



**Center for  
Independence**  
THROUGH CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION

# Annual Report

March 2024

The mission of the Center for Independence is to help children and young adults with disabilities achieve their highest level of independence in the home, school, community and workforce. We provide therapy programs that develop life skills and motor function in a manner that promotes self-reliance and an "I Can!" attitude. Committed to breaking down barriers to employment, the Center also provides job linkage and placement for young adults with varying disabilities through our innovative program, Working Together Chicago.

(708) 588-0833 ~ [www.CFImove.org](http://www.CFImove.org)



## Note from the Director

During 2023, the Center's word of the year was "Hope." We celebrated 25 years of hard work, success, and achievements for generations of children and adults with disabilities!

Your support has been transformative. This year, we served over 400 people with disabilities providing therapy and job services through Working Together Chicago. The Center also served over 400 parents and siblings through support programs. Every step forward has been made possible by your generosity.

We believe in transparency, and our detailed financial breakdown in the Annual Report reflects our commitment to accountability. Your trust empowers us to ensure that every donation is used wisely and efficiently, directly benefiting the children we serve. I want to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering belief in our mission.

Your contributions go beyond monetary value; they represent hope, compassion, and a shared commitment to making the world a better place for children and young adults with disabilities. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

As we prepare for another 25 years of success, we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. With your continued support, we aim to reach even more children, introduce innovative programs, and create a nurturing environment where every person can thrive.

Thank you for being a beacon of light in the lives of these incredible people. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the lives of so many

*Patti Herbst / Executive Director*

**Site Locations:** The Center is proud to offer programs at the following locations:

**Countryside**  
(Main Site)  
100 W. Plainfield Rd, Ste. 100  
Countryside, IL 60525

**Brighton Park - Chicago**  
2701 W. 36th Place  
Chicago, IL 60632

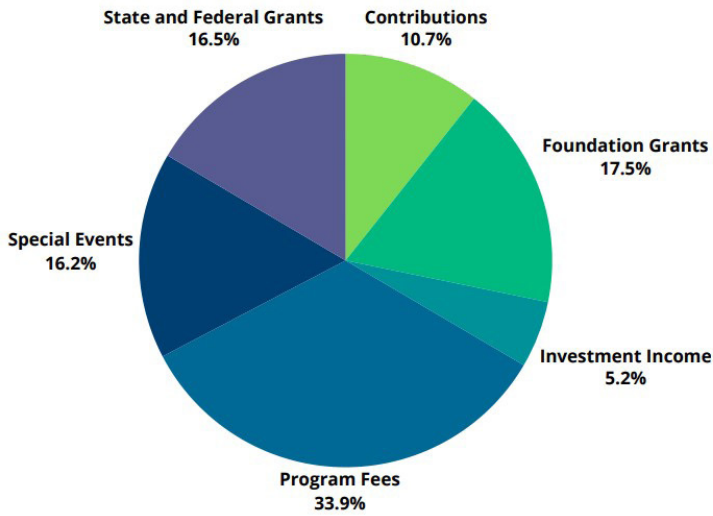
**Northwest**  
The Hope Collective  
23153 W Miller Rd.,  
Lake Zurich, IL 60047

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on Social Media!



# Financial Report for year ending December 31, 2023



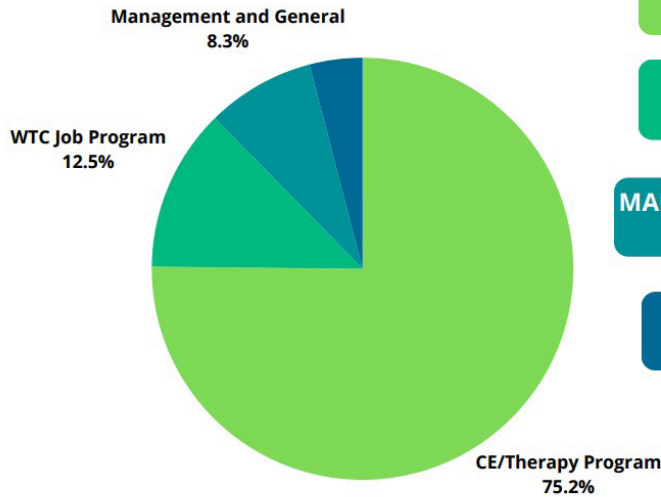
- PROGRAM FEES**  
\$866,720
- FOUNDATION GRANTS**  
\$449,057
- STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS**  
\$422,798
- SPECIAL EVENTS**  
\$413,417
- CONTRIBUTIONS**  
\$273,225
- INVESTMENT INCOME**  
\$133,674

**88%** of every dollar raised was spent on therapy and job programs that serve children and young adults with disabilities!

