

toally we achieve

Looking back over the last year at Easterseals Massachusetts, we decided it was important to put the spotlight on what was accomplished and how it was possible.

It has been three years since the world was changed by the pandemic. As a community-based service organization, it would be reasonable to think we would suffer more than most. How has Easterseals Massachusetts continued to grow and evolve despite these challenges? It is because we are not alone.

Every story and statistic you read on these pages is the result of our community coming together to make an impact.

The most visible way our shared work manifested in 2022 was through the merger with The Bridge Center. This partnership will benefit people with disabilities and Veterans across Massachusetts by hosting programming for people of all ages in a space that is completely accessible. But it would not have happened without years of work and shared vision from committed volunteers and staff of both organizations. This collaboration will continue to be the foundation from which we relaunch programs on this amazing campus.

The idea of accomplishing more together will be apparent through all the success stories you read on these pages. And for every person in the spotlight, many more quietly do their part with the knowledge that their contributions made a difference. If you are reading these words, you are most likely an important part of these stories.

As a final thought, before we celebrate the past year, I would like to briefly remember two powerful disability advocates whom we lost in 2022. Mary Margaret Moore and Paul Spooner were both fierce leaders and advocates for independence. They fought for equal opportunities for people with disabilities, and they both knew that a group of motivated people can accomplish more than any one person alone. Our responsibility is to continue their advocacy with the same determination they taught us.

Thank you for being part of Easterseals Massachusetts' exciting 2022 and reliving it with us in this report. After the last few years, I would never pretend to know exactly what we will have done by this time next year. What I do know is that we will ensure that children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play... together.

Best Regards,

Paul Medeiros President & CEO





Sister Robin is the founder and Executive Director of Able to Serve - New England, Inc., a nonprofit charitable foundation based in Lowell, MA, that provides immediate support for low-income families, the homeless, and children at risk. She is also a consecrated nun in the Roman Catholic Church.

Robin has spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy with ocular involvement and dysarthria, which gives her physical limitations, visual impairment, and speech difficulties. Being incredibly dedicated to her foundation, Robin realized that to gain more independence with oversight of the organization, she needed to use a computer and find other suitable technology to improve her daily life. Having participated in ESMA's summer camp when she was young, even highlighted as our state spokesperson in 1984, she knew exactly who to turn to for assistive technology (AT).

Robin met with Tiffany, ESMA AT Specialist, for an assessment to find solutions to implement AT into her day-to-day routine and expand her capabilities to grow her organization. Tiffany proposed a variety of low- and high-tech technologies to help her. To address her vision difficulties, Robin now uses a Tile device to locate her phone and keys and an audible meat thermometer to measure cooking temperatures. These low-tech AT devices quickly improved seemingly small parts of daily life which were previously more difficult. Additionally, Robin uses Siri on her phone to have emails and texts read to her. This is also how she makes calls and sends out texts.

Tiffany worked with Robin to identify other challenges and goals. One challenge was reading the mail. Robin started utilizing Seeing Al, an application that identifies objects and people and then audibly describes them. While this technology was a powerful tool for Robin, her shaky hands made it difficult to use. Tiffany came up with the solution by constructing a custom stand to keep Robin's phone in place using PVC and 3D printing. Robin's feedback was pivotal in making the final design, which offers her independence and the ability to lead her foundation. Pleased with the individualized approach Tiffany had taken, Robin shared,

"Easterseals empowers individuals

using the skills that they already have and are more focused on the dreams and goals than rehabilitation."

Another major goal of Robin's was to improve her computer literacy for both personal and professional use. Tiffany showed her how to use a variety of software including Dragon Naturally Speaking and JAWS screen reader with J-Say for voice commands, all of which helped her fundamental computer knowledge grow exponentially. These allow Robin to dictate an entire document in HER words, not depending on others.

Through these AT devices and applications, Robin has gained the skills necessary to expand her organization and provide more support to those in need. She shared, "Computers were almost impossible for me to think about using and now I can use them efficiently and effectively."

