

# 29 ACRES

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH. COLLECTIVE PROGRESS.

## 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



# AT HOME ON THE SPECTRUM



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## Letter from Our Founder/CEO Debra Caudy, M.D.



Dear community partners,

With my office being located in the very center of our buzzing clubhouse, I am reminded daily of all 29 Acres has accomplished in its seven short years, and also why we do it. I love my work.

As we approach the end of 2022, this report will reflect on the tremendous progress 29 Acres has made through support services, housing, employment, public policy/education for individuals living with autism and other neurodiversities.

My husband and I always knew it was possible for our son Jon, now 24 and who lives with severe autism, to, one day, be able to successfully live in his own home, have friends and continue to learn and flourish. We knew this was possible for him. What we didn't know was exactly how and where all of this was going to take place — until 29 Acres. We were even less certain he would be offered integrated employment opportunities and he now has, not one, but two part-time jobs where he is very much valued. As proud parents, we are so happy for him.

This independent and joyful life away from our family home is a reality for him and peace of mind for us.

As the person spearheading this effort, life lessons learned along the way are too numerous to count. My treasured Board members have stood with me during celebrations and also during disappointments graciously donating their time/support and innovative ideas. I am both empowered and thankful to travel this journey with them. 29 Acres has also been fortunate to align with sister organizations who have graciously helped us find our way when we got “stuck”. We will do the same for others.

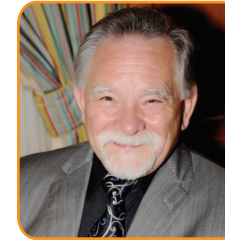
Our communities show a greater understanding and acceptance of those living with neurodiversity, making it possible to further our mission and to help others do the same.

I thank our dedicated community partners for fueling this important progress. I thank our terrific staff for making it all happen from the ground up.

*Debra*



## Letter from Board Chair: Doug Bartek



Dear community partners,

2022 and also the end of 2021 was a period of highlights for 29 Acres. We managed through COVID-19 issues while increasing support services for residents and clients, built and opened two new houses at our living community in CrossRoads, opened a new Dallas hub serving day clients, expanded our original 29 acres by another 1.7 acres with a neighboring land donation, and in spite of COVID, had two very successful fund-raising functions. This report will review these highlights and others.

When Jodi and I had our third son in January of 1997, we had no idea of the journey that would begin for the family. Both our first two sons were in the “Gifted and Talented” programs in school, and when Ryan was diagnosed with autism at 18 months, we experienced all the emotions that families with someone on the spectrum inevitably go through. Since Jodi and I are both “older” parents, we began to worry early on about how Ryan would be cared for years into the future, how he could be kept mentally engaged and challenged when we could no longer take care of him, and how he could lead a happy and full life. Looking forward to when he would leave high school, we began a search for a housing community for him and found some great places – but none that specialized in adults on the autism spectrum and associated neurodiversities. We began to think we would have to try and build a community ourselves, but then divine intervention happened. We saw an article in the Dallas Morning News about a Highland Park couple, Debra Caudy and Clay Heighten, that had started such a community and had already purchased the land for houses in CrossRoads, Texas, very close to our house in Frisco. We quickly met with both of them, became infatuated with their enthusiasm and plans, and decided we had to become a part of this ground-breaking project. Fast-forward to now and Jodi is volunteering at 29 Acres weekly and Ryan was among the first two residents to move in to the housing community in the summer of 2020. He has loved it ever since and calls it “home.”

29 Acres remains unique in its individual-based programming for residents, where each adult has their own level of personnel support, their own special-interest projects and their own individual work assignments. There is no “cookie-cutter/one idea fits all” at 29 Acres, yet everyone is part of a community and they enjoy social activities together with their peers.