The Center received a \$275,000 State of Illinois Capital Grant to completely renovate our Countryside location. We are now ready for the next 25 years!

**Total Revenue & Public Support**  
**\$2,558,891**

**\$1,221,908**  
(20,365 hours) of Charitable Care, allowing every child to participate regardless of income or insurance limitations!  
**THANK YOU!**



- CE/THERAPY PROGRAM**  
\$1,770,415
- WTC JOB PROGRAM**  
\$294,074
- MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL**  
\$195,336
- FUNDRAISING**  
\$95,585

**Total Expenses**  
**\$2,355,410**

**Net Assets as of December 31, 2023: \$1,991,799**

For a copy of the Center's Audited Financial Statements, please contact [pherbst@cfce.org](mailto:pherbst@cfce.org).

**892** people served in 2023!

213 children and young adults in therapy, 198 young adults with varying disabilities in job development and 481 parents and siblings in support programs

**98%** of children and young adults have improved in daily life skills, strength and independence, according to therapeutic standardized testing.

**100%** of Center families reported their child is more confident and self-motivated

**400** hours of free Social Work,  
**20,365** hours of charitable therapy care,  
**6** Free Parent Training Workshops

**23** New paid jobs created for adults with disabilities; **66** people with disabilities actively employed, earning > minimum wage!  
**5,200** hours of Charitable Job Placement Services

# *Intensive Therapy No limit to learning - reach your potential!*

**All smiles at the Center when we're working hard, standing tall and walking with our walkers!**



## ***CE Testimonials from Center Families and Participants:***

There are no words to express how fortunate and grateful my children have been to be part of Center for Independence Program. The genuine care, dedication, and facilitation the staff provide to make sure their clients gain independence with life long skills are exceptional! Parents are welcome too, and provided with much needed guidance and resources to support our families with our unique situations! We thank you CFI!!

*-Anita B, Brighton Park Parent*

We started in February of 2023 and CFI had made such an amazing impact on our CP warrior. Having therapy with peers has been so motivating for him and the staff is absolutely wonderful!

*-Jessica B, Countryside Parent*

My son has been going to the Center for almost 10 years. We as a whole family couldn't be more grateful to everyone involved in this amazing program! Through hours of hard work, patience and perseverance, he is achieving many goals in everyday life and beyond!

*-Lisa R, Countryside Parent*

The Center helps me with walking, standing, stretching and walking on the Treadmill. The Center also helps me to be more independent at home, using my skills everywhere I go! I learn new skills here, like cooking, art, and going out to the community. I like to practice money management, ordering and getting around in the community. I have many friends at the Center and I like to talk to them! Great place to be!

*-Matthew P, Center Participant*

## ***What is Conductive Education?***

Conductive Education is an intensive method of teaching people with motor disabilities to be more functionally independent. It is founded on the premise of neural plasticity; with intensive focused practice, the brain is capable of creating new pathways despite significant damage.

Children with motor disabilities develop and learn in the same way as typically developing children do. However, what most children learn through assimilation, the child with a motor disorder must be taught as a skill, whether it be walking, toileting, or dressing.

Our talented staff of Conductive Education Teachers, Physical and Occupational Therapists work together to provide a comprehensive program to promote confidence and motivation in every child, so that life skills are achieved to the best of their ability. The peer setting encourages children to take responsibility for their learning with an "I Can!" attitude.

***Improving self-determination and self-reliance in children with disabilities is the greatest influence in success at school, college, and ultimately, employment!***



Meet Working Together Chicago participant Nora Dresden, a resilient 23-year-old with cerebral palsy. Nora just landed a position as an office assistant at a sustainable energy company, Acciona Energy North America, in downtown Chicago. With the support and guidance of the Center's innovative job program, Working Together Chicago, Nora shines. She is the perfect example of "Hope."

Nora states, "The Center is where I gained the independence I needed, and where I learned I could advocate for myself. I found a job that is understanding and accommodates my needs. I feel comfortable and can see myself working here for a long time."

Nora's roots to the Center run deep. When she was 9 years old, Nora participated in specialized, intensive therapy at the Center for Independence to gain the skills she needed to live independently. Her connection with the Center goes beyond intensive therapy – it's a second family that has provided the community of support and services that she needed to thrive. Nora shares, "Before my experience with the Center, I didn't have any exposure to other people with CP. This is my second family."

