

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



“

Whole Learning will always have this big place in our heart. It kind of saved our family. I feel like in a lot of ways, it saved my son. It saved me in different ways. And my daughter, I mean she was never happier than when she was there.”

AOWL PARENT



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## WELCOME!

An annual report should tell you about the past year. We can all agree, the past year working through the challenges created by the pandemic makes a year feel like a decade! Despite the circumstances, Academy of Whole Learning (AOWL) thrived! And given our success in managing our programming and preparing for the future, this report will also be a peek forward, not just a look back.

Late summer 2020, as we were entering the new school year, we confidently made the decision to return to in-person learning. We had the staff and infrastructure to do so, but more importantly we knew it was the right decision for our students. We returned to in-person learning grateful for each member of our AOWL community.

In a pandemic year, where many classrooms were on a screen, we were together. Our staff, families, board of trustees and community members worked tirelessly to keep our students safe. Distance or in-person learning was offered to all families. To help our in-person students learn how to be flexible with distance learning, we met diligently every single week to evaluate and adapt to unknowable circumstances. The plans we put in place for the year matched the recommendations of the experts, and our students continued to build their skills and excelled.

Our clinic doors have remained opened and in-person throughout the pandemic. Not surprisingly, the demand for mental health services continued to rise this year. With the generous support of a benefactor (or “a grant”), we secured funds to hire and train new clinic staff. This made it possible for us to serve most of the children who were on our long waiting list, as well as continuing to serve our current clients.

Our adult program, in its pilot year, was named one of the best adult programs in the Twin Cities. We are now approved through the state as a Community Partner with the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Our enrichment programming continued throughout the year, virtually and in person. For the first time, our summer program enrolled more students from the community than from the school. The future is bright for our programming that builds social skills and offers neurodiverse students opportunities they could not get elsewhere.

Together, we worked to hold our biggest fundraiser online, generating a record-breaking amount of donations. Thank you to our generous donors who made it possible for us to continue a broad range of programming in a year of great challenges.

In a year when many organizations were on hold due to the disruption to their services, together, we took a leap of faith and secured AOWL’s future. With the generous support of major donors who came alongside us, we purchased a building and campus that will be our permanent home.

Last but not least, at this writing, renovation has begun on our new campus. Because of you, we are truly Building our Future – Together. And that future is boundless.



## K-12 SCHOOL

An accredited, private, K-12 school for learners with autism and related learning differences, Academy of Whole Learning provides a unique learning environment that meets each student's sensory needs and learning style.

While we have existed since 2003, we're essentially a start-up – passionate about our purpose and innovating every step of the way to meet the needs and fulfill the promise of our community. We have grown each year, whether by adding grades, electives, or staff, like the behavior therapists in each classroom who work side-by-side with our amazing teachers.

Just as we've grown, so has enrollment. In fact, it's more than quadrupled in the past 10 years, as more and more families realize we offer not just an alternative to traditional schools, but an avenue to unlock the potential for learning, belonging, and succeeding.



## STAYING ON STRATEGY: PROGRESS DURING A PANDEMIC

Despite the pandemic, we continued to move forward on our strategic plan.

