



COMMUNITY ACCESS  
UNLIMITED



NEW HORIZONS

2021  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



# MISSION

To provide community access through effective and comprehensive services to people with developmental disabilities, youth aging out of foster care and people with affordable housing needs, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives as citizens integrated into the community.

# VISION

We strive for our members to:

- Achieve economic self-sufficiency while being as productive as commensurate with their abilities
- Achieve independent living within the community according to their abilities, resources and needs
- Achieve a functional level of money management
- Achieve a satisfying social life
- Achieve a healthy lifestyle
- Achieve personal growth
- Achieve equal rights and self-determination

# VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe all our members have a right to:

- Community integration
- Holistic interactions as valued human beings
- Equal treatment as citizens
- Equal value as members of a social action movement
- Choice and self-determination
- Real lives in real homes

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## A Message from the Board President and Executive Director

Our theme for this year's annual report is "New Horizons," and it is apt to capture our progress and positive feelings about the future as CAU continues to serve individuals and families in New Jersey.

Our members have returned to many of their regularly scheduled programs and activities, including CAU's Day Program, the Academy of Continuing Education, overnight trips, recreation programs, and the Ira Geller Walkathon. New and returning events have brought us together in person to enjoy each other's company again. Over the past year, two couples who met as CAU members have been married!

CAU staff and members have transformed some challenges into opportunities for positive change. From tackling virtual education to finding the right support to be confident at a new job or new program, these adjustments have helped us grow to be more self-assured as we face the future.

In these pages you will read about the many services CAU provides and a few of the members we wish to acknowledge this year. With more than 42 years serving New Jersey, we have much to celebrate in advancing our mission to build a more inclusive and accessible community that is open to all.

In addition to continuing services and support coordination uninterrupted this year, we reopened our Academy of Continuing Education at a newly redesigned space in Roselle. We have also continued to expand employment services, including for youth members. Our summer internship program has returned with more than 30 youth gaining paid work experience in different fields this year. Services for adults now include assistance with costs related to accessing employment, such as child care and transportation for eligible individuals. These services are supporting more opportunities for New Jerseyans to find gainful employment.

We are excited to build on this progress next year. With a strong team and focus on empowering adult and youth members, we continue to see a bright future ahead for our members, staff and community partners.



**Harold J. Poltrock**

President- Board of Trustees



**Bernadette Griswold**

Executive Director



## CAU AT A GLANCE

More than 3,000 individuals and families across New Jersey are served by CAU programs that increase their stability, opportunities, independence and self-sufficiency. CAU continues to grow and enrich the lives of the people we serve every day. With Executive Director Bernadette Griswold leading the organization, CAU services are more comprehensive than ever, meeting the needs of members and offering opportunities to help them engage as citizens of the community.

We started our journey in 1979 with a single \$90,000 grant and a staff of 3 to integrate 20 people in Union County from developmental centers (institutions) into the community. CAU now operates a budget of \$72 million with a staff of over 1,000, serving individuals and families statewide. We own more than 270 housing units in Union County to offer a variety of accommodations meeting individuals' needs.

Our residential and support services are complemented by CAU's support coordination, allowing the agency to serve individuals and families across every county in the state.

CAU is committed to providing quality services and strives to build an accessible world where everyone can lead a fulfilling life as part of the community. We empower adults and youth who traditionally have had little support and no voice in society. We assist people with housing, life skills training, vocational skills, employment, health maintenance, money management, socialization, education, crisis intervention, civic activities and community support. Advocacy and recreation programs offer additional opportunities for members to connect with their communities throughout the year. Our advocacy programs for youth members and adults with disabilities offer training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights.

From accessible and affordable housing to education and life skills training, the variety of services at CAU allows members to engage with what they need to help increase their independence and meet their goals in life. The agency strives to empower members to reach their potential and enjoy rich lives with as much independence as possible.

CAU also serves as a resource for families through our Family Support Group, which includes presentations from professionals to help families navigate the world of disability services. We strive to share relevant news, service updates and local resources with our members and community and seek out new partnerships that continue to support the success of our members.



# TO OUR STAFF: THANK YOU **SO MUCH**

At Community Access Unlimited, we know that strong teamwork makes everything we do to enable members to live happy and fulfilling lives in the community possible. We would like to recognize our staff and the talent and dedication they bring to work every day to provide great services.