Nora shows what is possible for people with disabilities who have access to intensive therapy and employment services. Thank you for giving Nora that opportunity!

*Thank you for giving young adults with disabilities the purpose and pride of a paycheck!*



## **THANK YOU!**



***Dr. Marni Tahuilian and Dr. Valerie Kattouf for hosting Parent's Day Out on December 2nd. Center families had a much-needed day off!***



***Nives and Joe Rizza for sponsoring the Annual Santa Breakfast on December 10th for all Center families! Everyone enjoyed presents and breakfast!***

# Thank You to Our 2023 Donors!

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## Your donations make a difference...THANK YOU!

64% of children attending the Center live in low-income households and face barriers to therapy services. But it's not just low-income families who face barriers...

High deductible insurance plans and HSA plans continue to shift the cost of therapy and healthcare to middle-income families.

The CDC estimates medical costs for children with Cerebral Palsy are **10 times higher** than typically-developing children. Middle-income families are struggling to pay for their child's necessary therapeutic services.

***...You break down access barriers so children can grow up healthy!***



***According to the 2023 Parent Satisfaction Survey, 95% of reporting parents expressed a reduction in overall stress and improved well-being. This is a significant achievement as parents of children with disabilities are at high risk for post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. The Center attributes this outstanding outcome due to high levels of charitable care and the following free services:***

- Workshops on banking, disability rights, government benefits and more
- Social work services for siblings and parents
- Parent support groups
- Young adults with disabilities social groups
- Case Management
- Respite Days
- Food Drives
- Home, School and Doctor visits

**The Center has *never* turned a child away due to insurance or income limitations! Thank you.**

# Board of Directors

*Our sincere thanks to the Board for donating their time and talents to the Center!*

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*The Center meets all 20 Better Business Bureau of Chicago Charity standards, is rated Platinum by Guidestar Charity Navigator, and received a 2023 "Top Non-Profit" Award from Philanthropedia!*



## Save the Dates

**March 3rd** - Bowling Social for WTC and CFI participants 18 years old and up

**July 12th** - Disability Benefits Workshop  
More information to follow.

**September 20th** - CFI Annual Golf Outing and Fundraiser at Bobak's Signature Events

**November 14th** - Working Together Chicago In-Person Fundraiser - More info coming soon!

## Accreditation!

*In December 2022 the Center was awarded Accreditation for quality programming and leadership by CQL. Congratulations to our terrific Staff and Board!*



Center for Independence is an Illinois nonprofit under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. EIN: 36-4259162

## ***Disability Benefits Workshops***

This February, the Center hosted another Disability Benefits Workshop for parents and participants with disabilities to learn about governmental and other benefits that people with disabilities may be entitled to.

The Center hosts educational workshops bi-annually to ensure that all families have the awareness and knowledge they need for their loved ones! Check out our website or Facebook page for upcoming dates!

## ***Ways to Support the Center***

### ***Donate***

Your donations allow children and young adults with physical disabilities to receive medically necessary therapy, regardless of their insurance or income limitations. No family should have to choose between buying groceries or paying for their child's therapy and YOU make that possible. Donations are accepted by mail or on our website at [www.cfimove.org/donate](http://www.cfimove.org/donate).



### ***Send a Child to Summer Therapy***

The Center offers two intensive 4-week sessions of intensive therapy during the summer. For \$5000, you can cover the costs for a low- or middle-income child with a physical disability to receive this intensive summer therapy! Any donation makes a difference!

### ***Hire a Person with a Disability***

Does your employer want to become more diverse and inclusive? Hire a young adult with a disability through the Center's innovative program, Working Together Chicago! Not sure what position you might have? Contact our WTC team today to learn more: 312-995-3302.

### ***Volunteer***

The Center regularly needs volunteers to help with painting, weeding, envelope stuffing and more! Get involved by emailing [sbondi@cfice.org](mailto:sbondi@cfice.org).

### ***Share***

The Center is able to grow because of our amazing community of supporters. Without word-of-mouth, the Center's therapy and job development programs would not reach the correct ears. Please keep sharing the Center's good work with any and all who may be able to benefit from our programming!

### ***Follow***

Be sure to follow the Center's accounts on social media!

@Center for Independence on Facebook

@cntr\_4\_independence on Instagram

@Center for Independence on LinkedIn

@Working Together Chicago on Facebook

@workingtogetherchicago on Instagram

@Working Together Chicago on LinkedIn!

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***Thanks for helping so many amazing children and young adults with disabilities achieve their full potential!***