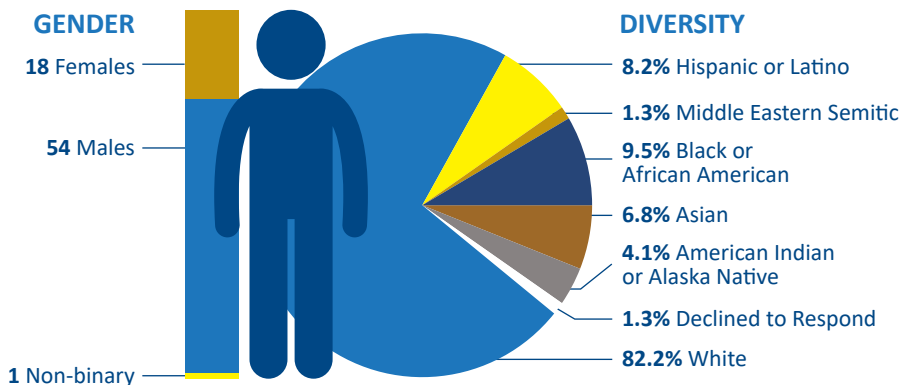


- ✓ We remained open throughout the year, offering both distance learning and in-person classes.
- ✓ We finished the first major alignment of curriculum to assessments, analyzing various tools to make sure we're keeping up with state standards while meeting the need for individualization. Using our proprietary Rubric Assessment Tool for School Skills, we developed specific social-emotional goals for each student (tracked monthly), demonstrating the integration of behavior therapists in the classroom AND our focus on the whole person (not just grades).



## SUCCESS STORY

### WHO WE SERVE



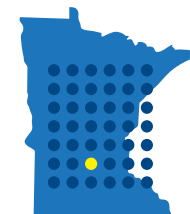
**24.6%**  
of students received financial aid, with an average gift size of \$16,508



**27**  
Number of cities from where our students travel



### THE NEED



**1 in 42**  
children in Minnesota has ASD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota-Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network [MN-ADDMM] 2018  
<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Education, 2021



**20%**  
High school graduation rates for students with disabilities are roughly 20% lower than for other students<sup>2</sup>

### HOW WE SERVE STUDENTS

We meet each student where they are and create a tailored plan to unlock their potential. We observe, adapt, and apply behavior strategies while teaching, through the pairing of experienced behavior therapists with teachers in each classroom. We also hire teachers who have both special education backgrounds and subject matter expertise. Through this holistic approach, we help our students build both executive functioning and academic strength to excel inside and outside the classroom.

- **4:1** student to staff ratio
- Behavior therapists and teachers **CO-LEAD EACH CLASSROOM**
- Students can be **DUALLY ENROLLED** in school and with Therapy Services — in fact, more than half of students are — to continue academic learning while addressing social-emotional/behavioral needs
- **AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS** build skills and allow for peer-to-peer learning
- **PARTNERSHIP WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS** allows students to participate in a wide range of sports
- **ONSITE PIANO LESSONS** add another valuable dimension for whole-mind learning

### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE IN THE NOW

Thanks to the first phase of our capital campaign, *Unlock Potential*, we have a new campus in Golden Valley (see pages 12-13). Once the campaign is finished, the campus will be fully renovated and ready for controlled growth.

Our plan for the K-12 school is to grow from 80 students enrolled to 125, continuing to offer a calm environment where holistic learning can flourish.



### NOW

"He's a thriving young man who has friends, is accepted for who he is...the artist and unique kiddo who just wants to be hugged. Our family can now embrace and look forward to his future."

# THERAPY SERVICES

Therapy Services is a separate service located alongside the K-12 school, serving a similar population of students with autism spectrum disorder and other learning differences. Within that population, we focus on those with related mental health challenges, like anxiety, ADHD, or depression, and their families. We serve clients as young as two and up to young adulthood.

Our expertise exists at the intersection of behavioral, mental, and physical health. We know that to truly unlock potential, you need to address the whole person.

## WHO WE HELP

In 2020-21 despite the pandemic, we worked with nearly 70 clients individually through a combination of in-person and telehealth visits. We also helped 91 clients through our Therapeutic Groups.



**70**  
clients helped individually



**91**  
clients helped in groups

## THE NEED

### FACING MENTAL ILLNESS



**1 in 5**  
Minnesotans face mental illness every year<sup>3</sup>

### WHO RECEIVES TREATMENT



Only 53% of adults and 54% of adolescents with mental illness receive treatment<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> MN Department of Human Services, 2017  
<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015



## SUCCESS STORY

**“**  
**THEN**  
“Kai was getting more and more anxious every day. It got to the point that he was throwing up every day before school. Anxiety is all-consuming for him. I’ve seen him be unable to relate to people, unable to learn. Children like Kai with multiple diagnoses who need help the most have the hardest time finding a therapist who understands all of the conditions they face.”

