SAVE THE DATE!
The Eden II & Genesis Foundation Gala is November 2nd at the Hilton Garden Inn of Staten Island.
Dear Friends:

FOR MANY OF US, GRADUATING high school was a happy day. For the most part, we knew where we were headed after high school, whether it was to college or to a job or perhaps to join the military. For many people with severe autism, however, graduating from school can be a dreaded day. Many individuals with autism will attend the same school from the time they are five until they turn 21. They get to know the school well and fall into a routine. Unfortunately, when they turn 21, many don’t know where they will go next. There is no guarantee that there will be a program or job available for them. Some in the autism community refer to this as falling off the cliff.

Graduation day, however, can be made easier with planning. It is important that planning for the next setting after graduation begin early. By regulation, planning is supposed to begin at age 14 with the development of a transition IEP. Research reveals, however, that less than 60% of students with autism ever get this transition IEP developed. We, at Eden II, feel that even age 14 is waiting too long. There are so many things that need to be addressed in order to truly prepare an individual with ASD to succeed after aging out of school. These include developing job skills, recreation and leisure skills, and most importantly, activities of daily living. None of these skills will be meaningful if they are not able to be completed independently. For many on the spectrum, it can take many years to develop independence across these areas. We cannot wait until a student is getting near graduation to begin to work on these skills.

Graduation can be stressful for families as well. They must learn how to navigate a whole new system with different regulations, funding and people. In fact, they may be faced with the worst possible problem…there is no place for their son or daughter to go. When you are under 21, you are entitled to an education and the school district must provide a placement. This is not the case once you turn 21. There are no requirements for a state to provide programs for individuals with developmental disabilities post-graduation. Fortunately, New York State has done a good job in addressing the needs of adults with ASD as they age out of school. There is never a guarantee, however, that this will continue and requires on going vigilance on the part of parents and providers to advocate for these services.

Fortunately for families, there are many supports available to help plan for this transition. Autism Speaks, for example, published an excellent guide that is available free for parents and caregivers. (https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/docs/ttk2_planning.pdf). In addition, they can ask the Committee on Special Education to provide them with information and help, particularly with regard to developing the transition IEP. Another great guide is offered by OCALI on their website (https://www.ocali.org/project/transition_to_adulthood_guidelines).

The most important thing that must be done to help make this transition work is to PLAN and to PLAN EARLY. It is not easy to think about your child turning 21 when he or she is only 8 or 9 years old, however, this is when it should begin. The best way to begin is to write a simple vision statement. If the child is capable, he or she should participate in developing this vision statement. Keep that vision statement handy as the IEP is developed each year. Revise the vision statement every few years if needed. With school and family working together to address the turning 21, it doesn’t have to feel like you are falling off a cliff.

Joanne Gerenser, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Executive Director

ON THE COVER
PARTICIPANT, NICKY, CELEBRATING HIS GRADUATION.
BOROUGH PRESIDENT AWARDS $25K FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAMPAIGN

Borough President James Oddo has provided $25,000 in funding for our Early Childhood Campaign. This is in addition to a $25,000 grant for upgraded furniture the BP gave Eden II after touring our Little Miracles location last year, bringing his total support to $50,000.

Borough President Oddo shared, “The work done by the dedicated professionals at Eden II is so very important, and I am committed to helping in whatever way I can.”

“James Oddo has shown a great commitment to our preschool students, and we are very grateful to him and his staff. When he came to our Skyline location in 2017, he immediately realized how badly we need this new building and a bigger space. He jumped at the chance to help us reach our goal,” noted Eden II Executive Director, Dr. Joanne Gerenser.

Lauren Grimaldi, Director of the Preschool, shared, “We are so thankful to the Borough President for his continued support of our participants and this program.”
DONOR RECOGNITION WALL

A custom donor recognition wall is being created to acknowledge gifts of $500 or more. The donor wall will have bronze, silver, and gold stars, each engraved with a donor’s name or message.

Pricing

- Gold Star: $2,500
- Silver Star: $1,000
- Bronze Star: $500

DONOR RECOGNITION WALL

MAKE YOUR GIFT ONLINE!
Go to www.eden2.org/ECC

SUPPORT EDEN II’s EARLY CHILDHOOD CAMPAIGN

Visit eden2.org/ECC to make your gift to support Eden II’s Early Childhood Campaign.

