

# Year in Review FY 2025



*Celebrating 60 Years of Impact*









# Honoring our Past, Shaping Our Future

The year 2025 marked a historic milestone for Little Friends, Inc., as we celebrated our 60th anniversary. For six decades, we've stood alongside children, adults, and families navigating the challenges of autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and more. This year, we didn't just honor our legacy; we expanded it.

In 2025, we launched several new initiatives to deepen our impact:

- We became the first organization in Illinois to partner with Ken's Krew, providing job placement, training, and support for individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities seeking employment in customer service roles at Home Depot.
- We merged with the Illinois Independent Living Center (IILC), expanding our reach to include adults living with physical challenges.
- We opened the Little Friends Wellness Center, offering counseling services to support emotional and mental well-being.

At the same time, we continued to invest in our core programs — educational services, vocational training, community-based residential living, respite programs, and our Center for Autism — ensuring that every individual who walks through our doors is met with compassion, expertise, and opportunity.

As we look ahead, our commitment to innovation, inclusion, and excellence remains strong. We're expanding our impact, strengthening resources, and forging new partnerships to meet the evolving needs of our community. Entering our seventh decade, we do so with renewed purpose and a bold vision for the future.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Whether you are a parent, partner, donor, staff member, volunteer, or advocate, your support fuels our mission and transforms lives.

With heartfelt appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Briggs  
President & CEO  
Little Friends, Inc.



# A Legacy of Impact

Founded in 1965 by passionate educators and advocates, Little Friends has evolved into a premier human services agency dedicated to supporting individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical challenges, and social-emotional needs.

Today, our comprehensive services include educational and vocational programs, residential support, autism services through our Center for Autism, and respite care for families. Serving nine counties and more than 50 school districts across Illinois, Little Friends is proud to be accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership—an acknowledgment of our unwavering commitment to improving quality of life for those we serve.





# 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.







# Celebrating

1965

Teacher and special education advocate **Dottee Krejci** began **Little Friends** school

1970

The **Naperville Sheltered Workshop** merged with **Little Friends**

1971

The Ladies Auxiliary group opened **Serendipity Resale Shop**

1973

**Little Friends Parent Infant Program** established to support children under 3

1976

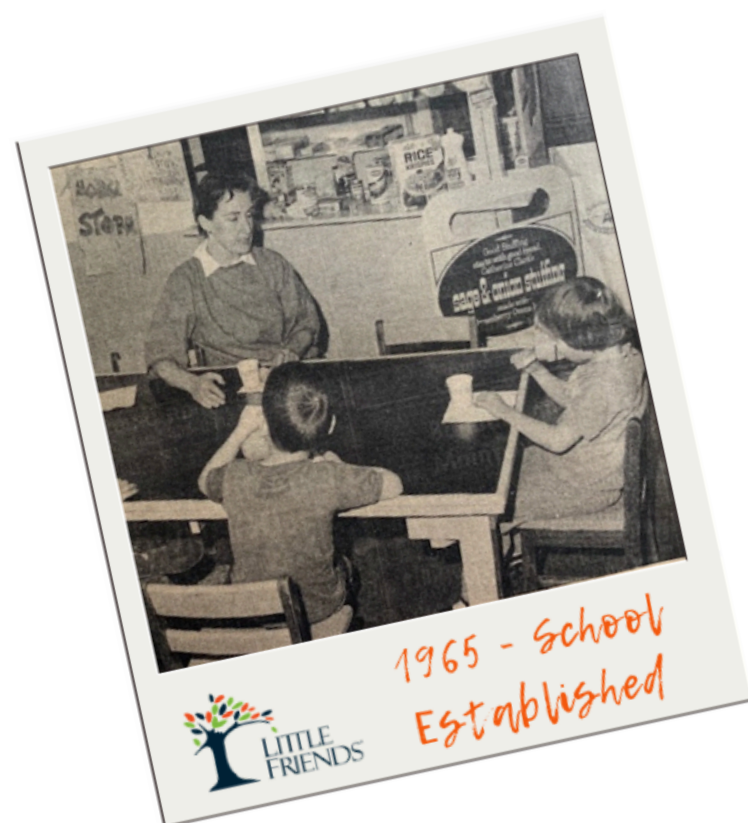
Little Friends **Community Living Facility** opened serving adults with developmental disabilities

