

OUR MISSION
is to respect the life choices
and dreams of people with
developmental disabilities and
help them reach their goals.

**Save the date
for our 2010 Gala!**
Saturday, October 16

Visit our online auction
catalog at [www.laurabaker.org/
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2009 Annual Report



Sharing brings good fortune



Dear Friends,

“Sharing Brings Good Fortune” is the theme of our Annual Campaign for Laura Baker Services Association. We are extremely grateful for the good fortune that we have experienced as a result of our volunteers, donors and staff consistently sharing their time, talent and resources.

The continued support of our donors and volunteers remains an invaluable asset to our organization. This has been a crucial part of our ability to deliver high-quality care to our clients. Laura Baker leads the way in providing superior services.

Many have had their lives enriched by relationships established with our clients. Our clients share with the community in a variety of ways, such as performing with the LBSA Choir, through friendships they make, jobs they hold, and lives that they touch. Sharing is a two-way street.

LBSA has experienced good fortune through our amazing, caring staff. Our staff members contribute their skills daily, enhancing the lives of our clients and each other. It is a privilege to serve on the same team with these individuals. We are truly blessed by the sharing of their talents.

Thanks to our staff, trustees, other volunteers and donors, we have been able to help our clients reach for achievement of their life-long goals. Please take the time to explore the content of this Annual Report and learn more about the great work we have all accomplished together! Your exceptional generosity continues to make this possible.

All of us at Laura Baker — clients, staff, trustees — thank you for your willingness to share and wish for you good fortune in the coming year.

In appreciation,

Cheryl Buck
President, LBSA Board of Trustees



Our mission is to respect the life choices and dreams of people with developmental disabilities and help them reach their goals.

Laura Baker Services is dedicated to dispelling the myths about people with developmental disabilities. We recognize the similarities among us all and strive to support our clients in the least intrusive way possible. We specialize in assisting people others have labeled as “difficult to serve.” We have a special program to serve people with Prader-Willi Syndrome.

Laura Baker laid the foundation for our work in 1897 when she located her residential program for people with developmental disabilities in Northfield. Her vision was clear — she saw a future that included more opportunities, education, and normal and productive lives for the people she supported. Her vision has been sustained for over 100 years by dedicated professionals who emulated her progressive spirit and her commitment to the service of others.

“Nicole was different right from the start. We never tried to adopt any of our foster children. With her, we knew it was important,” Deborah Raines says. Nicole was born to a developmentally disabled, mentally ill single mother who was in trouble with the law. Deborah describes the day in court, watching the young mother holding up an ultrasound of her baby to the judge, pleading to be able to keep her. That’s when Deborah petitioned to adopt them both. In the end they only got Nicole. In addition to Nicole, the Raineses have three biological children and have provided foster care for 35 children.

A special needs baby from the start, Nicole was initially diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Delay and autism. The diagnosis never really fully explained all of her behavior. She navigated school fairly well until high school. Suddenly everything completely fell apart: her coping skills, her eating, her ability to learn, her self-control and her ability to communicate. The school called daily, unable to control her without several adults in attendance. Several hospitalizations and crises later, she was diagnosed with atypical Prader-Willi Syndrome. She spent four months stabilizing at the Pittsburgh Institute, where they put her on a special diet and re-evaluated her medications.



Deborah spent the time researching alternatives for education and found our school. “At least her diagnosis gave us a road to follow,” she says, “and it led right to Laura Baker.” The small setting, the food control, the consistency and the structured environment were just what Nicole needed. Despite everyone’s best efforts, she could not get these things from her home school district.

That’s the difference our donors make here. Laura Baker School is the safety net for children who need more support than the traditional public school setting can provide. Our goal is to re-introduce them to their public school. Many do eventually make that transition, armed with new skills for coping and achieving. The special music and art therapy create outlets for self-discovery and expression never before explored for some.

“Laura Baker has meant so much to us. It is a place of happiness. All the students here are active and participate in society. It’s a safe, happy place,” Deborah states.