Congratulations to the executive team led by Debra Caudy and Morgan McKay for building an incredible staff of highly-educated and skilled personnel who have done an outstanding job with our clients. Also, my sincere thanks to the entire board of directors – a talented group of individuals who meet regularly, provide thoughtful advice, and are always very generous in their donations to achieve our mission.

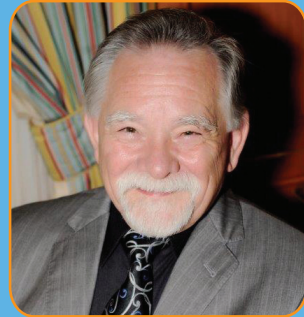
Regards,

*Douglas Bartek*

## Our Board & Team



**Debra Caudy, M.D.**  
President & CEO  
Founder of 29 Acres



**Douglas J. Bartek**  
Chairman of the Board  
CEO and Co-Founder,  
Tango Networks, Inc.



**Robin Hibbitts**  
Secretary  
Office Manager,  
Brown Ruth Advisors



**Peter Yeeda**  
Treasurer  
Audit Senior Manager,  
Montgomery, Coscia, Griellich LLP



**Carl Soderstrom**  
Founding Partner,  
Green Park & Golf Ventures



**John Gentry**  
Vice President, ExxonMobile  
Risk Management, Inc.



**Rick Prewitt**  
Senior Vice President,  
Hillcrest Bank



**Laura Schieber**  
Principal,  
Vivanti Group



**John Foley**  
Vice President of Human Resources,  
Eagle Materials



**Mitchell Basson**  
Financial Advisor,  
RBC Capital Markets



**Nika Arastoupour**  
Real Estate Agent,  
Rogers Healy Realtor



**Brigitte Fox, M.D.**  
Retired  
Internal Medicine Physician

## Staff Spotlight



### Sydney Johnson - Employment Coach

Sydney started with 29 Acres on our summer camp team and now works as part of our employment team. She has recently graduated from the TWU psychology undergraduate program, and is currently a graduate student at TWU in the psychological science program. Sydney is studying psychological science, and in the future hopes to be a licensed counselor. Her work here at 29 Acres has brought to her attention an amazing population of individuals who she would love to continue working with in the future.

### Idalia Ramirez - Enrich Life Skills Coach / RBT (Denton)

Idalia is a RBT and a life skills coach in Denton with the Day Program. She graduated with honors from UNT in 2021 with a degree in Special Education. During her college years, Idalia became aware of the limited opportunities for those with disabilities after high school. Her focus became bridging that next step. Her passion for the work we do here at 29 Acres is so strong because she believes all to be lifelong learners. Idalia thinks that bridging the gap so the learning of independence remains continuous is a necessity. She truly enjoys seeing the clients grow their confidence and independence in all of their victories!

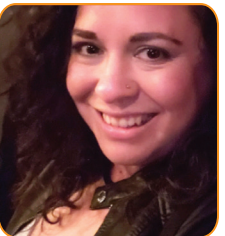


### Aspen Carter - Enrich Life Skills Coach / RBT (Cross Roads)

Aspen is a life skills coach and RBT at 29 Acres and works in the Enrich Program! As a neurodivergent person, Aspen loves defying the expectations of what neurodivergent people can accomplish. They graduated from UNT in 2019 with a Bachelors of Science in integrative studies with focuses in Rehabilitation, Psychology, and Counseling. Aspen enjoys spending time with their two cats, Archie and Bat Boy, and senior chihuahua, Harley.

### Raquel Steinbaum - Transition Academy Program Coordinator

Raquel is the Program Coordinator for the Transition Academy. She has been with 29 Acres for over three years and has worked in various programs. Currently, Raquel is finishing up her masters degree in education with a concentration in applied behavior analysis. She has worked with the neurodiverse population in many capacities prior as a case manager for local IDD services and as an ABA therapist. Raquel is originally from NYC but has lived in Texas for many years. She enjoys the outdoors, especially the beach and the mountains. Most importantly, though, she has a passion for helping others.



