



YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

# MILESTONE MOMENTS

URBAN AUTISM  
SOLUTIONS



# Our Mission

Changing outcomes for young adults with autism and related challenges through an integrated community life that advances social and vocational opportunities.



## Mission Pillars



### Empowering lives through vocational training.

Equip students with job-ready skills and create pathways to employment for successful integration into the workforce.



### Nurturing autonomy through essential life skills.

Provide a true-to-life environment for practicing daily living skills to increase confidence and self-sufficiency.



### Building self-reliance through community integration.

Train participants to confidently navigate public transit and public spaces for greater independence in daily life.



### Fostering connection through social networking.

Create safe, inclusive spaces to build connections and gain needed social skills for an enhanced quality of life.

## Milestone Measurements



**156**

11% Increase in  
Total Students



**42%**

Increase in  
Job Placements

**10 New Placements**



**Program  
Hours**

**444** Vocational Training

**1,928** Life Skill Development

**1,412** Community Engagement Activities



**1,035**

occurrences of  
student internship  
involvement



**23** Social Events

**110** Unique  
Participants

# UAS PROGRAMS

## West Side Transition Academy

Designed for transition-aged West Side Chicago public high school students aged 16 - 22 years old. Clinical and community-based services include socialization skills, speech pathology, social-emotional learning, vocational training and internships, and community exploration by public transit. Job-ready students work with staff to create resumes, prepare for interviews and build their communication skills. UAS identifies businesses offering competitive employment and are open to hiring neurodiverse

**98%** come from minority backgrounds

UAS students predominantly come from marginalized, low-socioeconomic communities.



## Life Lab

A true-to-life environment in a three bedroom townhome serving students with higher support needs. This setting helps to increase autonomy by teaching daily living skills such as cooking, light cleaning, laundry, routine self-care, and using public transportation.

**66** Life Lab Students  
**100%** increase from FY23

## Growing Solutions Farm

An urban agricultural initiative located on a 1.2 acre produce farm in the Illinois Medical District. Young adults learn how to grow, harvest and prepare food for sale while gaining transferrable job skills. Approximately 20% of the harvest is donated to local food pantries.

**22** One Summer Chicago Participants  
GSF summer program sponsored by the City of Chicago providing paid employment.



## Social Networking

Engaging social activities that foster peer relationships and community integration. Events include a monthly meetup, game days, and opportunities to explore Chicago neighborhoods and restaurants through our weekly Urban Hikes with Mike.

**780** Young Adults Attended  
**23** Monthly Meetups, Urban Hikes and Game Days





## Defining Milestones

### 42% Increase in Employment Placement

UAS steps in during a critical period of an individual's transition into adulthood by equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to secure their first job and thrive in the workplace. This past year, ten students started a new job.

#### Ahmad's First Job

"I had this story . . . and for 10 years I tried to develop it."

Ahmad always dreamed of becoming a writer, but he needed the right resources to unlock his potential and move closer to his goal. His path to fulfill his aspirations unfolded during his vocational training at Growing Solutions Farm, where his leadership skills and drive flourished.

With the support of UAS staff, Ahmad landed his first job at Mariano's, marking an important milestone on his journey. He views his earnings as a stepping stone toward buying a computer that will help him pursue his writing goals. "I want to be a writer. I have a great story written, and I want to put it all together and share it with the world."



## Inaugural Year of the Young Adult Advisory Council

In September 2024, UAS launched the Young Adult Advisory Council. This initiative strives to deepen our mission by integrating the perspectives of young adult leaders with autism into our program planning and organizational development. Five exceptional individuals were invited to join the Council's inaugural year for their leadership, service, and advocacy in the community.



These five Council members brought a fresh perspective to furthering our mission. Their input was invaluable, but their impact extended further – their leadership revitalized and expanded UAS's social programs.

### Council's Successful New Initiative: Game Day



The Council's influence is greatly felt at the increasingly popular Game Day events held at the UAS Academy. Launched in February 2024, this ongoing social opportunity kicked off with a strong start drawing 24 attendees. Council members warmly welcomed new participants, helping them feel at home in the community. They managed food arrangements and served as role models and resources for everyone in attendance.

