

Annual Report

2023



s a s i 

2023 Revenue and Expenses

Revenue:

Government Revenue	\$43,743,234.63	84.98%
HUD	\$26,935	0.05%
Sub Contract Revenue	\$3,258,872	6.33%
Program Participant Fees	\$2,974,269	5.78%
Clinic 3rd Party Reimbursement	\$149,471	0.29%
Investments	\$1,159,866	2.25%
Vending Sales	\$0	0.00%
Contributions	\$87,839	0.17%
Miscellaneous	\$74,202	0.14%
Total Revenues	\$51,474,688	100%

Expenses:

Personal Services	\$31,782,624	63.79%
Fringe Benefits	\$9,057,918	18.18%
Professional Fees	\$753,510	1.51%
Supplies	\$1,321,635	2.65%
Utilities	\$822,014	1.65%
Building Maintenance	\$688,182	1.38%
Leased Facilities	\$342,268	0.69%
Insurance	\$484,042	0.97%
Equipment Expense	\$289,358	0.58%
Individual & Staff Transportation	\$1,868,706	3.75%
Workshop Expense	\$640,462	1.29%
Interest Expense	\$78,205	0.16%
Depreciation Expense	\$1,306,410	2.62%
Miscellaneous Expense	\$384,599	0.77%
Total Expense	\$49,819,932	100%

(Net Deficit)/Surplus

\$1,654,756

2023 sasi Foundation Grants

Genesee Road IRA - ceiling lift -\$4,900

Genesee Road IRA - awning - \$6,200

KStreet IRA - replacement cover porch awning - \$3,793

Derby Day Program - roller blinds - \$6,000

Adare IRA - extension of patio - \$15,600

Total - \$36,493



Ben Veenendaal shows off the new roller blinds at Derby Day Hab.

Message from the President

In 2023, we lost Judy Heumann, one of our nation's foremost fighters for disability rights.

Ms. Heumann shared a lot of wisdom during her 75 years on this earth, but this quote is my favorite: "It is not a tragedy to me that I'm living in a wheelchair. Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives — job opportunities or barrier-free buildings."

In the waning days of 2023, we adopted a new mission statement: "Connecting people with creative opportunities that honor their choices and fit their lives." The words "transforming lives" are no longer part of our mission statement, because it is not up to *sasi* or any other organization to transform the life of a person with a disability. Disability is not something to be corrected, cured or transformed. Our job is to help people live the lives they choose, using the supports they want.

People with disabilities have so much to offer. Like everyone else, they have hopes, dreams, talents and gifts. Disabilities are a natural part of life. Providing the necessary supports should be just as natural. That is what *sasi* strives to do each and every day. I hope you enjoy reading these stories of support and perseverance. Thank you for your partnership and support.



Jeff Paterson

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John Voss (died in 2023)

High Hurdles trots along

2023 posed many challenges and opportunities at the farm and ultimately concluded in a very positive place. Early in the year, each of the riding instructors at High Hurdles moved into different positions. The program was able to quickly identify and hire two new full-time riding instructors, one part-time riding instructor, and an apprentice instructor. In addition to this, Program Manager Shelby Dytschkowskyj was promoted to Director. Despite having a slow start to the season, the High Hurdles team made significant gains throughout the remainder of the year.

In total, High Hurdles served 72 unduplicated riders 640 individual units. There were many riders that were new to horses, several long-time riders and a few in between. We hosted new and recurring events for riders and community members to be a part of, including a party in July, our horse show in September and a movie night around Halloween. We look forward to continuing to offer these fun opportunities for everyone to get involved in the coming year.

We implemented some significant improvements to the facility this year. We created a dry lot for the horses which has already proven to be a huge help in keeping them happy and healthy during the wet season. This project included drainage from the surrounding buildings, repair of rotted fence posts as well as a new driveway behind the barn. We submitted for several grants to continue to improve the physical property and better serve riders and horses.

We purchased two horses this year- Ramona and Fettuccine. Ramona still remains with us with the goal of partaking in some lessons this year after undergoing some training, and Fettuccine ended up being traded to Houghton University for Prize, a more suitable equine for our purposes. Jessica also joined the crew in October, putting us at a full barn with 10 horses.

Staff diligently worked on increasing their skills with trainings and clinics throughout the year, and we look forward to certifying them with CHA in the coming season.



