



C.I.T.Y. OF SUPPORT

Children In Therapy and You

C.I.T.Y. OF SUPPORT

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

MISSION

TO CREATE A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY, BOTH ONLINE AND IN PERSON, THAT SUPPORTS ALL FAMILIES NAVIGATING THE NEEDS OF THEIR CHILD IN THERAPY, REGARDLESS OF DIAGNOSIS.

CORE VALUES



CONNECTION

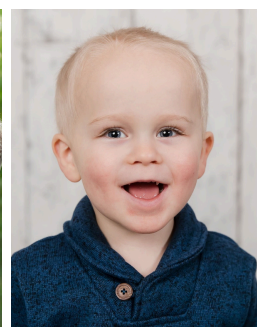


COLLABORATION



CELEBRATION

- WE WELCOME ALL FAMILIES & CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF DIAGNOSIS. WE UNDERSTAND NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE, FAMILIAR, OR UNDERSTOOD, AND WE BELIEVE ALL FAMILIES CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SUPPORT OF THIS UNIQUE COMMUNITY.
- RESOURCES & PROGRAMS ARE PROVIDED AT NO COST AND IN VARIOUS FORMATS (IN-PERSON & ONLINE OPTIONS) TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY FOR FAMILIES.
- WE STRIVE TO CONNECT FAMILIES TO OUR RESOURCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BASED ON CURRENT RESEARCH THAT SHOWS THAT CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL COMPLEXITY OFTEN TAKES A PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, & PSYCHOSOCIAL TOLL ON PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS.



MEET SOME OF THE AMAZING CHILDREN IN OUR C.I.T.Y.

C.I.T.Y. CLOSE-UPS

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"My youngest son Silas is the toughest and most resilient kid I know. What was supposed to be a routine C-section ended up with him being born in distress and needing to be transferred to a level 4 NICU. Six weeks later we were discharged with an NG feeding tube and a lot of unanswered questions! I'm so thankful for the C.I.T.Y. Facebook group as it helped me navigate his first year of life. We found out he has not only a pituitary disorder, but also a rare genetic syndrome. He's been in therapy both privately and through Early Intervention. He charms everyone he meets and all the doctors and nurses say he is the best patient!"

"We are proud of our son, Marc, for making many great strides. One, is his communication. Although non-verbal, he has increased the amount of gestures and ability to use his communication device. Secondly, he's now more independent such as taking the school bus by himself. Lastly, no matter how he is feeling, he always has a positive attitude."

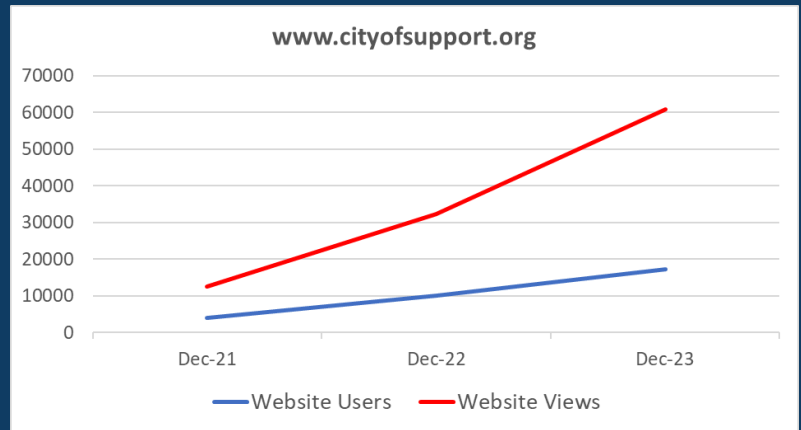
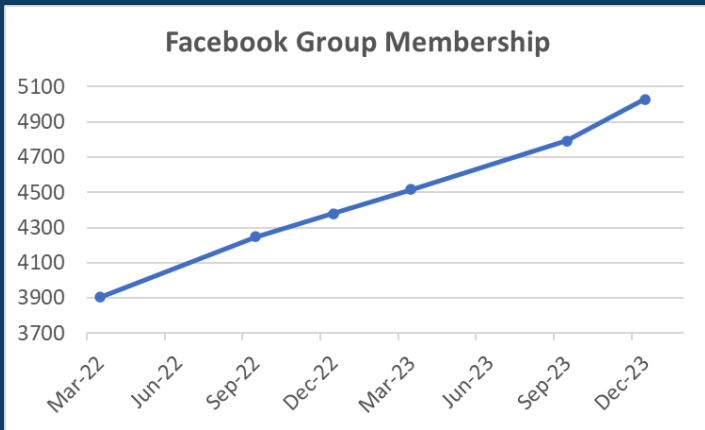


