# 2023 Gratitude REPORT

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Celebrating Our Community's Generosity and Impact



## A Message of Gratitude



Rachelle Vartanian Founder and President Living and Learning Enrichment Center



Pam Travis Executive Director Living and Learning Enrichment Center

#### Dear Friends,

As I reflect on this year, I am overwhelmed thinking about how grateful and honored I am to have partnered with you throughout 2023. I am filled with gratitude and excitement on the extraordinary year of growth we have experienced this year.

This year, we've expanded our reach significantly, now serving people from 8 counties and over 70 cities in Michigan. Our community-based vocational training program has flourished, partnering with over 100 businesses across 20 industries.

Our Exceptional Academy continues to break barriers, and we've seen our members shine in our sold-out Annual Variety Show and at our thriving Mod Market. Living and Learning isn't just for those with disabilities – it's a community where everyone belongs and potential is unlimited. I invite you to visit and experience the joy firsthand.

Looking ahead to 2024, we're eager to build on this momentum. Your support has been crucial, allowing us to offer financial assistance and expand our services. The stories of hope and transformation are a testament to what we achieve together.

We need your continued support to fulfill our mission. Whether you're a long-time supporter or new to our community, I invite you to be part of our story. Visit us, volunteer, or consider contributing to our cause.

Together, we've accomplished so much in 2023, but the best is yet to come. Join us as we create a world where every individual, regardless of ability, can live and learn.

With gratitude and hope,

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Rachelle Vartanian Founder and President Living and Learning Enrichment Center

#### Dear Friends,

As we look back on 2023, I'm excited to share the wonderful progress Living and Learning Enrichment Center has achieved. This year has been filled with growth, expanded services, and stronger community ties.

Our Living and Learning family grew by 25%, reaching 129 dedicated team members. This growth enhanced our vocational program and other essential services. We're thrilled that our clinical team now includes 4 Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, enabling us to provide even better support.

We helped 55 individuals find meaningful employment across 18 different cities, and our community partnerships blossomed to 100 business partners across 20 industries. New satellite hub locations have made our programs more accessible to families across the region.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we were awarded more than \$300,000 in grants, and our annual Hopes and Dreams Gala raised \$245,000 for our programs. Our social enterprise, Mod Market, saw a 20% increase in sales, providing valuable work experience for our members.

Looking ahead, we're focusing on meeting the growing demand for our services, with over 135 individuals on our vocational training program's waiting list. As we move into 2024, we're improving our facilities, expanding our programming, and enhancing our services to provide the best possible support for individuals of different abilities. Thank you for being part of our journey. It's through your support that we're able to make such a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. We couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,

Panela Trainip

Pam Travis Executive Director Living and Learning Enrichment Center

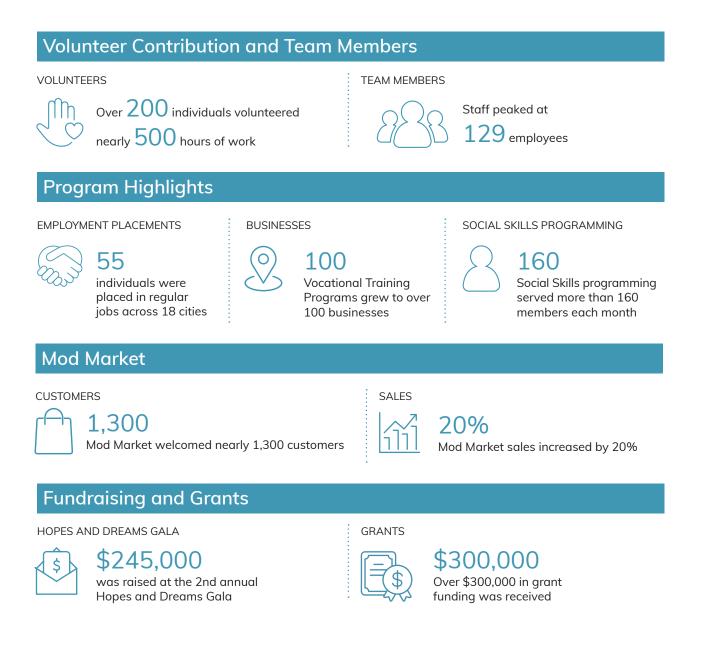
"The Farmstead is truly a gem! We love the incredible work you do, from the fresh eggs and golden honey to the warm smiles of your amazing members. Every visit feels like a breath of fresh air, and supporting your mission is a joy. Keep shining!"

