

Bobby Dodd Institute

# 2024

## Impact Report





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To empower people with differing abilities to maximize their potential by securing economic self-sufficiency, independence and inclusion within their communities.



At BDI, we believe in an inclusive world where people of differing abilities can lead more independent and purposeful lives when provided the right guidance, support and opportunities.

Achieving more  
together

# Letter from the CEO and Board Chair

As another year wraps up, we are thrilled to share that we not only met our goals but surpassed them significantly. Our mission is to create a truly inclusive world where everyone is empowered and employed, regardless of disability status. We won't stop until this becomes an everyday reality.

In 2023, we served over 2,700 people with disabilities and their families through our programs. Additionally, over 200 people were employed at one of our 54 worksites or placed into jobs in the community through our workforce development efforts. In this report, we highlight one of these dedicated employees – Marius. His remarkable personality and dedication never go unnoticed.

Through the additional stories of Jewel, Avery, and Julian, you will witness the true impact Bobby Dodd Institute has in the community, providing vital services and support such as Behavioral Health and Counseling, Benefits Navigation, Family Support, and Job and Career Services. The life-enhancing resources we offer individuals and their families are a ticket to self-sufficiency, ultimately impacting the local and national economy in a tangible way.

As you read these incredible stories, know that none of this would be possible without our incredible staff and BDI's extended family of supporters, including donors, volunteers, government agencies, peer organizations, interns and business partners. We are grateful to have so many friends who understand the importance of our mission. It is a mission that serves the state of Georgia and beyond. Because of this, BDI feels a responsibility to be a community leader and collaborator in identifying opportunities to deepen our impact. BDI staff serve on numerous nonprofit boards and task forces and presented at over 50 community events last year. Collectively, these efforts strengthen the solidarity and expand the opportunities for the largest minority in the country...people with disabilities.

As BDI looks ahead, we are beyond excited to achieve even more together.

**Larry Gluth**  
President and CEO

**Peter Lauer**  
Board Chair



Peter F. Lauer



2789

individuals received essential  
services directly.



9.3%  
increase from 2023

An additional **800+** people were indirectly served  
through our community engagement initiatives.



Behavioral Health and Counseling

38



Benefits Navigation

469



Family Support Services

886



Georgia Community Trust of BDI

671



Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

480



Job and Career Services

245



\$8.9M

Total Financial Impact

from employed participant wages and  
benefits navigation awards.



Over \$450M

Lifetime Benefits Awarded since 2016

38 NOW/COMP waiver awards

35 Social Security awards

68 Medicaid awards



92%

of Family Support Participants

reported that their lives improved after  
taking part in the program.

# Our Impact

## He Has a Special Place to Be

When Marius walks through the door, the room floods with positivity and good vibes. He greets you with a big smile and a warm welcome, and, when you ask how he's doing, he responds with a spirited thumbs up. Marius has been with Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI) since 2012. He works as a janitor to ensure the organization's main campus is spotlessly clean. Marius takes great pride in his job and is a valued member of the team.

Marius's journey with BDI began long before he was hired. He first joined BDI's Job and Career Services program through a referral by Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). BDI provided Marius with training to prepare him for the workforce. The organization also equipped him with essential life skills and ongoing guidance. After completing the program, Marius interviewed for an available position and was hired instantly.

Marius's supervisor, Ellis Axson, Senior Director of Facilities at BDI, remembers him from his first day at work. "He always offers to help and is constantly willing to learn something new. Marius is an outstanding employee! He is reliable, dedicated and always puts a smile on my face. He is an asset to our organization. We are honored to have him!"

At age 4, Marius was diagnosed with Autism. Initially nonverbal, he struggled with communication at school and with basic life skills. "As a child, he always wanted to be first," remembers his mom, Alicia. She adds, "He was funny at times. He enjoyed playing and liked school a lot. He always did his homework."