**NOW**  
“He had gotten further in four and a half months in therapy at Academy of Whole Learning than he had two years before that. We are seeing what real-life magic is. It’s one team, it’s one dream...the entire school and the therapy and what we are doing at home is really reinforcing and really starting to work. It gets his mind and body to a place where he is ready to learn.”

## HOW WE SERVE CLIENTS

Therapy Services is one of only a few Twin Cities’ providers bringing mental health, social-emotional, behavioral, physical, occupational, and speech therapy together in a single location. We are the only one co-located with a school.

Starting with a diagnostic assessment, we then create a customized approach in partnership with the family and school (when clients are also students). We have trained therapists in:

- Psychotherapy: addressing the social-emotional mental health for children with (but not limited to):
  - Behavioral challenges
  - Mood and anxiety disorders
  - Depression
  - Developmental issues
  - Autism Spectrum Disorders
  - ADHD
- We also work with parents to improve functioning of family systems
- Accelerated Resolution Therapy
- Intensive Behavior Intervention (1:1 individual and family skills training) focusing on
  - Communication
  - Socialization
  - Repetitive behaviors
  - Behavior regulation
- Provide Onsite Rehabilitation Therapies
  - Occupational
  - Physical
  - Speech
- Testing & Assessments

Our trained therapists also lead Therapeutic Group sessions. Research shows this kind of therapy is effective thanks to the increased feedback (from the therapist and other group members), modeling (by the therapist and other group members), and the opportunities to improve social skills through peer interaction.

## STAYING ON STRATEGY: PROGRESS DURING A PANDEMIC



Despite the pandemic, we continued to move forward on our strategic plan.

- ✓ Therapy Services is now credentialed with seven major insurance companies, including HealthPartners locally and Cigna nationally.
- ✓ We applied for and received a grant to double the size of our mental and behavioral therapy staff to better meet the needs of children and families on our extensive waitlist.
- ✓ We are now certified through the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which means we can provide services to students who receive medical assistance.



## 500% ↑ BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE IN THE NOW

Our plan for Therapy Services is to grow capacity to serve 500 clients each year – that’s a 500 percent increase. The need is there; we are confident we can meet that need with our unique approach and blended expertise.



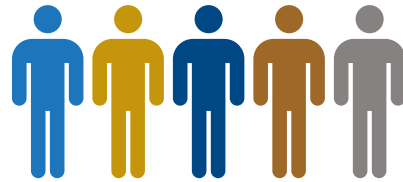
## ADULT EDUCATION

Launched in 2020-21, Academy of Whole Learning now offers a holistic program to help young adults on the autism spectrum or with related neurodiverse challenges live and work independently with confidence.

More than a set of classes, we teach students the mindsets to be forward thinkers, the insights to command their own thought processes, and the social and vocational skills necessary to thrive in their communities.

### WHO WE HELP

In its debut year, we worked with 5 young adults from ages 19 to 22.

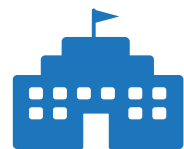


### THE NEED



66%

Studies estimate 66% of adults with ASD are unemployed<sup>5</sup>



39%

Only 39% of people with ASD who start college, finish college<sup>6</sup>



42%

42% of people with ASD in their early 20s have never worked for money<sup>7</sup>



19%

Far fewer young adults with autism live independently after high school (19%) compared to nearly 80% of those with learning disabilities<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5,7,8</sup> National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood, 2015  
<sup>6</sup> Journal of College Student Development, 2017



## SUCCESS STORY

“

### THEN

“He was [at a] third-grade level in 6th grade, and he was bullied. It was extremely bad. He completely shut down, mentally, emotionally. We ended up having to put him in a mental health facility.”

### NOW

“I believe [Academy of Whole Learning] saved Aris’ life, truly. I can honestly see him having a job, living on his own, and I think Academy of Whole Learning has helped in so many ways giving him the confidence; giving me the confidence in my son...I can see [Aris’s] future, and it’s really bright.”

