



# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT

Together... Creating the  
right solution for any need.

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[www.familyres.org](http://www.familyres.org)



Family Residences and  
Essential Enterprises, Inc.

Reach High | Achieve More

# FREE's Core Values

## Integrity

We expect the conduct of all Team Members in the FREE Network to be rooted in transparency, mutual respect, and synergy.

## Responsiveness

We strive to meet the needs and dreams of the people we support, valued Team Members, and the unmet needs of the community.

## Innovation

Together, we find creative solutions to take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges while celebrating our collective accomplishments.

## Interdependence

We honor the gifts and talents of our Valued Team Members that empower a collaborative spirit.

## Diversity

We believe in the dignity and worth of all people. We strive to foster an appreciation of, and respect for, the differences among all of us that strengthen the fabric of the FREE Network and enrich the world.

## Quality

We support people to plan, choose, and contribute to their personal outcomes and to live a rewarding life based on individual choices and preferences.

## Stewardship

We recognize our responsibility in managing the resources of the FREE Network effectively and efficiently.

## Mission

To support people of all abilities to reach their full potential and thrive in their communities.

## Vision

Together... Creating the right solution for any need.

## Motto

Reach High... Achieve More



# A message from our CEOs

**Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)** is a dynamic human services organization dedicated to providing a broad range of support and services to more than 5,500 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness, substance use disorders, and traumatic brain injuries. Our mission is to support individuals of all abilities to reach their full potential and thrive in their communities.

As leaders of this multi-service organization, we take great pride in our commitment to embracing change and creating new opportunities for the individuals we are privileged to support. Building on our past successes, we remain focused on refining our strategic vision, expanding our services, strengthening partnerships, and fostering new relationships. With the co-leadership model guiding our efforts, we are energized and excited to continue advancing our mission, alongside a deeply talented team that brings our vision to life every day.

We are so thankful for the community that surrounds us every day at FREE, Inc. We extend our deepest gratitude for the passionate and wonderful staff of the network who show up every day with such enthusiasm and open hearts to do this transformative work. None of our achievements would be possible without you. Your time, commitment, and belief in our mission have enabled us to continue being a source of hope and support for thousands of people throughout Long Island and the greater NYC area. And a special thank you to our donors and funders, who help to allow our work to grow and deepen. Your commitment to our mission has made a profound impact on the lives of the individuals/communities we serve.

As we look back on the past year, we know that our work is far from over. Every day, we are searching for new ways to empower, support, and improve the lives of those we serve. And we do this with deep gratitude for the dedicated individuals on our team, whose passion and commitment make a real difference in the lives of so many.

Together, we are building a brighter future for all those we are honored to support.

Respectfully,

Robert S. Budd and Dr. Christopher Long



**Robert S. Budd**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Budd".



**Dr. Christopher Long**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Long".



FREE hosted its annual Advocacy Conference, Different Together — And That's Our Strength: Celebrating Every Voice, at SUNY Old Westbury. Planned by and for people with disabilities, the event welcomed more than 250 self-advocates, students, staff, families, and community partners from across Long Island for a day of inclusion and empowerment.

The conference launched a new partnership with SUNY Old Westbury's CSTEP program and featured 11 local sponsors who connected with attendees at exhibitor tables in the campus atrium. The FREE Players Drum Corps and Ensemble opened the day, followed by remarks from FREE leaders Anu Arnold and Nicole Wolf, SUNY Old Westbury Provost David Lanou, CSTEP leaders Monique Clark and Kristin Smith-O'Neill, and Senator Monica Martinez.



A recorded message from Commissioner Willow Baer and OPWDD's Peer Specialist Team highlighted statewide peer leadership efforts. Keynote speakers Matt Hofele and Doug Golub delivered Advocacy Meets Innovation, underscoring that innovation must be guided by lived experience.

Congratulations to this year's honorees:

- Self-Advocate of the Year:** Jessica Portnoy
- Community Partner:** Emma Clark Library
- Family Advocate:** Mickey Michaels
- Staff Advocates:** Residential Staff Advocate: Krista Knoblich; Day Services Staff Advocate: Kathleen "Kat" Kehoe
- Rising Star:** Janine Saunders Hooks



Thank you again to everyone who made this year's conference unforgettable!

# Employee Longevity Celebration

FREE celebrated the dedication of its staff at this year's Longevity Awards Celebration Brunch, honoring employees whose years of service have helped shape the organization and advance its mission.

