



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Easterseals of Greater Waterbury



# A Message from our President, **Len Cipollone**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been one of transformative growth and achievement at Easterseals of Greater Waterbury. Through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters, we've expanded our services, strengthened our programs, and celebrated numerous milestones that have deepened our impact on the community.

One of the most exciting developments has been the expansion of our Employment and Community Services (ECS) program. With the opening of new locations in Waterbury and Brookfield, we are able to offer even greater support through Day Services Options (DSO), Group Supported Employment (GSE), and transition programs – creating more opportunities for individuals to thrive in inclusive environments. Our school readiness sites have also undergone important upgrades to ensure safe, nurturing spaces for our children, including security system enhancements and significant facility improvements.

We are proud to announce that our Medical Rehabilitation Program received a prestigious three-year CARF accreditation, recognizing the high quality of care we provide. Additionally, Children's Center East and Children's Academy both earned NAEYC accreditation, underscoring our commitment to excellence in early childhood education.

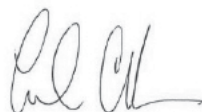
This year also brought exciting successes in our fundraising efforts. Alongside the continued success of our 2023 Annual Golf Classic, we introduced a new event, Pints for a Purpose, which brought the community together for a fun and impactful evening. These events help fuel our programs and ensure we can continue delivering essential services to the individuals and families who rely on us.

Looking ahead, we are eager to build on this momentum. With well-planned initiatives in place, we're poised to further expand our reach and support even more individuals in their journey toward greater independence. Our mission is unwavering, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone in our community has access to the resources they need to thrive.

I want to extend my deepest thanks to our incredible staff, volunteers, and supporters. Your commitment and generosity have made all of this possible. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

Finally, I want to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and vision. Your guidance has been instrumental in driving our mission forward.

With sincere appreciation,



**Len Cipollone**  
President and CEO, Easterseals of Greater Waterbury

## With Gratitude for Leadership: Thank You to Our Outgoing Board Chairman, Paul Jessell



Easterseals extends its heartfelt appreciation to Paul Jessell for his exceptional leadership during his time as Chairman of the Board. Under his guidance, our organization has made significant strides in advancing our mission to support individuals with

disabilities and their families. His dedication, insight, and passion have been instrumental in shaping the future of Easterseals.

We are fortunate that Paul will continue to serve on the Board, and we look forward to his continued contributions and wisdom as we work together to build an even stronger future for those we serve.

## Introduction of Jim Watkowski, New Board Chairman



We are honored to introduce Jim Watkowski as the new Chairman of our Board of Directors. With six years of dedicated service as an Easterseals Board member, Jim has played an integral role in driving our mission forward. His wealth of experience extends

beyond our organization, as he also serves as Vice President of Innovation at Circuitry Solutions, a division of MacDermid Alpha Electronics Solutions, where he has led cutting-edge initiatives in the electronics industry.

Please join us in welcoming Jim Watkowski to his new role, as we look forward to achieving even greater milestones together under his leadership.

# Board of Directors



Mark Graveline



Kellie Jandreau



Paul Jessell, Esq.  
Chairman



Kenney Johnson



Liz LaCava,  
Vice Chairwoman



Tamara Nyce,  
Esq.



David Segal



Maribel Rivera Smith  
DNP, MSN, Ed., RN



Robert Stabile,  
Secretary



Robert Teittinen



Jim Watkowski,  
Treasurer



James S. Zoldy, Jr.

## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

# Expanding Employment and Community Services in Waterbury and Brookfield



This year, Easterseals is proud to announce the expansion of our Employment and Community Services with two new spaces in Waterbury and Brookfield. Both locations provide the same comprehensive range of services, including Day Services Options (DSO), Group Supported Employment (GSE), and transition programs, all aimed at supporting individuals with diverse needs.