### Renee Shofner - Enrich Coordinator

Renee is an Enrich Coordinator at 29 Acres. She feels each day is full of victories, both big and small, and are regular reminders of what can happen when someone feels heard and seen. Renee is from Texas and never plans on leaving. There are not many things that bring her more joy than spending time with family. During her free time she loves to serve at her family's food pantry, Minnie's Food Pantry. If Renee is not there, she is trying a new food spot, writing poetry or sleeping. She is currently finishing her Master's degree in Special Education with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis and will graduate in May 2023.

### Kassandra Sepulveda - Enrich Life Skills Coach / RBT (Dallas)

Kassandra has been a Registered Behavioral Therapist for four years. She was the first therapist at the Dallas hub and just completed her first year at 29 Acres. She graduated from the UTA Public Health Sciences undergraduate program and is currently a full-time graduate student at Capella University. Kassandra is studying psychology with an emphasis on Behavioral Analysis. In the future, she hopes to be a licensed Behavioral Analyst. Her work here at 29 Acres has sparked her interest in the young adult population. She has a deep desire to help the special needs community. Her passion in the field of ABA is spreading kindness, teaching social skills, and independence.



29 Acres is a supportive environment for neurodiverse adults, many with autism spectrum disorder. We offer evidence-based and customized support services for each client to ensure tangible growth in areas of career readiness/employment, independent living, relationship building, physical health and emotional well-being.

## The 29 Acres Difference

Our **PURPOSE** - to provide the support neurodiverse adults need to live a full and happy life.

Our **PASSION** - because our founders have children living with autism, we walk along this journey with our clients. We are resolute in our commitment to support the unique needs of each person and family we serve.

Our **PROGRAMS** - while we are autism-focussed, we provide services to neurodiverse adults with a variety of diagnoses. Based on the level of support each client requires, we customize our offerings to meet those needs.

Our programs include:



**Transition Academy** - a two-year, all-inclusive educational and residential program for high-functioning young adults 18 and up with autism, who need a longer runway to better prepare for independent living

**Living Community** - adults 18 and up can find a short-term or forever home at this living/learning environment designed to support and celebrate neurodiversity

**Enrichment Services** - a comprehensive and customized system of support available to residents of our living community and also to those who still live in their family homes

**Employment Services** - our vocational specialist and trained job coaches work with clients to establish goals, develop skills and find meaningful, integrated work experiences

Our **PLACE** - find us in Cross Roads, TX, just 30 minutes north of Dallas on 29 Acres of gently rolling, woods, meadows, and fields. Two lakes, two state parks, and 100 miles of walking and biking trails are nearby. We are also within minutes of two major universities and several dynamic North Texas communities. Additionally, we now have hubs in Denton and Dallas, expanding our service area to include much of North Texas.

Our **NEED** - Medicaid funding simply doesn't cover the cost to care for those living with autism or other neurodiversities. Private funding and fundraising are crucial to delivering on the 29 Acres mission. Whether it is the increasing cost of inflation to hire and retain the best and brightest, the cost of transportation for our clients or caring for 29 beautiful acres of land, we need the support of the community-at-large to ensure the quality of services we deliver day in and day out.

## 2022 Year in Review

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- 43/44 units at the Living Community are leased.
- Built and opened up two new houses-debt free!
- Opened up our Dallas Hub offering support services in Dallas for those still living in their family homes.
- 68 job placements this year, so far.
- Began fifth and largest class of TA with 14 freshman students.
- Continued growth of valuable partnerships with TWU and UNT.
- Added two additional BCBA's to the team!
- Launched Club 29 (our Thursday/Friday night social groups) in both Dallas and Denton.
- Moved the sophomore TA students into off-site apartment living.
- Built a one-acre organic garden, debt free.
- Had our first annual golf tournament which was a huge success!
- Sponsored a terrific documentary on autism called "In a Different Key".
- Spearheaded the advocacy effort on the use of HCS funding at 29 Acres and other intentional communities.
- Chosen as a finalist for the best nonprofit (medium sized) in DFW by D CEO.
- Alongside several other prestigious organizations in this space, 29 Acres became a member of a Translational Research Consortium for Supportive Housing.





