



Annual Report 2023-2024

25 YEARS & COUNTING



BY THE THEN **NUMBERS** NOW

4	----- Service Capacity ----->	400+
6-8	----- Ages Served ----->	15 months to adult
1	----- Programs Offered ----->	13
1	----- Campuses ----->	2
2,000	--- Square footage to serve clients -->	175,000
4	----- Program Staff ----->	300+
1	----- Localities Served ----->	30+
0	----- Research Papers Published ---->	40 and growing
\$392,720	----- Annual Revenue ----->	\$22,000,000
1 in 500 children	----- Rate of Autism Diagnosis ----->	1 in 36 children

1999 2024



Letter from the **PRESIDENT & CEO**

I attend every new hire orientation and at each one, I share the following advice with our new staff. "All of you have tough jobs. There will be days when you go home and ask yourself 'What am I doing?' When you have those moments, think about the toddlers, students or adults who you are working with and remember the progress that they are making. Their progress is a result of what you are doing. You should feel proud of that. There will be other days when you really ask yourself *'What am I doing?!'* When that happens, think beyond those who you are working with and think about their families. Everything you do on this campus translates to their home life. We aren't just helping individuals; we are helping families."

This year's annual report celebrates The Faison Center's 25 years of helping individuals and families. Many of you reading this report have supported Faison since its beginning in 1999. For others, this may be the first annual report you have received. Regardless of how long you have been a part of Faison's history, I wanted to share this new hire advice with you because it is a good reminder of what we are celebrating.

We celebrate the thousands of toddlers, students and adults who we have served in two and a half decades in our Early Education Center, Faison and Peninsula Schools, Faison Residence, Adult Day

program, Family Partner program and Behavioral Health Clinic. We celebrate their hard work, their successes and the impact they have had on our lives.

We celebrate the families of those in our programs. Every single day, we are honored to be by their side and to have the opportunity to work with their loved ones.

We celebrate all those who are working or who have worked at Faison over the last quarter century. They are the embodiment of dedication to our clients and our mission.

Finally, we celebrate you. You support the individuals we serve. You support their families. You support our staff. You support Faison.

Without everyone who has been a part of our work over the past 25 years, we would not have grown from a school for a handful of students to a world-class autism center providing a lifespan of services to individuals of all ages all along the autism spectrum.

Regardless of how you supported Faison throughout our history, thank you!

Sincerely,

W. Brian McCann
President and CEO



In memory of

ALAN KIRSHNER

While our 25th anniversary year had many highs to celebrate, Faison — and the entire community — experienced a tremendous loss.

Alan Kirshner was a visionary leader who helped build an international corporation and, at the same time, successful nonprofit organizations. In addition to his leadership, we will remember his tremendous heart and warm smile.

Hard work, excellence, humor: His way of doing things is infused in Faison's way of doing things. Faison would not be what it is today without his steadfast support on all fronts.

For tributes in honor and memory of Alan Kirshner, please see page 30.

“If you want something done, just go do it. With dreams and passion you can do it.”

— Alan Kirshner





WE OPENED OUR DOORS WITH THE ‘FAB FOUR’

On his third birthday in 1998, Carter L. received his autism diagnosis. His mother, Barbara — pregnant with twins — found the news “crushing.” For two years, the family struggled to balance Carter’s home-based ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) care with raising the younger two.

Then Carter was invited to join three other children to form The Faison School’s first class, a group Barbara lovingly calls the “Fab Four.” The school offered programmatic experiences for Carter to learn and grow. “To be able to take him somewhere where I knew he was learning and getting such quality attention was everything,” she said. “I still remember the names of everyone who worked with him.”

Faison’s support extended to the entire family, teaching them skills for living with an individual with autism and connecting them with other families going through similar experiences.

“They didn’t just care about Carter; they cared about all of us,” Barbara said.

Today, Carter has graduated from The Faison School but continues to attend our Adult Day program. Barbara’s advocacy for our work has only strengthened over the years.

“To be able to take him somewhere where I knew he was learning and getting such quality attention was everything,” she said. “I still remember the names of everyone who worked with him.” — Barbara L.

“Faison means hope to me, hope for Carter,” Barbara added. “Faison means security, knowing that Carter is well cared for. I see no limits with Faison.”

WE BUILT OUR FOREVER HOME

A quarter-century ago, we opened our doors to a converted home on Chamberlayne Avenue and welcomed our first students.

"It was a dream that came true," said Lynne Faison, whose daughter, Brittany, was among the first four students. Until the school opened, Lynne scheduled six hours of in-home learning for Brittany, seven days a week. She and her husband, Don, even brought a teacher with them on vacation so their daughter didn't miss a lesson.