Together, our network of staff make sure people have access to the tools and resources they need for increased independence, including residential services, life skills training, education and employment programs, behavior support, advocacy opportunities and much more.

CAU employs more than 600 Direct Support Professionals who provide specialized support for members. We want to thank them for their commitment to going above and beyond for our members, whether that means assisting them with a new hobby or workout routine, accompanying them on a special trip, or making sure that they can enjoy their favorite meals.

As a team, CAU has managed the challenges of program closings and reopenings, and requirements for safety. We want to thank our employees for continuing to find opportunities in assisting members to reach their full potential. Their work impacts the lives of hundreds of individuals and their families every day, and we thank them for bringing their skills to CAU!





EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT





## EMPLOYMENT OPENS DOORS TO INDEPENDENCE

CAU assists members in finding meaningful employment that helps put them on the path to independence. Our employment services continue to grow to serve more people in New Jersey and connect them to the right opportunities. Our expanded employment services include college planning, post-high school education, prevocational training, vocational assessment, career planning, supported employment, job coaching and long-term follow-along supports. We also assist with internships and other paid work experiences that help individuals enter or reenter the workforce.



CAU has assisted members through work transitions due to the COVID-19 situation, helping many people find new jobs that they love. Our employer partners include Amazon, New Jersey Transit, Newark Liberty International Airport, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Walmart, McDonalds, Galloping Hill Golf Course, Marshalls, and Associated Humane Societies. Our members work in a growing number of fields, and we continue to build relationships with business partners in different industries, including hospitality, manufacturing, food service, recreation, shipping and receiving and facilities management.



Supported employment programs are approved by the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Division of Rehabilitation Services. Thanks to our partnerships, our CAU employment team is extending services to more people. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in partnership with the county of Union, we are helping to cover costs associated with getting back to work for adults and offering even more comprehensive youth employment services. Our summer paid internship program returned in 2021 after being cancelled in 2020 due to the the pandemic. This supported internship program for Union and Essex county students is supported by a grant from the State of New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

# EMPLOYMENT

# EMPLOYMENT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Simon Martins is proud to be taking on more responsibilities at a new job that he loves.

In just a few years, Martins progressed from attending a day program to completing small group employment training at CAU. He explored work as a security guard and member of the cleaning crew before starting his new job at Amazon, where he uses the skills he has learned.

“It’s great- my job coach is always here to help me out,” Simon said. “They are here to support me with whatever I need.”

After starting as a seasonal employee at Amazon, Simon now scans and sorts packages as part of the year-round staff and has been able to start saving money for his future.

“My goal is to have my own apartment, have kids and get married,” Simon said.







HOUSING

HOUSING

HOUSING





## STABILITY & COMFORT IN THE COMMUNITY

CAU offers just about every type of housing accommodation on the market to facilitate people with disabilities living in real neighborhoods where they can be part of the community. From apartments, condominiums and townhouses to single-family homes and multi-family homes, our members live in urban and suburban settings. We match individuals with housing that is a good fit for them around Union County.

Our talented direct support staff provide on-site support and supervision 24 hours a day, every day. As essential service providers, staff follow appropriate measures for safety at the programs, including mask-wearing and screenings for all staff and visitors entering the program.

Members can receive additional supports from CAU at programs, such as behavioral supports. CAU members at residential programs are encouraged to enjoy local amenities such as parks and shopping, and participate in education or employment opportunities.

CAU owns more than 270 housing units, including affordable housing apartments in Elizabeth. Additional programs include housing for youth at risk, a youth shelter, emergency placement for people with developmental disabilities, transitional housing, supported housing and community rental assistance.

Our facilities team ensures housing is accessible for members with physical disabilities. Many of our programs already include these accessible features, such as roll-in showers and wheelchair ramps. Residential program members may also work with our Assistive Technology department to ensure they have the technology they need to increase independence at home and in the community.

## HOUSING



# HOUSING MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Gabianny has increased her time and involvement in the community after working on coping skills and managing emotions with the CAU behavioral team. She has taken trips to the beach and the zoo, and participates in meal preparation every day with staff at her program. She has learned how to communicate better, even though she is nonverbal.

“She has learned how to express herself calmly so that she can advocate for herself,” said Director of Behavioral Services Tina Hansen.

“She is happy, she likes this program because she likes to be by herself,” said Annie, Gabianny’s mother.







