



the heart of the matter



2014 Annual Report

Our Mission

Oak Hill sets the standard, partnering with people with disabilities, to provide services and solutions promoting independence, education, health and dignity.



Independence

through
innovation and
integration.

Chairman's Letter

This time last year we sat on the threshold of a new beginning. When I look back on the last 12 months I see a reinvigorated organization, with a profile that truly reflects our stature in Connecticut. In terms of general presence and an improved understanding of our organization's mission, we have made dramatic strides forward.

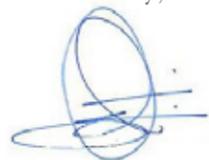
Many of you will have seen and heard the advertising and marketing we have been doing throughout the year, and will have heard the same positive stories I have, which reflects so well on Oak Hill. We have addressed issues of awareness and messaging, and embraced the strategic plan's call to 'develop a culture of marketing'. We have been able to promote the breadth and depth of our services, while projecting our new brand and our overarching goal . . . Empowering People with Disabilities.

Our new mission states, "Oak Hill sets the standard, partnering with people with disabilities, to provide services and solutions promoting independence, education, health and dignity." The stories you will read in this annual report speak to the empowerment that takes place in a person's life when a successful partnership is developed, and the enhanced quality of life that is realized as a result of needs being identified and met here at Oak Hill.

As Chairman of the Board of Connecticut's largest private provider of services for people with disabilities, it is my privilege to work alongside many people who are committed to moving the mission of Oak Hill forward on a daily basis. I want to take this opportunity to thank the following individuals and groups for their dedication: the Oak Hill and Oak Hill Foundation Board of Directors, each of them brings a level of expertise that is willingly exercised in helping Oak Hill develop new strategies to keep us on the cutting edge of care; our new President and CEO, Barry Simon, under his leadership we have witnessed remarkable evolution this year; the staff at Oak Hill, for the extraordinary care and encouragement they provide to those with disabilities that we serve; our parents and guardians, who participate in all levels of their loved ones care; our donors and volunteers who give unselfishly of their time and financial resources; and, the many advocates who are committed to raising awareness and community support.

This was truly a landmark year for Oak Hill and we have much to celebrate. Over 40,000 individuals benefited from Oak Hill's services and lives were changed! On behalf of the Boards of Directors, staff and those we serve, thank you for your support and for the role you play in empowering people with disabilities! May you be inspired as you read this report.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Szilagyi, Esq.



Words from the President

2014 has certainly been an exciting year. Your collaboration and hard work have helped to contribute to Oak Hill's success. The dedication of our participants, staff, board of directors, and the generosity of our donors has enabled us to continue during difficult times and will allow us to move forward into the future. We thank you.

New Challenges

With the State funding for a significant portion of our services being precarious and a philosophical change occurring in the Developmental Disabilities field, Oak Hill has remained ahead of the curve. Amidst increasing concerns about the State budget, greater demands for transparency and accountability, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Healthcare Reform) mandates, Oak Hill has consistently balanced conviction and flexibility, goals and realism, cautious management and the ability to take advantage of timely opportunities. This balance allows us to meet immediate program needs while participating in a changing service delivery system.

A New Vision

Since I became CEO, I've talked to as many people as possible about our vision for Oak Hill: plans to expand and transform our programs and services to meet the changing needs of the communities and people we serve. We will concentrate on two key areas: the needs of our participants and educating the community and public policy makers on the importance of our services. We will continue to build a strong infrastructure that can withstand the significant challenges upon us.

Timeless Commitment

At Oak Hill, keeping focused on what really matters involves building on our foundation – our mission – and establishing and maintaining value-driven, person-centered services. We have clear ideas about where we need to go and the talent to get there. In addition to the knowledge and experience of our staff and board, we have significant resources among the individuals whom we serve, our advocates, family members, and other community partners. We have enjoyed strong support from the State agencies who contract with us, but let there be no mistake: as we move forward, profound changes are reshaping the way we do business.