"Theo has a rare genetic condition known as Pelizaeus Merzbacher Disease. Severely affected, we were told Theo would likely not survive his first 2 years. We are extremely proud of Theo for his continued perseverance against staggering odds. He is now 6 years old and has learned to walk with a gait trainer and even ride an adaptive tricycle. Theo is a thrill seeker who loves to ride fast in his wheelchair and be pushed high on the swing. He wins the heart of everyone who meets him with his determination, his adventurous spirit and his signature smile. Though Theo's health is declining, he continues to shine as the brightest star at the center of our universe and we treasure every memory and every smile he shares with us."



CONNECTION

ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS & RESOURCES ARE OFFERED AT NO COST TO FAMILIES, AND MANY ARE AVAILABLE 24/7 ON OUR WEBSITE AND ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS.



- VIRTUAL PARENT MEET-UPS
- DADS HANGOUT GROUPS

- 1ST-EVER PARENT RETREAT
- FAMILY PLAYDATES



7,433

FOLLOWERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS OF ENGAGED PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS, & COMMUNITY MEMBERS



864

PARENTS WHO CONNECTED IN-PERSON AT C.I.T.Y. EVENTS THIS YEAR

“The network of families and therapists that CITY brings together is priceless. Being a parent to a special needs kiddo can be scary, and joyful, and overwhelming. For any of these moments, thanks to CITY, I know right where to go for advice, for expertise, for friendship, and for celebration.”

CONNECTION & OUTREACH

**CONNECTING C.I.T.Y.'S
NEWEST FAMILIES IN A
COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT**

"WELCOME TO OUR C.I.T.Y."

This program was developed specifically for families whose newborn is referred for therapy following their NICU stay. Upon discharge from the hospital, parents are immediately connected with a giftbag filled with resources & support from our CITY.



500

**BAGS DISTRIBUTED WITH
RESOURCES, WELCOME CARD,
PARENT LETTER, BOARD BOOK &
SMALL GIFTS ASSEMBLED BY
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN 2023**

**ONE-OF-A-KIND LEARNING
EXPERIENCE WHERE PARENTS
TEACH THE THERAPISTS**

**V.I.P. PROGRAM: "VALUING
THE INSIGHT OF PARENTS"**

"I wish this training could be mandatory for every Provider and Service Coordinator in our system. Whether you are new to Early Intervention or have been in the field for a long time, this experience will both reaffirm and reshape your practice. The information shared by these families is invaluable."

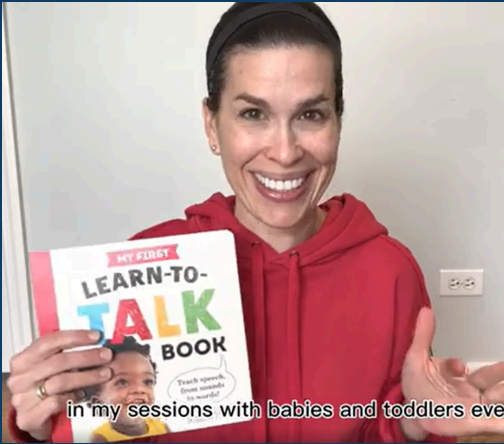


108

**GRADUATES FROM THE V.I.P.
PROGRAM THIS YEAR**

COLLABORATION

- “WE LOVE OUR C.I.T.Y.” MONTH COLLABORATIVE THERAPY TIPS
- ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT LIBRARY COLLECTION
- BI-ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING EVENTS
- ONLINE CLASSES/WEBINARS & COLLABORATIVE BLOG POSTS



27

VIDEOS OF THERAPY TIPS SHARED BY PROFESSIONALS DURING FEBRUARY 2023 FOR “WE LOVE OUR C.I.T.Y.” MONTH



803

NUMBER OF MATERIALS CHECKED OUT FROM THE ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT COLLECTION AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MEMORIAL LIBRARY THIS YEAR



146

PROFESSIONALS WHO ATTENDED BI-ANNUAL C.I.T.Y. NETWORKING EVENTS THIS YEAR

CELEBRATION

THIS YEAR, 119 GRADUATES REGISTERED TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR ANNUAL, FREE EVENT WHERE ALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE CELEBRATED.