Moving Miracles celebrates 25 years

This year was a bittersweet celebration of 25 years of operation, while also bidding farewell to Founder and Director Sheila Pilc, as she retired at the end of the 2023 season. We found it fitting that the recital held on May 21 was titled “ICONIC” and the opening feature included dancers that have been with the studio throughout its 25 years of operation. Following the close of the season, Program Manager Macey Doe was quickly promoted to the director position, and she hit the ground running with plans for the next season.

The studio welcomed back a previous dance instructor in September, brought back Saturday classes to support increased enrollment, and reintroduced solo class options.

Moving Miracles also began utilizing a new studio software system that made the payment process easier and more efficient for our dancers and their families.

The total 2022-2023 dance season provided 2,858 units of service to 90 students. The projected totals for the 2023-2024 dance season are 3,577 units of service to 104 students, with 1,327 units of service already having been provided in the 2023 portion of the season.

This represents an estimated increase of 719 total units of service (25% increase) and a 16% increase in students.



Moving Miracles dance program provides sessions in a safe, non-threatening environment for individuals to grow and develop their personal potential.

COMMUNITY LIVING & INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

APARTMENTS

The Ennio Cerquetti and Elliott Woods apartment buildings each have 12 single apartments available for rent to individuals with a disability. These units provide affordable, accessible housing in a community where public transportation is available. The occupancy rate for 2023 at Ennio was 98% and Elliott Woods was 100%.

SUPPORT BROKERAGE

The self-direction program continues to evolve and provide unique opportunities for people to coordinate their supports and make more independent service planning decisions, specifically through the involvement of their Support Broker. The Support Broker department at SASI developed further throughout 2023 and by the end of the year added an additional part-time broker. By the end of 2023, the Support Broker program was supporting 102 people, which reflects an increase of 21% or 18 new enrollments. It is anticipated that this program will continue to grow and develop throughout 2024.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Housing subsidies are offered through OPWDD in the form of Individual Support Subsidies (ISS) to assist people with establishing and maintaining independent housing. Enrollment slightly increased in 2023 and is expected to continue to grow throughout 2024.

HOURLY WAIVER RESPITE

Hourly waiver respite is provided in a variety of settings to meet the needs of families and provide caregiver relief. Some of the programming options under hourly waiver respite include agency supported self-directed respite, in-home respite, and recreation respite. The program's enrollment and provided units of service remained consistent with the prior year. Enrollment and participation in these programs is anticipated to grow throughout 2024!

COMMUNITY HABILITATION

Community Habilitation is an HCBS Waiver service that provides support to people with developing and maintaining the most independence that is possible for them. People work with Community Support Professionals to develop and maintain skills in a variety of areas associated with household chores, financial management, social skills, community safety, etc.

In loving memory of those we lost in 2023

Frederick Marshall, John Voss, Lesa VanSon, Mark Kreeft,
Sally Kornacki, Raymond Dennison, Ryan Gannon, Dr. Dale Skoog,
Constance Rougeux, Douglas Dalton, Arturo Galluzzo, Irma Shea



sasi's 2023 Founders Award

sasi was founded nearly 50 years ago by a group of parents who had an idea about the types of services that they would like to see for their sons and daughters. At that time, there were limited opportunities for family members with disabilities. They decided to put their ideas into action. Through a lot of hard work, dedication, and persistence, what started out from humble beginnings, operating out of a garage has metamorphosed into the multifaceted agency that we know today as sasi.

The Founders Award is based on this concept of good things coming from the germination of an idea coupled with determination, persistence, and hard work. The winner of the Founders Award is a staff person who exemplifies the attributes of the founding board members and whose ideas have helped to improve the agency and provide opportunities, influenced the people sasi supports, and has had a positive effect on the agency.



Peg Welker, left, receives the sasi Founders Award from President and CEO Jeff Paterson.

Founders Award winner: 'sasi is the bee's knees'

Peg Welker spends much of her days sitting behind a desk, greeting people with a warm smile and a chipper "Hello." In a way, she is the face of sasi, as hers is the one people see first when they enter the Supported Employment facility in Hamburg. It is important that she be friendly, helpful, and comforting.

But Peg is much more than a receptionist. She is known throughout sasi for being exceedingly kind and humble. She is the embodiment of support, giving people what they need to succeed and providing a little boost when they are down. She accepts people for who they are and treats everyone with dignity and respect. For those reasons, and for her years of dedication to the sasi mission, Peg was an easy choice to receive the 2023 Founders Award.