Thanks to the guidance and support of our Board of Directors, we were able to purchase and renovate our new Waterbury location on Watertown Avenue. Ideally situated within the community, this welcoming space features beautiful outdoor areas for individuals to enjoy during the warmer months. The site also includes a digital sign, which allows us to share important updates with the community, such as upcoming events, job openings, and child care enrollment opportunities.

In Brookfield, we moved into a new space after many years at the DDS office in Danbury. We are grateful to DDS for providing us with the use of their space, but we are thrilled to now have a place of our own that mirrors the offerings of our Waterbury site. Both locations are warm, inviting, and well-liked by the staff and the individuals we support.

We are excited about these improvements and the continued growth and positive impact of our programs in both communities.



*Celebrating the ribbon cutting of our Employment and Community Services at two new locations in Waterbury and Brookfield. Exciting opportunities ahead for the community!*

## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

# Celebrating the Impact of Our Employees

At Easterseals, one of our core values is that we are bigger than the sum of our parts. Our employees are the heart and soul of our organization, and their dedication to our mission is what drives our success. This summer, we were thrilled to celebrate their invaluable contributions at our annual Employee Appreciation Day. With over 170 employees in attendance, the event was a wonderful opportunity to recognize the hard work, passion, and commitment that each member of our team brings to Easterseals.

A special moment of the day was honoring four exceptional employees as STAR recipients, an award where nominees are selected by their peers for their outstanding dedication and positive impact.

### This year's STAR recipients were:

- **Daphne L. Franks**, Assistant Teacher, Children's Center
- **Monica Jacobson**, Lead Teacher, Children's Academy East
- **Jennifer C. Kee**, Program Manager, Employment and Community Services
- **Beth O'Sullivan, MPH, OTR/L**, Occupational Therapist, Medical Rehab

The celebration also included pizza, salad, and gelato provided by The Big Green Pizza Truck, creating a welcoming atmosphere filled with gratitude and camaraderie.

Employee Appreciation Day is just one way we recognize the vital role our staff plays in helping us achieve our mission. We are immensely proud of our team and the difference they make in the lives of individuals and families in our community.



*Left photo from left to right: Lauren Buonomo, Linnette Mendoza, Carmen Hall, Jody Brouillard, and Jeff Raboin.*

*Right photo: Jennifer Kee receiving the STAR Award from Len Cipollone.*



## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

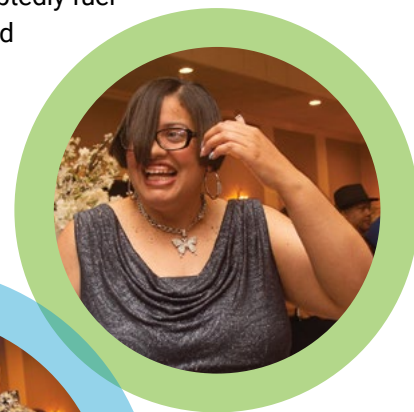
# The First Annual Easterseals Gala: A Night to Remember

The Employment and Community Service program at Easterseals Waterbury embarked on an exciting new tradition in 2022 with the launch of its annual prom. These events, held at our program site, quickly became a highlight for everyone involved. The atmosphere was filled with joy and celebration as attendees enjoyed the chance to socialize, dance, and revel in a fun, inclusive environment. Each year, the event grew, with more people attending, showcasing its popularity and the happiness it brought to our community. The prom was more than just an event — it became a symbol of connection, belonging, and joy.

In 2024, this vibrant tradition took a meaningful turn when our Self Advocacy group voiced their thoughts on how to make the event even more special. They expressed that the term “Prom” didn’t feel entirely fitting for an adult celebration, and suggested that moving the event to a more upscale entertainment venue would elevate the experience for everyone. Their passion for change and their desire for something more reflective of their community led to the birth of the Easterseals Gala. With their advocacy at the forefront, we transformed the event into a grand, elegant evening at the beautiful Grand Oak Villa. It was a testament to the power of self-advocacy and the importance of listening to the voices of those we serve.