Robin's dedication to serving people in need is admirable, and her use of assistive technology demonstrates the power of technology to empower individuals and organizations alike.

together we succeed

Thomas | College Navigator

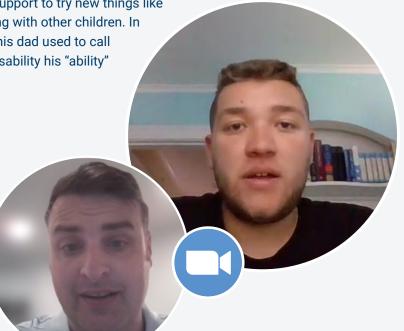
Thomas has autism spectrum disorder and ADHD. Early on, Thomas learned there were both positive and challenging things about his disabilities. He has always been great at remembering dates, facts, and people. Indeed, one of his skills is what he calls his "calendar trick," where someone can give him a date from any year, and he can instantly recall what day of the week that date fell on. His disabilities provided some challenges, too. Staying organized, paying attention, and making friends had Thomas working extra hard to learn how to understand more about his disabilities.

So often someone's disability can be under the scope of all the things a person cannot do, but Thomas's parents reframed that lens for him when he was young with guidance and support to try new things like playing with other children. In fact, his dad used to call his disability his "ability" and encouraged Thomas to focus on the areas where he could excel.

Thomas is now a student at MassBay Community College and working with his College Navigator, Kyle. Thankfully, his school introduced him to the College Navigator program because his freshman year was tough for Thomas to manage on his own. He shares he didn't do well because either his homework was late, or he completed the wrong assignment. Thomas says working with Kyle helps as "I had trouble with the syllabus because it outlined the whole semester and there was so much information that I couldn't find what I needed.

"Kyle helped me break it down by weekly work and due dates."

Thomas is busy; he is a student working toward his Early Childhood teaching certificate to become an educator and works two jobs. He and Kyle meet twice a week online to work on time management strategies to balance his full schedule. Thomas credits feeling successful in both his work and schoolwork, thanks to the tools and organizational skills he has learned from Easterseals Massachusetts' College Navigator Program.





Dave | Military & Veteran

Some people are called to serve, whether they're actively engaged in the decision to or not. When Dave was compelled to serve his country as he entered the military in 2000, perhaps he inherited this civicminded call to duty from both of his grandfathers. Regardless of how it came to be, it's an innate part of whom he continues to be long after he retired from military life.

When Dave first got home from deployment in Afghanistan, he was relieved to have made it back safely and enjoyed the comforts of home. Over the next decade, he came to realize the mental health impacts that deployment had on his life.

He learned of Easterseals Massachusetts' Military & Veteran program from a fellow Veteran who recommended the robust and varied number of activities. Dave engaged due to the expansive calendar of events offered that appeal to Veterans of all different ages and abilities. He says he and his family feel very welcome at events, as his 6- and 9-year-old daughters have joined him on several occasions. "Easterseals events are a nice opportunity to talk to them about what it means to be

a Veteran and to serve, and to meet the children of other Veterans."

While Dave has participated in several of the programs offered by Easterseals, one has really captured his heart: the partnership with Project Comeback. This program pairs Veterans and those on active duty with rescued horses. Over six weeks, participants assist the horses in recovering from trauma and reintegration into horse life while gaining valuable lessons and skills that may be used in their own lives.

Having no prior experience with horses, Dave admits he was a bit intimidated by such majestic animals. These doubts did not prevent him from taking a chance and he quickly realized it was an opportunity to be in the service of something. Dave worked with a retired thoroughbred named Percy and learned that thoroughbreds are trained hard, then quickly passed on once their racing days are over. Percy had to learn how to live a life that no longer had structure. Dave understood this feeling well and shared that he felt the same way after his time serving as a soldier had ended. Drawing that parallel between his life and

Percy's allowed Dave to draw on his own strengths throughout the rehabilitation process. Through this program, Dave shares

"The pain I have gone through has given me purpose and allows me to enrich the life of a beautiful animal."