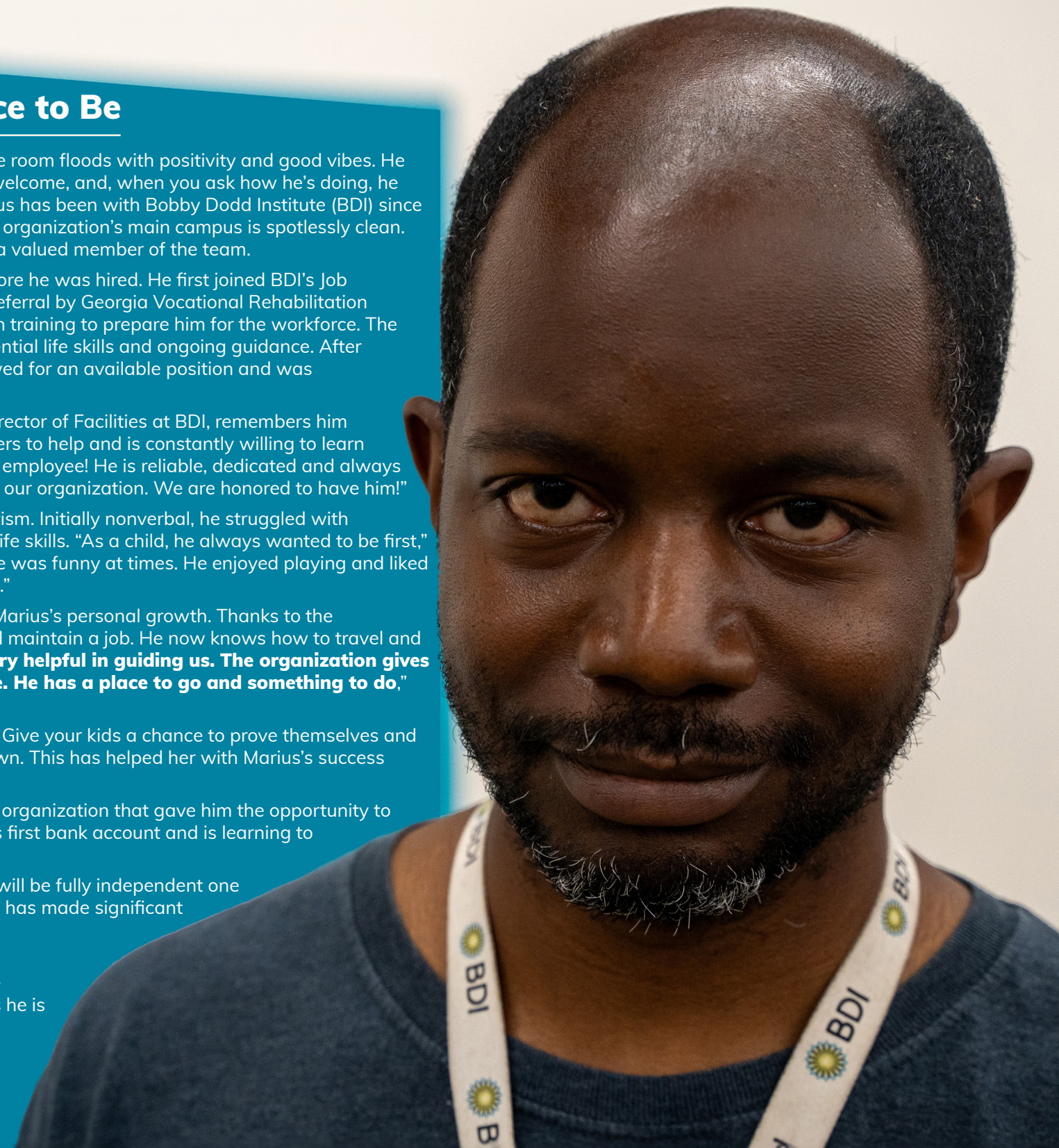
Alicia says that BDI was instrumental in Marius's personal growth. Thanks to the organization, he learned how to work and maintain a job. He now knows how to travel and shop independently. **"BDI's team was very helpful in guiding us. The organization gives him structure and a special place to be. He has a place to go and something to do,"** Alicia shares.

Her advice: get help early and be patient. Give your kids a chance to prove themselves and allow them to do simple things on their own. This has helped her with Marius's success so far.

Marius is now an integral part of BDI, the organization that gave him the opportunity to have a meaningful job. He just opened his first bank account and is learning to manage it.