Employees were recognized for milestone anniversaries ranging from five to forty years, with each group invited forward to receive awards and take photos with FREE's Co-CEOs. These moments highlighted the many staff members whose daily efforts support individuals and families across the organization.

Special tributes were reserved for those celebrating 30, 35, and 40 years of service, with leadership and Board members sharing remarks that reflected on the honorees' lasting impact and commitment. The program concluded with heartfelt comments from the Co-CEOs, who thanked all honorees for their compassion, perseverance, and dedication to the people FREE supports.

The celebration ended with a large group photo, symbolizing the pride and gratitude felt across the organization for these remarkable milestones.

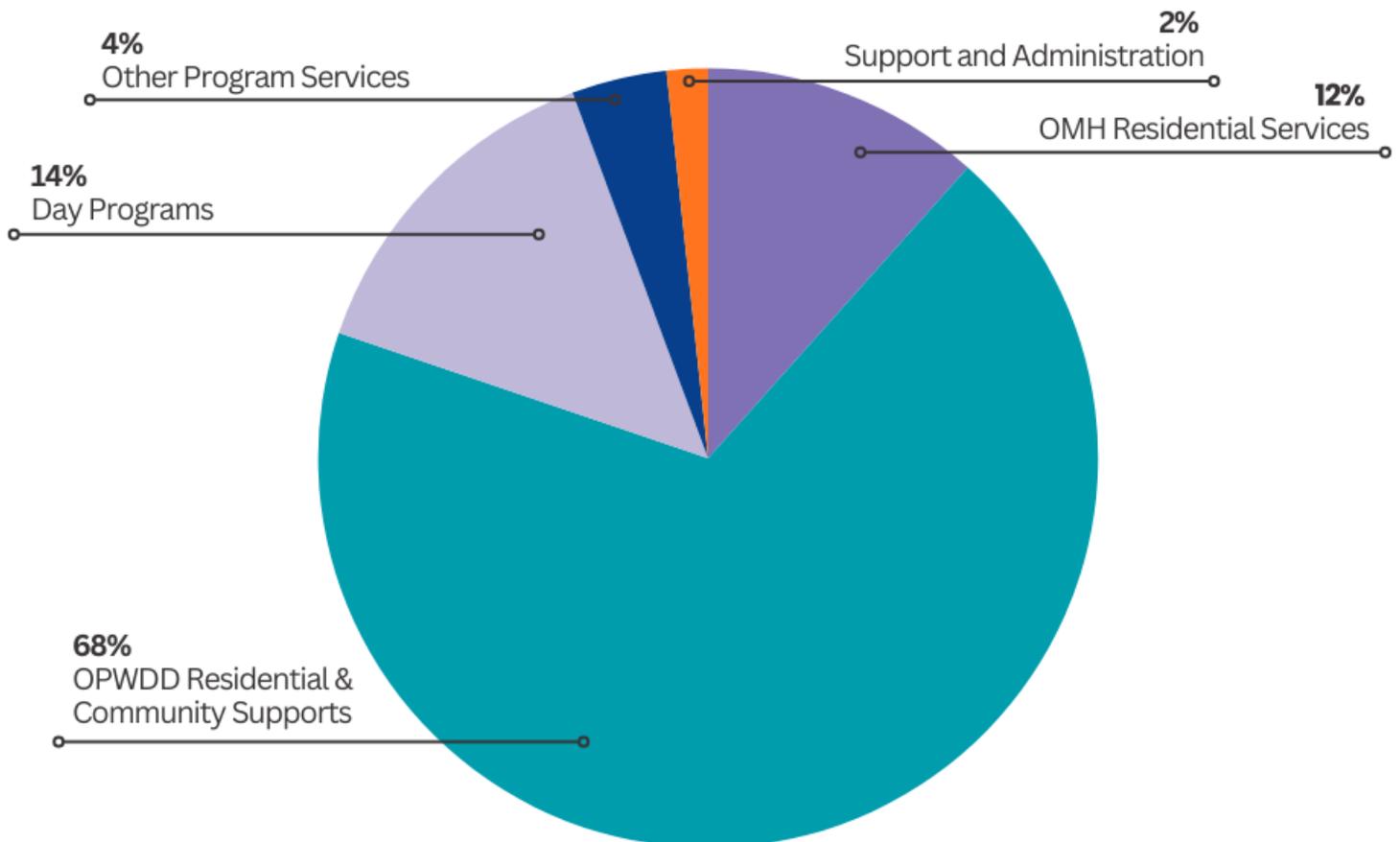


# Financial Highlights

## Supports and Services:

OMH Residential Services	20,594,122.00
OPWDD Residential and Community Supports	121,806,036.00
Day Programs	25,086,893.00
Other Program Services	7,004,206.00
Support and Administration	3,031,505.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$177,522,762.00</b>