Although Dave feels he still has room to improve his mental health, he is in a much better place. A key source of support is that Dave continues to look forward to future Easterseals events, which he calls "little glimmers of light at the end of the darkness," for all





Scott | Job Development & Placement

When Scott embarked on a working relationship with Connie, his ESMA Employment Coordinator, little did they know that right around the corner would lie one of the biggest opportunities toward his employment goal, playing music for the masses, literally.

Scott has a bachelor's degree in music and organ performance, as well as multiple certificates in management and PC technology support. He worked part-time as an organist for a church in Worcester. During the early days of the pandemic, as churches closed all over the world, Scott occasionally played for his church via Zoom. Scott took to the internet and began performing pieces he composed himself.

> Fans describe his music as "hauntingly beautiful."

As an Employment Coordinator, Connie's professional work hat rarely comes off, and as she watched his performances online, she suggested he play at a local assisted living center. Within a few short months, Scott became a featured guest at Brookdale Senior Living and entertained them with pieces they knew and loved. While Scott continued to perform both online and in person at the assisted living center, word began to spread about his talent. This led to Scott sitting across from the Priest of the Armenian Church of Our Savior in Worcester for a lunch meeting, which turned into a job offer as their permanent organist. A role so uniquely perfect for Scott, he could have written the job description! And if finding his dream job wasn't enough, he even had the privilege of performing in the presence of His Beatitude, The Archbishop, Patriarch of Jerusalem, last holiday season!

Having Autism Spectrum Disorder, Scott was referred to Easterseals by the Massachusetts Commission. Through regular

Scott credits Easterseals with his renewed sense of confidence that allows him to perform his music.

Finding gainful and meaningful employment was difficult and he shares that his disabilities greatly limited the type and amount of work he was able to secure previously; however, Connie's constant positive feedback and support helped Scott overcome this adversity.



support via telephone and email to write his resume and cover letters. and providing employment leads,



Kim was diagnosed with Cauda Equina Syndrome in 1996. This caused lower body paralysis and due to other illnesses throughout the years, she lost vision in one of her eyes, has hearing loss, and COPD. All of this prevented her from working as a nurse and had an impact on her daily life as a mother. It also led her to an inactive life.

Kim was referred to Easterseals Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Vocational Rehabilitation Division, which provides free assistive technology (AT) equipment and training to individuals who are pursuing employment, in 2020. The MRC program's services enable individuals to gain or maintain employment by using computer technology and voice-output communication aids. Louise, an **ESMA Assistive Technology** Specialist, met with Kim to assess her knowledge of technology and to put a plan in place to reach her goals. Working with Louise, Kim shared, "I could feel right away that Louise was interested in how I was doing. She treated me with respect and dignity, and I felt valued because she listened to me."

Through training, Kim learned the fundamentals of operating a computer and using Microsoft Word to create a document. She learned how to use Dragon dictation software and how to enlarge fonts and the pointer on her computer, which reduced her eye strain. To practice her skills using these new tools with the guidance of ESMA's training support, Kim started journaling and writing letters to her grandchildren.

Moreover, Kim improved her skills using calendar reminders and online communication tools like Teams and Zoom so that she could participate in appointments from her home. Learning new skills has opened a whole new world for Kim. "I want to continue to learn, to broaden my tech skills, to be a good volunteer, and have a parttime job," she said.

Having "graduated" from AT support in 2022, Kim is now employed part-time mentoring low-income and underprivileged women and actively volunteers as a member of the ESMA Western Massachusetts Regional Board. She is committed to supporting our mission and is thankful for the opportunity to do so remotely. With

all her endeavors, Kim continues to grow her experience with technology and further increase her level of independence with smart home technology and an iPad.

Today, Kim feels she is living a more fulfilling life, having more control over her schedule, and participating in events that she missed out on for years. After receiving services, Kim said,

"With Louise's and Easterseals' help, I have become more self-confident and self-assured which helps me and those I have contact with, to have richer lives."



