



# THE SERENDIPITY JOURNEY

Dear Serendipity Center  
Community,

**We** are pleased to present our 2022-2023 Annual Report, a reflection of another remarkable year at Serendipity Center. As Executive Director, I am continually humbled by the dedication and unwavering support of our staff, students, families, donors, and community partners.

This year has been one of continued resilience and growth. Through our holistic approach to education and therapy, we have seen remarkable progress in the lives of our students, enabling them to overcome challenges and reach new heights.

**... we were able to serve 85 students and graduated 5 seniors. None of this would have been possible without the collective effort and generosity of our community.**

In the 2022-2023 school year, we were able to serve 85 students and graduated 5 seniors. None of this would have been possible without the collective effort and generosity of our community. Your time, donations, and advocacy have directly impacted the lives of young individuals who rely on our services. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our

mission "To provide the best environment for our students to heal and become educated, productive community members" and will continue striving to provide a nurturing environment that fosters growth, healing, and empowerment.

I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey. Together, we are creating a brighter future for our students and contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

Cheers!



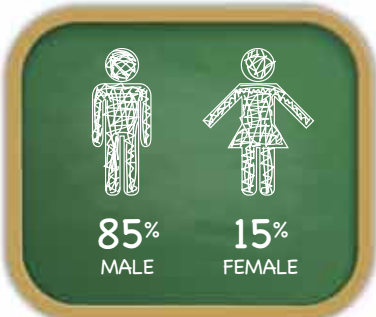
Mark Takehara  
Executive Director

Serendipity  
served  
**17**  
school districts  
during  
2022-2023

NUMBER OF  
STUDENTS

1	Battle Ground
7	Beaverton
1	Camas
7	Canby
9	Centennial
1	Corbett
4	David Douglas
6	Gresham-Barlow
1	Lake Oswego
2	North Clackamas
6	Oregon City
3	Oregon Trail
5	Parkrose
10	Portland Public Schools
20	Reynolds
1	Sherwood
1	Washougal

# Student and Staff Demographics



SERENDIPITY STUDENTS BY IDENTIFIED GENDER



SERENDIPITY STUDENTS BY IDENTIFIED RACE/ETHNICITY  
\*Some families declined to disclose student race.



SERENDIPITY STAFF BY IDENTIFIED RACE/ETHNICITY  
\*Some staff declined to disclose their race.

## School Districts Refer Students to Serendipity because:

80%  
Show Physical Aggression

76%  
Show Difficulty with Peers

68%  
Show Verbal Aggression

30%  
Have Multiple Failed School Placements

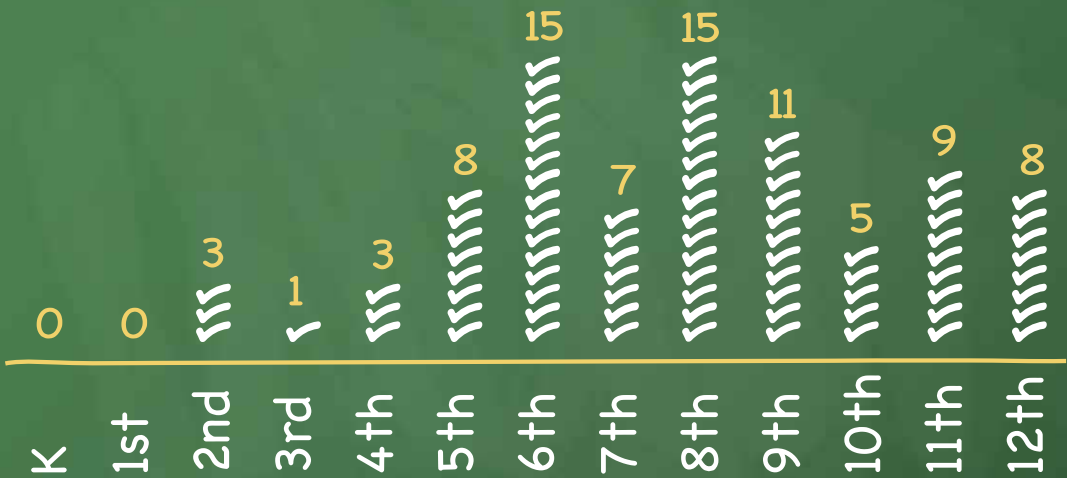
58%  
Show Self-Endangering Behaviors or Suicidal Talk