Shayne G - WM

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### Empowering Lives A Year in Review

Welcome to a look back at the transformative journey and milestones reached at the Living and Learning Enrichment Center in 2023. Through teamwork, empathy, and a deep commitment, we've made significant progress in advancing inclusion and enhancing the lives of individuals from diverse backgrounds and needs. Explore the key statistics below that highlight our ongoing dedication to building a world where everyone has the support, acceptance, and opportunities they deserve to thrive.



### **Finding His Place:** Kyle Baker's Journey to Fulfillment at Living and Learning

For Kyle Baker and his mother Heidi, the path to meaningful employment seemed uncertain after Kyle's graduation from the Plymouth/Canton school system and subsequent participation in Madonna University's transition program. As Kyle approached 26, Heidi found herself searching for options that would support her son's unique needs and talents.

Enter Living and Learning Enrichment Center.

On the recommendation of one of Kyle's former teachers, Heidi reached out to Living and Learning. After a year-long wait, Kyle was offered a spot in the Vocational Program—an opportunity that would prove transformative.

"Kyle has 'worked' a lot of places and he always dreaded having to go to work," Heidi shared with Jen Carpen, Living and Learning's Vocational Director. But at Living and Learning, everything changed.

Starting with two days a week, Kyle rotated through various job sites, including Independence Village, Art and Jakes, Ace Hardware, and Aramark. The experience was nothing short of revolutionary for Kyle. Unlike other programs that expected participants to fit a predetermined mold, Living and Learning embraced Kyle's individuality.

"The Living and Learning staff is kind and accommodating and truly cares about the person's individuality," Heidi explains. "I love the structure Living and Learning provides." For Kyle, the impact is clear and simple: "I have fun and like being part of a team."

Kyle's enthusiasm for the program has only grown. He recently requested to increase his participation to three days a week, adding the Living and Learning Soap Studio to his roster of job sites. He's forging meaningful friendships with co-workers and developing special bonds with his job coaches, even discovering shared interests like Disney and Lorcana Cards.

These connections go beyond mere work relationships. They provide Kyle with a sense of belonging and purpose. His mother notes that Kyle's caring nature shines through in these interactions, as evidenced by his eagerness to share his prized Lorcana Cards with a job coach's husband.

The impact of Living and Learning extends far beyond job skills. As Heidi beautifully articulates, "You're providing hope and acceptance that most of the world is lacking. It's a huge sense of relief to finally find something that he enjoys, that will help ease this transition and enrich his life... every parent's dream."

At Living and Learning Enrichment Center, Kyle Baker isn't just finding a job—he's finding his place in the world, one day at a time.



"You're providing hope and acceptance that most of the world is lacking. It's a huge sense of relief to finally find something that he enjoys, that will help ease this transition and enrich his life...every parent's dream."





## A World of Opportunity:

Keya's Journey from India to Independence

Meet Keya, a young woman whose journey from India to the Living and Learning Enrichment Center exemplifies the transformative power of community, support, and determination.

Last year, a simple inquiry from Keya's family in India set in motion a series of events that would change her life forever. After careful consideration and numerous conversations, Keya made the bold decision to leave her home country and embark on a new adventure in Northville.

Her goal? To embrace independence and unlock her full potential with the support of Living and Learning's innovative programs.

From the moment Keya arrived, she dove headfirst into her new life. She secured her own apartment and quickly became an active participant in the Living and Learning community. Whether it's expressing herself in art club, socializing at the 20's club, sharing experiences in girl talk, or enjoying weekend hangouts, Keya has found her place among friends who appreciate her kindness, patience, and attentive nature.

But Keya's story doesn't end there. Her dedication and hard work culminated in an exciting achievement: a full-time position as a front desk receptionist at the Psychiatry & Psychology Center in Northville. In this role, Keya is the warm, welcoming face that greets patients, schedules appointments, and manages essential paperwork. It's a position that not only utilizes her administrative skills but also allows her natural kindness and creative mindset to shine.

"The Psychiatry & Psychology Center isn't just a workplace for Keya," shares a Living and Learning staff member. "It's an environment where she can build a fulfilling career, one that aligns perfectly with her values and aspirations. We're thrilled to see her flourish in a role that offers such potential for growth and success." Keya's journey is a powerful testament to the mission of Living and Learning Enrichment Center. In just a few short months, she has transformed her life, moving across the world to build independence, forge meaningful connections, and embark on a promising career path.