While we will improve the quality of our services by staying true to our mission and values as the basis for all our decisions, our enthusiasm and optimism, our record of success, and the diverse talent and energy of all of you will enable us to not only adapt to change, but also thrive in it.

Oak Hill's goal has always been to set the standard and provide the highest quality care for people we serve. It was the desire of our founder in 1893, and it is that same desire today that will serve as our guide. Oak Hill is ready for a new era of excellence.

Thank you all for your support of Oak Hill!

Sincerely,



Barry M. Simon, MA, MPA



Oak Hill Leadership

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Frank Szilagyi, Oak Hill Board Chairman, presents Board Member David Hadden and his wife Sara with the Oak Hill Parents of the Year award at the 2013 Inspirations: A Celebration of Excellence

Financial Highlights

The financial results presented below have been excerpted from Oak Hill's financial statements for the fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2014. The mission-related programs generated income, which fell short of expenses by \$5.8 million. Contributions from generous donors, coupled with income from investing prior donor contributions, reduced the shortfall. Without the generous support of current and prior donors, scores of people with disabilities would be unable to benefit from the innovative programs that are the hallmark of Oak Hill. Audited financial statements are available to interested parties through Oak Hill's business office.

Operating Income

Group Homes	\$55,199,532	72%
Day Services.....	\$8,013,138	11%
Oak Hill School	\$10,062,151	13%
Other Revenue	\$3,291,061	4%
Total Operating Income.....	\$76,565,882	100%

Operating Expenses

Salaries and Wages.....	\$47,005,273	57%
Employee Benefits.....	\$17,274,619	21%
Purchased Services, Leases, Insurance, Utilities.....	\$11,847,578	14%
Materials and Supplies.....	\$2,547,288	3%
Other Expenses	\$1,351,455	2%
Depreciation	\$2,296,236	3%
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$82,322,449	100%

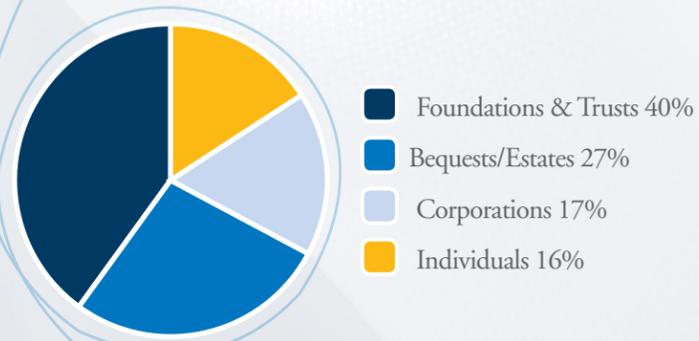
Deficit From Operations (\$5,756,567)

Public Support And Investment Income*

Interest and Dividends From Investments (less fees)	\$1,763,713
Income as Beneficiary of External Trust Funds	\$1,601,141
Gifts, Grants and Bequests	\$1,487,713
Total Public Support and Investment Income.....	\$4,852,567

* Excludes realized and unrealized capital gains and losses on investments, which the Board of Directors of Oak Hill has directed to be added to the investment pool. See "Report of the Oak Hill Foundation Investment Committee" for information on growth and management of the investment pool.

FY14 Sources of Income



Financials

Report of the Oak Hill Foundation Investment Committee

Christopher J. Hanlon, Chairman

- The Oak Hill Foundation Endowment fund had another strong year, returning over 16.74% and well outpacing our spending policy. The portfolio is positioned to do well in this uncertain investment environment and contribute to Oak Hill's mission and programs into the future.
- As Oak Hill celebrates 120 years, the foundation portfolio achieved a milestone of its own, eclipsing \$100 million in market value and ending the fiscal year at over \$102.5 million. This is an all-time high and the portfolio has more than recovered since the start of the credit crisis and the previous high water mark while providing annual support for the operating plan
- The fund remains prudently invested across multiple equity, fixed-income and alternative asset classes across the globe, utilizing numerous third-party professional investment managers. All sectors of the portfolio made positive contributions, highlighted by the equity component of the portfolio, which returned 23.67%.
- Last year the Foundation and outside trust income provided \$5.3 million of Oak Hill's \$82 million operating expenses. These resources maintain the quality of care that distinguishes Oak Hill and enriches the lives of our clients. Thank you to Oak Hill's generous donors for their long-standing support.