## Revenue

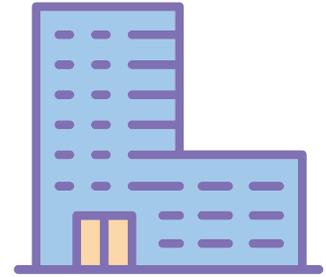


# Support & Services

## HOUSING

**930**

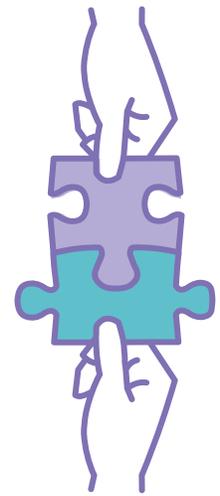
People Served



## YOUTH SERVICES

**230**

People Served



## RESPIRE SERVICES

**650**

People Served



## DAY SERVICES

**1213**

People Served



## COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SERVICES

**1919**

People Served



# Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

FREE is proud to reflect on another year of meaningful growth and forward momentum. Through strengthened community partnerships and close collaboration with our oversight bodies, we continue to lay the groundwork for thoughtful, sustainable expansion.

Across our programs, our dedicated teams are embracing innovative approaches to elevate the supports we provide. From day services to residential opportunities, we remain focused on broadening access and ensuring individuals can fully benefit from the comprehensive care and resources available to them.

As we look to the future, our commitment remains steadfast. We will continue to build authentic connections with the people we serve while staying true to our guiding principle: their well-being is—and will always be—at the heart of everything we do.



## *The Pavilion at Sunken Meadow*

The A Simple Gift Gallery Showcase featured 30 outstanding works of art and celebrated the talented artists behind them.



## *Pre-Vocational Services Car Wash Fundraiser at FREE Oakdale*

The FREEPlayers brought the house down with their vibrant production of *SpongeBob The Musical*, performing to sold-out audiences both nights. The production showcased remarkable talent, infectious energy, and the dedication of the performers and staff who work behind the scenes to make every moment shine.

## The Gift of Dance with Dance Workshop of Deer Park

The FREE Players Dance Troupe, in partnership with the Dance Workshop of Deer Park, captivated audiences with The Gift of Dance, performing to a full house and delivering an unforgettable production. The performance reflected the extraordinary talent of the dancers and the dedication of the instructors and crew who brought the show to life.



## Al's Farm Stand

FREE proudly celebrated the grand opening of Al's Farm Stand, an exciting new venture offering fresh vegetables, flowers, and plants grown by our dedicated farmers. The farm stand reflects our commitment to meaningful work opportunities, community engagement, and locally grown products that make a positive impact.

## Food Pantry Volunteers from FREE Help Support Our Community

Our PWW and Pre-Vocational programs helped bring holiday cheer to the Adelante Food Pantry in Brentwood, distributing more than 400 meals to individuals and families in need during the past holiday season. This effort reflects the compassion and commitment of our team, whose dedication underscores the importance of coming together to strengthen and support our community, especially at times when generosity matters most.



## Newsday Marching Band Festival

The FREE Players Drum Corps and Color Guard delivered an outstanding performance at the Newsday Marching Band Festival, showcasing their passion, precision, and energy on a prestigious stage. We are proud of our performers for representing FREE at an event that celebrates music, teamwork, and inclusion.

# Behavioral Health Services

For nearly 50 years, FREE has remained committed to delivering high-quality behavioral health services to individuals with complex needs. With deep expertise supporting people living with serious and persistent mental illness (SMI)—including those with legal or forensic involvement, co-occurring substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities—FREE continues to be recognized for compassionate, comprehensive care. Long-standing partnerships with community providers remain central to this work, strengthening our ability to deliver housing, clinical services, and individualized supports in alignment with our inclusive mission.