GOLD STAR $2,500
SILVER STAR $1,000
BRONZE STAR $500

EDEN II PROGRAMS
Early Childhood CAMPAIGN

TOGETHER, LET’S HELP OUR CHILDREN REACH FOR THE STARS!

GOAL
$1MM

WE’RE ALMOST THERE!

25%
50%
75%

SET UP YOUR CROWDRISE FUNDRAISING PAGE TODAY!!

1. Set up your Crowdrise fundraising page
2. Go to: https://www.crowdrise.com/eden2campaign
3. Click the grey SET UP YOUR FUNDRAISER button on the right
4. Choose to CREATE or JOIN A TEAM
5. Add photos, your goal, and your story
6. Log into CrowdRise (or create an account)
7. Personalize your page via EDIT FUNDRAISER
8. Start raising money today!
Olga Goodman is currently the Director of Eden II’s Genesis School. Olga received her Master’s degree in Special Education from Queens College and her Master’s degree in School Building Leadership from St. John’s University. Olga has been working with individuals with autism and their families since 2004 when she began her career at Eden II as a teacher assistant.

HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM?

My first encounter with autism and individuals with disabilities, in general, took place 17 years ago, when I first came to the United States. My friend invited me to volunteer at a summer camp for children and adults with special needs. Until then, while growing up in Russia, I had not met or seen individuals with disabilities of any kind - whether it was on the street, in a store, or in my school and college. The endless possibilities offered to individuals with special needs in this country, and the support provided to them inspired me to learn more about the system of education here, and how I can help these individuals achieve their full potential. Therefore, I applied to a graduate program in Special Education at Queens College. It is there through the courses I took and my volunteer experiences, observations and internships that my interest in autism and Applied Behavior Analysis strengthened. My actual journey in autism did not start until 14 years ago when my college professor told me about “a wonderful school” and helped me be placed there for my final internship. That school was Eden II’s Genesis School, which has been my home ever since.

WHAT ARE SOME MOMENTS THAT HAVE STUCK OUT TO YOU WHILE WORKING AT EDEN II?

It never ceases to surprise and amaze me on the amount of progress each of our students makes on a daily basis, and how often their success exceeds everyone’s expectations. I also love to see the unbreakable bonds that develop between our staff, the students and their families. I still have very close ties with the individuals who were the students in my class when I first became a teacher. Even though they have been in our Adult Program for years, they will always be my “kids.”

WHERE DO YOU SEE AUTISM AND EDEN II IN 10 YEARS?

In 10-years, I would like to see Eden II as a thriving agency; continuously expanding its school, adult, and residential programs and providing new services on Long Island, such as preschool and early intervention. This expansion would accommodate the growing needs of our current families and offers more services to new families. I would like to see each day-program have an individual, spacious building equipped with the latest technology for instruction and data collection. I would also like Eden II to continue increasing its collaboration with local colleges and universities and to continue serving as a teaching site. Eden II should become a center for ongoing research in instruction on decreasing challenging behaviors in individuals with autism.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN EDEN II DEVELOP AND GROW SINCE YOU BEGAN WORKING HERE?

In addition to expanding all of the existing programs on Staten Island, Eden II’s Genesis Programs opened two residences, a behavior clinic, a social enterprise, and a day habilitation program on Long Island. The day-hab program began with three participants, and we now serve 35 young adults. Since I started working here, Eden II has become internationally known. We have significantly increased and improved our use of technology for instruction, the clinical level of our staff (with a growing number of BCBA certified staff in both locations), and we have tailored all of our programs to be more individualized and person-centric.

AS SOMEONE WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD, IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU CAN OFFER TO THOSE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM?

I know this sounds “cliche,” but if you want to make a difference in someone’s life and if you want to have one of the most rewarding jobs, this field is for you. You have to be prepared, however, that your easiest day on the job may also be one of your most challenging days, compared to anything you may have done before. Additionally, when working with individuals with autism, you will never stop learning and will continue to develop your clinical skills.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT WORKING AT EDEN II’S GENESIS SCHOOL?

