

# Oak Hill Newsletter

A Newsletter for Friends of Oak Hill



## Navigating Uncharted Waters

**During 2020, when the world came to a halt, and everything changed; you were the calm in our chaos. You were our joy amid moments of hardship. You were the light in our darkness. You kept us moving forward. And you continue to keep us inspired. Thank you.**

We continue to be amazed and overwhelmed by the unquestionable strength and character you have shown for our team. Your messages of gratitude, acts of heroism, generosity, and compassion are powerful declarations of just how strong the Oak Hill family is.

The Oak Hill staff have made the ultimate personal and professional sacrifices to our organization as you can see in these photos.



L: David Hadden, Oak Hill Chairman  
R: Barry M. Simon, Oak Hill President

As we continue to navigate these uncharted waters, please know we are eternally grateful for the support. From, YOU the donor. YOU the parent. YOU the guardian. YOU the volunteer. And YOU the staff. **Thank you and stay safe.**

*David Hadden*      *Barry M. Simon*  
David Hadden      Barry M. Simon

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# 26th Annual Oak Hill Golf Classic Presented by Monaco Ford Raises \$141,000 for Oak Hill Programs and Services

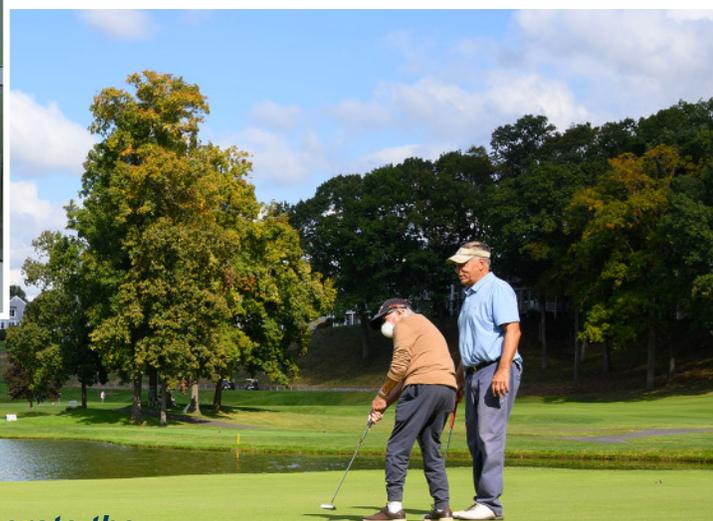
During a global pandemic, the Connecticut community found a way to safely and successfully generate vital funding for individuals with disabilities here at Oak Hill. On October 5th, more than 70 golfers and 40 sponsors, safely gathered at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell, CT to benefit Oak Hill.

Thanks to our incredible sponsors and supporters, we far exceeded our expectations, raising over \$141,000! These funds will be used to support the various programs beneath the Oak Hill umbrella.

“The Oak Hill programs & services align with our culture of giving,” says Chrissy Monaco, Co-Owner of Monaco Ford. “Making a positive difference to improve the quality of life for individuals within the Connecticut communities where we live, work, and play. This is central to our mission and vision as a family-owned Connecticut business.”

Oak Hill has a long-standing history in Connecticut, providing services to the community for over 126 years. Our programs have transformed and evolved over the years. Including adjusting their programming now to fit the current nature of the pandemic; creating ways for all programming to move to virtual platforms.

“We have a strong focus on supporting transformative programs for the individuals who receive Oak Hill services,” says Barry Simon, President and CEO of Oak Hill. “Events such as the golf tournament help us to generate the necessary revenue to keep our programs running. We extended our sincere gratitude to the sponsors and participants who have made this fundraising event a resounding success while having a great and safe time on the golf course.”



***“Events such as the golf tournament help us to generate the necessary revenue to keep our transformative programs running for the individuals who receive Oak Hill services.” ~ Barry Simon, President & CEO***



*The Homebound Services Program has provided a calm and stable routine during a time of hardship and frustration.*

## Homebound Services at Oak Hill School

The last six months have certainly caused educators to think outside the box. Finding new and effective ways to deliver instruction to students during a worldwide pandemic. Oak Hill's Homebound Services Program came from a necessity and desire to provide high quality instruction to students who were unable to attend school in person, often because of medical fragility.