Four years later, Nicole’s progress is spectacular. She loves to read out loud and sing. She frequently sings solos in the Laura Baker choir. Through music therapy, she has learned to play piano and guitar. She also sings in church, has a small part-time job rolling silverware for our food service, and rides a horse in Special Olympics. “Her confidence and joy are re-discovered,” Deborah happily reports.

A dental procedure this past winter resulted in a psychotic break, which has set Nicole back temporarily. With support from home and school, she is recovering slowly. Her teacher, Joanne Sommers, says that Nicole is a determined and enthusiastic learner.

Good fortune abounds. The Raineses will tell you how Nicole adds great joy to their lives. Nicole teaches us that progress is a reason to rejoice. All who realize that truly know good fortune.





Sharing brings good fortune. In its simplest context, this phrase requests that the community share its good fortune with us. In its broadest application, sharing suggests an exchange of mutual benefit to both parties. As a not-for-profit who consistently is asking for support, assistance and community partnership, we can lose sight of the many things we have to share.

I recently talked with some Board members about this very concept — acknowledging and broadcasting to the community what it is that LBSA does, and does so well. As a Minnesotan, raised to never brag or put yourself above others, this goes against

my grain. I understand the need, but have a hard time elevating the organization as unique. Instead, we collect our stories so you can experience the uniqueness.

We focus on individuals and what each person needs to be successful. We don't have one-size-fits-all programs. Even when the basic principles are the same, each person views the world a little differently and deserves to have that acknowledged. We work hard to allow people to have a home that doesn't change at someone's whim or when the person is deemed unsuccessful. If a person is not succeeding, *we* have failed, not the person.

Laura Baker's educational philosophy was, "A pupil needs to wonder about a thing in order to learn about it. If one approach doesn't bring a response, another must be tried to open up an interest. It is necessary to begin where the child is and to go on from there with the very next step."

We have stories, and you will be introduced to a few in this report. I was deeply touched by the letter we received from a volunteer. This woman was looking for an opportunity to give, had that chance, and also received the gift of her creativity returned. In her words:

"What is so miraculous ... is that for the past nine years I have had a severe mental art block ... because of a tragic, horrible event that happened in my life. I intended to help Laura Baker, but in a miracle, Laura Baker helped me by challenging me to use my art. I really want to thank them for giving me back my obligation in life — to share the gift I was given, my art!"

Our sharing brings good fortune — to the Association, to our clients, to our community partners. It takes a village, regardless if the village is our next-door neighbors in Northfield and Dundas, or our friends from Muskegon, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., Owatonna, Eden Prairie, Calgary, Superior, Jacksonville, Arlington, Falls Church, Fort Worth, Seattle, Omaha, Corvallis, or the many other communities whose members reach out to provide support. We appreciate you sharing with us, and we hope that you, like our volunteers, like our staff members, like me, are enriched beyond measure by that sharing.

Good fortune to you!

Sandi Gerdes
Executive Director

The St. Olaf Disability Awareness (SODA) house guys punch people in the arm when they use the "R" word. That is part of the awareness-raising plan for St. Olaf College they adopted this past year. They proposed this plan last year as juniors to form this senior honors house. Their goal was to dispel myths about people with developmental disabilities through service and education. These six young men served as college buddies, which requires one hour of one-on-one time a week with an LBSA client. All of them agree that the program has been very rewarding.

Josh, a biology major, has a cousin with disabilities, which motivated him to start SODA house. He partnered with Steven, who liked going out to Target and Dairy Queen. Josh will never forget the time they played checkers for the first time. "That guy is a checkers expert, I could never beat him," he laughs. David, a history major, joined the house because he just wanted to learn more about people with disabilities. His first visit found his buddy, Sarah, talking about how she was playing in the NFL that year. Then they started playing catch, and it got easier. "It wasn't as hard to connect as I thought it would be," he says.