HEALTH

HEALTH

HEALTH





## PREPARED FOR HEALTHY LIVING

CAU pursues a holistic approach to health and supporting the unique health needs of people with disabilities, including any ongoing medical and behavioral needs.

Our comprehensive health and behavioral health team includes registered and practical nurses, board-certified behaviorists, licensed social workers and licensed clinical social workers.

This team has worked together for compliance of COVID-19 safety procedures from the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and has coordinated vaccinations for hundreds of members. More than 95 percent of CAU residential program members have been vaccinated! Our staff also conducts a weekly distribution of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies for programs. All office and program spaces, including our day program, have been reorganized for social distancing.

Medical staff assess non-urgent medical situations, provide medical injections, care for wounds, and monitor medical situations. Our social workers and behaviorists conduct behavioral assessments, develop and implement treatment plans, facilitate groups for members and provide staff training on effective behavioral supports. CAU has also updated technology at programs to ensure members have virtual access to health professionals as needed.

Our assistive technology professionals are trained and certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America and can assist with home modifications as well as procuring assistive technology and training members and families.

## HEALTH

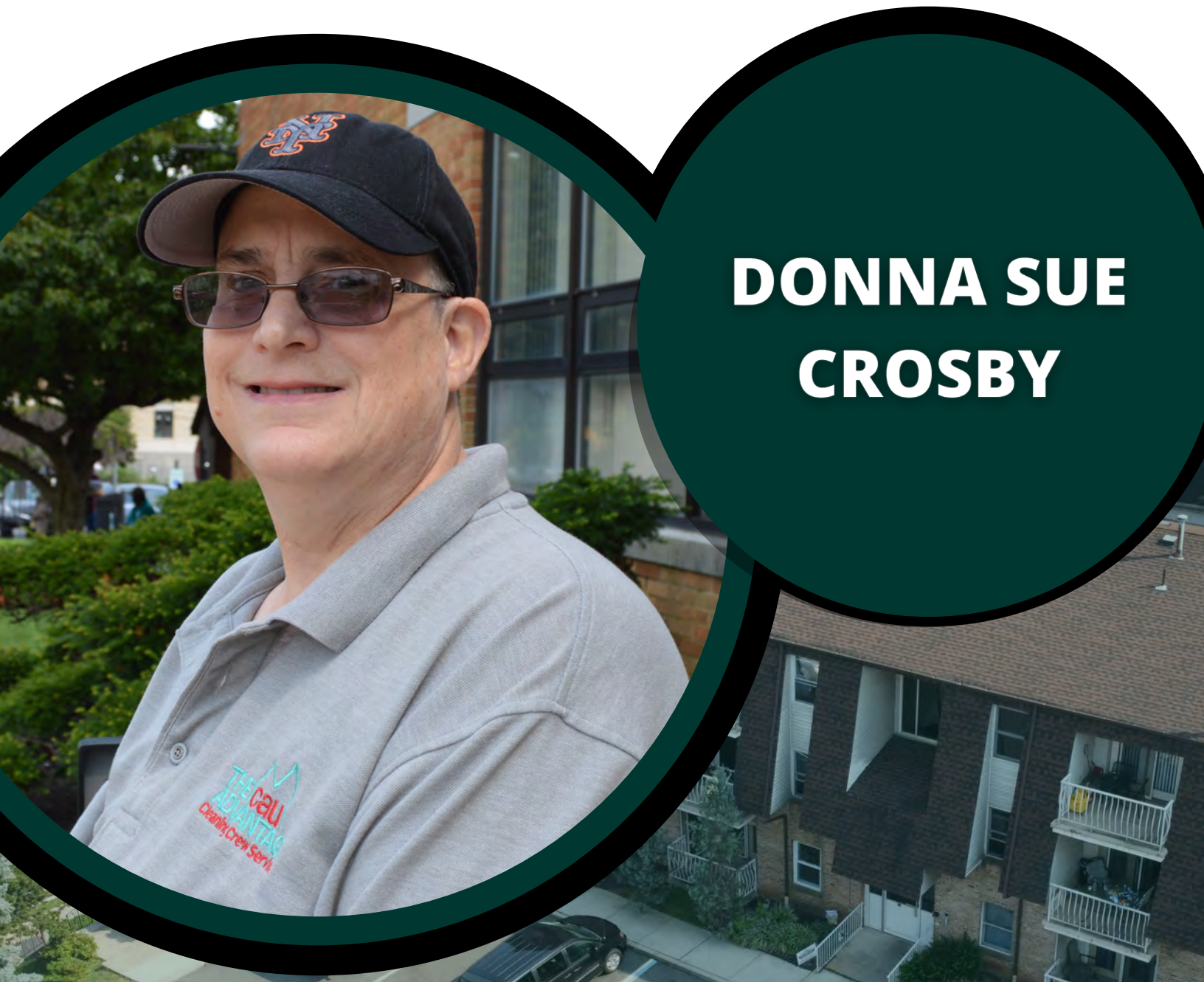
# HEALTH MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