We outgrew that space quickly, moving first to the basement of a church and then to the former Richmond Memorial Hospital. Our enrollment soon tripled as we refined our evidence-based, ABA approach for young children on the spectrum.

That growth aligned with increasing recognition in Central Virginia and nationally for our exceptional autism services. As our students advanced into middle and high school and became adults, we needed more space.

We found our forever home in 2008 when we moved into a new building near Willow Lawn. Today, Kirshner Mihaloff Hall anchors our Richmond campus, with school programs for individuals ages 5-22.

Six years ago, a building expansion introduced specialized learning areas, more classrooms and innovative features that broadened opportunities for students to learn and increase independence skills. Those resources include a simulated apartment and kitchen where students develop and practice daily living skills.

While families like the Faisons once considered moving out of Virginia to access the needed services for their children, Richmond now is a destination for autism services. "We're positively impacting not just the students, but their families," Lynne said. "I'm just so happy that others don't have to go through what we went through. We didn't set out to establish a school when we looked for needed services for Brittany, but we are proud to have helped establish The Faison Center as an amazing resource in Richmond and beyond."

"We're positively impacting not just the students, but their families," — Lynne Faison





STUDENT WINS CREATE 'OH, WOW' MOMENTS

Beth Newcomb still recalls the moment that a student she was working with spoke to her for the first time. It was a small, but magical moment that showed the young teaching assistant that she was making a connection — and the student was responding.

"I taught that kid to say just one word. Then he began to talk," she said. "That experience was a defining moment in my own learning process."

That was 20 years ago, when Beth had just started at Faison. She joined the team after providing in-home instruction for one of our students when he came home from school. She never imagined that a part-time college job would evolve into a long career in autism services.

"Through working with just one child, I found that I liked working with students with autism," Beth said. "The kids were all very different. I enjoyed their small but steady gains where I could see the impact of my teaching."

Over the next two decades, Beth took on more responsibility and greater leadership roles while also earning a Master's Degree and Board Certified Behavior Analyst designation, both paid for through Faison's tuition reimbursement program.

Year after year, she watched our school and community grow. Elementary-aged students advanced into middle and upper classes. Enrollment expanded at every level. The school moved into its Willow Lawn campus and then that campus grew exponentially. That young boy she first taught at his home continued with Faison through his entire school career, and he is now in our Adult Day and Family Partner programs. Today, Beth serves as the Director of The Faison School overseeing a staff of more than 150 teachers and teaching assistants.

No matter how much Faison has grown and evolved over the years, Beth still knows that the real

measure of success is the collection of magical moments that each student experiences. From mastering a basic skill, to talent shows and graduation, special moments prompt her to say "oh, wow!" as each student grows and learns. "Because of Faison, these kids have the opportunity to do many of the same things that every other kid is doing," Beth said. "When I think about that, I know I'm with the right people and that Faison is a special place to be."

"When I think about that, I know I'm with the right people and that Faison is a special place to be." — Beth Newcomb

OUR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY SERVES EVERYONE



When Talbot L. moved into the Faison Residence, he found not just a home, but a community.

"It was just a really positive uplifting environment," he said. "I just loved meeting different kinds of people and understanding that autism is such a wide spectrum that I didn't even realize."

The Residence, which opened in 2014 along with Faison's Adult Day Services, fosters independence through enriching activities and programs.

"It was just a really positive uplifting environment... I just loved meeting different kinds of people and understanding that autism is such a wide spectrum that I didn't even realize." — Talbot L.

Talbot (pictured center) with friends.



Patricia meeting then-Governor Terry McAuliffe when he visited the Faison campus.

“It helped me become more independent.”

— Patricia H.

These resources address an overwhelming need for adult services and supportive housing. Our innovative approach reserves a portion of the apartments for adults with autism, with the remaining units rented by the public.

Talbot met dozens of friends, mentors and peers who encouraged him to explore new opportunities, pursue his interests and think about his future.

Talbot now works in maintenance at a retirement community, but he has dreams of applying his experiences at Faison to benefit others — perhaps by working with his brother to open a coffee shop that employs people with disabilities. “I know firsthand how hard it is for even individuals who are high functioning to find employment,” he said. “We need to create more businesses like that, and Richmond is a great place to start.”

Patricia H. also found her first apartment at the Faison Residence. She made friends, enjoyed holiday events, and even joined then-Gov. Terry McAuliffe in a bill-signing ceremony marking the use of tax-advantaged funds for living expenses of individuals with disabilities.

“Having an apartment complex that is safe and inclusive is a huge deal,” said her mother, Paige H., who had moved them to Richmond for Faison. “We decided to take the opportunity so she would have this life experience.”

Today, Patricia works and lives on her own, back in Alexandria where she’s reunited with many friends. Faison was important in making that happen, she said, because “it helped me become more independent.”