I relive my proudest moment every year when I watch my students walk down the aisle wearing a cap and gown at graduation. When I see the love and the pride on the faces of their loved ones, I reflect on the amazing progress each student has made throughout the years.
Share your pictures on Facebook & Twitter using #MyEdenMemories
We are EXCITED to announce that Eden II’s Genesis Programs has developed a social enterprise in order to provide job training opportunities for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Visit us on the first floor near the escalators that go to the food court and IKEA at the Broadway Mall in Hicksville, Long Island.
Jamie Arnold, Director of Educational Services at Eden II notes, “Leaving the world of school can be a terrifying transition for not only the students but also the parents as well. Adult services are not a mandated service. Therefore, all entitlements end at the age of 21 years old. With this in mind, it seems we have to do something to better prepare our young men and women to live in the world with the kinds of funding models that are going to be out there. We need to better prepare our students to be independent active members of their community, and this autism center does just that.”

Since the services are no longer mandated services, each person entering into adult services must have the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver. The purpose of the HCBS Waiver is to use alternative services not normally provided through traditional programs. These individualized services help people to remain at home and in the community.

The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) utilizes the HCBS Waiver as its primary funding mechanism for supporting the individualized service environment of the person.

There are a variety of different Waiver Services available for each person to utilize. Some of the various funding models for day services are:

- **Day Habilitation services** are habilitation services that may be provided to an individual regardless of his or her living environment, and regularly take place in a non-residential setting, separate from the individual’s private residence or other home. Day Habilitation services can assist individuals to acquire, retain or improve their self-help, socialization and adaptive skills, including communication, travel and other areas in adult education. Activities and environments are designed to foster the development of skills and appropriate behavior, greater independence, community inclusion, relationship building, self-advocacy and informed choice. Additionally, individuals accessing day habilitation often contribute to their communities through volunteer work.

- **Prevocational services** address the individual’s vocational interests. These services assist individuals who are interested in joining “the world of work” but their skills are such that they may not expect to obtain competitive employment within the next year. The individual may or may not perform work for which he/she is paid while receiving prevocational services. Prevocational services include support and training related to the ability to obtain and retain employment, excluding training on job tasks.
Supported Employment OPWDD offers several employment programs to assist individuals with different levels of support needs. All employment services provide employment staff or “job coaches” to assist individuals with the goal of integrated community employment. Through work, people can earn wages, increase their independence, gain self-confidence and develop relationships in their community. Here are a few employment services that are offered:

a. Employment Training Program (ETP)  
ETP offers individuals an opportunity to work in an internship that will lead to permanent employment in a local business. During the internship, wages will be paid through ETP while the individual learns the skills needed for the job. ETP participants also attend job readiness classes that present topics such as conflict resolution and how to dress for work. ETP services include increased job development and job coaching as well as assistance with other job skills.

b. Supported Employment (SEMP)  
SEMP provides the support individuals need to obtain and maintain paid competitive jobs in the community. Individuals with developmental disabilities will typically transition to SEMP after they have received supported employment services funded by the NYS Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR). Individuals also come to supported employment from programs that offer intensive training such as ESEMP and ETP.

c. Pathway to Employment is a person-centered employment planning and support service that provides assistance for individuals to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment. This service is available to individuals expressing an interest in competitive employment or self-employment including (but not limited to) individuals who receive Day Habilitation, Pre-Vocational and Supported Employment services, as well as students leaving high school. This service offers an individualized planning process that helps identify a career or vocational direction, while providing instruction and training in job readiness skills. This pathway also helps develop a plan for achieving competitive, integrated employment at or above the New York State minimum wage. Within 12 months, the outcome of this service is the documentation of the participant’s career objective, a detailed career plan, and preparation for supported employment services.

There is a wide array of services available for each individual with autism. The key is matching the right person up with the correct service(s) that will facilitate their success throughout their life.

"After 18 years, Nicky will walk the halls of Eden II’s School Program, a place that was his second home, for the last time as a student. He will still be part of the Eden II family beginning his new journey at their DXT Day Hab Adult program. I want to thank everyone at Eden II who has touched our lives and has been part of Nicky’s amazing journey. Most have become our extended family. I have had the best teachers and staff help Nicky be the best he can be. I hope that we will continue to keep in touch with his wonderful friends and their families as well as his teachers and staff. I hope the staff always knows how they have made a difference in the life of my child; who right in front of their eyes became the man he is today. We love and thank you all."