As an employee on CAU's mobile cleaning crew, Donna Sue Crosby has been part of a team that helps to ensure the sanitation and comfort of the CAU main office and residential programs.

Donna started working at CAU 13 years ago and enjoys staying active at work and helping out new employees.

Working has also allowed Donna to grow her independence. While she used to live in a supervised residential program, Donna now lives in and pays for her own apartment and walks to work. She has support staff to take her to appointments and to shop for food and clothing.

"It feels good- I have no roommates and it feels good to be by myself; I love it," Donna said.



**DONNA SUE  
CROSBY**





SOCIAL LIFE





## PART OF A SOCIAL COMMUNITY

CAU offers a variety of opportunities for members to meet people and enjoy a fulfilling social life. There are many social activities to choose from, including recreation events and trips, advocacy groups, interfaith meetings and services, fundraising events and other social meetings.

In-person recreation events returned in 2021 with dinners, movie outings, bowling, and a trip to Atlantic City. In March, we held our second Banding Together virtual concert series featuring six artist performances on our Facebook page. Virtual meetings of CAU advocacy groups continued to allow members to stay socially connected and discuss current events.

The reopening of Day Program, the Academy of Continuing Education, and other in-person services has allowed members to continue pursuing goals in life skills, education and employment. Members have been excited to reconnect and socialize with friends and staff and enjoy activities together.

Many of us were able to reunite and socialize in person at the Ira Geller Walkathon in July, which was held in a hybrid format to allow supporters to join the event from home.

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council can connect members to a place to worship and welcome them into a community of faith through the group's many annual events.

For the theatrically inclined, The CAU Community Players are an inclusive theatre troupe of people with and without disabilities who collaborate to stage a production like no other. They are thrilled to return and present Elf the Musical Jr. in a virtual format this December!



## SOCIAL LIFE



## SOCIAL LIFE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Kyzier Davis is proud of himself for graduating from high school this year and learning how to communicate more effectively with others.

“I did what I had to do and I listened to my teachers,” Kyzier said. “I was doing well in school and loved going to school every day.”

Kyzier’s mother, Demeka, said that working with the CAU behavioral team has helped her son become more socialized in the community to do the things he likes to do, such as shopping and going out to eat.

“Kyzier has a positive rapport with [the behaviorist] and she has offered to do far and beyond things to help him,” Demeka said.





MEMBERSHIP &  
MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY  
INTEGRATION  
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION





## CONNECTING AND BUILDING TOGETHER

Dedicated Direct Support Professionals and staff at CAU make sure that members have opportunities to enjoy and engage with their communities. From outings such as kayaking and sports games to assisting members with shopping or taking a class, we facilitate activities in the community and with the many groups at CAU.

We also aim to empower families with information to help them find the right services for their loved ones. At our biweekly Family Support Group, families can discuss navigating the system and receive support from peers and professionals to help overcome challenges. CAU has Family Mentors who use their own experience as parents of children with disabilities to help guide the way. Meetings include a mix of discussion and presentations on different services and programs available for individuals with disabilities.



Advocacy at CAU has continued with virtual meetings where members discuss current events and issues affecting people with developmental disabilities. Helping Hands, the state's oldest and strongest self-advocacy group for people with disabilities, and the New American Movement for People with Disabilities (NAM), remain committed to changing the social, political and economic landscape of America so that all people can live with pride as equals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, and income or disability status.



Helping Hands engages members and the public on education in voting and voting rights, legislative updates, letter-writing campaigns, meet-your-candidate events and peer mentoring. MAC Attack offers similar advocacy training for youth in the child welfare system transitioning to adulthood.

## MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

## MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY INTEGRATION SPOTLIGHT

Matthew Katz and Daniel Gomes are roommates who are both building their futures and enjoying getting back to social activities. Matthew is excited to continue his education after completing his associate's degree in summer 2021. He will continue college this fall with a goal of completing his master's degree in social work.

"I want to help people find the right path and overcome inner conflicts," Matthew said.

Matthew is also looking for a part-time job to help with college expenses and saving for the future. In his free time, he enjoys CAU recreation events such as a recent trip to Atlantic City, and going to the movies.

Daniel is interested in working with his hands and is exploring job and apprenticeship options in auto mechanics or electrical work. In his free time he enjoys playing video games, and he is looking forward to an upcoming trip with CAU to Comic Con. Daniel moved to the U.S. from India with his family in 2014. He said he was nervous at first about moving into the CAU program, but he is glad to have more independence.

"I like it here," Daniel said. "I have the freedom to do what I want."



**MATTHEW  
KATZ**



**DANIEL  
GOMES**





# SUPPORT COORDINATION



## GUIDANCE AND EXPERTISE



CAU is unique in our capacity to provide support coordination as well as support services in New Jersey. Support coordinators at CAU make the greater choices and options of the fee-for-service model less overwhelming and guide individuals and families in meeting their needs and goals while making the most of their state-assisted budget.



CAU support coordinators are experienced professionals who consult with individuals and families to locate programs and services such as day programs, educational programs, employment resources, home care, transportation providers, recreation activities and more.

Our support coordinators live around the state and are knowledgeable about services available in the community, allowing them to explore professional and natural resources to improve a member's lifestyle. From therapeutic horseback riding to cooking classes and game design, CAU's support coordination services help members explore their interests while they learn new life skills for their present and futures.



Support coordinators receive continual cross training in crisis management, community building and integration, and employment. We also have Spanish speaking Support Coordinators.

Support Coordinators maintain ongoing contact and hold regular meetings with members in addition to being available via a 24-hour emergency hotline. Support Coordination services are available in every New Jersey county except Union.

## SUPPORT COORDINATION



## SUPPORT COORDINATION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The interruption in day program services due to the pandemic was an opportunity for John Guerrero to reassess whether his son, Victor, could find more enrichment elsewhere.

Thanks to CAU support coordination, Victor is learning new skills such as money management, reading and sewing by working with a tutoring service several days a week.

“Her greatest trait is that she takes a personal interest in seeing and monitoring what is being done with Victor,” John said of their support coordinator. “She has been the type of person to call on the phone periodically and ask where Victor is at in what he's doing, ask if we're having any problems- she really keeps a hand on the pulse.

A photograph of Victor Guerrero, a man with a beard and mustache, smiling and holding a Justice League of America comic book. He is wearing a blue t-shirt and is seated on a brown couch. The comic book is titled 'JLA' and features Superman and Batman on the cover. The background is a colorful, abstract painting with green, yellow, and blue tones.

**VICTOR  
GUERRERA**





YOUTH SERVICES





## GUIDING YOUTH TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Youth services at CAU help set members on a path to fulfilling their potential and becoming independent. We ensure that members have a safe place to live with emergency housing as well as semi-independent and supported housing. Services also include crisis intervention, counseling, recreation services, leadership and advocacy opportunities, and training and education programs that teach life skills and help prepare youth for the workforce or continuing education.

CAU youth programs include the Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) which provides comprehensive residential services to youth ages 13 to 21, as well as the Union County Youth Shelter and federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Program and federal Transitional Living Programs. Youth enrolled in the TOP day program participate in an employment training workshop, a GED program, or volunteer job practicum for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

CAU is contracted by the County of Union to operate the Union County Youth Shelter for runaway and homeless teenagers and those referred by the juvenile detention system or family court, aged 13-17, providing shelter, care and education for up to 30 days. We also operate two programs under the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth initiative.

CAU now offers even more comprehensive youth employment services, including a supported internship program for Union and Essex county students, which is supported by a grant from the State of New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Union County youth also receive employment services thanks to our partnership with the County of Union under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Pathways to Academic and Career Exploration and Success (PACES) program is our college and career preparation program in Essex and Union counties. In this program, youth prepare to leave the protection of the youth services system, and CAU is there to guide them to a brighter future.