Emily Wells Foster Society

The Emily Wells Foster Society was established to recognize individuals who have made provision for Oak Hill in their estate plans. Some of the planned giving opportunities, which can provide tax benefits to the donor and/or their estate, include gifts of real estate or personal property, insurance policies, IRA or Keogh plan benefits, bequests, and trust arrangements. The society is pleased to recognize the following individuals who have generously committed to the future of Oak Hill:

Anonymous (3)*	Annette H. Conard*	Lars Guldager, PhD
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Emily Wells Foster's legacy changed the lives of hundreds of blind Americans over the past 120 years. Donors continue to expand on her mission by supporting the creation of new programs. Our adaptive recreational sports and fitness facility, Chapter 126, is now serving people with disabilities, veterans and their families.



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For information on how to become a member of the Emily Wells Foster Society, call the Development Office at 860.769.3834.

** Deceased*

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Putting the universe in clear view

Rory tracks classroom activities through Vision Assist technology.

The changes I see in my son, Rory, are enough for me to see Oak Hill has something very special. I don't know where we'd be without them. He's no longer sitting in a classroom, feeling left behind," explains Dawn Eifes, Rory's mom.

"Rory barely spoke when he arrived," said his teacher of six years, Barbara Rankin, "and not because he couldn't." The teachers at Oak Hill soon realized Rory's line of vision was consistently focused upwards, toward the ceiling, due to mobility and muscle control issues. This made it difficult for him to connect visual cues from the teacher to the content, making it impossible for him to engage.

"We secured his computer onto a mobile mount, next to his wheelchair, within his direct line of sight," Barbara added. "The monitor is now Rory's virtual classroom as Vision Assist, an iPad app, feeds him video of what's going on in front of him. He can play back clips to keep pace with the course material and enlarge video content to help minimize his low vision challenges."

"That's what they do – Oak Hill focuses on the individual needs of each student," explains his mom.

"They uncovered my son's specific challenges, then adapted the technology. That lit a fire in him, he immediately wanted to learn and be a part of everything."

And today he is. Rory is involved in the school play, the talent show, science experiments, Spanish class, the book club, and he's out on the playground with his friends.

Oak Hill's faculty also got him singing. To prepare for the talent show and plays, voice activation software was customized so Rory

can call up songs and lines, with a single word, to help him rehearse on his laptop. At the talent show he performed "You Win Again" by Hank Williams. He brought the house down! Dawn said, "I looked around the audience and saw everyone cheering him on. It was awesome to see him up there smiling and feeling included, with the entire school population...being just another kid, not the kid in the wheelchair."

Rory came to Oak Hill in 3rd grade. Now he's in 9th grade and speaking a foreign language in Spanish class – a far cry from the child who was mostly silent when he

first came to the school.

"It's a joy to see him figure out who he is, to be happy and fulfilled. He has a strong sense of self worth. This is the single most important thing that will help him as his life goes on. That's better than any skill we can teach him," adds Barbara. "He wants to go to college and get a job, and he feels like he can. This makes me want to keep doing what I'm doing."

At Oak Hill, teachers like Barbara Rankin, who Rory calls "Team Rankin", go beyond the call of duty. "I don't have to anticipate," said Rory's mom, "because they consistently seek to meet our needs – academic or functional. Barbara was the one who let it be known we were shopping for a van, because as Rory gets older, transporting him gets complicated."

When Oak Hill discovered the Eifes family could not afford the \$50,000 price tag for a new, adaptive van, we tapped into our community to identify possible resources.

One of our board members, Craig Lomma, made us aware that a friend, Grace Fiqueredo, was looking to donate an adaptive van. The van that transported her disabled sister, who had passed away.

The match was made.



The Eifes family, receiving their new gift from the Fiqueredo family: an adaptive van, modified by Advanced Wheels.