- Lisa Caldarera, Nicky’s Mom
There should be a plan set in place after an individual ages-out of the school program. This plan could be going to college, entering the workforce, or starting a certification program. Having a plan is important to reinforce a daily schedule outside of the home.

There are various organizations across NYC that provide adult programs to teach those living with autism the necessary skills for successful everyday living. During schooling years, children and teens not only learn academics, but also adaptive living skills and vocational skills. Here at Eden II, we host a vocational rehabilitation program that assists our adult participants in developing employable skills.

Eden II offers programs for our adult participants such as Adult Day Habilitation, Residential Services, and Community Habilitation.

The College of Staten Island, a CUNY (City University of New York) school, offers college-based programs for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. These programs are designed to prepare these individuals for adult life. For locations and more information, visit https://www.ahrccny.org/locations/melissa-riggio-staten-island/.

Family, caregivers, and educators can support a person living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) during their transition to adulthood. It is important to identify the individual’s strengths and weaknesses as well as help them to find a job in a field that takes their hobbies and interests into account.

**HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES TO HELP WITH THE TRANSITION PROCESS:**

- Office of People With Developmental Disabilities
  www.opwdd.ny.gov

- Parent to Parent NYS
  www.parenttoparentnys.org

The mission of Eden II Programs is to support people with autism throughout their lives to achieve their full potential through service, science, and passion.

For more information on programs and services available at Eden II, please visit us online at eden2.org or email us at info@eden2.org.

Jamie Arnold is currently the Director of Educational Services for Eden II Programs. She has been with the agency since 2005. Jamie earned her Master’s Degree in Childhood Regular/Special Education from the College of New Rochelle and her Master’s Degree in School Building Leadership from St. John’s University. Jamie has been a classroom teacher, head teacher, and clinical coordinator at Eden II Programs. She has worked with typically developing children, as well as students with autism, ages ranging from Pre-K to 21 years old. Jamie has presented at a variety of local conferences and she currently oversees the school age programming, community integration, and the vocational program at Eden II.
What Parents Of Children With Autism Worry About Most

**GREATEST CONCERN:**
69.3% cite adult independence as their greatest concern.

**SOCIAL CONNECTION:**
52.6% do not have many friends or a peer group at school.

**TRANSITION PLAN:**
Only 18.4% have a transition plan to prepare for life after high school graduation.

64.8% do not include any job skills or vocational training as part of their transition plan.

**EASE OF ACCESS TO CARE:**
Nearly 80% find access to services difficult.

14.4% Somewhat easy
5.7% Very easy
25.4% Very difficult
54.3% Somewhat difficult

SOURCE: BANCROFT

What Happened To Young Adults With Autism Between High School And Their Early 20’s?

**EDUCATION**
Attended any postsecondary education
36%

**LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**
Lived independently
19%

**EMPLOYMENT**
Had a job for pay
58%

**ACCESS TO SERVICES**
Received any services
74%

As both a parent of two adult sons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), it is very disconcerting that the importance of communication is somehow lost in the discussion when preparing individuals with ASD for transition to adult services. While the importance of independent daily living (IDL) and activities of daily living (ADL) skills cannot be understated, neither can the importance of functional and appropriate communication. In fact, the ability to perform IDL and ADL skills requires an understanding of the vocabulary and language concepts involved in those tasks. The Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5) cites, “Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts” as the first of two diagnostic criteria for ASD. “Persistent deficits” in this area coupled with a lifelong disability indicates a significant deficiency in communication skills for individuals with ASD throughout their lifespan. As we prepare our students for independence we cannot ignore the need for them to continue to develop their communication and socialization skills. First and foremost they must have an appropriate means of communication such as an augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) system which transitions with them from the school setting to an adult setting; e.g., designated communication device, communication application on the iPad, sign language, written scripts that are systematically faded upon mastery, etc.