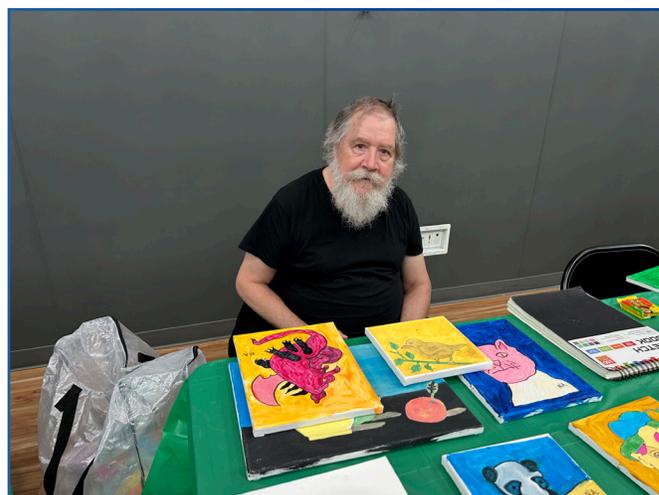
Over the past year, FREE expanded its Children’s Mental Health Clinic, including growth in its School-Based Mental Health Clinics, ensuring that young people and families have increased access to critical supports where they are most needed.

FREE’s Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program also advanced significantly, with new initiatives focused on

specialized groups for individuals with co-occurring mental health and addiction diagnoses. These enhancements reflect our ongoing commitment to addressing substance use and mental health challenges across the communities we serve.

In addition, FREE established an Office of Mental Health (OMH) Housing and Clinic Collaboration Group to strengthen clinical engagement for individuals residing in our OMH housing programs. This initiative targets individuals with dual diagnoses who were not previously receiving treatment, bringing services directly into their homes through newly developed Integrated Outpatient Services (IOS) group curricula. Certified homes with higher needs were prioritized, allowing FREE to expand service delivery while increasing clinic engagement and access to care.

Together, these efforts underscore FREE’s continued evolution as a learning organization—one dedicated to responsive, integrated, and community-driven behavioral health services.



## Mental Health Arts & Advocacy Conference

The event brought powerful stories to life while shining a spotlight on our talented artists, whose work was proudly showcased for all to experience.

# Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) waiver program is grounded in the philosophy of providing individuals with complete freedom of choice. To advance its mission, the Structured Day Program focuses on building essential skills for maintaining competitive employment or volunteer roles within the community. We are excited to share that the TBI Structured Day Program has successfully expanded its reach, supporting more individuals and creating increased opportunities for community engagement.

Participants in the program develop vital skills, such as effective communication, customer interaction, task focus, attention to detail, and professional appearance. The structured day begins with individual work upon arrival, followed by group activities centered on job readiness topics or skill-building. The day concludes with either additional individual work or a group activity chosen by the participants.

Additionally, the group enjoys organizing special outings to connect with the community, such as visiting museums, shopping, or taking a relaxing walk in the park.

This holistic approach fosters personal empowerment, greater independence, meaningful community inclusion, self-reliance, and productive engagement. We are excited to continue expanding our program in the coming year to support even more individuals on their journey toward growth and fulfillment.



## TBI Structured Day Program

Participants in our TBI Structured Day Program's gardening group got their hands in the soil, planting tomatoes and other vegetables in anticipation of a fresh and rewarding summer harvest.



## Holiday Celebration

The TBI program celebrated the holidays together, strengthening meaningful connections and forming lasting bonds along the way.

# Creating Opportunity Through Growth



## Adelante Senior Program

We proudly celebrated the launch of Adelante's Senior Enrichment Program, a welcoming new space designed to help Islip residents age 55 and older stay connected, engaged, and thriving within their community.

## Pinetop Residence Opens

FREE proudly opened a new fully accessible residence for individuals with developmental disabilities, creating a space that promotes independence, comfort, and belonging. Thoughtfully designed with dignity and accessibility at its core, the home ensures residents have the freedom and support needed to thrive within their community.



## Employment Training and Placement Center

FREE celebrated the grand opening of its new Employment Training & Placement Center at Adelante in Brentwood, a space dedicated to expanding opportunities and providing meaningful employment supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

# Learning at the Heart of FREE



## Direct Support Learning Academy

FREE proudly celebrated the first graduating class of its Direct Support Learning Academy. This dedicated cohort demonstrated exceptional commitment and perseverance throughout the program, and their accomplishments mark an important milestone for the organization. We look forward to the continued positive impact they will make in the lives of those we support.

## Free Tuition Program

FREE selected five team members to receive one year of tuition-free college through its partnership with the University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC). Through the Free Tuition Program, these employees are pursuing their educational goals with 12 months of fully funded coursework—reflecting FREE’s continued investment in workforce development and professional advancement.



## Microcredentialing Program Graduates

FREE congratulates our team members participating in the FSC Microcredentialing Program. Representing various disciplines across the agency, these professionals exemplify the dedication essential to supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. We are proud to partner with FSC to foster academic and career success while championing the vital importance of this field.