**Exponential Growth for 29 Acres in 5 short years: Speaking to the Need.**

29 Acres launched its first program in August of 2018 with its first nine students in our inaugural residential Transition Academy class. This was our first experience supporting someone living away from their family home.

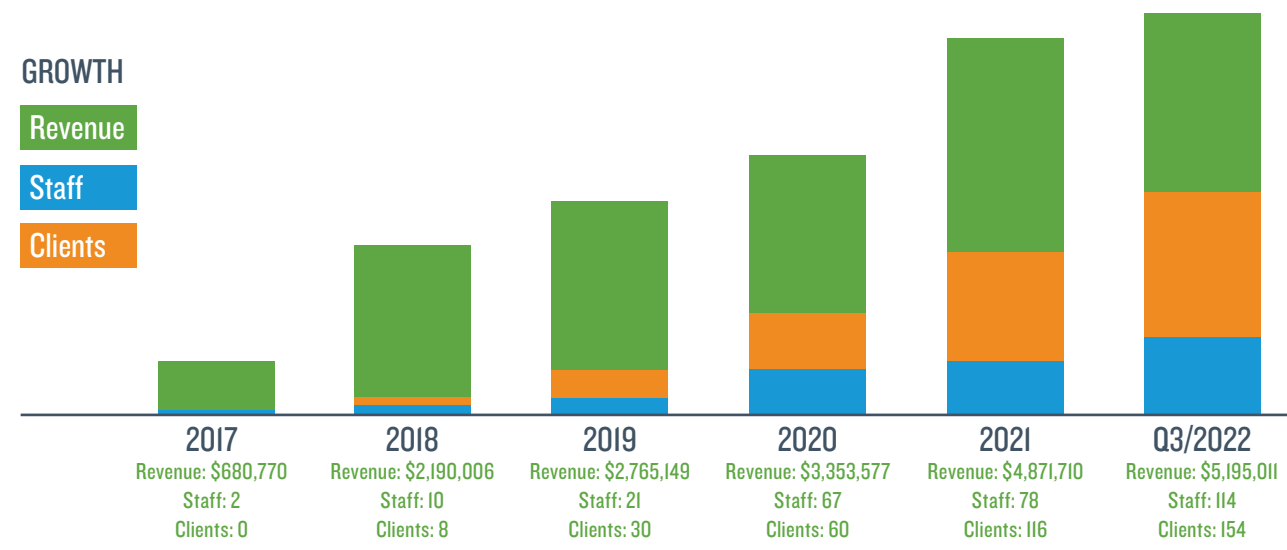
In 2019, we launched our daytime support services (including employment services) in the Denton area wanting to capture the learning environment of a college town-the home to two, four-year public universities.

During the Covid-19 era, our supportive living community opened up. We experienced further growth by moving the majority of the residents into their new homes during the first wave of Covid-19, the summer of 2020. This effort necessitated flexibility and perseverance. Above all, we were tasked with helping to keep everyone safe and healthy in our living/learning environment during this unprecedented time. Thankfully, we were able to do that.

This year we launched our Dallas Hub and began offering daytime support services to those in the greater Dallas area.

Last, but not at all least, we launched our Thursday/Friday night socials in both Denton and Dallas locations: aka Club 29!