1986

The building housing **Community Day Services** was purchased in Downers Grove

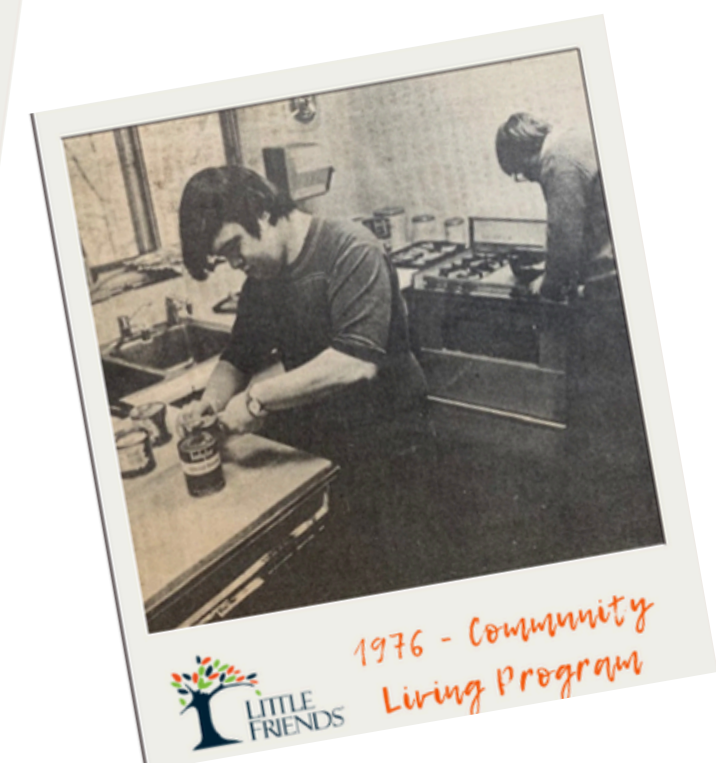
1995

**Residential Services** overhauled to move participants to individual residences, with own bedrooms and 3 housemates



The first Little Friends **Benefit Auction** was hosted

Name officially changed to **Little Friends, Inc.** and **Spectrum Vocational Services**





# 60 years of impact

2004

Little Friends  
opens  
our **Center for  
Autism**

2019

Respite Endowment  
Services merges to  
create **Little Friends  
Family Respite  
Services**