33%  
Recent Hospitalization or Discharge from a Treatment Center

28%  
Home or Family Challenges

100%  
Eligible for Special Ed Services

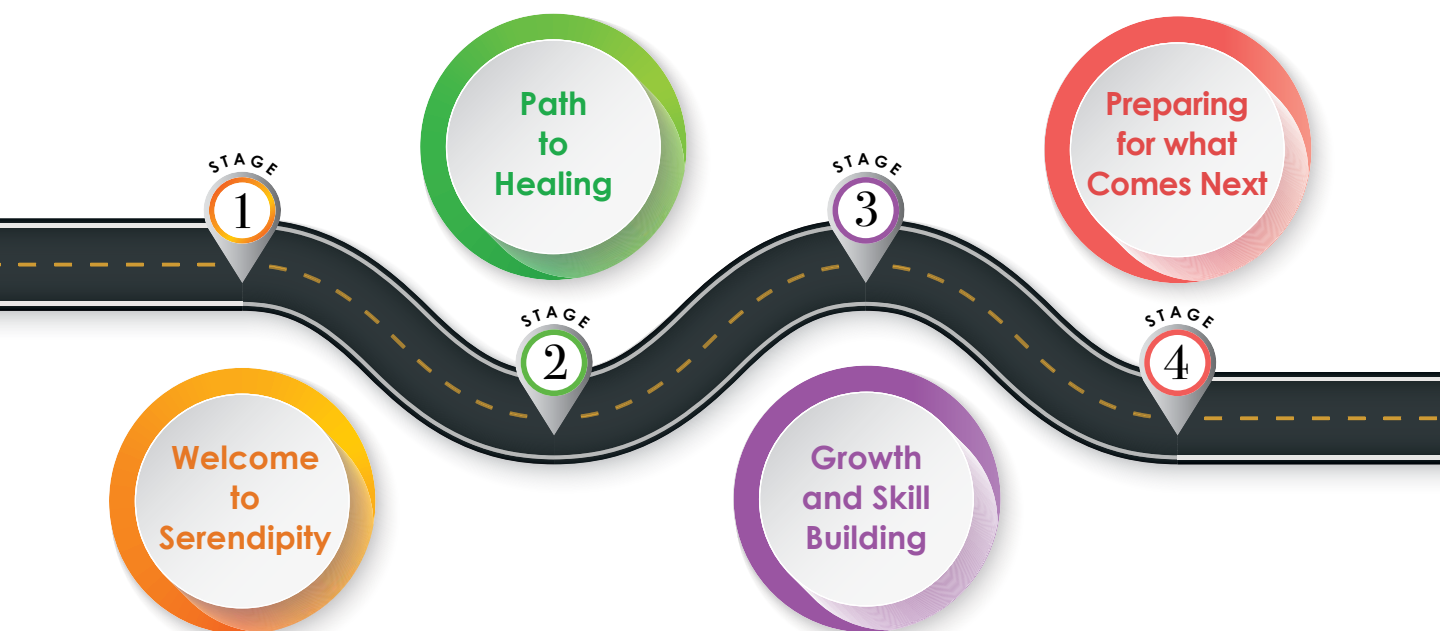
## Serendipity Students by Grade Level



# MY SERENDIPITY JOURNEY

The journey of a typical student at Serendipity Center is a transformative experience characterized by a holistic intake experience, stabilization, healing, academic progress, self-advocacy, and transitional skill development. While each journey tends to be non-linear and different for each individual, we are honored to guide each student through their Serendipity journey.

**Students typically experience the following stages over the course of several months or years:**





# WELCOME TO SERENDIPITY

In every school district, there are students with complex needs and challenging behaviors. These students require highly specialized services and a well-trained and experienced staff. That's where we come in.

"Serendipity serves many students with histories of traumatic life experiences," shared Jackie Trussell, Treatment Director. These traumatic events may include school trauma, incidents of abuse and neglect, exposure to family substance use/abuse, unstable housing, family separation and witnessing domestic violence at home and in the community. We use a Trauma Informed Care approach to promote resiliency, health, and wellness to create a minimum standard of care in addressing the impact of trauma.