### HOW WE SERVE CLIENTS

Using research-based assessments for each student, we pinpoint areas for growth. Keeping class sizes small and student-to-teacher ratios low, we work through each individual plan to provide guidance, skills, and real-life practice.

We offer full-time, part-time, and flexible scheduling. Our classes cover topics including:

- Employment skills
- Independent living
- Social skills
- Community participation
- Self-determination
- Post-secondary education
- Social recreation

One of the ways we prepare students for independence is integrated work opportunities, for example in an assisted-living facility. Last year, our first year of this partnership, students were responsible for cleaning, organizing, and completing paperwork, doing a COVID screening process with employees, and interacting in social activities with the residents. At the end, each participant was offered employment, based on their excellent performance!



### STAYING ON STRATEGY: PROGRESS DURING A PANDEMIC



Despite the pandemic, we continued to move forward on our strategic plan.

- ✓ We launched our Adult Education Program! We now provide students ages 18+ additional opportunities, skills, and training to live confident, connected, independent lives.



### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE IN THE NOW

We know the need is high for neurodiverse adults who want to live independently but aren’t quite ready yet. Once we’re on the new campus, we’ll have more room to grow. We’re also actively pursuing partnerships for job training, housing, and social interactions. We plan to increase capacity to enroll 40 students each year.





## ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is both a separate set of activities and at the same time a vital component of our holistic approach. While anyone can participate in Enrichment offerings without being a student of the school or a client of the clinic, many participants are both students and clients, epitomizing the benefits of our wrap-around approach to unlock each individual's full potential.

From after-school clubs to summer camps, we design engaging activities where students develop leadership skills, become more self-directed, and experience success in new settings outside the classroom or home.



### STAYING ON STRATEGY: PROGRESS DURING A PANDEMIC

Despite the pandemic, we continued to move forward on our strategic plan.

- ✓ We continued to offer our high-quality programming (clubs, summer camp, and sports) with both virtual and in-person options.
- ✓ In our Bridge the Gap Summer Camp programming, we grew our community reach with nearly 40 non-AOWL students attending.



### WHO WE SERVE



**75** students went to Bridge the Gap summer camp in 20-21, with over 50% being community students (non-AOWL)



**120** club enrollments throughout the school year

### HOW WE SERVE STUDENTS

Our Enrichment programs include:

#### AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS

- Tech
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Gaming
- Flag Football
- Minecraft
- Arts & Crafts
- Mindfulness & Yoga
- Lego club
- Drama

*Strengthens leadership, teamwork, social skills, social awareness, social connection, decision-making, and communication.*

#### BRIDGE THE GAP SUMMER CAMP

- Sports
- Tech
- Environmental Science
- Art & Animation
- Reading, English Language Arts, & Math
- High School Skills

*Offers students unique opportunities for enrichment and fun in academics and essential social and life skills with trained counselors.*

#### IN-VIVO LEARNING

Learning through experiences like:

- Field trips
- Dinner & a movie
- Painting parties
- Bowling

*Promotes independence and allows students to practice social skills in a new setting with guidance from behavior therapists.*

#### PARTNERSHIPS

- Breck
- Special Olympics

*Builds valuable team-based skills, while providing the joy of playing competitive sports.*

### THE NEED

Children diagnosed on the spectrum can react to the world differently, and that includes human interactions. Behaviors related to social skills can be a barrier to successful relationships, learning, and navigating any process with other people, from going to the grocery store to playing a sport. These include:

Difficulty reading non-verbal cues

Literal interpretations (which makes jokes and sarcasm hard to understand)

Making appropriate eye contact

Understanding personal space

Recognizing and understanding feelings in themselves and others

### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE IN THE NOW

Our new campus features fabulous outdoor space for camps – our plan is to grow from hosting 100 summer campers to 250! And thanks to our splendid supporters, we're renovating specific spaces to support clubs, activities, and athletics.