“There’s no other opportunity like this,
certainly not in the public schools to this level,
and definitely not at other private schools.” — Jill V.

STARTING WITH THE LITTLEST LEARNERS

Every program offered at Faison is vetted to ensure that the data tells us it's the right thing to do. Not surprisingly, then, in 2015 we opened the Early Education Center (EEC). After all, research shows that the earlier children receive intervention and education, the better their outcomes. With the creation of the EEC, we expanded our lifespan model to reach not only school-age children and adults with autism, but also children in their earliest years of development.

We help our littlest learners develop communication and social skills at a young age. Our goal is simple: Prepare them to enter traditional kindergarten classrooms whenever possible. To reach that goal, the EEC's unique inclusion model co-locates our two classrooms with two classrooms run by our partner, Westhampton Day School. Students from both programs enjoy learning in their own environment while also having the opportunity to learn and play with their neighboring peers. This arrangement gives our kiddos, like Mary V., a chance to practice skills for when they head to a traditional kindergarten classroom.

"Mary has such an incredible love for kids and friends. She longs for friendship so much but really struggles with those social skills that are needed," said her mother Jill V., noting it was the first time her daughter interacted — beyond her siblings — with children without disabilities. "Because of the relationship that Faison has with Westhampton, she had this incredible opportunity to work on those skills in a way she was comfortable with, at her own pace. There's no other opportunity like this, certainly not in the public schools to this level, and definitely not at other private schools."

Faison gave Mary a foundation that allowed her to "be the thriving, shining star she is today," Jill added. "They gave her a safe space to shine, and I don't know if she would have the self-confidence, spunk and tenacity that everyone falls in love with if it wasn't for Faison and their partnerships."

EXPANDING OUR REACH & IMPACT

With our Richmond campus serving more than 30 Central Virginia localities, we had to find a way to extend our evidence-based approach beyond this region. Shortly after starting to explore expansion options, we uncovered a promising opportunity in Newport News.

We found a great partner in The Peninsula School for Autism which had been independently serving the Hampton Roads area since 2010.

The school was already beginning to use ABA therapy and intensive data collection to serve its clients, so it was a natural fit for Faison.

As the small school sought to have a gold-standard impact in a long-underserved community, tapping into broader expertise and capabilities could make that happen. Bringing the two organizations together simply made sense and efforts to merge the two began in 2018.



“The Peninsula School had great momentum in their efforts to build a first-class school for individuals with autism,” said Faison CEO Brian McCann. “We were able to apply our resources and knowledge to help accelerate their progress. In turn, they provided a strong foundation to expand our services outside of the Richmond area. Together, we were able to offer quality autism services to the Hampton Roads area.”

After a successful fundraising campaign, Faison opened a new campus at Oyster Point, applying lessons from Richmond to create an optimal learning environment for our students. This campus now serves students coming from New Kent County to Virginia Beach and even as far as North Carolina.

But we didn’t just add another school: We extended our proven treatment approach to educate more students and support more families.

“At the end of the day, our success is not measured in the size of our budget or the number of buildings on our campus. Faison’s success

“At the end of the day, our success is not measured in the size of our budget or the number of buildings on our campus. Faison’s success is measured by having the greatest impact possible on the greatest number of people,” — Brian McCann

is measured by having the greatest impact possible on the greatest number of people,” said McCann. “Our Peninsula School campus gives us the ability to expand our reach to help meet the growing demand for autism services across Virginia.”



PIONEERING RESEARCH

In addition to delivering world-class services, our staff are committed to advancing knowledge and practices related to autism and Applied Behavior Analysis. The Faison Center is part of a small group of organizations outside of higher education who regularly publish articles in peer reviewed literature. Our research covers both best practices in working with individuals with autism, and broader explorations of organizational behavior and staff management. Faison staff have published over 40 different research papers since our founding.

This past year, Faison published two new papers. The first investigated how to maximize a team's performance based on how they are rewarded. Titled "Variations of the Dependent Group Contingency and Effects on Employee Performance" and published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, the article was authored by staff members Shantel Pugliese, Jody Liesfield, Eli Newcomb, Gina Graf and Byron Wine. This research explored the relationship between team performance and how individual team members are evaluated. Researchers learned that when the team knows that their overall success is dependent on the success of a specific team member, the team performs better overall. Team performance was highest when the team members didn't know which individual's performance would be used in evaluating the overall success of the team. This research has direct real-world impact on how Faison's behavior analysts lead their teams of teachers and teaching assistants to provide the best services possible each day.