**Revenue/Staff/Client Growth - 2017 to Q3/2022**



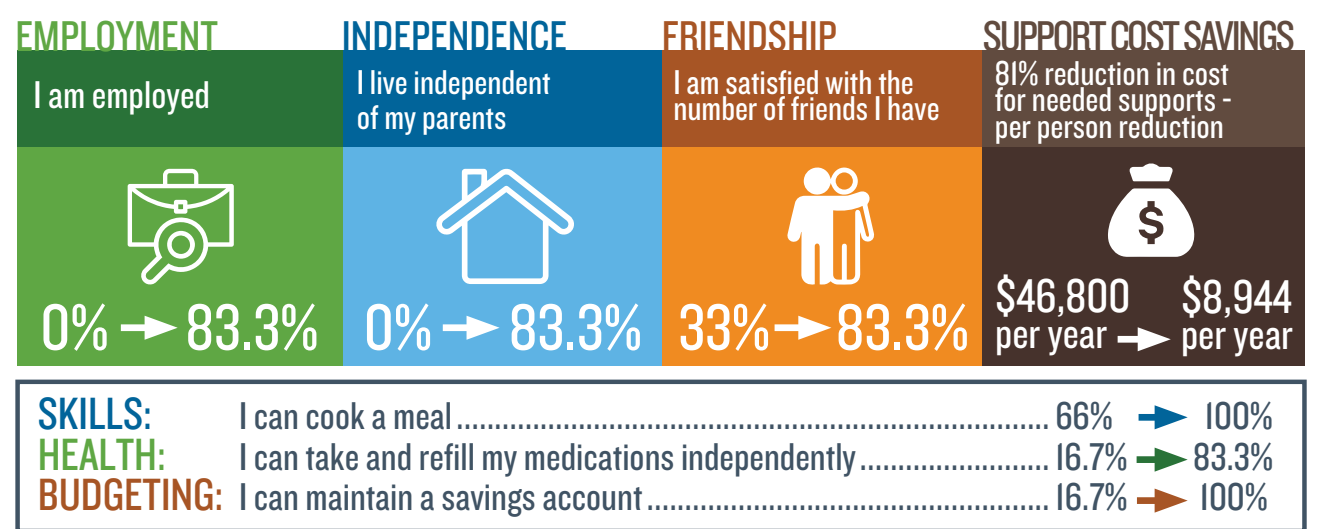
To align with our mission and vision at 29 Acres, we remain data driven.

Data allows us to learn more about what is working and what needs to work better.

**Data points from our Living Community and Support Services**



**Measurable Results Transition Academy as of 7/2022**



**Enrichment Services** are available to residents at 29 Acres or to those still living in their family homes, through our day services. We currently have hubs in Denton and more recently in Dallas from which we offer daytime support services. These services are customized for the client and can include the full repertoire of “adult living” such as vocational/independent living and social support. Our support services are community-based which means that we work on desired skills/goals in the natural adult environment. In our Denton location, we are especially proud of our adaptive wake boarding program, which is offered to our clients during the summer season.



Pictures left to right: a group of clients during their martial arts ceremony, day program takes on Globe Life Field for a Rangers game, trip to House of Shine Museum to grow confidence and self awareness, and a client on the boat about to participate in adaptive water skiing!

## The Transition Academy

is a two-year residential program, and the goal is independence. This past August, we welcomed our 5th and largest class so far, having 14 freshman move-in! 2022 was also the first year that we had our second year students move into Elan apartments in Denton, presenting them with the opportunity to learn both house and apartment living and all the skills associated with each. They take their classes at Texas Woman's University, and our partnership and opportunities with the university continue to grow! During the program, we help clients get jobs, start college courses, begin certification programs, learn and practice independent living skills, and budget. Along with all the amazing practical skills they gain during the program, one of the coolest things is watching the friendships blossom!



Pictures top left to right: TA student helping at the barn and getting friendly with the goats, student makes a healthy air-fryer salmon for individual cook, 2022 graduate parade with TA graduates getting celebrated by their 29 Acres family  
 Pictures bottom left to right: Two of our TA students at their volunteer internship with Frisco Fire Department, TA student on his first day of college classes at Collin, both classes hanging out together bowling

## Employment

Employment is a big need for our neurodivergent population. We offer job placement and supported employment through Texas Workforce Commission or through private pay. Our goal is integrated, competitive employment at an opportunity that our clients are excited about.