The first annual Easterseals Gala exceeded all expectations. Thanks to the generous support of community members, the gala was hosted entirely free of charge for the individuals in our program, ensuring that no one was left out of this magical evening. The Grand Oak Villa provided the perfect backdrop for the night, with its elegant setting enhancing the already festive atmosphere. Attendees enjoyed a lavish meal featuring pasta, meatballs, roast chicken, and an assortment of desserts. A lively DJ set the tone for the night, with music that got everyone up and dancing. Attendees arrived dressed to the nines, filled with excitement and joy.

With over 120 attendees, the night was a huge success, leaving everyone with fond memories of dancing, laughter, and togetherness. The Easterseals Gala not only became a new annual tradition but also a testament to what we can achieve when we come together as a community, driven by the advocacy and spirit of those we support. The energy and joy of that night will undoubtedly fuel the growth of this cherished event for years to come, making it a cornerstone of celebration and unity at Easterseals Waterbury.



*Far left: John and Marissa enjoy the party.  
Second photo: Jane  
Left: Keri and Deavon dancing  
Above: Natasha*

## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

# Empowering Individuals Through Comprehensive Driver Education, Community Engagement, and a High-Tech Van Donation

Easterseals' Drivers Assessment Program, under the leadership of Raechaell Corbett, Supervisor of the Easterseals Driver Assessment Program, offers a wide range of invaluable services to meet the diverse needs of individuals seeking to improve their driving skills and safety. One of the standout initiatives is the mock traffic stop program, developed in collaboration with the Meriden, Newtown, and East Windsor Police Departments. This innovative program serves a dual purpose: it educates police officers and helps individuals from the neurodiverse community better understand what to expect during traffic stops. By creating a controlled and educational environment, this initiative fosters safer, more respectful interactions, reducing anxiety and promoting mutual understanding between officers and drivers.

Beyond traffic stops, Easterseals is deeply involved in training local first responders. Raechaell recently educated the entire Meriden Fire Department about neurodiversity and the specific needs of individuals using modified vehicles. This training ensures that firefighters and emergency personnel are better equipped to respond to accidents or emergencies involving these individuals. Advanced Wheels, a leader in vehicle modifications, also joined forces to provide further insights on how modified vehicles operate.

We are also thrilled to announce that Easterseals has received a generous donation of a high-tech van from Advanced Wheels. This makes us the only driver assessment program in the area with access to such cutting-edge technology. High-tech vans are specially designed for individuals with physical disabilities or mobility challenges, allowing them to drive independently using features such as hand controls, joystick steering, voice-activated systems, and wheelchair-accessible lifts. This van will open up new opportunities to serve individuals who may have otherwise been unable to drive, offering them the chance to regain independence and freedom.



*Top photo: High-tech van. Bottom photo: The inside the van of some of the vehicle modifications.*

In another collaboration, Sergeant William Chapman from the Newtown Police Department worked with the program to host Car Fit Events. These events, aimed at older drivers, ensure that they are safely and comfortably using their vehicles. This service allows older adults to maintain their independence while maximizing safety.

These initiatives highlight Easterseals' commitment to empowering individuals and fostering positive community engagement. By equipping both drivers and first responders with essential knowledge and tools, we are building stronger, more inclusive communities.

## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

# Inaugural “Pints for A Purpose” Fundraiser

Easterseals hosted its first annual “Pints For A Purpose” fundraiser at Brewbury in Middlebury, and it was an overwhelming success! The event drew a fantastic crowd of community members eager to support a meaningful cause while enjoying local brews, delicious wings, and pizza. The relaxed atmosphere created the perfect opportunity for attendees to learn more about the vital work Easterseals does to support individuals and families in need.

Thanks to the incredible turnout and the generosity of those who attended, we were able to raise an impressive \$12,400 to fund our programs and services. This event not only helped us financially, but it also allowed us to raise awareness about Easterseals’ mission and build stronger connections within the community.