Just like Marius, his mom dreams that he will be fully independent one day. Although he is not quite there yet, he has made significant progress and is working hard to achieve his goal.

"We are thankful for BDI. Without BDI, he wouldn't be able to do many of the things he is now capable of doing and is good at," says Alicia.





## \$17.6M

Total Business Revenue

### Business Services

- Facilities Management
- Contact Centers & Switchboard
- Administrative Services
- Supply Chain & Logistics



**54**  
Worksites



**205**  
Employees



**41**  
Contracts

BDI provides a wide range of managed business services that our partners can trust to meet their organization's specific needs and, at the same time, feel good knowing **they've helped put people with disabilities to work**. Our partners rely on us for high-quality holistic solutions at competitive prices. BDI works with federal, state, and commercial partners. The organization currently maintains 16 AbilityOne contracts across 31 worksites. We manage 9 state contracts at 7 locations. Additionally, we have 16 commercial contracts across 14 sites.



"First Horizon Bank has partnered with BDI for more than two decades. We work with BDI's Facilities Management Janitorial team, which maintains the highest level of cleanliness for all our branches throughout Metro Atlanta. The work that they do is impeccable, and the attention to detail is the hallmark of their work. We are very proud of the professional relationship with BDI. It helped us create employment opportunities for those with disabilities. It is our aim and our goal to make a real difference in our community, and we hope to continue to do so."

— Rodney Hall, Executive Vice President, Atlanta Market President at First Horizon Bank

### 24/7 Contact Center

BDI understands the intricacies of staffing and operating 24/7 contact centers, customer support centers, and inbound/outbound settings. BDI's agents are quick to master the fundamentals of diverse contact center environments, while also representing the culture and values of the organizations they serve.

**453,597**  
Accounts Handled

**502,059**  
Phone Calls Taken

**13 seconds**  
Average Speed of Answering





## She Can Go Far

In 2013, Jewel's life changed without warning. At about five years old, she had to leave her home and her mother. Dealing with an intellectual disability and constant stress, Jewel's mom was encouraged by her therapist to make the tough decision to have a family member take care of her two young children.

Fortunately, Jewel's aunt, Dorthea, stepped in. Since then, Dorthea has been caring for Jewel and her brother, both of whom live with disabilities. From day one, Dorthea was determined to do everything possible to secure a stable future for her niece and nephew. Her hard work paid off.

Dorthea began researching opportunities and found the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). Eventually, she was introduced to BDI.

Jewel first interacted with BDI in the summer of 2023, when she participated in Getting Ready for Opportunities in Work (G.R.O.W.)—a one-week introduction to employment for students aged 14-22. Referring to Monique Bell, Program Manager for G.R.O.W., Jewel recalls, "Ms. Monique is very funny. She gets mad at people, and then she likes them. She is a really sweet person." Jewel's favorite parts of the program were the fun-filled field trips and working at the BDI warehouse as part of a team. Jewel says the program helped her become more respectful and responsible, qualities she used extensively during her time at Callaway Gardens. This summer, she worked as a breakfast attendant at Callaway Gardens as part of her education at Roosevelt Warm Springs—a program she learned about while attending G.R.O.W.

Ginger Henderson, Jewel's Vocational Instructor for Hospitality and a lifelong disability advocate, sees tremendous potential in her: "Jewel has a lot of energy; I just needed to find a way to channel that energy. She was almost climbing the walls. From day one, she made outstanding progress. She can go far."

Getting to this point took a lot of dedication. "Jewel is a beautiful person. She is very outgoing and lovable," shares Dorthea. Her aunt never gave up on researching new opportunities for growth, even when Jewel was expelled from school. She knew there had to be a better way. She found out about Camp Jewell House, where her niece continued her studies until graduation. The family had hoped that Jewel could then attend Kennesaw State University, but unfortunately, she was not accepted. Through G.R.O.W., Dorthea found Roosevelt Warm Springs and saw it as a great fit. She immediately signed Jewel up for their hospitality program.

Dorthea has a piece of advice for other caregivers: "After graduation, many kids end up lost in the shuffle because parents are not aware of the available resources. Do your research, find programs, and talk to other parents and caregivers. There are programs that can help your child become independent. It is also important to teach your children to make their own decisions."