Easterseals work has rippled into many lives thanks to an incredible client with a strong motivation to grow his career. Chris was initially referred to Easterseals Massachusetts' Assistive Technology Department by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) after receiving vocational services from MRC five years ago. He needed a home office setup that would alleviate his chronic back and hip pain from an injury that made him unable to work for the previous five years. Assistive Technology (AT) was the solution to support Chris' desire to work again and lead a more independent life.

After a home visit to assess Chris' needs in 2017, ESMA's AT Specialists set him up with a sitstand desk, allowing him to get a part-time remote job as a Business **Developer for Work Opportunities** Unlimited. This job was meaningful to him as he helped other people with barriers to employment. Then in 2021, he was offered another incredible opportunity as a parttime Grant Writer at Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust. After three months of success in grant writing, the nonprofit wanted to increase Chris's role to full-time. With the goal of finding a solution that would allow him to work more hours, he once again connected with ESMA.

Ebert and Oren, AT Specialists, visited Chris' home and set him up with an Altwork station - an adapted workstation with a seat, keyboard, and computer monitors that would allow him to work while reclining. After three months of testing in his home office, he was able to work 8 hours per day. For the first time in more than a decade. in January 2022, Chris started working full-time! He shared.

"Easterseals was instrumental in helping me build a career within the limitations of my disability."

The past year has been a gamechanger for Chris. He was promoted from Grant Writer to Director of Programming and Development. He took on communications, managing most of his organization's programs, and leading their most successful grant funding year ever. AT services played a crucial role in Chris's success by providing him with the tools he needed.

Chris' journey is a testament to the power of technology in improving people's lives and is a reminder that disabilities do not define a person's capabilities. With the right accommodation and support, individuals can unlock their full potential and thrive in the workforce and other areas of life.

"In the five years I've been supported by Easterseals, I've gone from being unemployed to a part-time entry-level position, to a part-time professional position, to a full-time upper management position. I couldn't have done it without Easterseals' help."





ESMA Staff at Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children provided services to 49 Patients.



Students can now easily access our College
Navigator services through our partnerships with the
Bristol, Greenfield, MassBay, and Mount Wachusett
Community Colleges.

Rehabilitation Services & Applied Behavior Analysis served
140 Community Partners, which includes schools, day
habilitation programs, skilled nursing facilities, early
intervention agencies, and various other community programs
that require the assistance of allied health professionals.



eastersealsma.org had 30,568 Users, up 30%, with 185,928 Pageviews, up 42%. The homepage, College Navigator, and Assistive Technology pages were the most visited in 2022.

The **College Navigator Team** provided **9,619 Hours** of 1-to-1 support to students in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both.

Between the Boston and Worcester Assistive Technology Regional Centers, 736 Devices were loaned to people with disabilities to help find solutions for communication, education, hearing and vision impairment, and daily living.









Nearly 6,000 Training Sessions were provided to 940 Clients who received free Assistive Technology Equipment and Training through our contract with the MRC, enabling individuals to live more independently and safely in their homes.



The #TeachDisabilityHistory committee, led by youth and young adults with disabilities, met regularly and conducted 10 Presentations to promote the importance of teaching disability history in schools.

Job Development & Placement services supported 204 MRC Clients with 56 Individuals achieving their goals and obtaining jobs.



Student Service
Aide Staff worked
with 25 Students in
20 School Districts.



The MassMATCH AT Regional Center Mobile Van allowed us to conduct 25 in-person trainings throughout the state, expanding access to the different kinds of assistive technology available.

In total, 26 Participants in our B.A.D. and Thrive mentoring programs attended 13 Events.



Our Advocacy Team attended nearly 200 meetings, hearings, roundtables, and testimonies to support legislative priorities that advance various Advocacy-Related Issues important to people living in the state with a disability.

50 Accessible Martial Arts Classes happened virtually or in person, allowing more than 40 Participants to stay physically active, learn self-defense skills, and build confidence.