Given the overwhelming success of “Pints For A Purpose,” we are excited to continue this event next year with the hope of even greater participation and growth. Our goal is to make this an annual tradition that brings our community together while raising even more support for the people we serve.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who joined us and made this event a true success. We can’t wait to see how it grows in the future!



*Guests savor craft beers and camaraderie at the Pints for a Purpose event, raising funds for a great cause in a cheerful setting at Brewbury.*

## Upgrading Our School Readiness Sites with Support from the Office of Early Childhood

Easterseals is proud to announce that we received a generous grant from the Office of Early Childhood to make critical updates to three of our school readiness sites. These much-needed improvements include the installation of new windows at the Meriden Children’s Center, a key fob security system at the Children’s Center East to enhance safety, and a new boiler as part of the final upgrade to the HVAC system at the Children’s Academy in Waterbury.

These upgrades will create safer, more efficient, and welcoming environments for the children and families we serve, helping us continue to provide high-quality early childhood education.





## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Upgrading Our Centers for Better Hearing with New VRA Systems

We are excited to announce that we were able to replace the Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA) systems at our three Centers for Better Hearing. VRA is a critical tool used to assess hearing in young children and individuals who may be unable to respond to traditional hearing tests. By using engaging visual stimuli, such as animated toys or lights, the VRA system helps audiologists accurately determine hearing thresholds, ensuring early detection of hearing impairments.

This upgrade is essential to providing the highest quality of care, as early diagnosis of hearing issues allows for timely intervention, which is crucial for the development of speech, language, and social skills in children.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following generous supporters, whose contributions made this important upgrade possible: **Watertown Foundation & Thomaston Savings Bank**. Their support helps us continue to deliver exceptional hearing care to individuals of all ages in our community.



### Adapting to Change: Enhancing Our Children's Centers and Academy to Meet the Needs of Older Pre-K Students

This year, Connecticut introduced a new age requirement for children entering kindergarten, requiring them to be 5 years old before September 1st. This change meant that many children who would have traditionally moved on to kindergarten were unable to do so, leaving us with a larger group of older Pre-K students. In response, we quickly adapted by opening dedicated Pre-K classrooms at each of our Children's Centers to support this group.

The decision to create separate classrooms for the older children was essential for several reasons. Older children typically have different developmental needs compared to younger children. They tend to be more advanced in language skills, cognitive abilities, and social interactions. By placing them in age-appropriate environments, we ensure they receive the focused attention and curriculum necessary to challenge their growing minds and prepare them for kindergarten.

For example, older Pre-K students benefit from more complex problem-solving activities, enhanced literacy instruction, and structured social-emotional learning. They are ready to engage in cooperative group play, participate in longer learning activities, and begin more advanced pre-literacy and math skills. In contrast, younger children in the same classroom might still be developing foundational

language skills, learning how to follow basic routines, and needing more hands-on, exploratory play. Separating the older students allows us to tailor our teaching strategies to meet their more advanced developmental milestones, without the distraction of younger students who require different levels of guidance and supervision.

To ensure we were providing the best possible education for these older Pre-K students, we invested in new, age-appropriate curriculum that are specifically designed to foster their academic growth and social development. This curriculum was made possible through the generous support of donors, including MacDermidAlpha, United Way of Greater Waterbury and The Leever Foundation. Their contributions have been critical in helping us meet the evolving needs of our children and families.

At our Children's Centers and Academy, we are proud to continually evolve and adapt to the changing educational landscape. By creating specialized classrooms and implementing targeted curriculum, we are ensuring that every child – regardless of their age or circumstance – has access to high-quality early education that meets their specific needs. This commitment to flexibility and responsiveness underscores our dedication to supporting the growth and development of the children in our care.