Ginger agrees: "There are people who can help you find a job if you go to the right place and ask. People with disabilities want to work more than the general population. I encourage employers to give it a try. You'd be amazed. A lot of people with disabilities are some of the best employees out there."

Jewel began her journey at Roosevelt Warm Springs feeling nervous but excited. Now, she is thriving and excited about the future, dreaming big: "I dream of getting a house, a car, and making a lot of money. I also want to eventually get married."

**G.R.O.W** is a part of BDI Job and Career Services – a comprehensive program preparing individuals to enter the workforce. In 2023, 60 young men and women with disabilities participated in the program.

In total, across all its programs, BDI served 2,789 people.

Along with programs like G.R.O.W., we provide a full lifecycle of support and guidance for those directly impacted by our programs and services and their families. We focus on a personal approach, ensuring that everyone gets the resources they need to thrive on their own path. Our goal is to help each individual and their loved ones gain the skills and knowledge necessary to live independently and successfully.

## Educating the Community

To extend our services and reach even more people by providing vital educational content, we launched the **BDI Empowers Webinar series**. Across 21 episodes, we covered topics on mental health, disability benefits and financial planning.

**21**  
Webinar Sessions

**~750**  
Webinar Attendees

2024  
**BDI Empowers**





## Living Her Best Life

When Avery was born 22 years ago with Down Syndrome, a condition in which a person has an extra copy of chromosome 21, her family was puzzled and unsure of her future. Neither she nor her family was prepared for what was coming next. “But... when you have a child with special needs, you just start somewhere,” says Sherri, Avery’s mom. Little did she know about the challenges they would overcome together.

Today, Avery is rocking her 21st chromosome and living her best life. But to get here, Avery and her family had to move a lot of mountains. At only five months old, Avery underwent open-heart surgery. It took her a while to begin talking and walking. “Now, I don’t know where her off button is,” Sherri wonders, a smile spreading across her face.

Avery thrived in school. After moving to a special needs class in second grade, she gained confidence and slowly began developing her leadership skills. In middle school, she expanded her talents by joining the cheerleading team, where she was pushed to always do better and achieve more. She kept this tempo throughout high school, where she joined the swimming team, a talent she inherited from her late father, who she lost unexpectedly in 2020.

Her dad was the inspiration for one of her biggest achievements so far — getting into ClemsonLIFE at Clemson University. The program offers a collegiate experience that prepares young men and women with intellectual disabilities for competitive employment and independent living. She is now in her second year. But getting here wasn’t easy.

“It’s hard to get in, but she did it,” her mom proudly says.

Avery and her family turned every stone and learned everything about the program. Her flawless application, now used as an exemplary model, got her an interview. Determined to get in, Avery showed up to the interview while facing a serious medical challenge. Remarkably, she nailed it!



The next day, she was admitted to the hospital for intensive treatment of her condition. But then, not long after, she learned that she was not accepted into the program. The news broke her heart, but they persisted. Sherri contacted the school looking for answers. Avery’s application was perfect, her interview was great — facts confirmed by the ClemsonLIFE director. Nevertheless, they felt that she was not mature enough yet to join this competitive program. After a series of subsequent conversations, a place opened up. Avery got in!

Before she made it to Clemson, however, life threw Avery another curveball. On July 4th, 2023, several days before her 21st birthday, Avery had her first stroke. About 10 days later, a second episode occurred. Her mom found her unresponsive in the bathroom and rushed her to the hospital. She was diagnosed with Moyamoya, a condition that causes narrowing of the arteries in the brain. They were immediately referred to Emory, where Avery underwent a successful brain surgery.

Several months later, in January 2024, she finally went to Clemson and began her independence journey. At first, she was extremely homesick and frightened. It was not easy to catch up with all the other students in the program. But as she gained momentum, things got better and better.

Avery is confident, “Clemson is the best school I have ever attended. I am learning a lot. I learn how to be independent — do my own laundry, cook for myself, and other independent skills.”