Tom, an art major, clicked with his buddy, Matt, right away. What really worked well was that Tom came with SODA housemate Brandon, who was already a buddy with Willie, who is Matt's friend. They played a lot of basketball and football together. "It was really fun for us, and we liked how it helped them become better friends too," Tom notes. "I enjoyed introducing new rap music to Willie," Brandon shared. "The best was when he would do his own freestyle rap!"

Nick, a math major, had volunteered at a free physical therapy clinic for kids in Peru the previous summer, which sparked his interest in disabilities. He and our client Jack enjoyed frequent walks in the arboretum, which both found relaxing. "I always liked it when Jack would use my name," Nick says as he smiles. Ryan, a chemistry major, taught swimming to kids with autism last summer. This year, he has enjoyed hanging out with Bobby, a fellow music lover, traveler and tennis player. Ryan showed Bobby how to use a music program to organize his tunes. They both enjoy the "oldies" a lot. "It was really cool lately when he proposed to his girlfriend on their date," Ryan relates.

Raising awareness of disability issues strengthens community. We experience this over and over again, as others work on our behalf, and as we work on learning how to care about others through new relationships. The bonds of community accentuate and make us grateful for our good fortune.

Pictured, left to right: David Tonyan, Tom Goodale, Josh Engelsjerd, Nick Roetker, Brandon Fritz and Ryan Hoel.



2009 Highlights and Accomplishments

Sharing brings good fortune. In 2009, by sharing our resources, we were able to continue to make progress in our goal areas while receiving a 2.5% reduction in our program services rates (a decrease in revenue of approximately \$100,000). We approached these cuts with the following principles:

- 1) Keep client services and staff salaries whole.
- 2) Move forward with organizational goals, as much as possible.

This meant really examining every area of the budget and finding cost savings wherever we could. The dietary department led off by committing to \$30,000 in food expense cuts, while maintaining or improving food quality.

We made some changes in supply budgets, and dropped some memberships and dues that, while not extraneous, provided the kind of impact we needed to meet our budget reduction objectives. We reviewed all of our contracted services and made changes where possible. We cut back our employee appreciation and special event budgets. Together, as an organization, we were able to meet our objectives and make the reductions. We were supported by our fabulous community partners, who donated a record amount. That was amazing, as it allowed us to maintain some of our “extra” services: music therapy and our artist-in-residence. Beyond that, those gifts allowed us to move forward in our organizational goals and objectives.

WHAT YOUR PARTNERSHIP PROVIDED:

Music therapy and community choir for people with disabilities. Your gifts fund our 40-hour-per-week music therapist position, which provides every residential client with exposure to either individual or group music therapy. Your gifts also fully fund a music therapist for our choir, which provides music opportunities for any of our clients who choose to participate, and anyone from the community who wishes to participate. Participants do not have to pay a fee; they are given an opportunity to provide a free-will donation, if they choose.

Artist-in-residence. Your gifts fund our 15-hour-per-week artist-in-residence program. This program provides a variety of fun and therapeutic art opportunities for our clients who are interested. This includes a monthly art workshop where our artists may make sculptures, paintings or other fantastic works of art. Much of this artwork can be seen in the Millis Hall dining room and the Laura Baker Center assembly room. We'd love to show off the talent when you come for a visit.

Family Support Services. We continue to hear from our constituents — we need and want crisis and respite services for children and adults with disabilities. We have continued to tweak Family Support Services to meet this request. During 2009, we provided summer services at Grandpa's Farm. Now we are providing respite support in individual homes, we have after-school care at 211 Oak Street, in our school, and we are working

to find ways to make the price affordable for families, while covering our costs to provide the service.

In addition to Family Support Services, we have had a committee which met for the past seven months to develop internal and external crisis response teams. This will allow us to provide support to people who may not have funding for long-term services. It will give families, other service providers and people receiving services a break from each other.

WHAT ELSE WE'RE DOING:

Therap: Communication and documenting program effectiveness.

We selected a small pilot group of family members and case managers to open up daily activity logs in Therap, our online documentation system. Family members and case managers are able to log into the system and see what's been happening in their client or family member's life. In January 2010, we gave all clients and case managers access to this information.