## How do we support students?

- Low student-to-staff ratio with licensed staff providing support both inside and outside the classroom
- Behavior coaching through every aspect of the school day
- Average of 8 students per classroom
- Each student is paired with a Clinical Case Manager who regularly consults with families and classroom staff, ensuring that staff understand the trauma history and current challenges students face.
- Regular sensory and movement breaks help students regulate their bodies and emotions.
- Family support services and care coordination. We provided \$6,196.88 in rental assistance, gas, grocery, and utilities gift cards to families in need.



*Students pose at our Fall 2022 Open House*

## Student Stories: Welcome to Serendipity

### JUAN

"When I first met **Juan\*** as a 6th grader in my classroom, he sat with his head on his desk and never spoke. He refused to speak or do any work," remembers Juan's teacher, Abie. At the start of the next school year, his behavior got even worse: there were physical altercations and aggressive behavior.

### ADAM

**Adam\*** arrived at Serendipity as a fifth grader with significant sensory needs. High-pitched noises caused him to try to drown out the sounds with his own yelling. Or, he would simply try to leave the room. He would often refuse to come into the classroom, spending a lot of time in the hallway with his Serendipity support person.

\*Names have been changed to protect student identities.





# PATH TO HEALING

Students can make progress in both academics and behavior starting on day one. But many students find that before they can engage in school, they must stabilize and learn to cope with the trauma that brought them to Serendipity. At our school, therapeutic supports are woven into the fabric of daily life. Goals at this stage often include reducing the number of behavioral incidents over time, ensuring regular attendance, and focusing on wellness activities such as healthy eating and cooking, art therapy, and movement.

## Accomplishments in 2022-23 included:

- Reducing the number of behavioral incidents by 36%
- For students with the most frequent challenging behaviors, we helped reduce their behaviors by 50% or more within an average of two months.
- Our average rate of attendance was 84%, a full 20 points above Oregon's average.
- Our art therapist and intern from Lewis & Clark logged 681 hours of art therapy and worked with 45 students. Students completed 15 multi-week projects and two collaborative projects. They drew 14 rockets, 19 monsters, 54 trees, and 9 different versions of their own Pokémon.
- We served 16,889 from-scratch meals featuring produce from the Growing Minds Garden and local sustainable farms.
- From seed to harvest, students participated in every aspect of growing their own food, logging many hours playing and working in the half-acre garden.



*When students come to Serendipity, we meet them where they are in each moment, responding with empathy and nurturing choices*

## Student Story: Path to Healing

# TREVOR

In **Trevor's**\* second year at Serendipity, his care team added a support staff to his services. Over the next several years, Trevor started to show glimpses of what he was capable of. As he became a middle schooler, he was readily accepted and well-liked by other students in his class. He was still quiet but built a strong rapport with a couple of staff members whom he had grown to trust over the years. He continued to need a good deal of support with his academics, but he demonstrated growth in his ability to accept direction from staff, and the incidents of him being physical aggression stopped altogether.

\*Names have been changed to protect student identities.

# GROWTH AND SKILL BUILDING

As students' behaviors start to stabilize, engaging in schoolwork becomes even more of a priority. Students typically start to make academic gains during this stage while continuing to work on behavior goals.

- 59% showed improvements in reading, and 64% of students made progress toward their writing goals.
- 64% showed improvements in math and 71% of students made progress toward their math goals.
- 80% either maintained an A grade average, or made improvements in their grades over the course of the year.
- 83% of students made progress in positively interacting with peers.



*Positive relationships and one-on-one support create the foundation of our therapeutic school. Student works on a project with an Instructional Assistant.*

## Student Stories: Growth and Skill Building

### JUAN

Last year, **Juan** started doing more and more schoolwork, and towards the end of the year he was completing all his work. He was engaging, having fun, and making friends. His mom shared that Juan had never engaged in school before. He joined the Magic the Gathering Club at Serendipity, where he formed more solid relationships with adults and peers, practiced problem solving, and being patient.

### ADAM

"For **Adam**, change and growth had to be very incremental and purposeful," explained his teacher, Drew. "We started by meeting him where he's at, waiting for him to master a skill, and then moving on to the next baby step." For example, Adam's idea of "writing" was having a staff member move his hand along a dry erase board to trace letters. Once he mastered tracing with the staff's hand, staff started gradually removing their hand. Over time, Adam began using real paper, then moved from a marker, to a pen, to a pencil. After two years of consistent work, Adam finally began to write independently.

\*Names have been changed to protect student identities.