# 2024 FINANCIAL OPERATIONS REPORT

Year ending August 31, 2024 (with comparable totals for 2023) (Unaudited)

## OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUES:

	2024		2023	
Public Support	\$116,104	1%	\$147,650	1%
Vocational Training and Educational Programs	12,730,643	83%	10,764,302	79%
Childhood Development and Behavioral Services	54,195	0%	521,671	4%
Medical Rehabilitation Services	2,270,686	15%	2,160,795	16%
Other Grants & Other Income	112,016	1%	97,121	1%
	<b>\$15,283,644</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$13,691,539</b>	<b>100%</b>

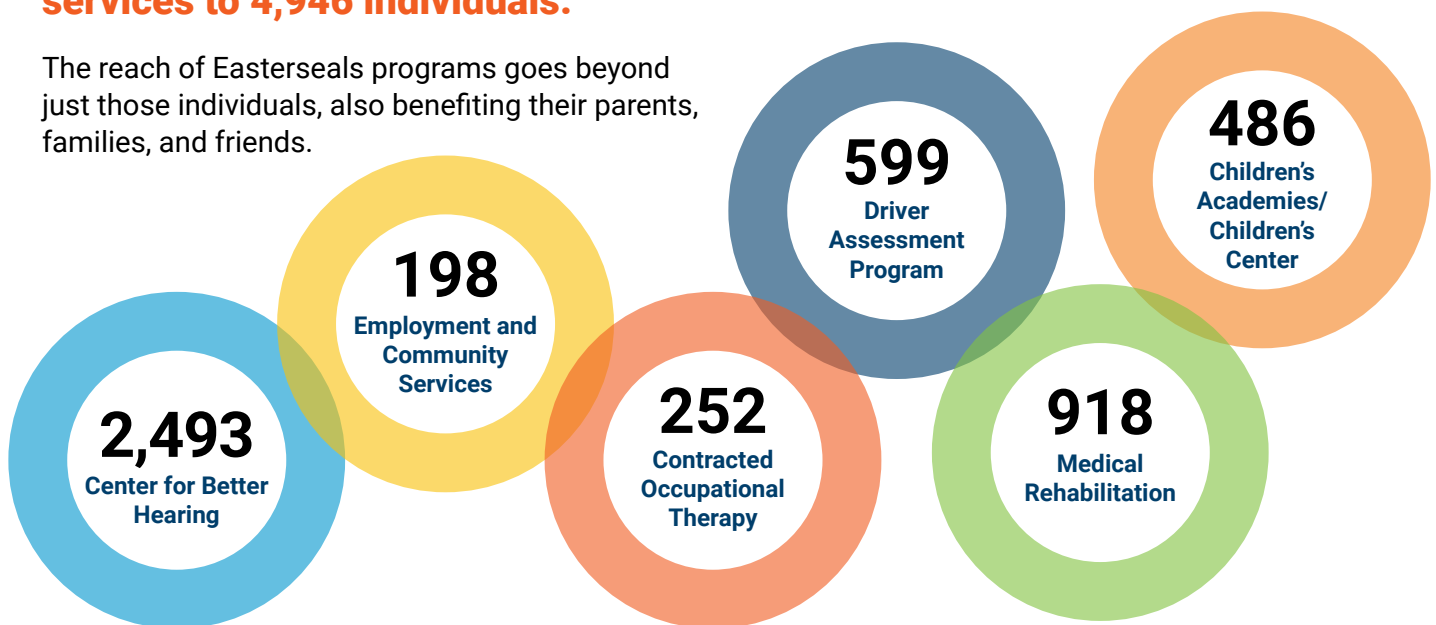
## OPERATING EXPENSES:

Staffing, Payroll Taxes and Employee Benefits	\$11,790,916	77%	\$12,112,323	79%
Professional Services and Operating Supplies	1,767,850	12%	1,534,850	10%
Occupancy and Interest	911,049	6%	803,567	5%
Transportation Service	300,610	2%	395,117	3%
Depreciation & Amortization	590,645	4%	456,773	3%
	<b>\$15,316,070</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$15,302,630</b>	<b>100%</b>

Release of "Ready Set Rebuild Net Assets"	—		\$413,487	
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(77,426)		\$(1,197,604)	
Community Outreach Programs	\$(140,063)		\$(136,464)	
Net Investment Revenues Gain/(Loss)	\$5,770,134		\$3,299,934	
Combined Surplus/(Deficit)	\$5,552,645		\$1,965,866	
Capital Asset Purchases and Improvements	\$1,037,502		\$1,379,396	

## In Fiscal Year 2024, Easterseals of Greater Waterbury delivered direct services to 4,946 individuals.

The reach of Easterseals programs goes beyond just those individuals, also benefiting their parents, families, and friends.