As we celebrate Keya's achievements, we're reminded of the incredible impact that support, opportunity, and community can have on an individual's life. Her story inspires us all and reinforces the vital importance of our work at Living and Learning.

To Keya, we say: Congratulations! Your courage, determination, and spirit embody everything we strive for at Living and Learning. We can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.

Keya's story is just one of many inspiring tales of growth and empowerment at Living and Learning Enrichment Center. It exemplifies our commitment to helping individuals lead fulfilling, independent lives—no matter where their journey begins.



## **Financial Overview**

ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	721,027
Accounts receivable, net	203,170
Contributions receivable, net	244,673
Prepaid expenses and other	6,940
Total current assets	1,175,810
Property and improvements, net	4,317,915
Total assets	5,493,725
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable	27,012
Current portion of notes payable	94,226
Accrued and deferred interest	_
Accrued other expenses	100,456
Total current liabilities	221,694
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	
Notes payable	2,896,698
Total liabilities	3,118,392
NET ASSETS	
Without donor restrictions	2,896,698
With donor restrictions	844,554
Total net assets	2,375,333
Total liabilities and net assets	5,493,725

Specific program revenue and expense data is available on Living and Learning's 990 form at: www.livingandlearningcenter.org/about



10 LIVING AND LEARNING

"We absolutely loved swinging on the trees, going on all the fun field trips, enjoying the Kona Ice truck, splashing around on water days, and, most importantly, making so many amazing friends!"

cdidas

"My child enjoyed every single day of summer camp—from the great variety of fun activities to seeing the animals, spending time with friends, and just getting out of the house. We can't wait to sign up again next year!"

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NUMBER OF STREET

MACHINE

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(\$500,000.00 to \$999,999.00)

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## A.A. Van Elslander Foundation

Funder Spotlight

## AA VAN ELSLANDER

#### FOUNDATION

Living and Learning Enrichment Center is proud to have received support from the A.A. Van Elslander Foundation. The Foundation was endowed by the late Art Van Elslander, one of Michigan's most prominent and respected businessmen and philanthropists. Credited with saving Michigan's iconic Thanksgiving Day Parade from financial ruin in 1990 with a personal check for \$200,000, he remained an integral part of ensuring the parade's continued success until his passing in 2018.

Diane Wells, COO and Executive Director of the Foundation stated, "Our founder, Mr. Art Van Elslander, respected individuals and organizations that used financial gifts as a "springboard to success," rather than as a source of income. We look for lean operations with low overhead; fiscal responsibility is paramount. We value the partners we have met who embrace these philosophies and it has been most gratifying to witness how Michigan's communities benefit from their efforts." In supporting Living and Learning, Ms. Wells commented that the Foundation "... looks for partners who have a compelling founder's story and an entrepreneurial spirit. Our greatest partners have overcome adversity, are deeply committed to their mission, and have not just a vision, but a clear plan to success and sustainability. We were intrigued by Rachelle's story, felt she had the potential to build a successful community, and wanted to help."

She concluded, "Living and Learning has used grant funds strategically for capacity-building initiatives, allowing it to access other sources of support and put critical infrastructure in place to ensure long-term sustainability. It is most rewarding to watch grantees make developmental strides in their growth. To be a small part of these stories is incredibly rewarding."

The members Living and Learning serves, our staff, and our board are truly grateful to the A.A. Van Elslander Foundation for both the financial support it has provided, and the vote of confidence it displayed in selecting Living and Learning as a partner to help the Foundation fulfill Mr. Van Elslander's philanthropic vision.



## Thank You 2023 Donor Honor Roll\*

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Diane & David Wallen Charitable Fund

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Chicken – Plymouth

Buffalo Wild Wings Novi Carrabba's Italian Grill **Creative Thinking** Design & Marketing Crispelli's Bakery & Pizzeria E.G. Nick's Edo Ramen **Events by Anasie** Fleming's Steakhouse French's Flowers & Gifts, Inc Fresh Thyme Northville Genitti's Hole in the Wall George's Senate of Northville Inc Granite City Brewery Guernsey Ice Cream Lekker Choco Treats Luca Pastry Metro Cars **Mission BBO** Picnic Basket Marketplace Studio 170 Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea The Lava Grille Northville Promoz Construction Signarama – Novi Highclere Castle Gin

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20 LIVING AND LEARNING

#### 2023 Fall Formal

Deliciously Dipped Dough.Re.MI Kits Imagine Design & Build Co Independent Carpet One Party Pix Souly Sips Vintage Food Truck Jeff & Cathie Gallant Brighton Florist