2020

Little Friends  
**moves from  
Naperville to  
Warrenville  
Campus**

2023

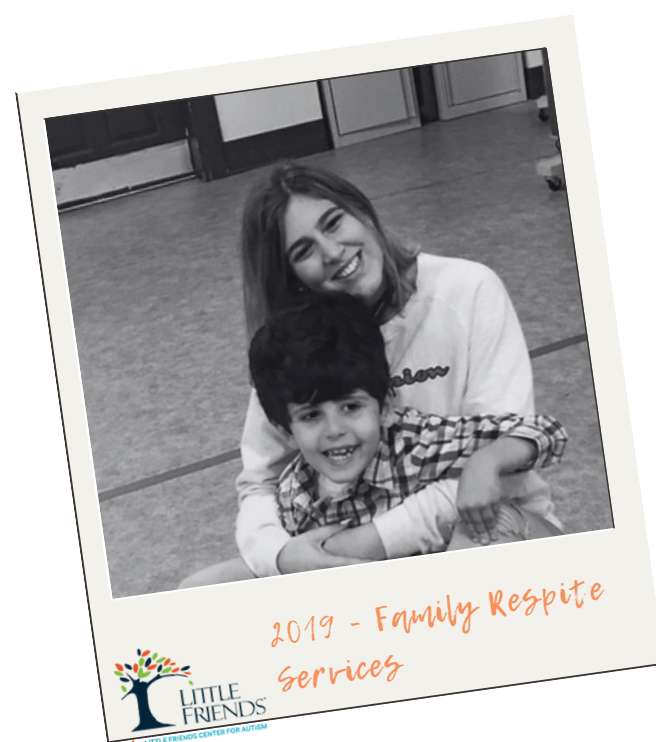
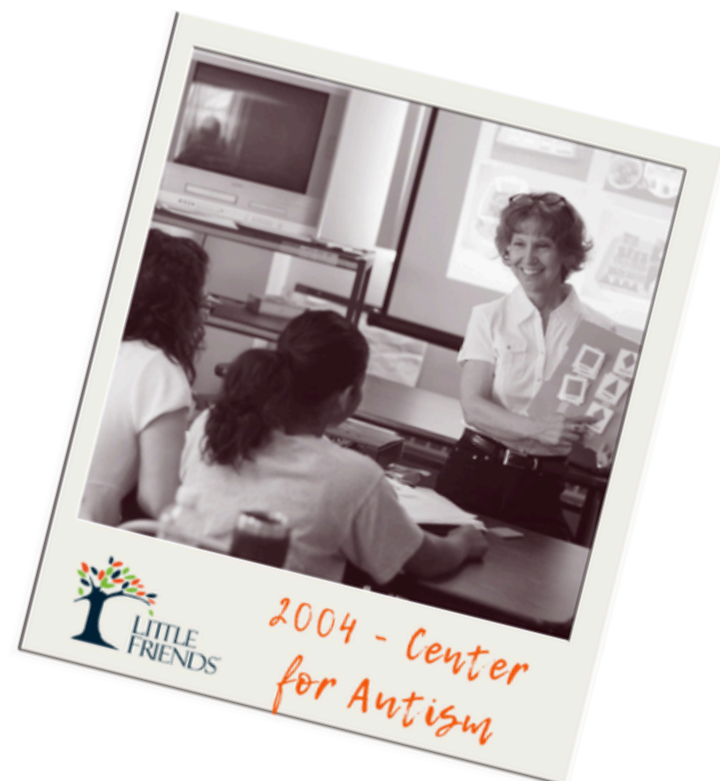
Downers  
Grove  
Facility  
**moves to  
Warrenville  
Campus**

2024

Expansion of  
**Employment  
Services for  
Neurodiverse  
Adults**

2025

Little Friends  
**merges with  
the Illinois  
Independent  
Living Center  
(IILC)**





# Those We Serve

By The Numbers: Fiscal Year 2025



400+

## Center for Autism/Autism Friendly City

Children receiving therapies, professionals, and parents are trained

131

## Krejci Academy & Mansion High School

Students enrolled in Krejci Academy and Mansion High School during the 2024-25 school year

100

## Residential Services

Number of individuals in community-based living arrangements managed and/or owned by Little Friends

63

## Family Respite Services

Children and siblings attending weekly or monthly Respite sessions

190

## Community Day Services

Adults participating in our Community Day and Employment Services

60

## FUN Club

Providing monthly social opportunities for young adults as they move forward into adulthood, while also fostering personal relationships between peer buddies

462

## Family Care Team

Supports the initial interactions with families, public entities, and advocates to learn more about our programs

50+

## Family Support Network

Socializing opportunities for families along with the information, resources, and support they need to make informed choices for their loved ones



# Our Programs

## 60 Years of Empowering Lives with Dignity and Respect

For six decades, Little Friends has been a trusted leader in providing therapeutic, educational, and community-based services for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. With a foundation built on dignity and respect, we strive to improve communication and life skills, foster independence and confidence, and create lives filled with quality and meaning in safe, healthy, and happy environments.

Our nationally recognized school serves students ages 5 to 22, offering excellence in special education that nurtures personal growth and lifelong learning. For adults, our programs deliver high-quality, life-changing opportunities through employment training, paid work experiences, social engagement, and supportive housing, ensuring every individual has the chance to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their community.