# PREPARING FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Through coaching, leadership opportunities, and life skills lessons, we prepare each student for success in life. Some students will graduate from Serendipity with a standard or modified high school diploma. Many more will return to their home school district with the tools they need to succeed in school. Whether they're with us for months or eight years, we work hard to ensure that our students' next steps will be successful.

- Two kitchen interns and two kitchen prep interns were integral to our school operations. They helped to cut and prepare the food grown in our garden for school lunches. The students set and achieved goals they wrote for themselves.
- We partnered with Embold Credit Union to teach our students about savings, budgeting, and keeping their identities safe.
- High school students learned about driving, biking, and walking safety. The "Skills to Pay the Bills" curriculum covered important workplace skills like communication, teamwork, and professionalism.
- Students passed the food handler's test and got their food handler's license.
- Five students graduated from Serendipity Center!
- Each graduate received a Stephen Carter Scholarship in the form of a gift that will assist them during the next phase of their lives. A budding cosmetologist received a mannequin with hair to practice on. A new photographer received a nice camera. Almost \$1,300 was spent on scholarship gifts.
- Ten students successfully transitioned back to their public school district.



*Three of our amazing 2023 graduates!*

## Student Story: Preparing for what comes next

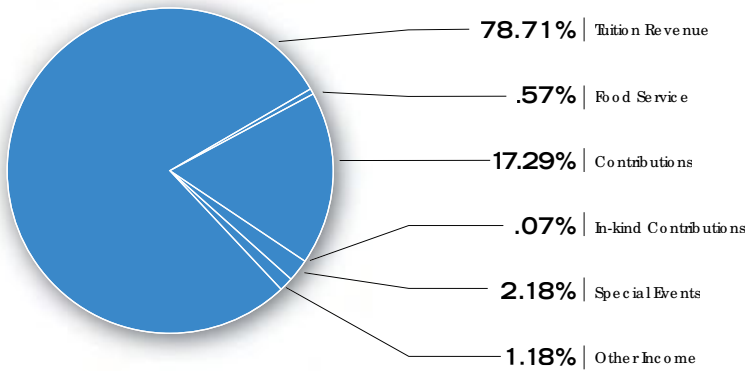
# TREVOR

By the end of his junior year, **Trevor** had demonstrated he no longer needed the level of support provided by a 1:1 staff person, and he advocated this for himself. He worked in the kitchen as an intern, got his Food Handler's Card and completed the requirements needed to graduate with an alternative certificate. He plans to attend his district's transition program for 18- to 21-year-olds in the fall. He hopes to eventually get a job, live independently, and make his mark—leave his shine!—in the world. We are proud and grateful for all our students!



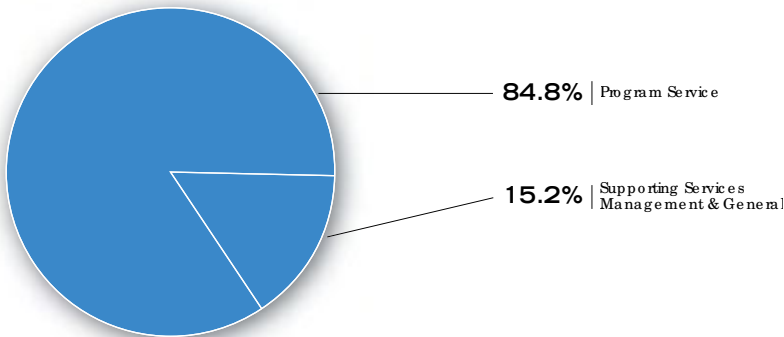
Consolidated Statement of Activities

Revenue and Support



Revenue and Support	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Tuition Revenue	\$4,793,888		\$4,793,888
Food Service	\$34,896		\$34,896
Contributions	\$552,525	\$500,541	\$1,053,066
In-kind Contributions	\$4,863		\$4,863
Special Events (net income)	\$131,664		\$131,664
Interest and Other Income	\$72,106		\$72,106
CARES Act Employee Retention Credits	—		—
Totals	\$5,589,936	\$500,541	\$6,090,477

Expenditures



Expenditures	Total
Program Services	\$5,712,787
Supporting Services - Management & General	\$1,022,344
Totals	\$6,735,131

Statement of Financial Position (Snapshot of June 30, 2023)