25 Campers had a blast creating, traveling to new places, and building new friendships from their living rooms during Virtual Summer Camp or overnight at Camp Sno-Mo in New Hampshire.

204 Students with disabilities participated in our Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to develop valuable employment and transition skills in their journey to adulthood while 8 Students were successfully placed in paid internships.



Virtual Summer
Camp field trips were
memorable thanks
to the New England
Aquarium and Unity
Farm Sanctuary.

Each year, Easterseals
Massachusetts provides
22,000 Essential Services
to more than 10,000
Individuals throughout
the state.



Training was given to nearly 600

People who provide services to individuals with disabilities, the individuals themselves, and family members, to learn how Assistive

Technology can improve quality of life, independence, and social participation.

In total, 113 Device, Mini, and Financial Loans were provided to clients as part of the Massachusetts Alternative Finance Program. Since 2005, more than \$16 Million has been loaned out!







Assistive Technology and AAC Teams worked with almost 2,500 Clients, providing more than 11,000 Appointments to help people with disabilities expand their independence by using devices to achieve greater access to education, employment, and their community.



Economic Impact: In total, ESMA employed 311 People in 2022, including temporary summer workers.



36 Youth Leadership Network Participants met at 70 Group Events, statewide and virtual, focused on self-advocacy and self-awareness for teens and young adults with disabilities ages 14-26.

Across all Youth Programs, 107 Participants joined in 1,120 Events.



Our Summer Adaptive
Swim Program allowed
31 Participants to engage
in fun safety activities and
water games that maximize
independence in the water.

ESMA's Social Media Fans across 8 channels grew to 13,161 – up by over 267% from the previous year!









ESMA Military & Veteran hosted or sponsored more than **150 Events and Activities** including attending sporting games, adaptive fitness classes, social and informative coffee hours, Project Comeback rescue horse training, food pantry distributions, and more.









together

we build an inclusive future

Our most exciting news of 2022 is the announcement of the merger and ongoing restoration of The Bridge Center, a fully accessible, 22-acre campus in Bridgewater, MA, that provides year-round recreation and equine-assisted therapy programs for individuals with disabilities.

Four years in the making, ESMA began discussions with The Bridge Center (TBC), before the pandemic, to expand services and fully utilize the property. When The Bridge Center closed in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, the TBC Board pursued the merger with ESMA due to our proven success and excellence in disability programming, our strong alignment with their core values, and their belief in our mission to provide services to ensure children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play.

Immediately following the merger announcement, ESMA staff, board, volunteers, and local community partners started working together to clean up the property, assess the safety and security needs, and prioritize the order of campus restoration projects to bring programs back to TBC in early 2023.

In addition to restoring the riding arena and other buildings and landscaping the beautiful grounds, our multi-year mission-driven business plan includes making investments in inventory needed for programming and hiring staff.

We are truly thrilled to continue TBC's nearly 60-year history of providing day camp,

horseback riding, adaptive swimming, and a variety of accessible recreational opportunities for community members and their families, and to expand services to even more children and adults with disabilities, and Veterans.

LOOKING FORWARD, TOGETHER!

Starting in the spring of 2023, the sounds of happy horses and joyful laughter will again fill the Equestrian Center when we begin our new Adaptive Riding & Horsemanship Lessons.

Afternoon recreation activities for children are planned for spring and summer as well. All programs will be instructed by skilled staff and designed to meet the social, emotional, and physical goals of participants.

Through innovative and inclusive recreation programs, TBC will encourage independence and help participants build important life skills, within a safe and supportive environment.

We can't wait to meet you at The Bridge Center and give you a grand tour! To schedule a personal visit, please email us at tbc@eastersealsma.org.

Learn about The Bridge Center Restoring Excellence Campaign 2023 and how you can help expand our programs and fill our heart!

















The Bridge Center campus consists of numerous outdoor fields, a beautiful pond, an equestrian center, a splash pad, multiple buildings for activities, and more.