Then Christian Quandt, an Oak Hill corporate partner, stepped up to volunteer his time and company resources to modify the van to meet Rory's needs. "When we first met Christian, he observed my husband lifting Rory out of his car seat, with great difficulty, he immediately said he could help us," explained Dawn. His company, Advanced Wheels, adapts vehicles for people like Rory.

"I cried tears of relief when I learned we were receiving the customized van as a gift," said Dawn. "I knew it meant we would no longer have to leave Rory at home when we go places. He likes to go... and now we have the freedom to go."

"Barry Simon and his team know how to attract people with compassion. They care.

They have a strong sense of community and they're full of life and love. They have given us hope," said Dawn.

"It's a blessing to see Rory dream," added Dawn. "He loves music. He wants to audition on *The Voice* and meet Blake Shelton and Adam Levine." "I recently asked Rory how Oak Hill has helped him. He told me, 'They have a good system working for me. Oak Hill is going to get me where I need to go... into the music business!'"

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Helen Keller

Innovation meets desire and determination

I pay attention to what my students tell me,” said Steve Famiglietti, a trainer at The NEAT Center at Oak Hill. “I never think, ‘I have ten things to teach today.’ Instead I say to myself, ‘How do I get them from where they are now to where they need to be?’” For Steve’s student, Alexi Page, that meant going to college, qualifying for programs to learn independent-living skills and socializing with friends.



Steve shows Alexi how to operate her Pearl Camera and navigate the Internet using JAWS.

Today, NEAT provides goal-oriented training programs and technology solutions for people in the Blind Vocational Services Program. Here, trainers look past the disability to uncover the ability in each student. Assistive technology helps them lead more independent, integrated lives.

“They saved my daughter,” said Bo Page, Alexi’s Mom. “And I’m not exaggerating. NEAT identified her strengths immediately. They uncovered her strong desire to learn, her determination and her enthusiasm. This gave Alexi the confidence to overcome her challenges. For years, we had only been told what Alexi couldn’t do.”

“NEAT serves hundreds of blind/low-vision people in the state,” said Bruce Stovall, Vice President, Oak Hill Centers. “Our program begins with an evaluation that reveals the skills students already possess and matches them to the right technologies.”

Alexi could read Braille, so NEAT suggested a Braille display. She has strong listening skills, so they recommended a Pearl Camera, which converts printed text to natural, human-like speech.

The results have been remarkable. “Before we found Oak Hill, Alexi had trouble qualifying for programs to help her advance her independent-living skills, which was a detriment,” said Bo.

“This year, she’s enrolled in a program in Massachusetts because she acquired a higher level of functionality at NEAT.”

Her trainer Steve understands the challenges that people who are blind face, because he is blind. He coached Alexi in many aspects of her life and helped her comprehend the new technology.

Teaching her JAWS, a screen reading software, was essential to navigate the Internet, conduct online learning and to communicate. Dragon software enables her to speak to the computer. Noted Bo, “Without these tools, my daughter would not be prepared for college or the workplace.”

Alexi’s Dad, Bryan Page, added:

“Alexi has also gained insight from her trainers, like learning that she didn’t have to do everything herself – that it was ok to ask for help. This took a big burden off her.”

Alexi is interacting with her friends. Before she was trained to use social media, she was disconnected. “Kids who are blind have a difficult time making friends,” said Bo. “Without this innovative technology, you’re cut off from the world. Now Alexi can take part, verbalizing most of her messages on Facebook.”

“We were amazed by how easy her trainers made the iPhone and iPad to use. They also demystified the technology for us as parents.”
Alexi’s Mom.



Today Alexi is taking on new challenges, downloading apps and banking online. These activities are a testament to how much more independent she has become. She has accomplished all of this with the added challenge of having cerebral palsy, which limits her mobility and dexterity.

Bo added:

“It blows me away how many people who are blind don’t realize how this technology can enhance their connection to the world and make it a safer place. It makes the difference between having a life and having no life.”

