newest group home is in Livingston. This home is currently being renovated and will be home to four adults with developmental disabilities. We anticipate the opening to be in the fall of 2016.

Not only do we build new homes, but also renovate our current houses to keep them up to date and safe. This year we focused on handicapped accessibility of our existing homes. A new ADA bathroom, laundry closet and ramp were



added to the Bridgewater group home (photo) This home will also be receiving a new roof and siding soon, thanks to a Somerset County CDBG 2016 grant.

We will be in construction this fall on a similar handicapped accessibility project at our second Bridgewater group home. When the project is finished, the home will be able to accommodate two non-ambulatory individuals with front and rear entrance ramps, an ADA bathroom, modified bedroom entry door and an accessible laundry closet.



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



Our House, Inc. Employment Services in its 28th year, provides competitive employment, transition services, on the job assessments, job sampling, and job stabilization to students and adults with disabilities. We are thrilled to serve over 115 individuals in Bergen, Union, Somerset, Morris, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Passaic, and Middlesex Counties. Our partnerships continue to expand and we currently work with over 40 companies in our program.

Our House Inc., continues to evolve to meet the needs of the community through staff training. Staff increase their knowledge by attending classes offered through the Mental Health Association of NJ, Elizabeth M. Boggs Center, TACE, Youth Consultation Services as well as the Association of People Supporting Employees First.

The Job Sampling Program is in its fourth year, with a grant funded by Provident Bank Foundation. The funds help new referrals, students in transition, and individuals looking to change their career path. It allows individuals the opportunity to sample jobs they may be interested in and is used as a working interview for employers. A total of 65 individuals participated and 17 individuals received paid jobs as a result of their job sampling experience. The types of jobs sampled ranged from office work, maintenance, child care, food services and retail services at companies such as Nokia, Old Navy and Greenbrook Manor Care.

This program started in 1988 as one of the first supported employment programs in New Jersey, Our House, Inc. continues to be one of the premier agencies in central New Jersey for supported employment services.

Our Story...

Jessica joined Our House as a supported employee in September of 2012 receiving trainings on job interviewing, resume writing, and job skills working one on one with a job coach. Since November 2013, she has been employed by Acme and loves it. During her speech at the Our House Grape Debate Event on March 11, 2016, she credits her successful employment to her job coach. Jessica's dream is to become a Zumba instructor. To that end, she is working on her certifications and practicing so she can ultimately teach a class.



VOLUNTEER ACTION PROGRAM

The Volunteer Action Program (VAP) expanded to sixteen groups serving forty four individuals. VAP participants volunteer their time at organizations such as Franklin Food Bank, Duke Farms, Hillsborough Township, Meals on Wheels, Care One, planting and gardening projects to name just a few.



Over twenty program VAP participants and community members attend quarterly meeting as part of the Community Spirit Club. They cover topics based on their concerns they have come across in the community so they can come up with solutions together.

The VAP participants also enjoyed going on some outings together such as Universal Circus, Jenkinson Aquarium, Somerset Hill Playhouse, and the Popcorn Zoo.



Our Story...

John joined the Our House Family five years ago. He moved into the Millington Group Home and immediately bonded with his housemates.

John loves that he is part of the Volunteer Action Program spending his days in the community “giving back”. One of his favorite activities is delivering meals to the homebound. John has a terrific personality and looks forward to seeing his new friends on his delivery route.

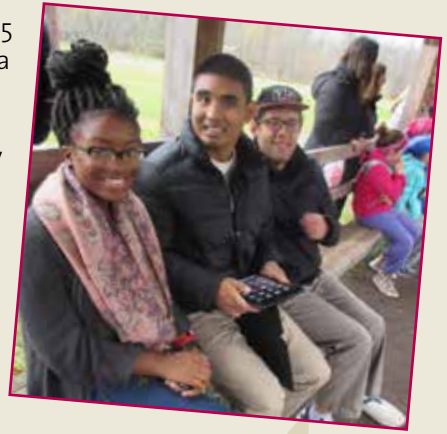
In his spare time, John loves to DJ. At many of the parties and dances at Our House, he shares his talents.



HOPE AUTISM SOLUTIONS

To make a difference in the lives of 65 adults on the autism spectrum it takes a village...

Hope Autism Solutions (HAS) is a daily living enhancement program for adults living with autism that operates year round and includes door-to-door transportation for all participants. It is only through the collaboration of resources that this innovative supportive program is available to young adults on the autism spectrum. With the well-designed and individually tailored support, these adults can obtain the social, vocational, educational and behavioral health services necessary to enable them to lead meaningful, fulfilling and productive lives within their own communities.



Sixty-five individuals are currently being served in three program sites. In 2012, the first site opened in Basking Ridge. Two additional sites followed: one in New Providence in 2014 and a second location in Basking Ridge in 2015. (A fourth site is planned to open in Montclair in 2017.)

The program is referred to as a “Program Without Walls.” Trained behaviorists and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) provide needed supports for all HAS participants. This includes the development of behavior support plans as needed. Transportation is provided to community sites where tasks are assigned to meet the individual’s interests and ability levels.



The participants are out and about in their community on a daily basis volunteering at Duke Farms, Furniture Assist, MedShare, and at many local businesses and participating in recreational programming such as swimming, soccer, and yoga classes. Life enhancement skills are practiced at each program site including weekly cooking class, laundry practice, and developing independence with activities of daily living.



David graduated from the Developmental Learning Center (DLC) in Warren in June, 2015 and started his transition into adult services through becoming a participant at Hope Autism Solutions in New Providence. Since joining the program, David has participated in all that Hope Autism Solutions has to offer including recreational programming, volunteerism, and developing daily living skills. David has made connections with staff and peers and is currently in a group with two other DLC grads, which makes him feel right at home. David has attended two overnight camping trips at the Frost Valley YMCA in the Catskills, NY. He enjoyed activities such as the nighttime hayride and making s'mores around the campfire!