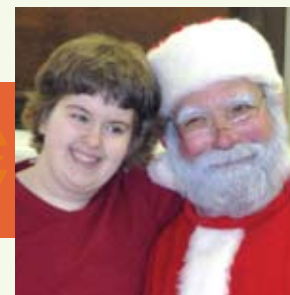
Organizational learning culture.

“Learning is the beginning of knowledge ...
knowledge is the beginning of understanding ...
understanding is the beginning of wisdom.” (*Unattributed*)

One of our long-term goals is to be an employer of choice in this area.

We want our employees to understand how vital they are to LBSA succeeding as a service provider. We want them to feel valued and valuable. Additionally, we want to have an organizational learning culture where everyone feels safe, free to ask questions and engage in on-going learning.

SumTotal. In 2009, we tested and moved on from one learning management system (allows people to establish a learning plan, keeps track of progress to that goal, and ensures that appropriate persons have access to that information) to SumTotal. We initiated use of several e-learning courses, which allow our staff and volunteers to do their learning wherever they are (at a site in the community or their college dorm, for instance). It will also allow us to share these opportunities with families and community members, as they are interested.



The Spirit of Laura Baker Award



Audrey Kieckhoefer got in trouble at her last job, working the front desk at a motel, for being “too friendly” because she enjoyed talking to the customers. She quit that job.

Her fellow employees nominated her to receive the Spirit of Laura Baker Award just a few years later for her attitude of calm, caring compassion. She inspires everyone around her, which makes her a natural leader. “I felt honored, surprised and humbled to win. It’s a huge honor,” she said.

Audrey had no prior experience in this field when she applied. A friend had encouraged her to apply because she was good with children. She got a little scared during orientation week when she got a few comments along the lines of “You’re in MG1? Good luck!” MG1 refers to the first floor of Margaret Graves, our oldest building and home to six challenging male clients.

MG1 has the largest staff of all the households on campus. Audrey became the household director within three years. Her quiet, confident leadership and firsthand knowledge of the clients brought continuity and calm to a household that could be chaotic. She embraces a team philosophy that relies heavily on frequent communication, whether that happens in person, in text or by e-mail.

“I try to create a family atmosphere with role models and good boundaries where friendships can develop,” she explains. Getting to know the clients well makes a big difference, especially with the non-verbal clients. “It’s very rewarding to experience relationship-building in this context. Their personalities just shine through.”

“It takes a lot of patience and role-modeling, but we are committed to helping people reach goals and fulfill dreams,” she says. People say I’m a saint or some kind of angel, but really, lots of people could do this kind of work.”

This year brought a challenge when a new client was added as a crisis placement. He required one-to-one support around the clock, and presented very challenging behaviors at all turns. After many months, he was able to take short trips into the community, like going to the gas station for snacks or to a fast-food restaurant. He can now take walks in the neighborhood and go to a movie at a theater.

He dresses himself, performs many personal hygiene tasks and is learning to be playful. “It’s been a delight to watch him,” says Audrey.

We are happy that Audrey chooses to do this work at Laura Baker Services.

Congratulations, Audrey, on receiving the Spirit of Laura Baker Award!



Giving Faithfully Brings Good Fortune

Does consistency matter? Are our cumulative efforts noticed, do they count?

It’s easy to dismiss the little things — we are all seduced by the big, splashy achievement. So often, the steps we take to get somewhere are underplayed. Each of those steps is its own celebration. If the clients at Laura Baker teach us nothing else, it is this above all: people matter, and progress counts. All small efforts add up to one large one.



When it comes to donations, some people feel if they can’t give a large amount, it’s not worth giving at all. We rely on consistent giving and its cumulative effect.

Giving regularly creates a pattern of focused generosity. Generosity leads to gratitude, which contributes heavily to one’s overall happiness in life.

Alison Unger and **John Tymozcko** are a living example of this. “We believe that people are supposed to take care of each other, and Laura Baker is a neighbor,” they state. “We give because we know we’re not giving into a ‘void,’” laughs Alison.