Sherri knows that early intervention was key to everything Avery has achieved so far. She had Medicaid, Katie Beckett Waiver, and other vital services right off the bat. She was enrolled in intensive therapy programs and received special care at home six times a week. Sherri is constantly looking for ways to connect with other families and organizations and never misses an opportunity to build on what they have already created together.

While participating in a support group offered by another local organization, FOCUS, Sherri learned about Bobby Dodd Institute. It’s been seven years now since she got connected to BDI, and the resources she has obtained through the organization were truly transformative for her daughter’s development. Avery has participated in both Traditional and Intensive Family Support as well as Benefits Navigation.

BDI helped her develop advocacy strategies and talk about next steps — like going to ClemsonLIFE. “To have a partner like Bobby Dodd [Institute], when you have a child with a disability, ‘important’ is a small word to describe the significance,” Sherri says.

Sherri’s advice: Learn from other families, other parents, and offer your own experience for others in return.

Avery is more than ready for this school year. She wants to be an example for her classmates. One day, she wants to work with horses. Taking care of the aristocratic animals is her passion.

After graduating, she wants to be independent and apply all the skills she has learned in real life. But most of all, as she says, “I want my family, my mom, and my dad to be proud of me. I want to be kind and nice, and that’s who I am.”



To have a partner like Bobby Dodd [Institute], when you have a child with a disability, ‘important’ is a small word to describe the significance.

— Sherri, Avery’s mom



# He Will Do Great No Matter What



Julian has always had a magnetic attraction to water. Whenever he visits a new place, he takes his family to beautiful rivers or lakes, sometimes leading them off the beaten path.

As a toddler, Julian struggled to meet the milestones for his age. He also lost his ability to speak, prompting his family to seek medical advice. Shortly before he turned three, Julian was diagnosed with Autism.

“I have read many stories of kids on the spectrum drowning, and it breaks my heart deeply for the loss of those families. I’ve heard that people on the spectrum are naturally attracted to water. For my son, he’s proven to me this is true since he was a baby,” Astri, Julian’s mom, shares.

Astri knew that she must provide her son with the tools needed to survive a force majeure situation. Enrolling him in swimming lessons was a no-brainer. The moment Julian turned five, Astri began researching classes. Her search led her to the local YMCA, where Julian was paired with a special needs swimming instructor. Using her over 20 years of experience working with children with disabilities, his teacher connected with Julian quickly. Since then, Julian has made tremendous gains, improving his water safety skills with every class.

Traditional swimming lessons were not enough for Julian, but more intensive courses demanded more resources—resources that his family didn’t have at the time. This is when Julian’s instructor mentioned Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI). Through Family Support, Julian was approved to receive funds to help him continue working on his swimming. Julian and his family have been working with BDI for more than two years now. “We are so grateful to BDI. Through the organization, we were able to maintain the lessons. Even in the winter, we would go,” says Astri. They also received funds to help cover memberships for the Georgia Aquarium, Zoo Atlanta, and the Children’s Museum of Atlanta.

Pictures Credit: Astri G.

Astri believes it is important to spread awareness about BDI’s services. She says, “There are families who need these programs, but they don’t necessarily know about them. Without BDI, I wouldn’t be able to get my son where he needs to be. It’s a huge help, and I am thankful.”

With a little help, Julian and his family were able to focus on helping him build his independence and find things that he truly enjoys. “Sometimes, we tend to do too much for our kids,” reflects Astri. “Let them mess up until they get it right. This will help them lead an independent life when we are no longer there.”

