









LITTLE FRIENDS®

Year in Review
FY 2026


Platinum
Transparency
2026
Candid.


Accredited by
CQL
SM
CQL | The Council on
Quality and Leadership


Charity
Navigator
FOUR-STAR
2026


National Association
NASET
of Special Education Teachers
School of Excellence

Building a Stronger Future, Together!

This year, Little Friends continued to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children, adults, and families throughout our community. Through our autism services, therapeutic education, employment programs, residential and respite supports, and community-based services, we remained focused on helping individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities live fuller, more independent lives.

As demand for services continues to grow, so does our responsibility to evolve and strengthen the support we provide. Across the country, service providers face workforce shortages, funding challenges, and increasingly complex needs. In response, Little Friends is committed to finding innovative ways to deliver high-quality, person-centered care while ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.

Looking ahead, we are investing in a more connected approach to care that brings together behavioral health, physical health, education, employment, and family supports. By building on our strong foundation, expanding services where needs are greatest, and embracing new opportunities for growth, we will continue creating pathways to independence, stability, and success.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our employees, the trust of the individuals and families we serve, and the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and community partners. Thank you for being part of the Little Friends mission and for helping us create a future where every individual is empowered to reach their full potential.

With gratitude,

Mike

Mike Briggs
President & CEO
Little Friends, Inc.



MISSION

Empowering people of all ages experiencing autism, intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities, and their families, to live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities.



VISION

To be recognized as a leading provider in Illinois for comprehensive services supporting children, adults, and families with autism and other developmental, emotional, and physical disabilities; delivering whole-person care through direct services and strategic partnerships, with robust clinical and research expertise in autism.

Our Programs

Through education, therapies, residential living, employment support, respite services, counseling, and community programs, we help individuals thrive at every stage of life.

CHILDREN

- ABA THERAPY
- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
- SPEECH THERAPY
- COUNSELING SERVICES
- KREJCI ACADEMY
- MANSION HIGH SCHOOL
- FAMILY RESPITE SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

ADULTS

- COMMUNITY DAY SERVICES
- EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
- INKLUDE ARTS STUDIO
- COUNSELING SERVICES
- FUN CLUB
- RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

FAMILIES

- FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK
- FAMILY CARE TEAM
- FAMILY RESPITE SERVICES







By the Numbers: Fiscal Year 2026

1445 — **Family Care Team Resource**
Individual & family help driven by requests, referrals, inquiries, and support offered to our community

161 — **Krejci Academy & Mansion High School**
Students enrolled during the 2025-26 school year

253 — **Center for Autism**
Children receiving therapies, professional, and parents are trained

146 — **Community Day Services**
Adults participating in our day program

96 — **Family Respite Services**
Children and siblings attending weekly or monthly respite sessions

101 — **Residential Services**
Individuals in community-based living arrangements managed and/or owned by Little Friends

11 — **Group Home for Children**
Children in living arrangements managed and owned by Little Friends

56 — **Skill Development**
Individuals participating in job readiness programs

29 — **Illinois Independent Living Center**
Residents in barrier-free housing

61 — **Supported Employment**
Participants receiving job coaching for employment

57 — **Inklude Arts Studio**
Artists creating, displaying, and selling their work

33 — **Wellness Center**
Individuals receiving counseling services

22 — **Ken's Krew**
Participants receiving customer service training and employment

60 — **FUN Club**
Providing monthly social opportunities for young adults

Milestones That Moved Us Forward

The Center for Autism launched a five-year consulting partnership with Bradley School District. Together, the organizations are enhancing classroom instruction through evidence-based practices grounded in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and TEACCH Structured Teaching, fostering more effective and inclusive learning environments.

For the 8th year, Krejci Academy was recognized as a School of Excellence by the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET).

We opened two new Children Group Homes supporting DCFS. Preparing for two more homes to bring total to 50 homes owned or operated by end of March 2027.

Employment Services saw great success:

- 97% graduation rate from skills development courses
- 50% of graduates secure employment within 1 year of graduation.
- 5% of graduates secure employment or pursue post-secondary education.