- ANNUAL GRADUATION CELEBRATION
- TRIBUTE CONCERT/PARENTS NIGHT OUT

- BIRTHDAY BUDDIES
- CITY CLOSE-UPS

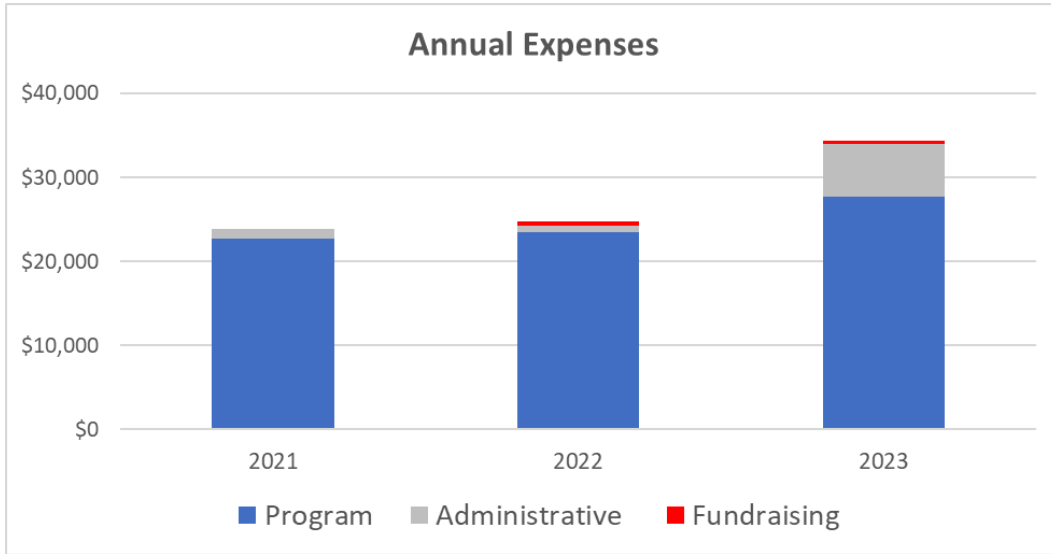


"We loved the special attention our son received when he got a medal that celebrated his milestones. He was absolutely beaming his smile was so large!"

"We've never been to an event like it!"



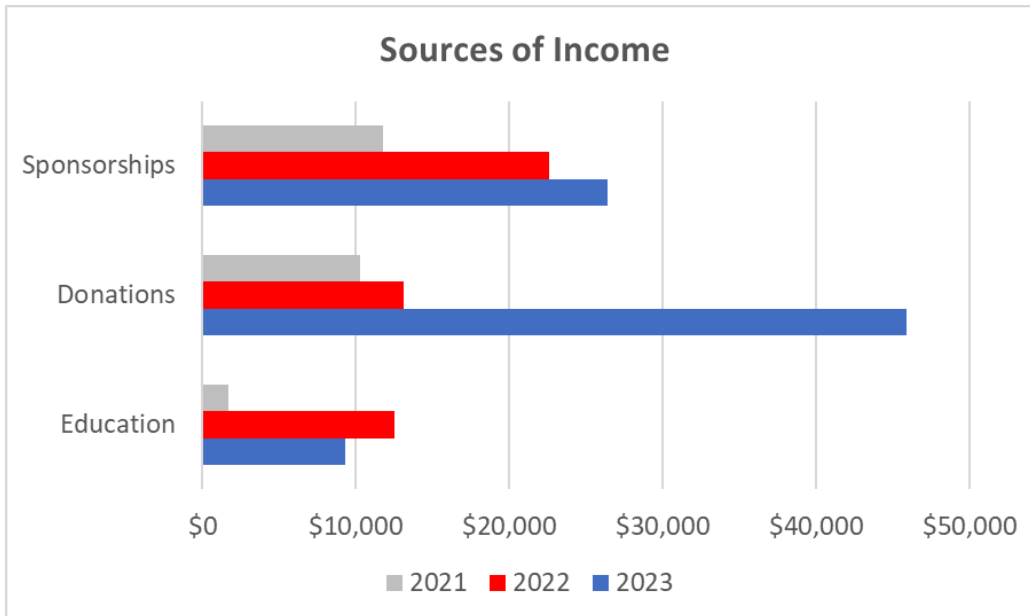
2023 FINANCES



IN 2023, 84% OF EXPENSES WERE USED SPECIFICALLY TO FUND C.I.T.Y. PROGRAMS

C.I.T.Y.'S BOARD CHAIR SPENT 965 VOLUNTEER HOURS DEVOTED TO THE RUNNING OF THIS ORGANIZATION IN 2023.