## SUCCESS STORY

“

#### ENRICHMENT

“The after-school programs and summer camp are also amazing. He loves the enrichment programs. Our son participates in all the enrichment programs and is so excited to participate. He can't wait to get up in the morning. He gets up early every day and chooses not to do other things outside of school if it conflicts with one of the programs.”

#### ENRICHMENT

“These programs create normalcy. They integrate social learning. It's safe and it's simple and they get to hang out with kids just like them.”



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

### UNLOCK & POTENTIAL 2021 AOWL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

While the pandemic caused a slight delay, we successfully moved ahead with our goal to buy a new facility to call our own. We found a location in Golden Valley that met all our criteria! Thanks to a vital, valued group of supporters, we bought the property in February 2021. Renovation started in October and our goal is to move all of our staff and programming to our new location in the summer of 2022.

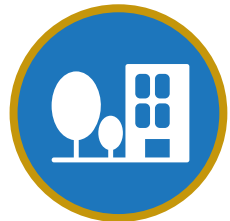


## WHY THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

Helping Academy of Whole Learning grow equates to helping more families whose children are just surviving when they could be on a journey with their tribe to thriving. This is not a campaign about simply getting bigger to serve more people. This is about the right kinds of spaces to fully meet the needs of our students, unlocking the potential they all have for a better today AND a brighter future.



**125**  
students each year  
learning to their full  
potential



**1**  
campus where we  
can create space for  
today and adapt for  
tomorrow



**500**  
people getting the  
mental, emotional,  
behavioral help they  
need to live a full life



**40**  
adults each year  
ready to work and  
live independently

### SPACE FOR...

- More classrooms
- Life Skills Kitchen
- Outdoor gross motor skills
- ADA accessible entry
- A gym!
- Room to adapt and grow...