Easterseals board members, employees, and their families, along with former Bridge Center staff and clients helped prepare for the reopening during **Volunteer Cleanup** Days. We filled four dumpsters, cleared the grounds, cleaned the buildings, and had fun together while seeing the campus come to life.



together we collaborate



Other significant news in 2022: ESMA State Headquarters and ATRC moved to 18 Chestnut Street, Worcester. Our new office provides a more accessible and inviting space where we feel proud to bring our clients and donors.

After more than 30 years residing on the 6th floor of the historic Denholm Building in Worcester, time had caused the building to deteriorate. By collaborating with other nonprofits in the building, and with the support of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority and Worcester City Council, we were able to move to a new more modern office without leaving downtown Worcester! As part of the move, the nonprofits received grants from local foundations and furniture donations from local businesses.

The process to move into the new office while keeping our programs running was as rewarding as it was challenging. Truly, the move would not have been possible without a whole team of dedicated people and a supportive community.

president's council

To view our full donor recognition listings, please scan the QR code:



Thank You! Your passion, belief and support of our mission made possible the growth and progress featured in this year's report.

Our vision of a kind and inclusive world where people with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play is imaginable thanks to your partnership.

\$25,000 & ABOVE

Ladd & Tammy Lavallee Paul Lavallee Dawn & Robert Seiple ◊

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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♦ Signifies Empowerment Team Member * Signifies Company

Walter & Rose Zydlewski

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We are grateful and appreciative of every contribution given in support of our mission and have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our recognition listings. Please notify us of any inaccuracies and omissions by contacting Debbie Stevens by email at dstevens@eastersealsma.org or call 508.751.6302.

champions of equal opportunities

We are honored and privileged that the corporations, foundations, and organizations listed below supported Easterseals Massachusetts in 2022. Working together we delivered on our mission and supported critical programs that directly benefit children, youth, adults, and seniors with disabilities, as well as our military families and Veterans.

\$100,000 & ABOVE

Comcast NBCUniversal W.K. Kellogg Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Laddawn | Berry Global The Hoyt Foundation Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation

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2022 mission

partners

In 2022, the Mission Partners highlighted below joined ESMA in empowering people with disabilities to live, learn, work and play to their fullest potential. While these companies and their leaders and employees are on the forefront of tomorrow's innovation, they are making an impact today through their community engagement and philanthropy.











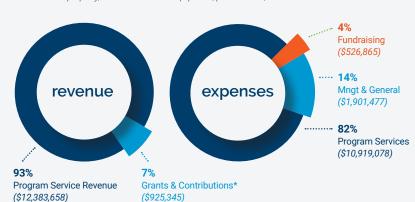


financials

As of August 31, 2022

Program Service Revenue Grants & Contributions Total Revenue	12,383,658 925,345 13,309,003
Expenses Change in Net Assets from Operations	13,347,420 (38,417)
Non-Operating Revenue* Extraordinary Items* Change in Net Assets	\$ 6,877,759 (1,974,438) 4,864,904
Net Assets at End of Year Fiscal 2022	\$ 15,514,426 20,379,330
Cash Prog. Fees Receivable, Net Allowance for Doubtful Accounts Contributions Receivable Prepaid Expenses and Other Restricted Cash Investments Assets Held for Others Property and Equipment, Net Total Assets	\$ 1,214,480 757,903 769,074 104,486 460,816 11,376,179 1,282,516 7,735,077 23,700,531
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses Notes Payable Pension Benefit Obligation Assets Held for Others Deferred Revenue Total Liabilities	\$ 1,593,539 113,959 - 1,282,516 331,187 3,321,201
Operating Property and Equipment Total Without Donor Restriction With Donor Restriction Total Net Assets	\$ 10,865,849 7,735,077 18,600,926 1,778,404 20,379,330
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 23,700,531

^{*}Note: Non-Operating Revenue includes the acquisition of Bridge Center. Extraordinary Items include gain on the sale of property, in-kind donation of equipment, pension cost, and decrease in investment returns.



state board

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Our mission is to provide services to ensure children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play.



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Massachusetts