John and Alison have lived around the corner from LBSA for the last 20 years. They enjoy seeing the clients walk by on the sidewalk, even if they do occasionally pick their flowers or come inside to visit.

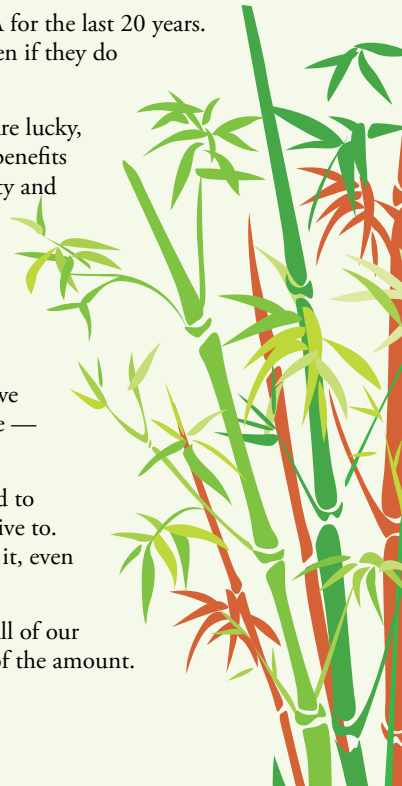
An attitude of gratitude motivates their generosity. “We are lucky, and we give out of thankfulness. The whole community benefits from having Laura Baker around.” They value the diversity and warmth that LBSA clients contribute to the community. “I like the hearts you draw on our thank-you letters,” John adds.

Other multiple-year donors echo their sentiments.

A couple who has given for over 20 years notes that, “We figured this was a good and worthy place to give, and we’ve just never stopped. We like how you don’t ask all the time — just a few times a year.”

Another consistent donor notes that when she first moved to town, others told her that we were an excellent place to give to. “My husband and I started giving, then I just kept doing it, even after he passed away, and I’ve never regretted it.”

We depend on the kindness of others, clearly. We salute all of our faithful donors who sustain us year after year, regardless of the amount.



Meet Our Board of Trustees



President **Cheryl Buck** lives in Northfield with her husband, Dave, and two children. She is the director of sponsor relations for PRMIA, a global risk management association. She is active in the community through a variety of volunteer opportunities, including LBSA, and has been on the Board since 2004.



Vice President **Bill Cowles** is a retired business owner who has been on the Board of Trustees since 1995. He sits on many local boards for nonprofits and is passionate about maintaining Northfield's character and community feeling.



Secretary **Frank Zastera** lives in Cloquet and has a family member at LBSA. He started in 2000, continuing the Zastera family tradition of service on the LBSA Board of Trustees. His father, Joe, served for many years.



Treasurer **Steve Kelly** is a professor of music at Carleton College. He was inspired to join the Board of Trustees after he saw what raising a special needs child was like for a close friend. He enjoys telling others about LBSA and doesn't miss a golf tournament or Gala.



Becky Behrens is a vice president of First National Bank of Northfield, which has been a major donor for LBSA for all 29 of the years she's been there. Becky and her husband, Mike, feel very connected to our clients, and have attended all 11 of our Galas. She loves the Twins and faithfully golfs in our annual tournament.



Robert Bonner, professor of history emeritus at Carleton College and an LBSA parent, has been on the Board of Trustees since 1989. He recently published a book on Buffalo Bill Cody. He is looking forward to the next Capital Campaign so we can provide new housing for clients.



Wayne Eddy, longtime local radio personality, has been on the Board of Trustees since 1998. He is a tireless advocate for LBSA, having first become acquainted by being Santa Claus for us in 1969. He has performed as auctioneer extraordinaire at many of our events for many years.



James Gleason is the great-grand nephew of Laura Baker and joined the Board of Trustees in 2007. He is the owner of American Excavating in Northfield. He is looking forward to being a part of the future of LBSA.