## ARTIST RENDERINGS OF OUR FUTURE SPACE



COMMUNITY ROOM



LOWER SCHOOL CLASSROOMS



GYM INTERIOR



EXTERIOR VIEW FROM BOONE AVE



VIEW FROM SECOND FLOOR

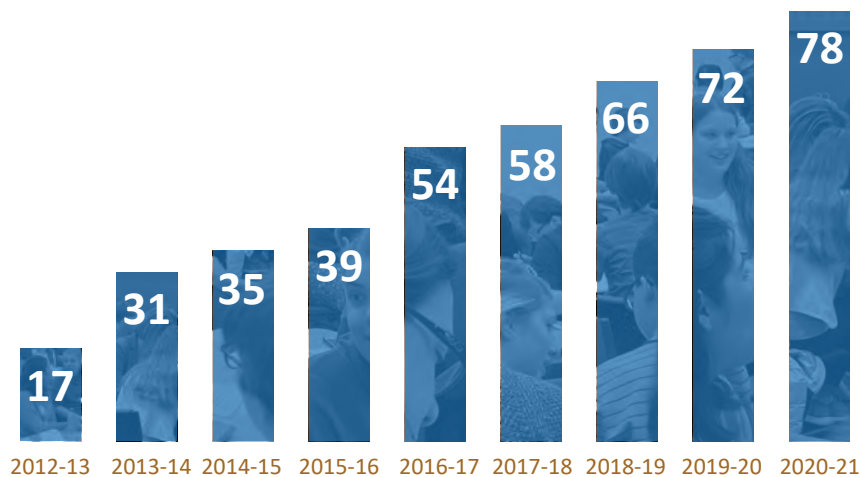


NEW ENTRY

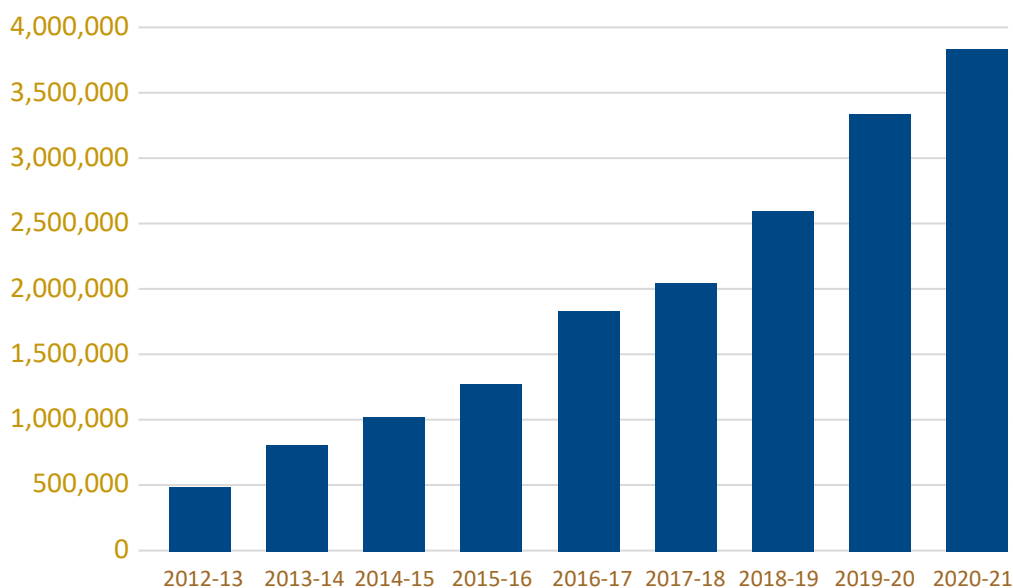


# FINANCIALS

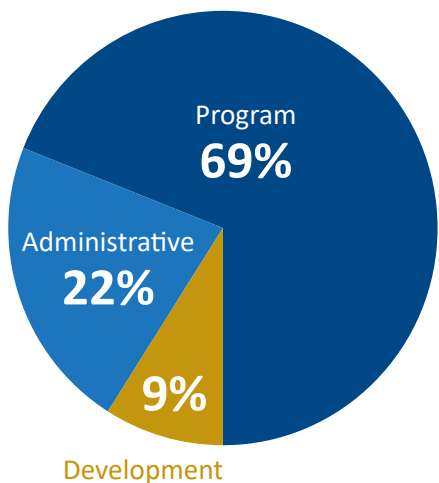
## STUDENT ENROLLMENT



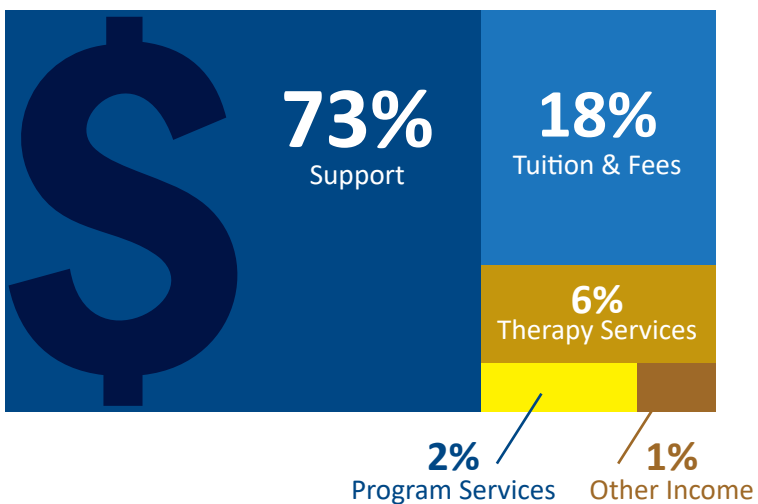
## TOTAL REVENUE



## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



## REVENUE BY TYPE



## INCOME STATEMENT

Fiscal Year Ended July 31, 2021

SUPPORT & REVENUES	AMOUNT
Tuition & Fees	\$2,290,216
Financial Aid	(\$310,815)
Contributions & Grants	\$7,916,687
Therapy Service Income	\$660,253
Clubs, Summer Camp & Others	\$229,398
Investments	\$67,762
Administrative Income	\$7,908
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>	<b>\$10,861,409</b>
<i>Net Assets Released from Restriction</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>	<b>\$10,861,409</b>