### Children

ABA Therapy

Occupational Therapy

Speech Therapy

Krejci Academy

Mansion High School

Counseling Services

Family Respite Services

Residential Services

### Adults

Community Day Services

Employment Services

Inklude Studio

Counseling Services

FUN Club

Residential Services

### Families

Family Support Network

Family Care Team

Family Respite Services





# Increasing Need For Services

**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**

**An estimated 5800 residents in Illinois Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA)**

**16K people on the State Priority List (PUNS) requesting residential services**

**50K people who are caregivers to individuals with a disability are over the age of 60**





# Expansion of Services

Addressing Growing Needs with New Initiatives



## Ken's Krew

Through our partnership with Ken's Krew, we provide job placement, training, and ongoing support for individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities pursuing careers in customer service. This collaboration strengthens our mission to empower neurodiverse individuals by equipping them with the skills and opportunities needed to thrive in the workforce.



## Illinois Independent Living Center

We broadened our focus to provide comprehensive care by incorporating support for adults living with physical challenges following our recent merger with the Illinois Independent Living Center (IILC). The IILC provides fully accessible, barrier-free residential spaces that empower residents to manage their daily needs effectively.



## Wellness Center

We opened the Little Friends Wellness Center, offering specialized counseling for individuals and families. The center is designed to support the unique needs of those with autism, intellectual disabilities, and developmental challenges, providing compassionate and tailored care in a welcoming environment.



# 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Auction

Creating Meaningful Change Through Community Support



The Annual Benefit Auction remains a cornerstone event, blending friendship, advocacy, and generosity to ensure those we serve lead fulfilling lives within our community. We are deeply grateful to our individual donors and corporate partners whose unwavering support has made this gathering a cherished tradition and a powerful force for good.

The 48th Annual Benefit Auction brought together 675 guests, with an inspiring 48% attending for the first time—a testament to the growing reach and resonance of our work.



Friends With A Lens



1985 Little Friends Annual Auction



# Serendipity Resale Shop

## Local Volunteers, Lasting Impact

For over 50 years, Serendipity Resale Shop has been solely operated by a team of dedicated volunteers. More than just a resale shop, Serendipity plays a vital role in supporting the mission of Little Friends—empowering individuals to live fulfilling lives. Every purchase, donation, and hour volunteered directly benefits the programs and services that make a meaningful difference.