YOUTH SERVICES

## YOUTH SERVICES MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shaniye Stockley is putting in the hard work to set herself up for success. The Rahway High School graduate said she studied to raise a science grade in time for graduation and is working at a part-time job to save money for her future. She also enjoyed being on the tennis and basketball teams and getting involved as manager of her school step team.

Shaniye plans to attend college this fall to study criminal justice, and is also considering joining the army after earning an associate's degree. As a member of the Transitional Opportunities Program, Shaniye had support from CAU staff to finish virtual schooling and find employment.

"I've been interested since I took a criminal justice class in middle school," she said. "They had crime scene investigators and everything. So I want to do that."

Also on Shaniye's busy agenda is getting her license so she can take herself to school and work.







**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP**

## WORKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH US

Our partnerships with others allow CAU to grow and progress our mission of creating a more inclusive and accessible community. We enjoy forging partnerships with community leaders, other nonprofits, local businesses, and more to connect members with the community.

CAU develops relationships with the New Jersey business community through the CAU Community Network, which meets to share information and philanthropic opportunities that benefit them and the community. Businesses are invited to sponsor the agency and participate in our events through the year.

CAU is also involved in local groups that increase cooperation among agencies to better understand and meet the needs of the people they serve. The Union County Nonprofit Consortium is a group of directors of social service providers from Union County who meet to discuss and increase organizational and community capacity in the human services sector in the county.

The Union County Youth Services Network is a collaboration of governmental and community youth services agencies dedicated to coordinating a network of services for youth in Union County. Participants are invited to an annual conference to promote networking and better collaboration among members of the network.

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council comprises more than 40 congregations of all faiths to promote inclusion of people with disabilities into their communities. The council hosts an annual Union County Day of Prayer and other interfaith events that CAU members are invited to attend.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

CAU's relationship with the Union County Police Department helps ensure that young people are safe and have the most beneficial outcomes possible while they are a part of the transitional housing program the Union County Youth Shelter provides them. UCPD works with CAU's Union County Youth Shelter to respond to emergencies, conduct wellness checks, locate youth and deescalate conflicts.

Marie Guillaume, director of youth services, credits the officers and Sgt. Chris Stanway for their prompt responses and follow-through on calls.

"Sgt. Stanaway always follows up with me- he stays on top of things and he makes himself available," said Marie Guillaume, director of youth services. "If there are any behavioral issues, they will increase their wellness checks."

Sgt. Stanaway said officers try to show compassion to youth residents and give them good advice.

"We fully understand that some of the juveniles are housed at the shelter as an alternative to a detention environment," Stanaway said. "Our approach has been and always will be to ensure the well-being of the residents. Yes, we are responding as Police Officers but we don't always want to be seen as 'law and order' and have a resident feel we are there to move them deeper into the criminal justice system. We can positively impact their experience at the shelter...I've witnessed officers from my shift turn hostile situations around, by just being human and honest."