As a first-time attendee of a UAS event, Sofie expressed she was happy she pushed past her hesitation to attend Game Day since new people and new places make her feel uneasy. But over a game of Sorry, she quickly connected with Aliyah, an Advisory Council member, who put her at ease and became a new friend. "I was very nervous but I was very happy I came."

## Social Networking Growth

UAS is creating essential social programs that support young adults with autism by providing safe spaces to improve communication, build connections, and foster emotional growth.

#### MeetUp Record Attendance

For the past 10 years, Monthly MeetUps at Pompei have offered food, games, and socializing. A record attendance of 51 in February highlighted the growing need for these social connections.

After discovering the meetups through an online search for autism programs, Tania believes these events have made a real difference for her: "I'm able to find new friends. I'm able to learn how to be social."



## Volunteer Partners



Our ongoing impact is a result of the hard working volunteers from our corporate partners. Individuals from these organizations generously gave their time, energy, and resources to ensure Growing Solutions Farm runs efficiently, allowing us to better accomplish our mission and make a tangible impact.

We are also incredibly grateful to the individual volunteers who dedicated time and energy to help where needed. A special mention goes to John Franzese and Aine O'Brien, whose hard work and commitment to the UAS mission goes above and beyond.



## CORPORATE & GRANT PARTNERS



C. GALLUCCI REALTY, INC.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust

Henry Nias Foundation

Laughing Acres Family Foundation

## Internship Partners

FY24 marked three new volunteer internship partnerships that have greatly contributed to our students' learning experiences. These collaborations are equipping them with vocational and life skills as well as providing them with meaningful ways to contribute to the community.

Here's how these partnerships are making a difference.

### Marillac St. Vincent Family Services

"Working alongside other volunteers each Thursday, we depend on the students to prepare the store for the Friday distribution by stocking shelves, moving items through the warehouse and filling the display refrigerators and freezers. What started as a training opportunity for the students has become an integral part of our Pantry operations."

- Bob Joynt, Volunteers



### Guest House

"Here at Guest House, we are grateful for the UAS Internship Program. The students who come twice a month on a Thursday morning bring enthusiasm and joy into our Jane Reich Community Room. They prepare delicious desserts that are included in our weekly dinners that we offer those staying at Guest House."

- Jan Kroeschell, Volunteers & Programming



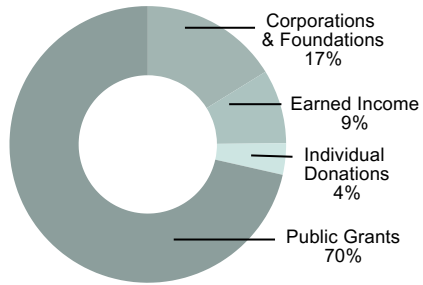
### Our Lady of the Holy Family

Although some UAS students aren't eligible for competitive employment, our volunteer internships help increase autonomy. Our Lady of the Holy Family parish offers a safe space where students can practice functional home skills – like sweeping, dusting, mopping, or cleaning a bathroom and kitchen – while also working on valuable job skills.

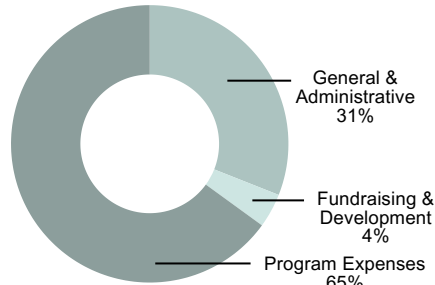




# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Income



Expenses

## 2024 Fiscal Year\* (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)

### Income

Public Grants	\$	931,369
Corporations and Foundations	\$	227,705
Earned Income	\$	123,839
Individual Donations	\$	51,500
<b>Income Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,334,412</b>

### Expenses

Salaries & Fringe Benefits	\$	605,785
Other Direct Costs	\$	237,014
Indirect Costs	\$	197,064
Contractual	\$	152,996
Supplies	\$	34,157
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,227,016</b>

\*These financial statements are unaudited.

## Co-Founders



Julie Tracy



Michael Tracy

## Board Members



Mary Walsh  
President



Joe Froehlich  
Treasurer



Kim Thompson  
Secretary



Meghan Davison



Warren Ribley



Andi Trubiano



Barbara Zawacki

## Young Adult Advisory Council



Norma Noriega



Aliyah Rich



Alejandro Sanchez



Zechary Stigger



John Tracy