Congratulations to FREE’s Extraordinary 29 team members for their outstanding achievement and commitment to excellence!

# FREE Happenings

## Annual Dinner Dance

The Annual Dinner Dance brought together the people we support for an evening of music, laughter, and celebration—an unforgettable night highlighted by joy, connection, and community.



## SANYS-Long Island Conference!

FREE was proud to be represented by nearly 50 self-advocates, staff, and family members at the SANYS-Long Island Conference. We also celebrated outstanding achievements, including the Oakdale All Stars being named Self Advocacy Group of the Year and Jaime Crispin receiving the Advisor of the Year honor recognitions that highlight the strength of advocacy and leadership within our community.

## Full Plate Project

At FREE, supporting one another is at the heart of everything we do. This year, we launched the Full Plate Project, an agency-wide initiative to ensure that individuals and families in our community had access to food during a critical time. We are deeply grateful to every team member and program that contributed to the effort, demonstrating the power of collaboration and compassion.



## Prideability Marches at Huntington Pride!

Thank you to everyone who joined us at Huntington Pride. Your incredible turnout and visible support created a powerful celebration of inclusion, community, and Pride!



## Talent Connection Job Expo

FREE, in partnership with ACLD, hosted an inspiring event that brought together community and opportunity. The day connected job seekers with intellectual and developmental disabilities and more than 40 Long Island exhibitors, opening doors to future employment.

## SANYS-U Graduation

FREE was elated to celebrate the newest graduating class of SANYS-U! Our graduates presented their projects displaying what advocacy means to them. Parents, supports, and SANYS were all present for the ceremony, awarding each graduate their diploma to a room full of applause.



## FREE in Albany at the NYDA Rally

The FREE Advocacy Group and our amazing team joined forces with NYDA at the Capitol in Albany, rallying for critical investments in the New York State Budget. Together, we can make a difference!

48<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

Roaring 20s

# Celebration of Life

GALA

Glitz, Glamour, Good Times



# Donor Spotlight

## Brenda and Juan Carlos Colon

Brenda and Carlos Colon, owners of Handy Worx of Long Island, represent the kind of partnership that strengthens FREE from the inside out. As a home improvement company serving Long Island since 2018, and expanding into commercial clients in 2023, Handy Worx brings practical expertise and a steady, solutions-first presence to everything they touch.

Their relationship with FREE began the way many of the best partnerships do: with small projects and a willingness to help. Over time, that support grew into ongoing maintenance work with a clear focus on safety, the details that make a space feel secure, functional, and ready for the people who rely on it every day.

But Brenda and Carlos have never limited their support to the scope of a vendor relationship. They consistently show up as volunteers, committee members, and advocates for the mission.

This year, Brenda and Carlos participated on the Celebration of Life Committee and attended the event, offering their time, follow-through, and community credibility to help advance one of FREE's key fundraising and awareness efforts. They were honored as the 2025 humanitarian partners at Celebration of Life, a reflection of how deeply they have invested in FREE's work.

Additionally, they volunteered their time and services at FREE's Talent Connection Job Expo, stepping in where support was needed and helping make the day successful for participants, staff, and employers. And their connection to FREE's community shows up in family life too, including their daughter's Girl Scout troop contributing to a sensory garden at Saddle Rock Ranch.



Brenda and Carlos are not simply service providers. They are partners who bring skill, generosity, and consistent presence, helping FREE deliver on its mission in ways that are visible, practical, and lasting



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## How You Can Help Create a Legacy!

### Ensure Fiscal Viability and Health

We need your support to further our mission. Please consider a gift through your Will (estate plan) or by gifting stock, mutual funds, retirement plan assets, life insurance or real estate. Your tax-advantaged gift will go a long way in creating a legacy. For more information, please call the Office of Development and Mission Advancement at 516-870-7036.

# Fueling Greatness: One Scoop (and Sip) at a Time!



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Mary Ellen Freeley

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Eric Klein

Michael Leahy

David Sanders

Mark Simms

Barry Zaks

## Did You Know?



### **National Foundation for Human Potential**

The National Foundation for Human Potential (NFHP) supports Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) and other not-for-profits by raising philanthropic resources to advance their missions. For more information, please call the Office of Development and Mission Advancement at 516-870-7036.

# FREE Network

Homes Anew I, Inc.  
Homes Anew II, Inc.



## Building Communities Together

### Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.

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