**Total Revenue**  
**FY 2025**  
**\$159,646.00**



Serendipity Resale Shop Opened in 1971 in Downtown Naperville



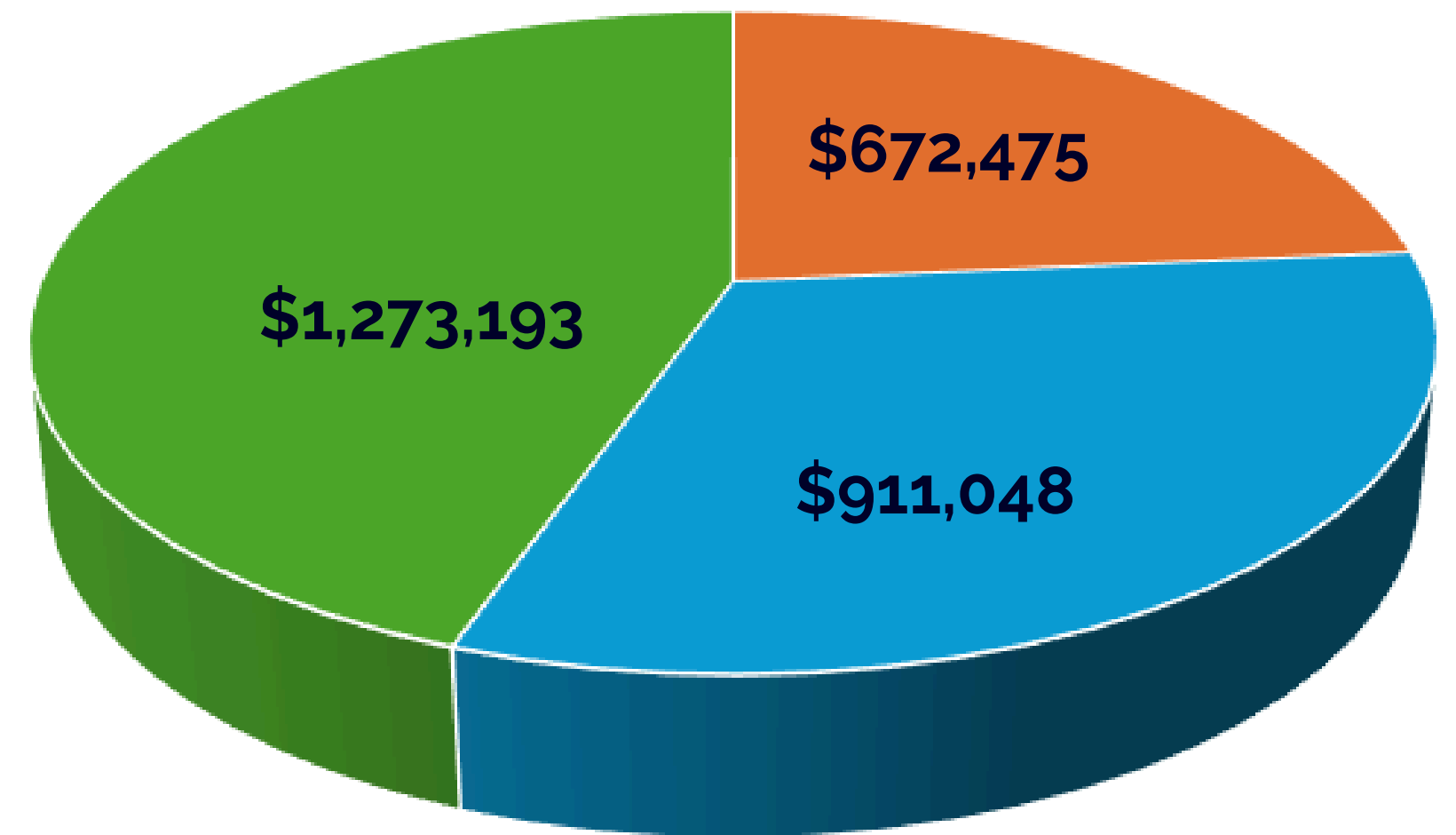
Serendipity Resale Shop is now located at 461 S. Route 59, Aurora.



# Philanthropic Support

As we celebrate 60 years of Little Friends, we remain committed to stewarding a strong and diverse funding portfolio. Yet, it is the annual generosity of our community that continues to be the heartbeat of our mission. Each year, your support plays a vital role in sustaining our operations and expanding the reach of our life-changing programs.

Thanks to your contributions, we are proud to report that 92 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to our programs—ensuring that every gift makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. Your belief in our work fuels progress, hope, and opportunity.



● General Contributions ● Events ● Grants

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS:**  
**\$2,856,717**





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Briggs, President & CEO  
Little Friends (non-voting member)

Ray Kinney, Vice Chairman  
Partner, Blooming Color & MACLYN

Matt Johanson, Secretary  
Co-Founder & Senior Partner, Just Act Partners

Pat Adamatis  
Retired, Educator, Naperville CUSD 203

Brady M. Brosnahan  
Regional Vice President, Rubrik

Paul Koretke  
Retired, General Manager, Pockets

Natasha Marriner  
Vice President, Busey Bank

Matthew Render  
Head of Finance/Accounting, Citadel

Stephen Scharafin  
Director, Brown Gibbons Lang & Company

Brooke Thompson  
Managing Director, Merrill Lynch

Thomas Connors, Chairman  
Retired, Managing Director, Credit Suisse

Kevin Kobe, Treasurer  
Senior Associate, CBRE

Dawn Bridges, Ed.D  
Vice President of Educational Affairs, Right At School

Karla Harmon  
Retired, Global Director, CBRE

Anthony Losurdo  
Managing Partner, Gibson's Restaurant Group

Raj Patel  
President, The Hari Group

Joseph Ruble  
Managing Director, Caliber Advisors, Inc.

Brian Sieve  
Retired, Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Adam Van Someren  
President, Charleston Building & Development





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