EXPENSES	
Program	\$2,402,406
Management & General	\$793,638
Fundraising	\$304,468
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,500,512</b>
<i>Changes in Net Assets Before Other Income (Losses)</i>	<i>\$7,360,897</i>
<b>OTHER INCOME (LOSSES)</b>	
Building Expenses – LLC	(\$45,424)
<b>TOTAL OTHER INCOME (LOSSES)</b>	<b>(\$45,424)</b>
<i>Change in Net Assets</i>	<i>\$7,315,473</i>
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$2,031,016
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$9,346,489</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

July 31, 2021

ASSETS	AMOUNT
Cash	\$510,830
Unconditional Promises to Give, Net	\$2,887,194
Other Receivables	\$1,489
Accrued Revenues	\$106,163
Prepaid Expenses	\$42,912
Investments, at Fair Value	\$3,072,011
Other Assets	\$7,500
Property & Equipment, Net	\$3,746,637
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$10,374,736</b>

LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable	\$256,894
Accrued Payroll	\$107,505
Other Liabilities	\$10,975
Deferred Revenue	\$652,873
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$1,028,247</b>

NET ASSETS	
Without Donor Restriction	\$890,937
Without Donor Restriction – Board Designated	\$677,842
With Donor Restriction	\$7,777,710
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$9,346,489</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$10,374,736</b>
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“

I really think there’s no one like us...that’s a huge factor. To have a clinic connected to a school, connected to a transition program, into adulthood. To really serve someone holistically for their entire lifespan I think is a really rare find.”

AOWL STAFF





DONORS

\$25K ↑

Anonymous  
David and Kitty Crosby -  
The Longview Foundation  
Robert and Teri Crosby -  
The Longview Foundation  
John and Amy Higgins  
Babs Koch  
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation Fund  
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\$10K - \$24,999

Allison and Jim Barosko from the  
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Fund of the St. Paul Foundation  
Rosemary and David Good  
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Kate and Rick Hartfiel  
Donna and Rob Sheeley  
UnitedHealth Group

\$5K - \$9,999

The Howard and Nikki Applebaum  
Foundation  
Autism Speaks  
Robert Dingmann and Ethan Reynolds  
Jackie and John Fallenstein  
Howard and Heidi Gilbert  
Donna and Robert Grubka  
Christi and Brandon Kruse  
Minnesota Independent School Forum  
Liz and Jeff Sloan  
Kim and Buddy Snow -  
The Longview Foundation  
United HealthCare Services Inc.

“

The things I liked the most at AOWL were the students, families, teachers, field trips, and the social experiences. All that made me feel wanted, accepted, and that I could learn. This all helped me become more independent. I started helping out more at home, understanding routines and doing things more for myself and I felt happy.” AOWL ALUMNI

\$1K - \$4,999

Anonymous  
Dr. Ben Christenson and Colleen Wilkinson  
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Rich Yudhishthru and Aki Yoshino

\$500 - \$999

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Foundation  
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Tom and Lisa Stark  
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Wendy and Keith Weigel  
Sahodra Yudhishthru

thank you!