THAT'S AN EXTRA 80 HOURS/MONTH (20 HOURS/WEEK) IN ADDITION TO HER WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

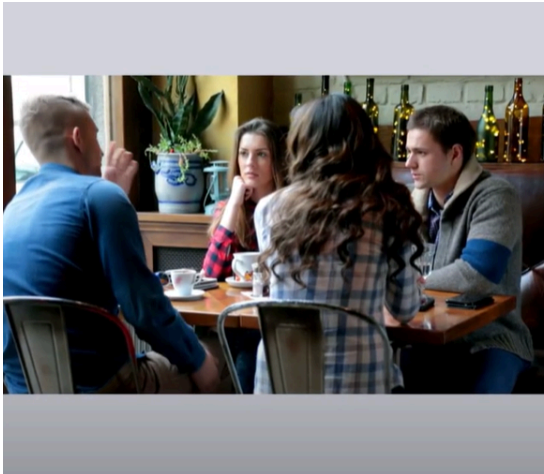


OUR COMMUNITY HAS DEMONSTRATED INCREASINGLY STRONG SUPPORT FOR C.I.T.Y, AS THEY RECOGNIZE THE NEED & IMPACT OF OUR ORGANIZATION

NOTABLY, C.I.T.Y. OF SUPPORT DOUBLED ITS RESERVE FUNDS WITHIN THE FY2023 ALONE.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR C.I.T.Y.

CREATING A PHYSICAL, CONVENIENT, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY CENTER THAT SPECIFICALLY WELCOMES CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS:
THE C.I.T.Y. WELCOME CENTER.



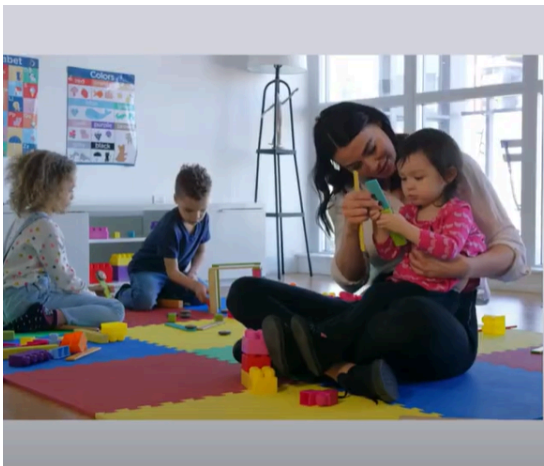
Parents could:

Meet new friends
Attend classes together
Enjoy quiet time
Grab a quick fitness break

Savor a cup of coffee
Plan private zoom meetings
Answer emails & phone calls
Explore a library of resources



WITH STRONG PARENT INTEREST AND FULL SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, THIS CENTER WOULD BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO INCREASE ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL SUPPORTS & RESOURCES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE FAMILY.



Children could:

Meet new friends
Have playgroups with peers
Bond with new caregivers

Enroll in family-fun classes
Explore different play spaces
Enjoy options for all ages



OUR NEXT STEP IS TO IDENTIFY & SUSTAIN FUNDING SOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT SUCH A SPACE WITH ONGOING REVENUE STREAMS, DONORS, & VOLUNTEERS

“This is a fantastic idea! It's so hard to make adult friends as a parent with our kids. I would love to be able to connect with others that have similar struggles that I could hang out with and foster a friendship.”

“It would be life-changing. Being a parent is lonely, being a parent of a kid who is different is so isolating that it's nearly impossible to socialize. My kids are isolated.”

“I would love something like this. As my daughter's disease progresses I no longer feel that our favorite play places are meant for us. Having somewhere we can go that is specifically for children with disabilities and their families would be so meaningful!”

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ALL OF OUR MOTIVATED VOLUNTEERS HAVE A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH C.I.T.Y, WHETHER IT BE AS A PARENT, PROFESSIONAL, OR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE



BETH DEITER

Founder & Board Chair
Speech-Language Pathologist



JILLIAN BURGARD

Business Owner in Applied
Behavior Analysis



DR. JAMES WEEDON

Developmental & Behavioral
Pediatrician



**MARIA
PAPANASTASSIOU**

Youth Librarian



SUSAN CHAVEZ

Parent Advocate



JEREMY JOSEPH

Fiduciary Financial Advisor



**WE WOULD LOVE TO
WORK WITH YOU!**

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www.cityofsupport.org

Contact us at: hello@cityofsupport.org