#### 2023 Haunted Hallows Event

Aramark Bimbo Bakeries – Taylor Busch's Fresh Food Market Dearborn Sausage Co James & Julie Harb Thomas Jakubczak

#### 2023 Santa Run 5k

Health For Life Chiropractic Papa John's Northville Athletix Running Lab – Brighton Better Health Co. Tuscan Café The Better Co. Michigan Rehab & Performance Blue Whale Café Tri-Covery Massage & Flexibility

#### 2023 Talent Show

Eric & Diane Smith International Minute Press Brighton Florist Preservation Dental Thomas Jakubczak Peggy Sturtevant Detroit Can Co

#### 2023 Hockey Hearts & Heroes Event

Fox Motors BMW of Farmington Hills Sergei Fedorov Foundation Bidigare Contractors, Inc Boar's Head, JW Coastal Provisions Inc Edward Clark's Hunter Service Detroit Tigers, Inc Sun Outdoors/Sun Communities Flynn & Company **Dwellings Michigan** Jack Demmer Ford, Inc Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken Remerica Hometown Wright & Hunter, Inc Why Bars Lasting Impressions Promotional Marketing Beer League Sports Plymouth Physical Therapy Specialists Alphagraphics

### 2023 Job Sites

**ABC Warehouse** (Farmington Hills) ACE East Livonia Great Lakes (Livonia Hub) ACE Hardware Applebee's Bar and Grill (Canton) Applebee's Bar and Grill (Commerce) Applebee's Bar and Grill (Westland) Aramark Refreshments (Livonia) Aramark Refreshments (Plymouth) Arctic Edge of Canton Art and Jakes Sportsbar and Grill (Northville) Ascension Providence (Novi) **Baby Baby** BI's Restaurant and BrewHouse **Bluestone Childrens Center BMW** (Farmington Hills) BrownDog Creamery Buffalo Wild Wings (Novi) **Building Beds 4 Kids Burlington Coat Factory** (Farmington Hills) Burlington Coat Factory (Novi) Burn Boot Camp Busch's Fresh Food Market (Farmington Hills) Busch's Fresh Food Market (Canton) Busch's Fresh Food Market (Plymouth) Summit on the Park (Canton) Center Street Grille Chick-Fil-A (Northville) Chick-Fil-A (Novi) City of Northville/Mill Race **Community Opportunity Center Continental Refresh** Country Inn & Suites (Novi)

Courtyard Marriot (Courtyard Detroit Livonia) Craft Breww City Deadwood Bar & Grill Edo Ramen Farmington Hills Inn Fleece and Thank You Forgotten Harvest Fresh Thyme Market (Canton) Fresh Thyme Market (Northville) Friendship Circle Great White Buffalo Brewing Co. Hampton Inn (Northville) Henry Ford Health (West Bloomfield) Hilltop Golf Course Hilton Garden Inn (Plymouth) Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites (Farmington) Home 2 Suites by Hilton (Northville) HopCat Independence Village of Plymouth The Inn at St. John's (St. John's Resort) Minuteman Press ITC Holdings Corp. **Jewish Senior Life** Karls Cabin Restaurant and Banquets Land Rover Novi (Fox Motors Group) Leo's Coney Island (Plymouth) Life in the Craft Room Lineage, Inc. Livonia Rec Center Los Tres Amigos (Northville) Macy's Magna International Mama Mucci Pasta (Mucci Food Products Ltd.)

Marriott (Livonia) Maybury Farm Meadowbrook Country Club Michigan Humane Society (Westland) Mill Race Build Project MOD Market New Hope Grief Center Northville District Library Northville Swim Club Novi Ice Arena **Oakland Country Foster** Care Closet Papa Johns (Northville) Papa Johns (South Lyon) Picnic Basket Marketplace Plaza Lanes Posh Consignment Boutique Red Dot Coffee Co. Savvy Sliders George's Senate Coney (Northville) Sheraton Hotels (Detroit-Novi) St. Edith Catholic Church St. Kenneth Catholic Church St. Mary Mercy Hospital Stemville Straight Farmhouse Studio 170 Sunrise Senior Living Tennis TEC **Tipping Point Theatre** United Image Group Valentino's Pizza Village Arts Factory Vistar of Michigan Volunteers of America Walnut Creek Country Club World Medical Relief

"Jessica is making a big difference...and I can see the difference in her already from when we met. She has really improved her speed and is able to get a lot done. She is doing awesome!"— MICHELLE, MANAGER

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