# ANNUAL DONORS

A heartfelt thank you to our generous sponsors, donors, and grant funders. Your invaluable contributions have greatly enriched the lives of many children and adults with disabilities and special needs. Below is a list of donations received between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024.

## \$25,000

Advanced Wheels

City of Waterbury  
Cly-Del Manufacturing CO.  
David Wang

Stutsky Law, LLC  
William Villano

## \$10,000 - \$25,000

Connecticut Community  
Foundation  
MacDermidAlpha  
The Leever Foundation  
Treadwell Corporation  
Webster Bank TTEE Meriden  
Foundation

Demsey Manufacturing Co. INC  
Ditron, INC  
Edward Segal, INC  
Leonard Cipollone\*  
Masotti Electric, LLC  
Mr. Jim Watkowski  
National Seating & Mobility, LLC  
Nick Guiditta  
PowerStation Events  
Resolute Point Private Wealth  
Waterbury Hospital

## \$250 - \$499

a.i. tek Instruments, LLC  
Albert Bros. Inc and  
Cornerstone Reality, Inc.  
Bill Wildman Floor Covering, Inc.  
Broderick Law Firm, LLC  
Building Blocks for Parents, LLC  
Carmen\* and Mark Hall  
Diamond Roofing Specialist  
Dibble and Rossi, CPA's  
Dr. John M. McHugh, D.P.M  
Gary Nielsen\*  
Gateway Limousine, Inc.  
German Auto Repair, LLC  
Labbe Heating & Cooling, LLC  
Law Offices of Anthony D. Santoro  
Lombard Group  
M. Jaffe  
Marion Mfg. Company  
Naugatuck Valley Landscape  
Management  
Nosal Builders  
Paul Jessell  
Paypal Giving Fund  
Pride Fence Company  
Protopac, Inc.  
Robert E. Teittinen  
Robert Stabile  
Rotary Club of Watertown  
Sandra Senich  
Smaller Manufacturers  
Association of Connecticut  
Stop & Shop

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

Bank of America, Harold & Rebecca  
Gross Foundation  
Comcast  
Ion Bank Foundation  
Post University  
Thomaston Savings Bank  
United Way of Greater Waterbury

## \$500 - \$999

Access Rehab Centers, LLC  
Ameritas Retirement Plans  
Bozzuto Associates, Inc.  
Carmody, Torrance, Sandak,  
Hennessey LLP  
C-B Manufacturing & Tool  
Company, Inc.  
Develomark  
Dunkin Donuts/BZ Management  
Corp Union  
E.S. Metal Fabrication, Inc.  
Harper & Whitfield, P.C.  
Jaci Carroll Staffing Services, Inc.  
Litchfield Bancorp  
Mule Security Systems Inc.  
New Opportunities, Inc.  
O'Hara-Feeley Family Fund  
Skyline Financial Credit Union  
Slavin, Stauffacher, & Scott, LLC  
Attorneys at Law

## \$2,500 - \$5,000

CUNO Foundation  
Liberty Bank  
Mr. Jack and Jennifer Hogan  
Savings Bank of Danbury  
The Meserve Memorial Fund,  
Albert Wadsworth  
Watertown Foundation, Inc.  
We Do Life Together...  
Webster Bank, N.A.