INNOVATIONS

Innovations, which opened in August 2015, in collaboration with Youth Consultation Services, is a day program dedicated to providing adults with developmental disabilities as well as mental health issues an appropriate program. Innovations provides an environment that supports career development through vocational exploration, community integration, and interpersonal skill development. The goal of this program is to help the individual succeed in an environment that is designed to address difficult behaviors displayed and change them into positive experiences for personal and professional growth.





Some of the activities the participants have been enjoying over the past year:

- volunteering at the food bank
- sorting eye glasses for Jersey Cares
- helping at SWAGG (community gardening)

The participants continue to work on their skills as individuals as well as a group. They enjoy a busy weekly schedule volunteering in the community but take time out to go bowling, visit the Y for fitness and swimming as well as practice yoga and art therapy.



Keith currently lives at home with his parents. He was one of the first to join the Innovations program. Since he began the Innovations program he has shown remarkable improvement in his social skills, personal hygiene and manners. Keith enjoys keeping busy by participating in all activities and has continued to succeed. While at the program, Keith likes his quiet time too.

RECREATIONAL SERVICES



Socialization is paramount for the happiness and well-being of the individuals we serve.

Residents, supported employees and community members, under the direction of our staff, practice social skills, leadership skills, and are encouraged to participate. The summer is kicked off with the most anticipated event – the Annual Carnival, held each year at a local park and features entertainment, crafts, games and food for all to enjoy. This wonderful event is underwritten by the Artie Picon Recreation Fund

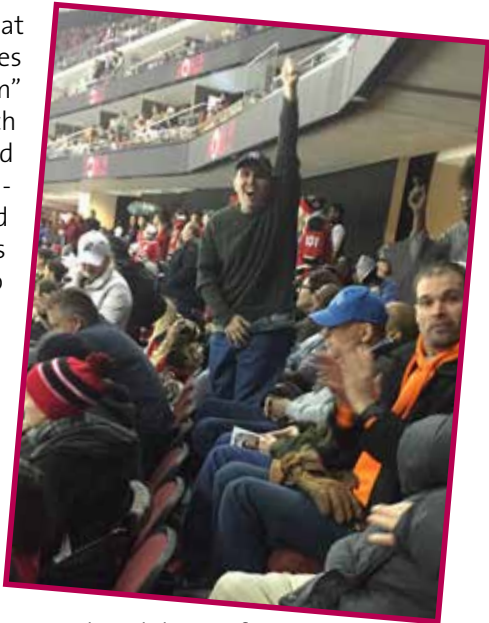


so that everyone is able to attend.



Dances are held on a regular basis at the Connection for Women and Families in Summit. The second annual “prom” was held in May. There was much excitement with the newly crowned king and queen (Patrick and Suzanne - see photo). The social interaction, and friendships discovered at the dances have made a positive impact on so many lives.

There are so many fun things offered in the recreation program geared to all interests. Some of the activities enjoyed by the individuals served by Our House include: golf, cooking classes, yoga, and movies under the stars.



Some of the trips they took – vacationing at a beach house for a week, planetarium, Liberty Science Center, and the circus.



OUR HOUSE FOUNDATION

Update on the happenings this past year-



The 25th Achievement Awards was held on September 17, 2015 at L'Affaire in Mountainside. The Masquerade themed event was attended by staff, families, friends and award recipients. It was an amazing evening of glamour, excitement and genuine pride as each member of the Our House community received an award highlighting their accomplishments of the year. Everyone stopped by the photo booth to take a glamour shot. Don't miss your opportunity to participate in this year's ad journal!

The 2015 letter writing campaign kicked off in November and was a great success raising over \$159,000. Board Members, staff and community members volunteered their time to write personalized notes to many of our donors.



Our fifth annual wine tasting event, The Grape Debate, was held on March 6th at the Basking Ridge Country Club. Thanks to Gary's Wine and Marketplace who provided an array of wines and spirits for tasting. Guests enjoyed sampling the various culinary stations while listening to the sounds of Clan McKay. The event raised \$68,000 which included a fabulous silent auction, 50/50 raffle and a wine pull featuring a variety wines valued from \$25 - \$100. Don't miss this fun event next year! Mark your calendars for the annual Grape Debate which will be held on March 3, 2017.



Our largest event, the 17th Annual Our House Our Run, held on May 21st, raised over \$150,000! Hundreds of runners and walkers filled the streets of Summit. Of course, the highlight of the day was the 13th Annual "Everyone's A Winner" Race for individuals of all ages with developmental and other disabilities. With John Elliott of CBS News as the official race starter, close to 50 participants were cheered on by spectators as they eagerly raced down Elm Street and made their way to the finish line. All the excitement was captured on camera and was aired on CBS News on Monday morning at 6:42am on May 23rd. If you missed seeing our residents and community members on television, check the link out on our facebook page "Our House Inc."

The Our House Foundation has had a successful year raising \$650,000 because of our generous supporters. Thank you to our community for your volunteerism and support! There are many opportunities to get involved with Our House. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Cathy Colford, Director of Development at 908-464-8008 ext. 122.



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- **Achievement Awards Dinner –**
September 29, 2016 – Mayfair Farms, West Orange
- **Annual Letter Writing Campaign kick off**
November 8, 2016
- **“The Grape Debate”**
March 3, 2017 – Basking Ridge Country Club
- **18th Annual Our House Our Run**
May 20, 2017 – Village Green in Summit