Michael Hero, local attorney, has been on the Board since 1989. From 1992 to 1999, he served as president with a steady hand and a stalwart heart during some of the most tumultuous times the Association has experienced.



Gail Jones Hansen is a writer and editor. After assisting for several years with the LBSA Gala, she joined the board in October 2009. She serves because she believes that everyone deserves to experience joy, fulfillment and understanding in their lives, and that LBSA makes those things attainable for its clients.



Judy Jones is the executive director of the North Shore Children's Center in Milwaukee, a play-based learning preschool. Her hobbies are reading, gardening and traveling to visit her granddaughter. She has had a family member at LBSA for over 50 years and says, "It's a pleasure supporting Laura Baker."



Ed Lundstrom is a longtime Northfield businessman, now retired. He has served as CEO of Sheldahl and CFO for All-Flex. Ed and his wife, Anne, are the founders of the renowned gourmet restaurant Fermentations in Dundas. If you get invited to a dinner they are preparing, drop everything and say yes!



Aggie Pavlek has been on the Board of Trustees since 2005. She started a company that provided transportation for people with developmental disabilities, based on her experience of having a sister with special needs. She is a great auction organizer.



Charles Sewich, partner at Heartman Insurance, joined the Board of Trustees in 2002. He serves because he had a brother with special needs and knows the struggle families face. He is an enthusiastic supporter of the golf tournament, and is good at inspiring other people to support our cause as well.



Eric Stratton, an LBSA parent, joined the Board of Trustees in October 2006. He and his wife, Tammy, are deeply appreciative for their daughter's life and are passionate about our mission and involving others. They love bidding wars at the Gala live auction, and they often get what they want.



Julie Thorsheim, social work consultant and founder of a small company, KST Associates, has been on the LBSA Board since 2002. She serves because she understands the need for our services and the need for them to be provided with integrity.

Thank You to Our Donors and Volunteers!

Every effort has been made for accuracy in these lists. If you have been omitted, please accept our apology and contact us at 507-645-8866.

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Linda Blaisdell
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Cheryl & David Buck



Thank You to Our Donors and Volunteers!

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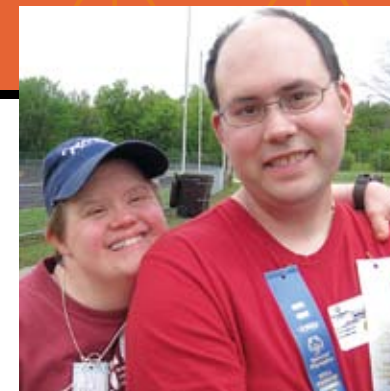
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Eileen Anderson
 Terri & Harry Anderson
 Megan Andrews-Sharer
 Deana Antley
 Dany Arevalo
 Jack Austin
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 Neil Barck
 Nick Barry
 Grace Bartlett
 Sabrina Behr
 Samantha Behr
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 Kirstin Buck
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 Kathy Budig
 Marissa Burkey
 Lizzy Carlson
 Shannon Caton
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 Jon Chang
 Chase the Pet Therapy Dog
 Kyle Chezik
 Atticus Christensen
 Ana Cline
 Aimee Clites
 Joanne Clites
 Mary Closner
 Greg & Patty Closser & Family
 Lauren Code
 Richard Collman
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 Richard & Carol Cover
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 Kathy Davidson
 Kathi DeJohn
 Jeanie Deplazes
 Chris & Sally Donisch
 Katelyn Donisch
 Earl the Pet Therapy Dog
 Brad Easterson
 Wayne Eddy
 Samantha Ellringer
 Josh Engelsgjerd
 Lynn Ennis
 John Ernste
 Joshua Esget
 Dan Fenn
 Jane Fenton
 Chris Ellison & Gene Finger
 Nate Finger
 Natalie Sawyer Fink
 Robert & Carroll Flaten
 Mary Foote
 Rachel Foran
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 Clare Franco
 Jennifer Franklin
 Jon Fraser
 Linda Frederick
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 Dixie Schaffer
 Kelly Scheuerman
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 Rachael Schlossin
 Sandy Schlossin
 Laura Schmidt
 Andria Schwalbe
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 Kathie Smestad
 Joanne Sommers
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 Kristin Spiak
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 Julie Thorsheim
 Martin Thorsheim
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Randy Voracek
 Aaron Wagner
 Nicole Wille
 Doug, Carole & Ryan Wilson
 Bob Winter
 Allyson Wopata
 Carolyn Zastera
 Frank Zastera
 Maria Ziegler