Challenges That Demand Action

1 in 31 Children are being diagnosed as being on the spectrum.

Children born in 2018 were 1.7 x more likely to be diagnosed with autism before Age 4 compared to children born in 2014.

In the next 10 years, 500K neurodiverse teenagers will be looking for work.

5M adults (>2% of the population) are on the autism spectrum.

36% of all autistic adults admitted into a hospital were tied to mental health issues.

28.7% of adults in the US have some type of disability.

16K people on the State Priority List (PUNS) are requesting residential services. The state capacity with State Operated Developmental Centers is 11K beds.

1.3M people nationwide over the age of 60, are caregivers to individuals with a disability.

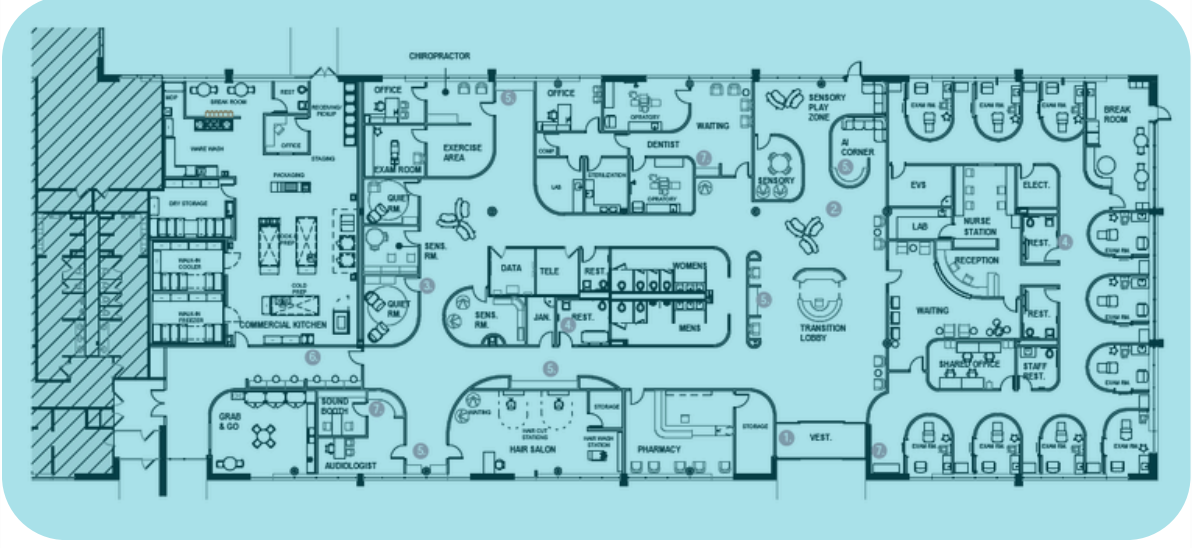


Growing to Serve More: The Whole Person Care Center

As demand for services continues to grow, Little Friends is taking a bold step forward with the development of a Whole Person Care Center designed to meet the evolving needs of the individuals and families we serve. This innovative expansion will bring essential health, wellness, and life-enrichment services together in a sensory-friendly environment thoughtfully designed around the needs of those we support. The center will not only enhance access, convenience, and continuity of care for current participants; we also envision serving more than 35,000 families within a one-hour drive of Little Friends who could benefit from this comprehensive range of services.

The center will include:

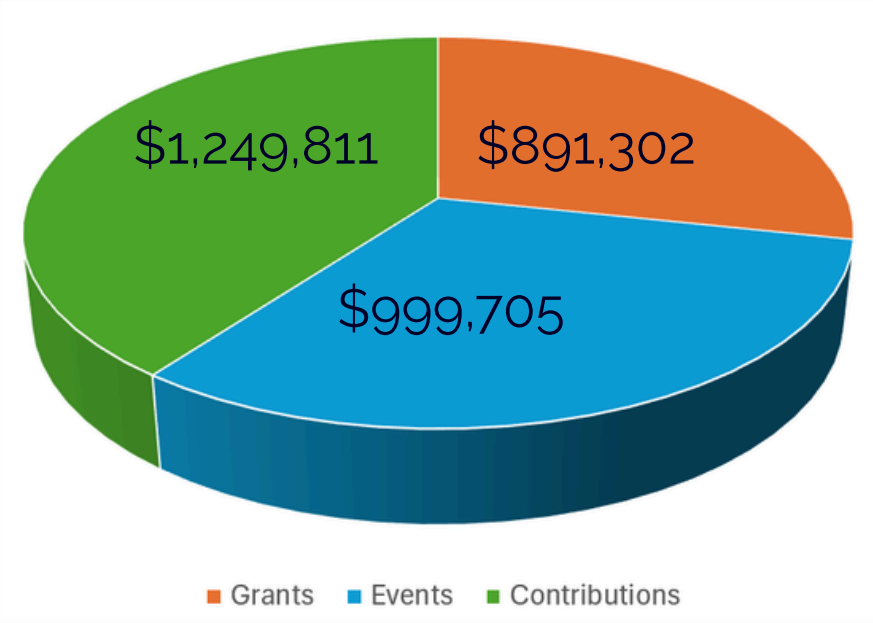
• Medical Clinic	TOTAL SF: 4900
• Dental Services	TOTAL SF: 1300
• Pharmacy	TOTAL SF: 610
• Chiropractic Care	TOTAL SF: 600
• Audiology Services	TOTAL SF: 700
• Hair Salon	TOTAL SF: 350
• Commercial Kitchen	TOTAL SF: 3200



Philanthropic Support

At Little Friends, we are dedicated to building a resilient and balanced funding model that strengthens our ability to serve today and for years to come. While a variety of revenue sources support our work, the compassion and generosity of our donors remain at the core of everything we accomplish.

Your investment in our mission helps sustain essential services, broaden access to innovative programs, and create meaningful opportunities for children, adults, and families across our community. We are proud to share that 92 cents of every dollar raised is directed toward programs and services, reflecting our commitment to responsible stewardship and maximum impact.



Total Contributions: $3,140,818

Serendipity Resale Shop

Serendipity Resale Shop is a shining example of community generosity in action. Operated entirely by dedicated volunteers, the shop relies on their time, talent, and commitment to manage every aspect of daily operations, from processing donations to serving customers and creating a welcoming shopping experience.

Through the support of donors, shoppers, and volunteers, Serendipity transforms gently used items into meaningful resources for Little Friends. Every purchase helps support our mission and programs, demonstrating how community involvement can make a lasting impact in the lives of those we serve



49th Annual Benefit Auction

The 49th Annual Little Friends Benefit Auction brought together more than 750 supporters, community leaders, advocates, and friends for an inspiring evening dedicated to advancing the mission of Little Friends, Inc.. Guests enjoyed a memorable program featuring dining, entertainment, auctions, raffles, and opportunities to celebrate the impact of programs that empower individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.

The evening also honored outstanding champions of the organization through the Dottee Krejci Memorial Award for Distinguished Service, reflecting the legacy of compassion and advocacy that continues to guide Little Friends today.



Little Friends Invitational

The Little Friends Golf Invitational is a signature fundraising event that brings together community leaders, corporate partners, donors, and friends in support of a shared mission. Through sponsorships, donations, and participation, the event raises critical funds to benefit the Illinois Independent Living Center (IILC), helping ensure that adults with physical disabilities have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing.

The IILC provides barrier-free, wheelchair-accessible apartments designed for individuals who are mobility-impaired, mentally alert, and able to live independently. Beyond accessible housing, residents benefit from supportive services and convenient access to community resources that promote independence, dignity, and quality of life.



Dottee Krejci Memorial Women's Golf Outing

The Dottee Krejci Memorial Women's Golf Outing brought together golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and community supporters for a day of camaraderie and philanthropy benefiting Little Friends, Inc.. Held at Naperville Country Club, the event provided on-course activities and an evening reception.

The generosity of all who attended helped provide essential resources that further the mission of Little Friends, Inc., ensuring life-changing programs and services continue to make a lasting impact.



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Little Friends (non-voting member)

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