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For nearly two decades, Peg has quietly waged a campaign to support anyone who needs it.

“Peg consistently help people to feel accepted and valuable,” Job Developer Lynn Conrad said. “Some folks who walk through the doors in Supported Employment are discouraged, lack confidence in their abilities, and oftentimes have fear of what comes next in their lives. Many have never worked in the community, and some have recently lost jobs, which can be a devastating life challenge, others do not even have appropriate clothing for interviews. These situations happen on a regular basis and can bring intense anxiety.

“Multiple times, Peg has been ‘caught’ leaving an interview-appropriate outfit in that person’s size, or clothes would appear for a person in need. She would casually say she ‘had it laying around and thought it might help.’ Afterwards, she never wanted recognition for herself, because it might embarrass the person in need. Peg likes to see people get to the next level in their lives whether it is an encouraging word, a welcoming smile, a cup of water, coffee, or donated items. She quietly makes a huge difference.”

Peg and her husband, Ron, are also known for creating oversized greeting cards that are unique, creative, and personalized to the recipient. Each of them is handmade and always appreciated.

“No one asks for these cards; Peg will just bring them in as needed and leave them for staff to sign,” Conrad said. “She pays attention to where encouragement is needed, and she takes action. They even provide the sharpie for signatures, and mail the cards at their expense.”

In September, sasi President and CEO Jeff Paterson presented the Founders Award to Peg at the annual Founders Breakfast. While he has only known her a short time, he admitted to being greatly impressed by her.

“In my career, I have presented a lot of awards to people,” Paterson said, “and more often than not, the people who get these awards say ‘I don’t deserve this; I don’t do anything special; give it to somebody else.’ I have always enjoyed giving it to that kind of person the most. And that’s Peggy.”

Peg accepted the award, fittingly, with humble grace.

“I am very honored and humbled by this award,” she said. “It’s amazing. I must say that in the 19 years I have worked at sasi, it’s been great. The staff are wonderful. The people we support are wonderful. sasi is the bee’s knees.”



The new sasi Executive Team is, from left: front row -- Chief People Officer Karen Keyes, Chief Strategy Officer Barb Lamoreaux; middle row -- Chief Development Officer Lynn Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Amanda Kinmartin, Chief Program Officer Susan Mentecki; back row -- Chief Executive Officer Jeff Paterson, Chief Quality and Compliance Officer John Bowles.

sasi reorganizes executive team

One year after taking over as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of sasi, Jeff Paterson has reorganized the agency's executive team with the goal of changing the culture in the organization.

Paterson looked within and outside sasi to gather a leadership team that is guiding the organization in a new era.

"Like many other sectors, the human services sector is facing a succession problem," Paterson said. "Week after week, we see headlines about seasoned not-for-profit leaders retiring. We tend to read about the CEOs, but the trend pervades entire organizations."

Following the retirements of former President and CEO Anthony Annunziato, Executive Vice President Karen Gustina, and Vice President Patty Watkins, Chief Financial Officer Shawn

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Cunningham announced that he would also be retiring later in the year. That is more than 125 years of service to sasi walking out the door in a short amount of time. It also means that a new team would be needed to take the reins at sasi.

“I’ve seen firsthand that a cohesive, effective leadership team can be like jet fuel for an organization,” Paterson said. “What was most important to me was to assemble a team of leaders who are collaborative and transparent, with high emotional intelligence and a sense of servant leadership. We’re shifting from a traditional command-and-control culture to one that is flatter, nimbler, and more inclusive. The members of the leadership team need to understand and hasten that shift.”

The first move was to promote from within:

- Executive Vice President Barbara Lamoreaux became Chief Strategy Officer.
- Vice President of Development and Marketing Lynn Kelly became Chief Development Officer.
- Vice President of Quality Assurance and Incidents John Bowles became Chief Quality and Compliance Officer.
- Associate Vice President of Payroll Amanda Kinmartin became Chief Financial Officer.

The second move was to hire from outside the organization for two reconfigured positions. That brought in Chief Program Officer Susan Mentecki and Chief People Officer Karen Keyes.

Mentecki came to sasi with more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit leadership. She has also served as the chair of four Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York committees since 2000. As Chief Program Officer, she oversees the residential programs, work and day opportunities, and clinical services.

Keyes has worked in the health and human services field for more than 25 years after starting as a Direct Support Professional. In her current role of Chief People Officer, she provides oversight of the Human Resources, Benefits, and the Education and Training departments.