Statement of Unrestricted Activities



For the year ending December 31, 2009

Support and Revenue

Client Services	\$4,609,881
Donations	199,941
Other Income	48,950
In-Kind Donations	10,407
Unrealized Net Loss on Investment	32,065
Total Support and Revenue	\$4,901,244

Operating Expenses

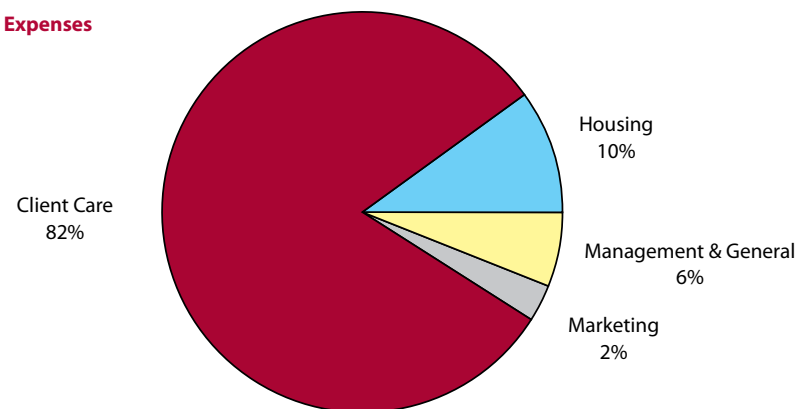
Salaries & Benefits Client Care	\$3,275,762
Client Program Supplies	135,002
Transportation	40,634
Contracted Services	196,465
Housing	475,297
Food	175,444
Other Client Care Expenses	105,050
Total Client Care Expenses	\$4,403,654

Management & General	\$292,187
Marketing & Events	94,086
Total Support Services	\$386,273

Total Expenses \$4,789,927

**2009 financial results
 audited by Olsen Thielen, Co., Ltd.**

2009 Expenses



Balance Sheet

as of December 31, 2009

Assets

Current Assets	\$796,578
Investments	199,348
Building & Equipment	2,067,732
Total Assets	\$3,063,658

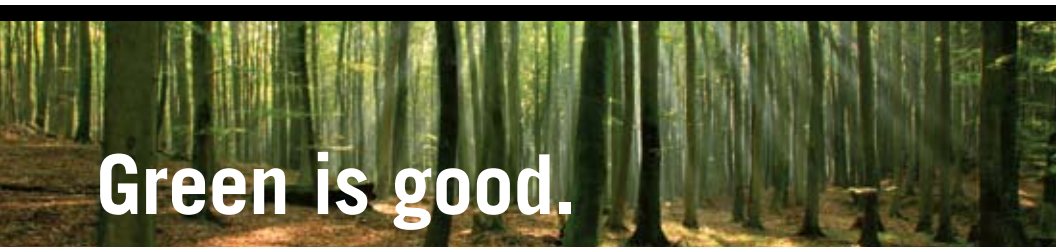
Liabilities

Current Liabilities	\$353,813
Long-Term Liabilities	—
Total Liabilities	\$353,813

Net Assets

Unrestricted Assets	\$2,709,845
Total Net Assets	\$2,709,845

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$3,063,658



Green is good.

At Engage Print, we believe that being “green” is simply the right thing to do. A staunch advocate of responsible environmental stewardship long before it was popular, Engage Print has voluntarily taken numerous steps toward sound environmental practices. And it shows in how we meet your print communications needs, and in how we operate as a company.

We are proud to support Laura Baker Services and help them share good fortune.



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