Thank you to our loyal donors

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Thomas Hooker
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We're grateful to the many companies that help to improve the quality of life for our residents. They provide assistance with property maintenance, landscaping and many other tasks associated with running a home. Here, employees of the XL Group give the Newington Group Home a facelift.

Supporting employment through partnerships & technology

“When our agency began working with Oak Hill, our staff had varying levels of ability, some of us had a little knowledge, others had no experience using the iPad for training our people in the work force,” said vocational manager, Marisa Faria, from the Windsor Independent Living Association (WILA). “We were amazed what our clients could do with this technology and with the volume of accessibility options.”

The New England Assistive Technology Center (NEAT) at Oak Hill was selected to implement the Supporting Employment with Technology Program, which is dedicated to helping individuals find, obtain and maintain competitive employment.

The program was funded by an employment grant from the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. NEAT worked to design and roll-out the initiative in collaboration with Robin Wood, Director of Family Support Strategies and Advocacy, from The Department of Developmental Services. The goal is to increase employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. In 2014, NEAT partnered with three agencies to support this goal – WILA, Futures Inc., and Community Systems, Inc.

NEAT supplied professional development for job coaches and managers at the agencies, provided assistive technology evaluations for the 15 workers they support, along with on-going technical assistance for iPad implementation.

This technology can most effectively support a person's working memory, planning and organizational skills, money management, anxiety/stress levels and reading abilities. The goal is to increase independence. The integrated workplace setting enhances social skills.

“The most important part of this technology is that it enhances lives, both at work and at home,” added Marisa.



Mark uses his iPad at Big Y to help him plan his daily activities.

For Mark Van Schelt, an employee at Big Y in East Windsor, CT, the iPad has helped him get ready for work on time. It's challenging for him to prepare for work each morning. Now he uses an app called Popplet on his iPad to help him remember how to sequence his morning ritual. He takes photographs of himself shaving, making his lunch and dressing up in his uniform – then reviews his sequence daily, to stay on task. Mark recently exclaimed:

“I came to Big Y to be a success.”

And he is a success: Mark is competitively employed; he bags groceries, stocks shelves and loves to help people to their cars with their groceries. He gets to work on time each day and he's more productive. The technology recommended for Mark in the NEAT evaluation helps prompt and reassure him that he is successfully and independently fulfilling his work duties.

Companies across Connecticut like Big Y, CVS and Geissler's benefit from this program, and so do Oak Hill partner agencies. “The new technology, training, and evaluations help them thoughtfully consider where these tools fit into their agency's future,” explained Bruce Stovall, Vice President, Oak Hill Centers.

“NEAT has been a great resource. The AT specialists have been fabulous,” added Marisa. “We would never have been able to use the iPad to the fullest extent without them.”

Innovative programming leads to groundbreaking progress

The Crossman family has been searching for answers for 16-year-old Hannah since the accident she had at three years old, which sent her into cardiac arrest. The resulting traumatic brain injury left her unable to speak or ambulate.

“Her doctors gave us no hope. They asked us if we were going to bring Hannah home, then told us... try if you'd like, but this is how life will be for her,” explained Carol. “Because she was so young, we believed she had the capacity to regain abilities.

We searched for solutions, both traditional and non-traditional, for 13 years.

While Hannah regained some mobility over time, no one looked at the problem from a mechanical standpoint – to try to retrain her muscles after the injury.

Then they found Oak Hill's newest program, Chapter 126, Sports & Fitness. For Hannah, this meant validation. She recently told her grandmother, Carol Crossman, “I have a gym membership now. I am no longer an outcast.”

The first time her dad and grandmother wheeled her into the gym, Paul, one of her trainers, was on the basketball court. He placed her in an all sports chair to teach her to play wheelchair basketball. When Hannah couldn't propel herself forward due to the loss of mobility in one arm, he said, “No problem, we'll try it another way.”

“At this place they embrace her as she is,” added Carol. “They have the attitude, expectations and the equipment to deal with her. This positive approach brings her great enthusiasm.”

“We live 45 minutes away. We're happy to make the trip 3 to 4 days a week,” said Carol. Hannah's routine: she warms up playing air hockey with her Dad. Then works out on

specialized, adaptive equipment to retrain her muscles and stretches to lessen the pain from her injury. If she still has energy, she's shooting hoops with Paul.



