



Staff Appreciation Fund 2023

To Our Fellow Oak Hill Families,

Every single one of Oak Hill's staff has been instrumental in creating *a home* for our children and loved ones. In this way, we can't help but think of them as **family**.

After some challenging years, it's time we offered them a special thank-you.

It's hard to believe that three years have passed since "lockdown." As you know, Oak Hill could not join as the rest of the world hunkered down. We had to keep going. Our amazing and dedicated staff led with courage while continuing to provide excellent services for our loved ones. In appreciation of their sacrifice and commitment, we want to say "thanks."

We invite you to join us as we raise resources for the Staff Appreciation Fund. **All gifts up to \$60,000 will be matched.** This very special fund provides invaluable recognition for Oak Hill's fantastic staff members through programs like the Staff Store, Surprise Squad, and agency wide gratitude events!

Many of the individuals Oak Hill serves have been with us for upwards of 50 years. Some of our own children are among that group. To us, Oak Hill has provided refuge and hope. We know that our children, Jamie, Laurie, and Stephanie, have received sensitive and supportive care in Oak Hill's group homes and at Oak Hill School. Their teachers, nurses, and residential program workers empowered them to live more confidently and independently. Oak Hill touches so many families, whether that is through our school, assistive technology services, or group homes. Like the impact, each relationship is special and enduring.

As parents, we are eternally grateful that our children felt comfortable and loved every day during these past few decades, especially during the pandemic years. Thank **you** for helping us show our gratitude. Your support means everything to our nearly 1,000 staff members who have sacrificed so much to provide services to individuals with disabilities. On behalf of our children, we cannot thank you enough!

With deep appreciation, from ours to yours,



David Hadden, Parent, Advocate and
Immediate Past Oak Hill Board Chair



Jim Link, Parent, Advocate and Former
Chairman, Oak Hill Foundation Board



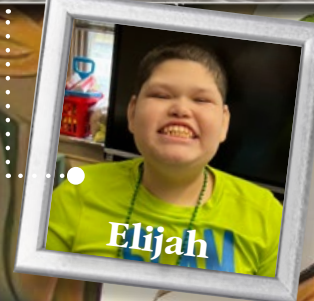
Karen Neag, Parent, Advocate,
and Oak Hill Board Member



OUR FAMILY TREE

Elijah, Ravil, and Stanley

Elijah, one of the most sensitive and emotionally aware students among his peers, is known as a “friend to all.” His birthday cards (which each of his peers get on their special days) are famous! This would not be possible without the conscientious efforts of Assistant Teachers **Ravil McFarlane** and **Stanley Ferguson**. Ravil and Stanley have worked together to build Elijah’s awareness of his own and others’ emotions. When Elijah first came to Oak Hill, he struggled to form positive relationships with his peers. Ravil and Stanley, with a combined 37 years of experience at Oak Hill, worked in tandem to create a plan that supported Elijah’s independence and social confidence. The key to this? Ravil and Stanley were confident that Elijah had the ability to grow; he just needed the right tools and support. This trust in Elijah’s innate abilities has been transformative. Ravil and Stanley’s philosophy is: “You can.” Hear, Hear, Ravil and Stanley!



Georgetown Road Group Home

Candee Figueira, Direct Support Professional, is known as the “sweetest” staff at Oak Hill. She has worn many hats in Community Programs, but her favorite has been Michael’s friend, confidant, and caregiver. Candee and Michael have been together since 1988! Over the past 35 years, they have developed a bond that has lasted through all of life’s ups and downs. The twosome is known for being the easiest going at the Georgetown Road Group Home and share a passion for long car rides and quality time spent outdoors. Candee is keenly aware of what Michael needs. Because Michael is non-verbal, Candee reads his body language to understand how he is feeling. The subtlest change in Michael’s demeanor can alert Candee that Michael needs her support. As Candee transitions into retirement, we thank her for all she has done for Michael and the gentlemen of the group home. Hats off to you, Candee!



“For the Next Generation”

Gwendolyn Bynoe, Human Resources Business Partner, is the career builder and dream maker of Oak Hill! Over her nine-year tenure, Gwen has spearheaded Oak Hill’s Career Pathways program and made countless connections with local colleges and universities. She has worked with these community partners to ensure our staff have every opportunity possible to further their career and educational goals, whether that is subsidized tuition, personalized programming, or support from Oak Hill. Innovation is the name of the game and Gwen is in the business of making dreams come true. Gwen is at the helm of our partnership with the University of Hartford that breaks down barriers to becoming a teacher at Oak Hill School. Why does Gwen do it? Her motto is FTNG, “For the Next Generation.” Thank you, Gwen, for supporting our students and staff!



Help us continue to show support and admiration for our amazing staff!



Oak Hill

Empowering People With Disabilities

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In Loving Memory of Steve Famiglietti
Manager of the Eleanor Brooks
Blindness Support Center