With the leadership team in place, Paterson began plotting a new course for sasi, one that would stay true to the organization’s traditions while advancing new ideas and policies.

“Of course, choosing individual executives is only the beginning. Building them into a cohesive team is now our focus,” Paterson said. “We’re working to create a foundation of candor, trust, and mutual respect, so that the team can be effective in guiding the organization forward. I think we’ve got the makings of a dream team here. We’ll be working hard to make sure the dream comes true.”



Cammie Stamp has been answering phones at SABAH for 20 years.

Cammie Stamp marks 20 years of supported employment at SABAH

Cammie Stamp might be difficult to see behind the counter – her hair just pokes over the top – but once she steps out, her bright pink sneakers can't be missed. She'll greet you with a warm, genuine smile and a great big "Hi!" even if it's her first time meeting you. She is the perfect person to greet people entering the office.

Cammie has been manning the front desk as the receptionist at SABAH for 20 years. She answers the phones, files paperwork, and greets all those who enter. She is a tremendous success story for sasi's Supportive Employment Program.

SABAH is a non-profit organization that, like sasi, supports people with disabilities. Creatively, it uses ice skating to enrich the lives of its athletes. Whenever someone calls for information, Cammie is right there to help in whatever way she can.

"I answer the phones and do the little tasks that the office staff can't get to, like stuffing envelopes and stapling packets," Cammie said. "I asked them one day what I could do to help out more, and they said answering the phones would be the biggest help. They're busy with other things and don't have the time to talk to all of the skaters when they call in."

To have been there for 20 years, you know Cammie is doing a good job.

"Cammie is passionate, independent, a great advocate for herself and others, and has accomplished success in competitive employment with a significant disability," said Bonnie, a sasi job developer and trainer, who has worked with Cammie for several years. "She is dedicated, loyal, a hard worker, and a strong communicator. She also aims to please."

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Brian Connors celebrates 30 years on the job

Brian Connors is a glowing model of sasi's Supported Employment Program. The 50-year-old recently celebrated 30 years of employment with Delta Sonic Car Wash. For his always-positive attitude and diligent work, he received a trophy and a \$3,000 bonus check from Delta Sonic. His coworkers event treated him to a night out to mark the occasion.



Brian Connors prefers drying cars at Delta Sonic.

"We went to Sidelines Bar and Grill in Depew, and everyone was buying me beers all night long," he said. "I had a great time."

Brian's assignments change frequently, but he prefers to towel dry the vehicles after they get washed. He doesn't like power washing as much, because he "doesn't get tips."

"Brian has a very good work ethic, and because of that, he is a very hard worker," said Daryl Rittiman, Brian's job coach at sasi. "He is fast and tireless." I love working with Brian. He is such a genuine person and would give you the shirt off of his back if you needed it."

Brian lives in Cheektowaga with his mother, Sandy, and step-father, Keith.

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Cammie works four-hour days twice a week at SABAH. She also loves to support the organization on social media by liking, sharing, and commenting on all of their posts.

Beyond being a good employee, Cammie is a staunch advocate for herself and others with disabilities. When we asked her what she loves about her job, she quickly replied, "That I can prove society wrong."

"(Society has) such a negative outlook on us," she said. "I don't want to be looked at like that. I don't want to be looked at like I can't do anything. We can do just as much as everybody else. I tend to say 'we' because I like to speak for those who can't. There are people who don't have a voice, because their disability is too severe. So I made it my mission when I was a little girl that I would be their voice."

While her voice might be tiny and soft, Cammie's message is big. She wants people with disabilities to chase down every dream they have and not let anyone or anything be an obstacle in the way.

"Don't give up on your dreams," she said. "Don't let your disability cloud your judgement on what you can do. And don't let someone else put a limit on what you can do, because only you know what you can do. You're the only one who puts limits on yourself. Just go for it."

sasi Olympics return from two-year layoff

The Day Habilitation programs provide both educational and fun activities based on interests and desires of the people we support. From theme week ideas to volunteering, programs are always on-the-go. In any of the programs, you will hear music and laughter.



A team from Yorkshire Day Hab shows off their medals.

During football season, you will see many Buffalo Bills shirts, signs, and decorations. This year, the program even helped out at the stadium. The "Shout" song is a daily occurrence.