Hannah plays air hockey with her dad as her grandmother Carol looks on.

Her Dad, Bryan, said he never dreamed they could find a place like Chapter 126.

The staff and center have boosted Hannah's sense of self. Her range of motion has improved to help her conduct more functional activities at home, independently. She is upbeat and sees her future expanding exponentially. Her grandmother added,

“We have made more progress at Chapter 126 in less than two months

than we did in 13 years of physical and occupational therapy.”

“The best part is they take a lifetime approach. They show me how I can help at home on days we can't make the trip,” said her grandmother. “Now that Hannah has grown into her teen years, the physical support for her rehabilitation is a huge help. They have taken a physical load off me and Hannah is safer.”

She has also made friends. “They are building community here and that couldn't mean more to us as a family,” said Carol. “When you have a child with disabilities there's limited support. Here, there's big connection. I would gladly stand on the White House steps to praise their dedication, because people need to know about this place.”

“Hannah's dream job is to be a paleontologist, because she loves dinosaurs,” her grandmother explained. “I *know* she is going to have a special place in society.”

[Learn more about this program at Chapter126.com.](http://Chapter126.com)

Caring for families in the comfort of their own homes

Eleven-year-old William Davis has autism and suffers from a traumatic brain injury he sustained when he was five years old. Resulting seizures and behavioral issues require constant supervision.

“Before I had to do it all myself. I could manage my son, but that's all I was able to do,” said Kim Davis, Will's mother. “Now I have Oak Hill. They provide Will quality home health care on a weekly basis.”

“His caregivers are like family,” Kim added. “We refer to them as aunts and uncles. This is really important to us, since we don't have relatives here in Connecticut.”



Will uses his Proloquo app to select the puzzles he wants to make with his Mom (R), his brother, Ruel and his caregiver, Dawn (L).

“They care for Will as if he's one of their own children.”

The feeling is mutual – Will loves his caregivers. They understand his need to have scheduled plans and activities, otherwise he feels anxious. So they plan outings: they go to the park, they take long walks and go to the mall.

This year, Will attended Oak Hill Camp for a few days. He enjoyed his trailer rides down to the beach. The camp provided personal assistance for him at all times, including a nurse who was there to help manage his feeding tube and administer his medications.

One of Will's caregivers, Dawn Albero, recently went on vacation with the family to Acadia, Maine. Will's mother wanted to take him there so he could appreciate the experience of a national park. “When we reached the top of Cadillac Mountain, I wondered what Will's reaction would be because it was so chilly and extremely windy,” said Kim. “Surprisingly, he didn't want to leave! He loved the feeling of the wind blowing through his hair. It's a sensory thing.”

“What's been real nice is our caregivers also go to doctor's appointments with us,” added Kim. “Since Will is non-verbal, he's unable to tell me how he's feeling. This is especially challenging if he's injured himself during a seizure and I'm unaware of it. I'm so thankful to have their input – a second set of eyes and ears really helps. I can turn to them and ask: ‘Are you seeing the same thing I am?’”

Today, Will is able to communicate his choices independently, thanks to Proloquo, a communication app designed for people who can't speak. “Will has lots of puzzles and movies. Now he can verbalize his preferences using Proloquo. He also uses his iPad and new software to help him communicate more effectively at his school,” said Kim.

The in-home care has helped our entire family. “Personally, it frees me up to also spend time with Will's brother, Ruel. And it's comforting to have the time to cook and sit down to a dinner as a family,” said Kim. “This type of break means the world to me. It's priceless for people like us, who were lucky enough to qualify for this service, because we desperately need it.”

“I see other people in my support group that would greatly benefit from home health care services. I see how beleaguered they are. I hope Oak Hill's community programs get as much funding as possible to continue this vital service, and to expand on it, because they are making all the difference to families in our situation,” explains Kim.

“As long as I'm able and the support is here for us, I am going to do all I can to keep Will at home with us.”