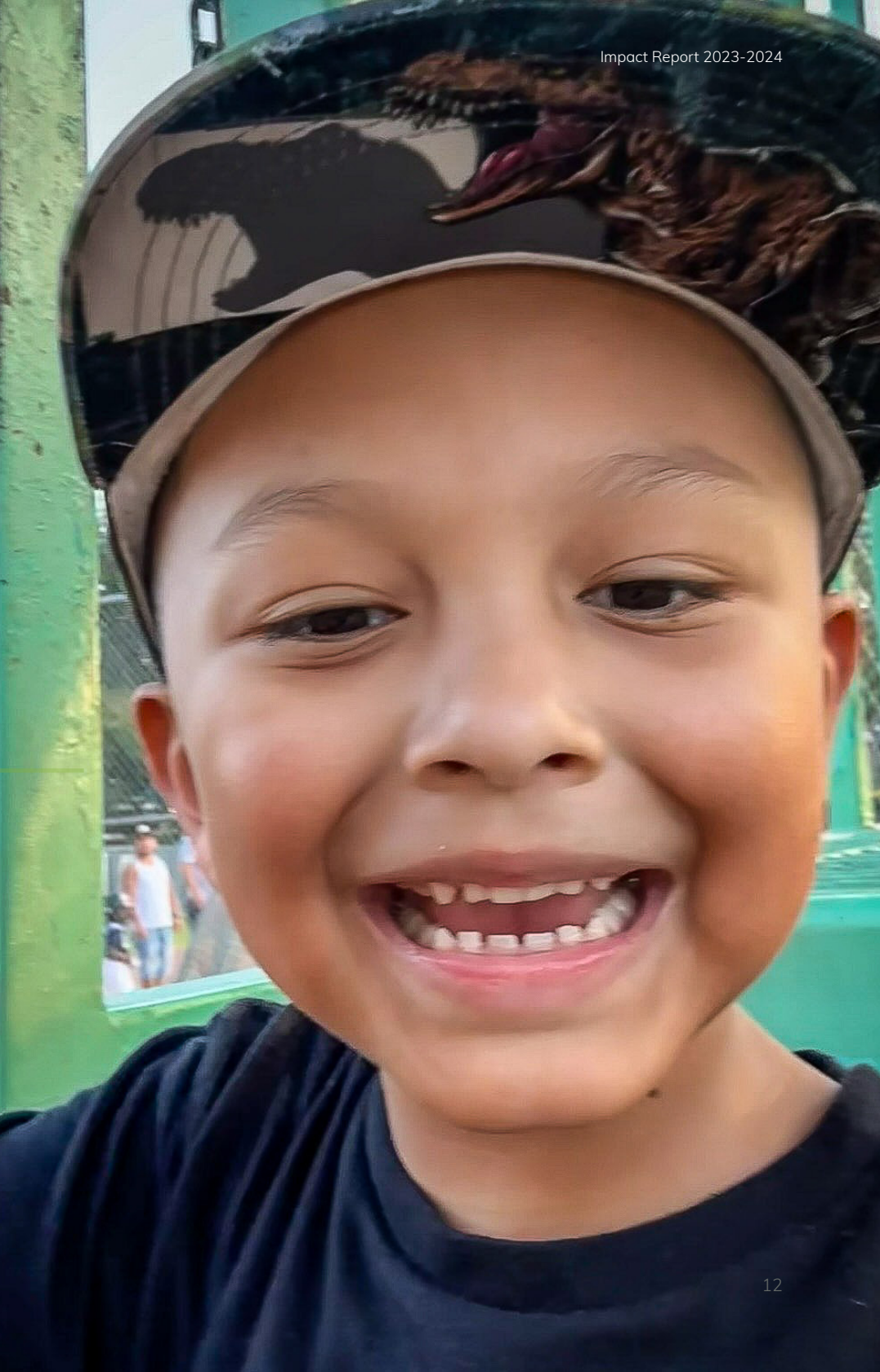
Julian is now eight years old and in third grade. He enjoys school and being with other kids. Every day, he teaches his family that we don’t necessarily need to be like everyone else. Astri’s advice to other parents of children with disabilities: “It’s OK. It’s OK if you don’t get a response. There’s nothing wrong with it. You just need to spend some time with your kids to start to understand their likes and dislikes and their way of communicating.”

Julian’s family is excited to see where his interests will lead him in life. Astri is optimistic about the future: “He is smart, funny, and a joy to be around. I am excited to see what he will do and want to do. I am not concerned. He will do great no matter what.”