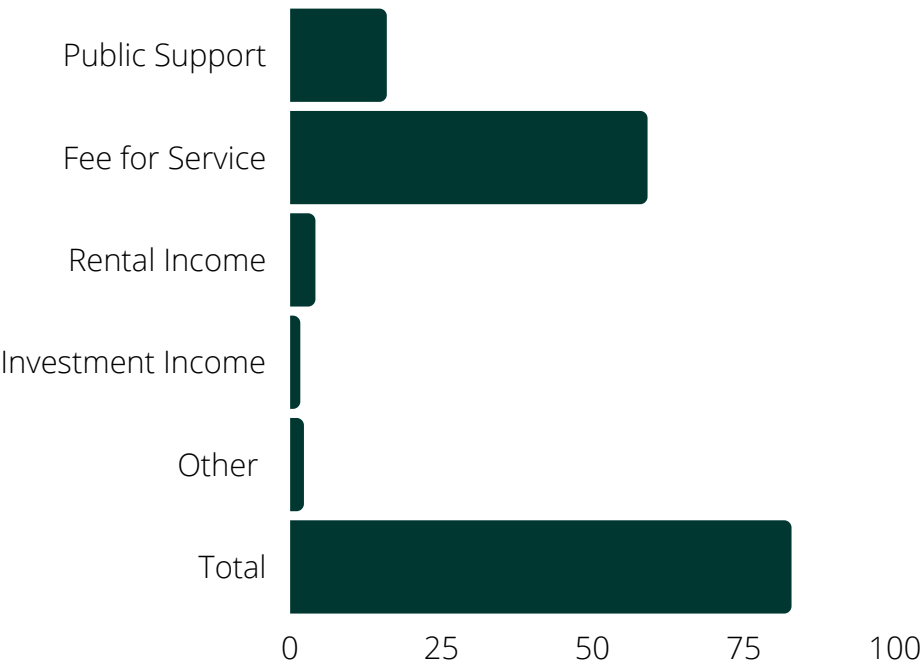


**UNION COUNTY  
POLICE DEPT.**

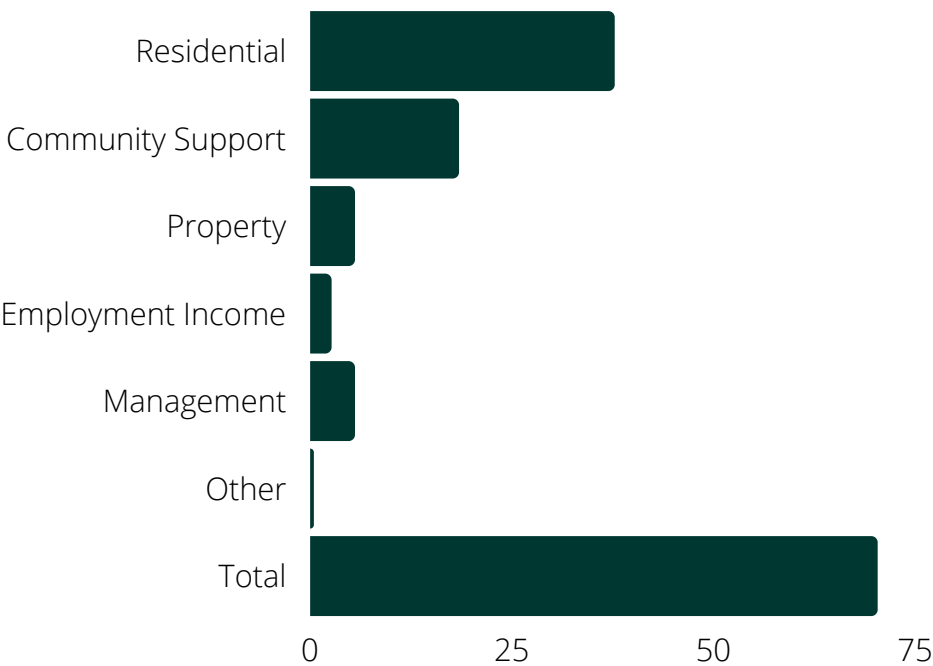


# 2020 FINANCIALS

## REVENUE 2020 (Amount in millions)



## EXPENSES (Amount in millions)

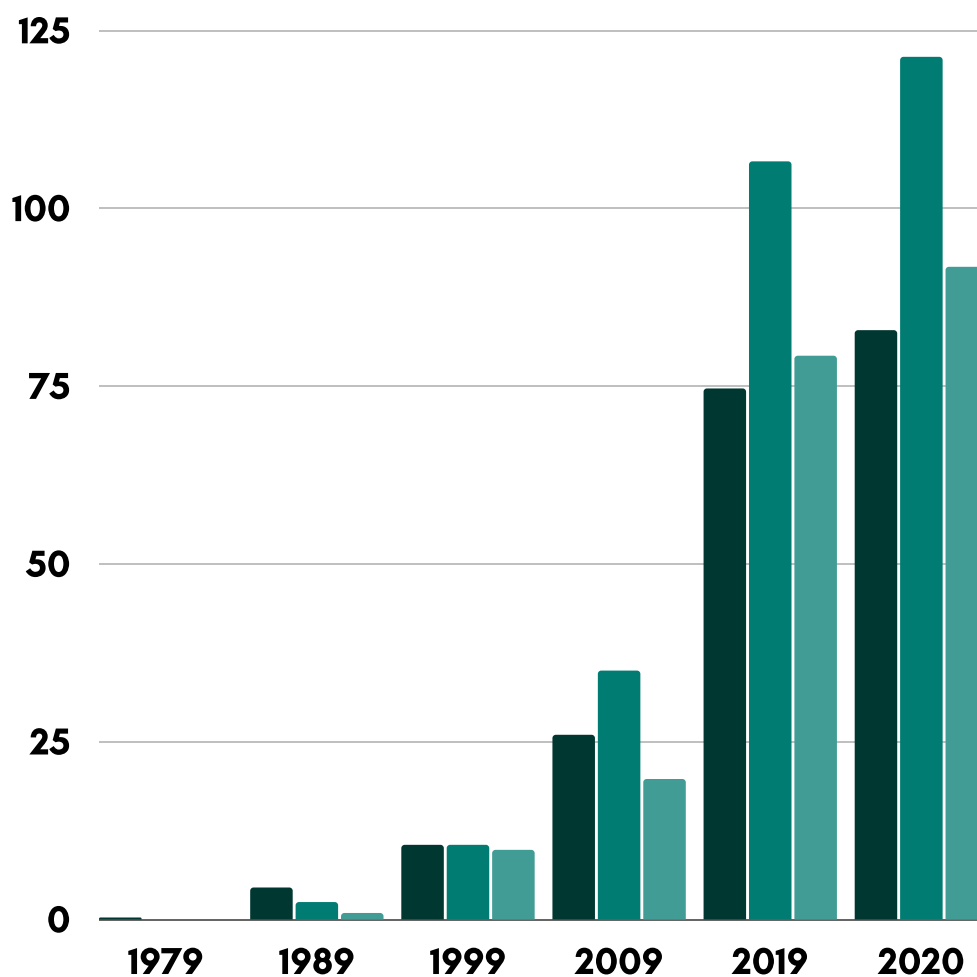




## ***FINANCIAL GROWTH***

1979-2020

	1979	1989	1999	2009	2019	2020
Total Revenues	0.08	4.4	10.4	25.9	74.6	82.8
Total Assets	0	2.4	13.6	34.9	106.5	121.2
Equity	0	0.09	9.7	0.09	79.2	91.7



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 SUPPORTERS

## PLATNIUM PLUS \$10,000+

E.J. Grassmann Trust  
Elizabeth Healthcare Foundation  
Kenneth Richuso  
Kessler Foundation  
TD Charitable Foundation

TD Charitable Foundation  
The Hyde & Watson Foundation  
Union Foundation  
Valley National Bank  
Westfield Foundation

## PLATNIUM \$5,000 - \$9,999

Columbia Bank Foundation  
Delivering Good

HBK CPAs & Consultants  
M&T Bank

Thomas Comiskey

## GOLD \$2,500 - \$4,999

Innovative Compensation & Benefits Concepts  
Louis J & Fannie Roncole Foundation  
Meeker Sharkey & Hurley

Palisades Educational Foundation  
Spencer Savings Bank  
Union County Savings Bank

## SILVER \$1,000 - \$2,499

B&B Press Inc  
Charles Cheskin  
Charles Rockford  
Colonial Hardware  
Delta Dental NJ  
EKA Associates LLC  
Epstein, Becker, & Green, PC  
Harold Poltrock  
I Support The Girls

Innovative Benefit Planning  
Irish Business Association  
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Northfield Bank  