While the program started in 2017, well before the pandemic, it began with two students and quickly doubled in size. Since its inception, Oak Hill's Homebound Program has provided in-home educational services for a total of eight students, averaging four students at any given time.

Although the program can adapt to a variety of needs, in most cases Oak Hill provides an in-home instructor for two hours per day. Instruction is specially designed to assist the student with gaining independence and making progress on goals written in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Amid a wildly unpredictable year, so many families have been jolted by the incredibly difficult changes to their schedules, especially our students. This program has proved to be an extraordinarily positive resource for families. The program has provided a calm and stable routine during a time of hardship and frustration.

The parent of one student remarked after just a few months of instruction that her child was beginning to look at her and follow her around the room. This is not something the student had done in the previous 14 years of life. That student is currently working on learning to use a switch, which is an assistive piece of technology that allows her to alert her caretaker that she needs something. Another student learned to use a head switch to communicate with his mother. He also learned to use the switch to operate his computer, and to make choices to create a slideshow presented at his graduation. For students who have little ability to control their environment or communicate, these skills have the potential to have tremendous impacts on their lives.

But, perhaps the greatest benefit of the Homebound Services Program is that of helping to provide the students with a sense of normalcy and equality with their more able peers. Homebound instructors are generally met with smiles and excitement each day, as they provide instruction, stimulation and a little extra attention. The intimacy of meeting with students in their homes daily leads to the formation of an open and unified team between the instructor and the family. Families can train the instructor about specifics of their child and the instructor is able to teach family members to use the technology and adaptive equipment that may help their child experience greater success. This free-flowing reciprocal communication strengthens the student's educational experience and improves their quality of life.

**If you would like more information about Oak Hill School's Homebound Services Program or other Oak Hill School services, contact Michael Champlin at [michael.champlin@oakhillct.org](mailto:michael.champlin@oakhillct.org).**

## Oak Hill Recognizes Rosa Hernandez as Winner of Direct Support Professional (DSP) of the Year!



Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Week occurred this year from September 12-18th. This was our opportunity to recognize the amazing direct care staff who work tirelessly every day to care for Oak Hill individuals.

A “Direct Support Professional” is defined as someone who works as a direct care worker, in-home support worker, personal assistant, or attendant that ensures people with disabilities have the necessary supports that enable them to live, work, and enjoy life more independently in a community- based setting.

This year Oak Hill awarded the “DSP of the Year” award to Rosa Hernandez in our Community Programs Department. Rosa was recommended by several of her colleagues, but her formal nomination that awarded her the big win is as follows:

“Please accept this nomination of Rosa Hernandez for Direct Support Professional of the year. This is a “slam dunk” nomination, as Rosa simply, outshines almost every worker I have ever known, in all categories. I have known and continue to know many superior workers. Some check most of the boxes, Rosa checks them all.

As to individualizing care: Rosa implements habilitative programming as though she wrote these programs herself. Rosa understands the spirit of each program and so when she uses her discretion on incidental teaching, she has the big picture in mind and therefore does not let her methods get in the way of the end goal.

Rosa is eager to assist individuals to get to events or go out in the community, to see family or to maintain relationships. She does not shy away from shifts that may have a heavier workload.

Rosa leads always with silent, but effort filled work. When she is on shift, things get done thoroughly, early and well. When she is finished managing the needs of one resident, she jumps in to help others.

Rosa is creative. Sometimes she makes a game out of cleaning up after a meal, other times she offers incentives for the completion of a less than desired task. Most of the time, it is done within the boundaries of normal and uplifting conversation. It is just Rosa being Rosa.

She comes in at the last minute to help coworkers, managers or the people who live in the houses through tough situations, all the time. She flexes her life to the needs of the workplace. She can be counted on in emergencies, and she can be counted on to never call out of a shift once she signs up for it. She is the epitome of reliability.” – Submitted by Lisa McCoy, Group Home Manager.

***Congratulations Rosa!***



**amazon**smile

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate a portion of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. **Oak Hill** is featured as one of the charitable organizations to choose from!

Here is how you can select Oak Hill as your beneficiary:

1. Sign in to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) on your desktop or mobile phone browser using your regular Amazon username and password.
2. From your AmazonSmile home page, hover over **Your Account & Lists** in the top right corner.
3. Under **Your Lists**, select **AmazonSmile Charity List**
4. Search for ‘Oak Hill’ and select.

**Thank you for supporting Oak Hill!**