## \$1,000 - \$2,500

Acrisure  
Anonymous  
Chittenden Group

# ANNUAL DONORS

The Innovative CPA Group  
Triple Stitch Sportswear  
Tynan & Iannone Attorneys at Law

## \$100 - \$249

Advartec  
Affordable Powerwash, LLC  
Anthony Power  
Antoinette Cianciolo\*  
Cindy Kaplita  
Collins Aerospace  
Destiny Lopez  
Dunbar United Church  
Janice Hall  
Jeanne Ruggiero  
Jeffrey Raboin\*  
Mark & Jill LaMadeleine  
Morrissey, Morrissey & Rydzik, LLC  
Patty Raymond  
Paula Lamoin  
Philip Squattrito  
Prospect Congregational Church  
Raytheon Technologies

Robert McGovern  
Robin Sharp  
Seth and Glenda Duke\*  
UBS Financial Services INC.  
USA Waste and Recycling  
Vernon Proctor

## \$1 - \$99

Abbotts Laboratories  
Andrea Dvaskas  
Andrew Harlan\*  
Ann and Michael Feinberg  
Annette Burton\*  
Anonymous  
Barbara & Harold Barringham  
Barbara Dowling  
Carolyn Smith\*  
Cynthia Pirro\*  
Darlen Baer  
David & Mary Clarke  
David Poirier  
Dennis Buckley  
Donald Ensero

Elizabeth Szymanoski  
Erik Lounsbury  
Gail Direinzo  
Gail Gatling-Ellison\*  
Hotshots Café  
James Roosa  
Joyce Perrotti  
Kathy Caiazzo  
Kenneth & Ann Rein  
Lauren Roslund\*  
Margaret Werner  
Mindy Fricke\*  
Murdock Branford  
Nancy Traver  
Rachele Ulaska  
Robert & Rosemary Vasil  
Robert P. Merchant  
Sharon McDonald  
Thomas F. Crowe  
Tiffany Marshall \*

*Employees marked with \**

**In Fiscal Year 2024, Easterseals received over \$63,976.14 in grant funding from foundations, organizations, and corporations. These grants were vital in supporting improvements to our programs and services, enabling us to continue meeting and exceeding the needs of individuals and families impacted by disabilities in our communities. Easterseals extends its gratitude to the following foundations and organizations for their generous support in Fiscal Year 2024, helping us fulfill our mission.**

Bank of America – Harold & Rebecca Gross Foundation  
Comcast  
Connecticut Community Foundation  
CUNO Foundation  
MacDermidAlpha  
O'Hara-Feeley Family Fund  
Paypal Giving Fund

The Albert Wadsworth & Meserve Memorial Fund  
The Leever Foundation  
Thomaston Savings Bank  
Treadwell Corporation  
United Way of Greater Waterbury  
Watertown Foundation, Inc.  
Webster Bank TTEE Meriden Foundation  
Walmart

# OUR MISSION

*Easterseals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through life-changing disability and community services. Easterseals of Greater Waterbury has worked tirelessly with our stakeholders in the community to enhance quality of life and expand local access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. We are committed to see that everyone is valued, respected, and accepted. Together, we're empowering people with all abilities and their families to be full and equal participants in their communities.*

## Center for Better Hearing

22 TOMPKINS STREET, WATERBURY

158 STATE STREET, MERIDEN

690 MAIN STREET SOUTH, SUITE 4, SOUTHBURY

## Children's Academy & Children's Center

22 TOMPKINS STREET, WATERBURY – WEST CAMPUS

128 AVENUE OF INDUSTRY, WATERBURY – EAST CAMPUS

172 GRANDVIEW AVENUE, WATERBURY – GRANDVIEW CAMPUS

125 BROAD STREET, MERIDEN – MERIDEN CAMPUS

## Driver Assessment Program

158 STATE STREET, MERIDEN

## Employment and Community Services

117 OLD STATE DRIVE, UNIT 102, BROOKFIELD

1700 WATERTOWN AVENUE, WATERBURY

## Lions Low Vision Program

158 STATE STREET, MERIDEN

## Medical Rehabilitation Program

158 STATE STREET, MERIDEN



[www.easterseals.com/waterburyct](http://www.easterseals.com/waterburyct)