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Thomas Stokes  
UC Chamber of Commerce

## BRONZE \$500 - \$999

AbbVie  
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Angel Cisson  
Audrey Vasey  
Bernadette Griswold  
Bob Griffin  
Bramnick, Rodriguez, Grabas, Arnold & Mangan

Cara Clair  
Commission for the-  
Blind & Visually Impaired  
Cort Furniture  
Cristin Quinn-Moore  
Freddy Perez  
Kevin Aspell

Knights of  
Columbus  
Maxine Neuhauser  
Michael Estabrooks  
Michael Vaughan  
Rev. Howard Bryant  
Robyn Wright



# FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO OUR MISSION!

## CONTRIBUTORS \$100 - \$499

A&S Carpets	Carol & Thomas Jerome	Felena Sly
Abigail Pomerantz	Carolee Marano	Felicia Okoto
Abiola Ajayi	Cathie Mazza	Felix Nzegwu
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Angela Williams	Dawn Aerial	Irene Tevi-Benissan
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Anne Williams	Deshala Cook	Jacqueline Schiff
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Assata Jalloh	Ebelin Obando	Jeremy Lefever
Assemblywoman Annette Quijano	Elaine Gilbert	John Michaelian
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Boris Kaplunovskiy	Esther Prudent	Joseph Giovannoli
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Brittany Wilson	Fallon Nieves	Joshua Adeboye

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Karen Ciambuschini	Mildred Aurigemma	Sheila McDowell
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