“

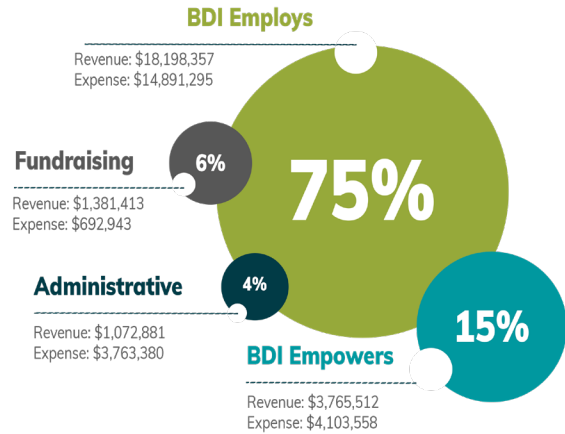
“There are families who need these programs, but they don’t necessarily know about them. Without BDI, I wouldn’t be able to get my son where he needs to be. It’s a huge help, and I am thankful.”

— Astri, Julian’s mom



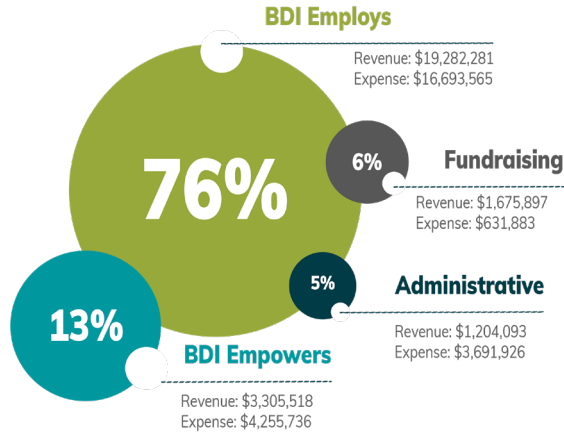


FY 2023 Program Revenues and Expenses



Income	\$24,418,163
Expense	\$23,451,176
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$966,987</b>

FY 2024 Program Revenues and Expenses



Income	\$25,467,789
Expense	\$25,243,110
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$224,679</b>

2023

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$871,694
Restricted Investments	\$7,406,846
Accounts Receivable (Net)	\$3,511,385
Pledges Receivable	\$208,500
Property and Equipment	\$4,413,311
Inventory	\$57,167
Other assets	\$1,873,533
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$18,342,447</b>

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$1,590,183
Long-Term Debt	\$2,595,406
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$4,185,589</b>

2024

\$683,496
\$7,427,348
\$3,742,101
\$416,050
\$4,249,063
\$69,146
\$1,414,872
<b>\$18,002,076</b>