In 2023, a popular event made a triumphant return after a two-year hiatus because of COVID-19 – the sasi Olympics.

Like its eponym, the sasi Olympics brings together teams of athletes from different locations to compete against each other in a series of events. The day programs made matching shirts and signs for their teams, and their families and friends were able to come cheer them on.

The sasi Olympics has become an event the people we support look forward to all year and talk about long after it has finished. They take pride in winning medals and working together. Thanks to the many staff who work so hard to ensure this is enjoyed by people of all ability levels.



Chris Green works hard for independence

Success doesn't always come easily. Often, it requires time and diligence.

One of the residents in Sasi's IRAs, Chris Green, is the embodiment of that. He has found success and independence in his life after a long history of intense and challenging behaviors.

Over the course of many years, Chris had a number of restrictions and safeguards in place to keep him and his peers safe.

Because of these things, Chris did not enjoy or have the willingness to participate in Day Program or any other program.

Chris, his treatment support team, and management team had developed goals that included reinforcers that included some of his favorite things like sporting events. We saw this as a huge turning point for Chris. He was working towards a goal and something he really enjoyed. During this time, Chris would go to Sabres Games, Bandits Games, and so on, learning appropriate skills on how to act within the community. He spent time

independently understanding building dynamics such as where bathrooms were within facilities to prove he was able to navigate on his own. Chris discovered he wanted to push himself another step and work towards even more independence by accessing the community without staff. Chris started out visiting stores of his choice to know where the bathrooms are, how to properly check out, plan expenses and manage his time. From Walmart in Hamburg to all local areas within Derby, Chris has access to safely explore his town. He rides his bike to Tops and The Bagel Jar.

He has learned that he can even meet friends at local areas too!

Chris successfully landed a job at Rite Aid as of August of 2023. He was so proud to obtain that first paycheck! Chris is still employed to date and working towards the "Employee of the Month" for May 2024.

Chris has had some dark times over the course of the last few years like any human being, but has truly discovered what is most important to him -- independence!

Chris is working hard, everyday, to achieve more goals and strive towards success in his behavior. With the support of his staff, management team, family, job coach, counselor and behavior team (all past and present), Chris has developed a variety of skills to build friendships, integrate in his community and maintain a success job. We are all so proud of Chris and all of his achievements.



Residences becoming art galleries

sasi homes are starting to look like art museums, and we love it. Many of the people we support have been enjoying their new art program, Indicator Art.

Indicator Art has been around for a while, but it has recently been made more accessible to sasi by opening up our Derby Day Hab building one evening a week from 4 to 7 p.m. Three art classes are held on Thursday nights where the participants come and express their creativity on canvas. The paintings are reflections of what they are feeling. They also enjoy the socialization of the art classes.

Whatever the reason they decided to join, they enjoy their classes with the instructor, Matt. They work on their painting for four weeks, then they do an art critique with local artist and talk about their paintings. We even have a few artists here at sasi that have sold their work to adoring fans.

The artwork is showcased in their homes in any place they choose. One house has a collage in their living room for all to enjoy. Many bedrooms have been brightened by colorful canvas. Others have gifted them to loved ones to share their joy and excitement around their new found hobby.

Our artists are excited by their new-found skills and are happy to show off their artwork to anyone who visits their home.



Say hello to Barkley!

In October, the Marketing and Fund Development departments introduced the rest of sisi and the Western New York community to our new mascot, Barkley.

The idea for a mascot came out of a meeting about how to further engage the community. The plan was to use Barkley at community events like the East Aurora Sidewalk Sale, the Eden Corn Fest parade, and trunk-or-treat events around the area. He was an immediate hit with the community, as people flocked to get their photo with him. Barkley has also served as a walking billboard at job fairs and recruitment events.

Where Barkley has made the biggest impact, however, is with the people we support. He makes frequent visits to our various Day Hab facilities and shows up to all sisi special events. The people adore Barkley. He never fails to make them smile and brighten their day.

Barkley has also become a social media darling. His Mascot Monday posts have proven very popular on all of sisi's social media platforms. The online "Name the Mascot" event was hugely successful, as we received more than 150 different name suggestions from as far away as Newfoundland, Canada. The name Barkley was chosen based on a suggestion from one of the people we support, Jenny Trometer.

"Everyone loves Barkley," said Matt Krueger, sisi's Director of Marketing and Communications. "Whenever he walks into a room, people can't help but smile. But he is a bit mischievous, so watch out!"



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