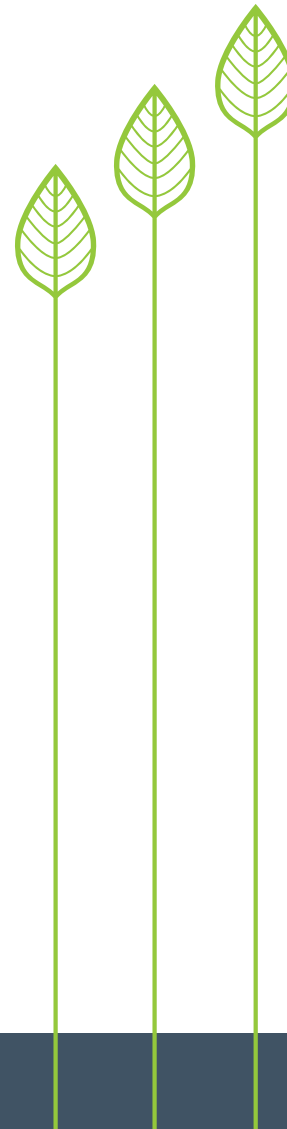


Pictures left to right: One of our day program clients getting job coaching at his brand new job at Chilis, founders' son hard at work at a local marina, 29 Acres resident working hard at his job in an elementary cafeteria, Dallas hub VAT students, client filling out a job application.

**Club 29** is our once a month evening social hangout. We now offer Club 29 at both locations and two different nights. This program is for ages 16+, and a great way to “try out” 29 Acres! We have dinner, do something cool together and hang out!



Pictured left to right: Come As You Are Prom, client holding a baby kangaroo when the creature teacher came to teach us about different animals, and a friendly game of mobile laser tag in our very own barn!





**Transition Academy Visits Our Partner Toyota!**

On Tuesday, October 18, our Transition Academy students visited Toyota North America, our newest strategic partner. Students enjoyed touring the facilities, viewing some of the latest concept cars, and were hosted for lunch by Toyota and IBM. Our students were dressed to impress!



**Inaugural 29 Acres' Classic!**

The inaugural 29 Acres' Golf Classic at the Four Seasons was a smashing success! Thanks to many generous community supporters, we raised almost \$140,000 to benefit 29 Acres and our neurodiverse community in North Texas!



**D CEO's Nonprofit & Corporate Citizenship Award Finalist!**

This year, 29 Acres' was a finalist in the mid-size category for Nonprofit of the Year! D CEO and Communities Foundation of Texas are proud to honor professionals and organizations in the nonprofit world that make a positive and efficient impact on the community, while celebrating the efforts of corporations and business leaders that support and collaborate with local nonprofits.



**North Texas Giving Day Recap!**

Together we raised a total of \$219,485 for 29 Acres on North Texas Giving Day!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of the 29 Acres community and beyond, we hit a home run on North Texas Giving Day! One hundred and ten donors gave a total of \$219,485 to make a difference in the lives of those impacted by autism and other neurodiversities. A special thanks to our anonymous donor for their incredible \$92,000 1:1 match!

**In A Different Key**

29 Acres was the proud host of *In A Different Key* with filmmakers Caren Zucker and John Donvan on Thursday, May 12 at the Angelica Dallas. It was an incredible night for 29 Acres and the autism community. This terrific film premieres Tuesday December 13th 9/8c on PBS stations nationwide.







*be mine* **29**  
29 ACRES  AUCTION BENEFIT

Saturday, February 11, 2023  
7:00 p.m. - Midnight

The Empire Room

Live Music by The Vinyl Countdown

Sponsorships and Tickets available at: [www.29acres.org/gala](http://www.29acres.org/gala)



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