\$1,504,315
\$2,116,224
<b>\$3,620,539</b>

Board Members

July 2023—June 2024

**Chair**  
**Andrew Tuck**  
Alston & Bird

**Vice Chair**  
**Peter Lauer**  
PEL Ventures

**Secretary**  
**Kristen Lewis**  
Harrison LLP

**Treasurer**  
**Rodney Hall**  
First Horizon Bank

**Immediate Past Chair**  
**Quinn Shearer**  
B. Riley Advisory Services

**Dan Haynes**  
Deloitte

**Jim Terry**  
Bobby Dodd Charities Foundation

**John McKenney**  
McKenney's, Inc.

**John Ralls**  
Alvarez & Marsal Private Wealth Partners

**Judith Moen Stanley**  
Community Advocate/Freelance Writer

**Kedrick Eily**  
Aflac

**Lori Chase**  
First Horizon Bank

**Maryann Balbo**  
Clear Channel Outdoor Atlanta

**Peg Nicholls**  
Cisco

Senior Leadership

**President and CEO**  
**Larry Gluth**

**COO**  
**Debbyn Milligan**

**CFO**  
**David Turner**

**VP, People and Culture**  
**Stephanie Bolton**

**VP, Development and Community Relations**  
**Todd Hermon**

**VP, Administrative Services**  
**Veronica Rohrlack**

**VP, Business Services**  
**Joe Paolini**

**VP, Program Services**  
**Ilond Zombil Tshipau**

**Senior Director, Contact Center Operations**  
**Troy Farina**

**Director, Learning and Organizational Development**  
**Jerry Sutton**

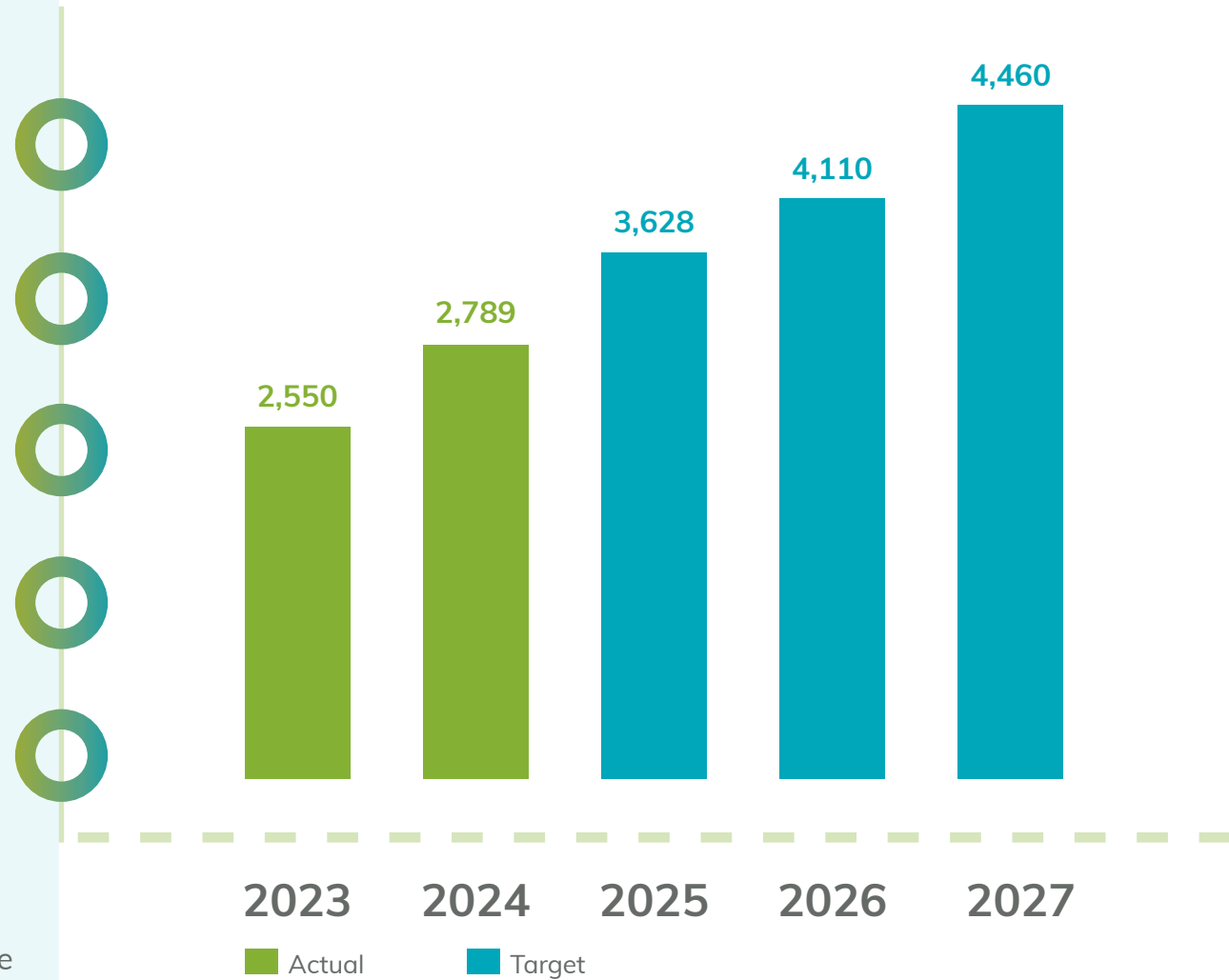
**Director, Organizational Support**  
**Tracey Crawford**

**Manager, Marketing and Communications**  
**Bobbie Dimitrova**



# Five Year Strategic Plan

2023-2027  
Individuals Served



**Donate:** [bobbydodd.org/join/give](https://bobbydodd.org/join/give)

**Website:** [www.bobbydodd.org](https://www.bobbydodd.org)

**Social Media:** BobbyDoddInstitute

**Email:** [info@bobbydodd.org](mailto:info@bobbydodd.org)