\$100 - \$499

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Sarah Beaven  
Meredith Beck  
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Walter and Marjorie Benjamin  
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Jack Brown  
Sara and Marty Brown  
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Dr. Catherine Burrows  
Charles and Nicole Carlson  
Joseph and Delphine Casey  
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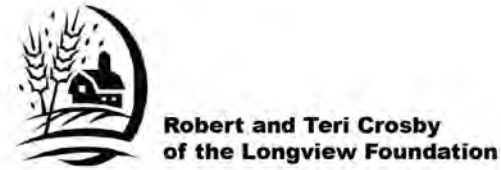
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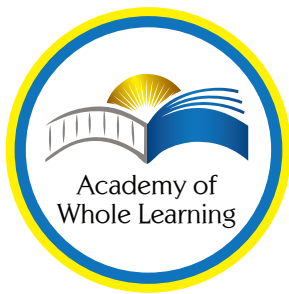
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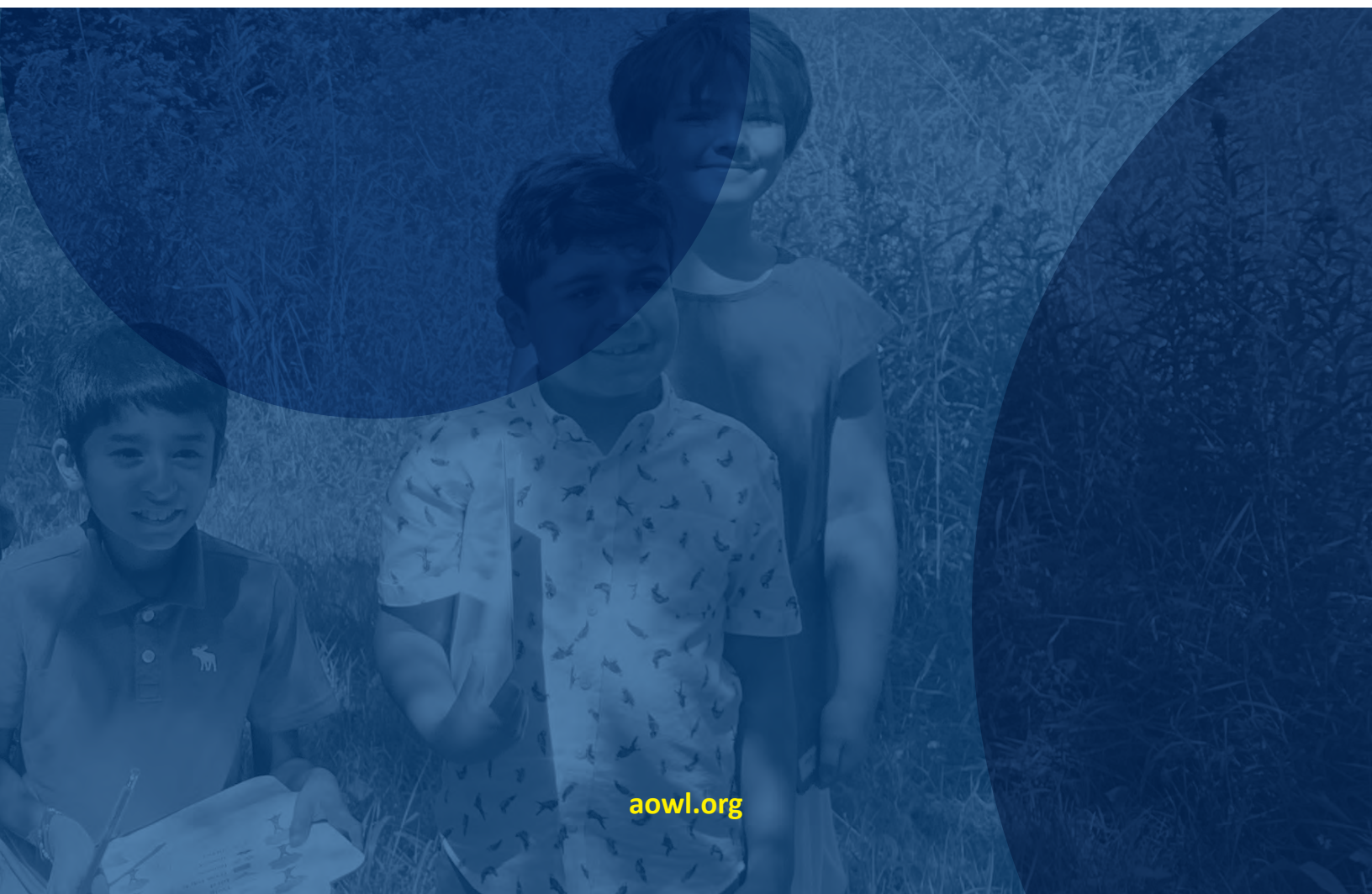
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