Most adult programs do not provide speech-language-communication services to their participants. Once the students leave school their communication goals are typically not addressed by an SLP and, in many cases, not targeted at all. As a result, many individuals with ASD exhibit regression of their communication skills previously learned in school. In addition, there is a lack of focus on teaching these adults new functional vocabulary or communication skills to assist them while out in the community; e.g., vocational sites, shopping, restaurants, etc. It behooves speech-language pathologists, teachers, assistant teachers, etc., to ensure the development and ongoing instruction of effective and appropriate communication skills are targeted throughout the students’ school years. Parent involvement is crucial in this area, and will assist these individuals when they enter their adult placements.

At Eden II’s Genesis Long Island Programs we provide speech consultation services to our adult day habilitation staff by our licensed SLPs. These services include monthly presentations in speech-language and communication related topics in ASD, development and oversight of speech-language and communication goals in the participants’ individual habilitation plans (IHPs), hands on training in the use of AAC systems and instruction in implementing communication goals, and clinical meetings as necessary. This helps to ensure communication skills learned in our school programs are carried over and generalized to our adult day habilitation program.

Our goal is always to ensure our participants will achieve the highest quality of life; therefore, appropriate and effective communication skills must be “front and center” during any discussion regarding transitioning to adult services. Without an adaptive means of communication, we will fail in our efforts to reach this goal. Catatonia-like deterioration typically occurs between the ages of 15 and 20 with the average being about 18 years; however, a few cases have been reported outside the typical age range. A limited number of studies suggest catatonia occurs in 12-18% of adolescents and young adults with ASD. An increase in the number of cases of catatonia in autism has been reported throughout the world over the last 20 years.

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Jan Downey is the Director of Speech and Language Services for Eden II’s Genesis. She is a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist in New York State, and holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). Ms. Downey received her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from C.W. Post/Long Island University in Speech-Language Pathology. She is an active participant in the Eden II/Genesis Outreach Department conducting presentations on consultation to school districts. She also serves on the “Parent Partners Project Advisory Board” at Winthrop University Hospital’s Department of Behavioral Pediatrics in Mineola, New York.
Jim Caldarella is a community member. He is a senior consultant for i-flex Consulting, assisting clients in the design and development of high-performance systems, solution research and evaluation, enterprise architecture and strategic IT change management. He spent much of his 37 year career developing wholesale funds transfer systems for Citibank. The last of these systems is still operating, processing more than 350,000 transfers per day worth more than 1.75 trillion dollars. He has also played a key role in developing many of the funds transfer industry standards used today. He holds a BA from Northeastern University and post-graduate management studies at Williams College.
Individuals with autism often display challenging behaviors such as self-injury and aggression. These problems usually intensify in the home if they are not attended to properly.

* OPWDD ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED

The Crisis Intervention Behavior Management Team provides intensive assessment and intervention services for individuals ages 3-25 in Staten Island for families that are in a crisis situation. These families require in-home training in order to provide strategies in managing the severe behaviors often associated with autism.

EDEN2.ORG/CRISISINTERVENTION

Individuals with autism often display challenging behaviors such as self-injury and aggression. These problems usually intensify in the home if they are not attended to properly.

* OPWDD ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
ELIZABETH CAIAZZO, LMSW
DIRECTOR OF FAMILY SERVICES
(718) 816-1422 EXT.1076
ECAIAZZO@EDEN2.ORG

CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

Eden II provides psychological and psychosocial evaluations for children 4 years old and above and who do not have Medicaid and require these evaluations for the purpose of determining eligibility.

FOR CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS,
PLEASE CONTACT GINA DEPRIMA:

Phone: 718-816-1422 x 1200
Fax: 718-442-1779
Email: gdeprima@eden2.org

For individuals seeking eligibility. No waiting list.
Amazon Smile is a free and easy way to help raise funds for Eden II's programs and services. Visit www.eden2.org/smile for more information. When you choose “Eden II School for Autistic Children” as your charity of choice, a portion of every purchase you make will benefit Eden II.

As you make plans for your future, we hope you will consider including Eden II Programs in them. In doing so, you have the opportunity to assist in our mission of supporting people with autism to achieve their full potential through service, science, and passion.

If you would like to learn more, we would be happy to send you our complimentary informative booklet, How to Make a Will That Works, with answers to 38 questions to stress the importance of a will.

Please email info@eden2.org with your request for a copy at no obligation!