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash and Equivalents	\$2,399,323	Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$31,469
Accounts Receivable	\$187,232	Accrued payroll and related expenses	\$368,313
Contributions Receivable	\$52,528	Grant advances - Deferred Revenue	—
Prepaid Expenses	\$208,109	Lease liabilities - operating leases	\$249,950
Right-of-use assets — operating leases	\$246,088	Total Liabilities	\$649,732
Property and Equipment	\$2,566,197	Net Assets	
		Without donor restrictions:	
		Available for Programs & General Operations	\$2,187,830
		Net Investment in capital assets	\$2,566,197
		Total without donor restrictions	\$4,754,027
		Total with donor restrictions	\$255,718
		Total net assets	\$5,009,745
Total Assets	\$5,659,477	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$5,659,477

# Other News

## Courtyard Color Transformation

Project Color Corps is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization dedicated to improving spaces using color and design. For months we worked with them and the amazing BRIC Architecture, Inc. to transform our courtyard into a beautiful sensory mural.

**Thank you to the following companies and volunteers for making it happen:**

Project Color Corps, Miller Paint Company, BRIC Architecture, Miller Knoll, YGH Architecture, PacificWRO, Ellen Hansen of Mindful Flowers, our muralist Paulina Levaggi, and Portland Street Art Alliance.



*Project Color Corps painting Serendipity's Courtyard Sensory Mural.*

## Once Again, Serendipity is rated a School of Excellence

For the fifth consecutive year, Serendipity Center was given the School of Excellence Award from the National Association of Special Education Teachers

(NASSET). Selection as a NASSET School of Excellence is the highest honor a private special education

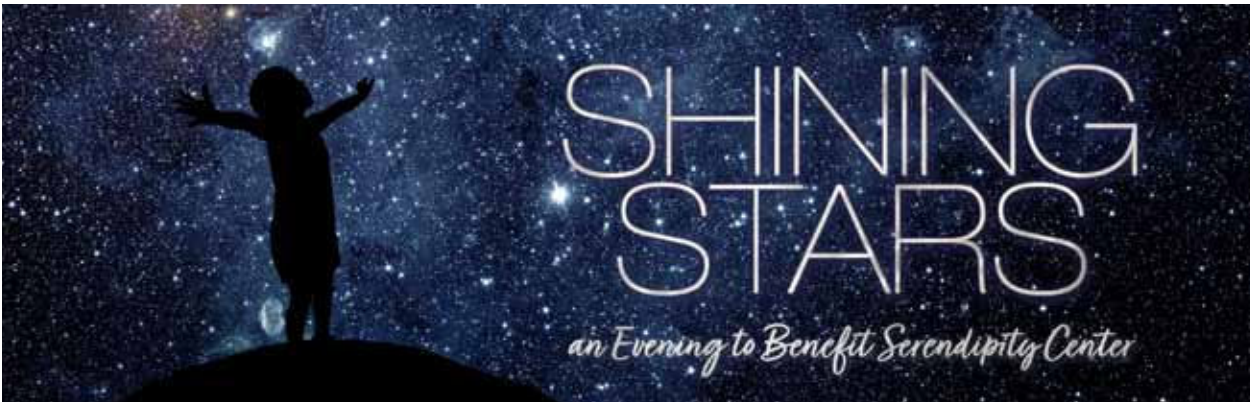


school can achieve. The recognition is bestowed on private special education schools that meet rigorous professional criteria and have demonstrated truly exceptional

dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of special education.

## EDI Grant Partnership

Thanks to a generous grant, we began a multi-phase project to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This work is being done in partnership with Future Work Design, a Portland based consultancy aimed at dismantling systems of oppression and creating organizations of belonging. Work has included developing and implementing policies and practices for interrupting microaggressions and derogatory language, developing benchmarks and reporting structures, and much more. We are excited to continue this important work in 2024 and beyond.



## 2023 Shining Stars Event

On Friday, April 14th, 2023, our Serendipity community gathered together at OMSI for a memorable evening benefitting our shining stars, our students! Together, we raised over \$170,000. Thank you for your support!



Save the date for  
Shining Stars 2024!

Friday, May 10 at 6:00 PM  
AVENUE Portland

Space is limited; get your tickets  
early and consider becoming  
a sponsor.





Serendipity's mission is to provide the best environment for students to heal and become educated, productive community members.



Student with Program Assistant Deborah



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