The second published paper also directly impacts our day-to-day work with students. Filling a gap on how to prevent injuries for staff

who work with clients who show aggressive behavior, this paper explores techniques that staff members can use to better provide a safe learning environment for themselves and our clients. This paper was titled "A Blocking and Distance Management Staff Training Intervention for Torso- and Head-Directed Aggression," and was led by staff members Byron Wine and Eli Newcomb. It was published in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, a leading peer-reviewed journal. Research like this benefits the overall field of behavior analysis while also having very practical benefits to both students and staff every day at Faison.





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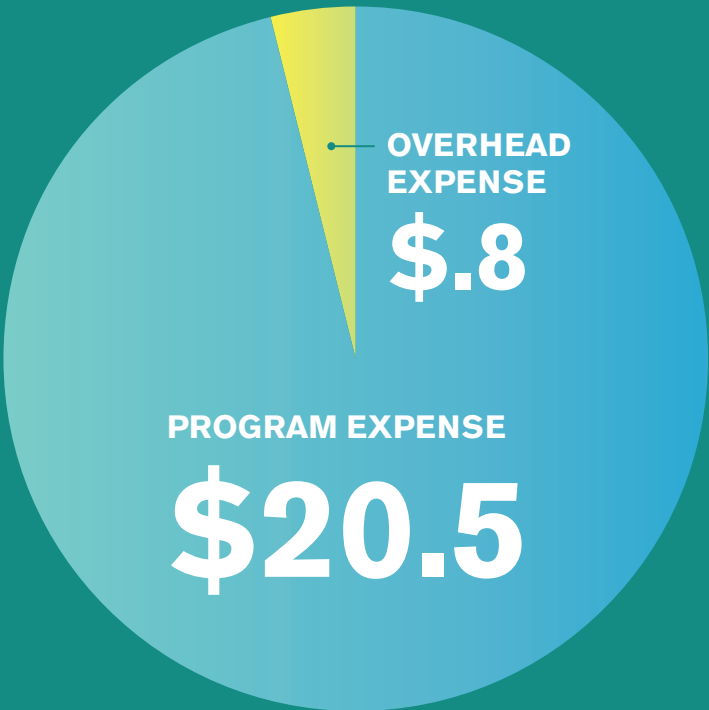
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**Of Blessed Memory*

THE FAISON CENTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2024



THE FAISON CENTER OPERATIONS (IN MILLIONS)

Program Revenue	\$19.6
Special Projects and Investments	\$1.1
Net Income from Fundraising	\$.7

NET FISCAL YEAR ENDING 06/30/2024

Net Income	\$0.1*
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Financial information is provided following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles but is not yet audited.

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

We recognize the generous gifts received from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 to our Annual Fund, Action for Autism Gala and Aces for Autism golf tournament.

\$25,000+

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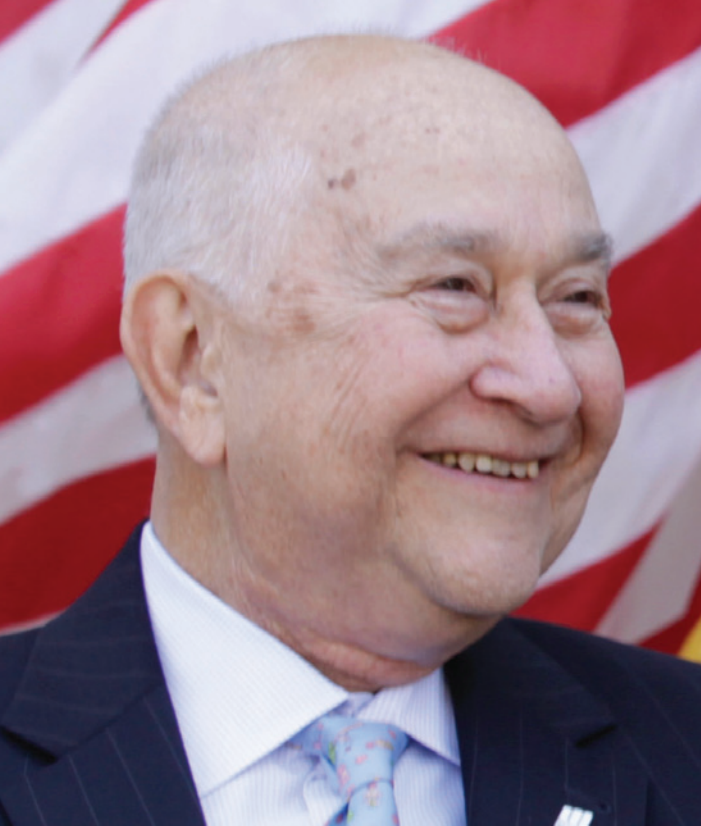
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OUR MISSION

At The Faison Center, our mission is to give children and adults with autism and related challenges the best opportunity to improve their life's journey through evidence-based practice.

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The Faison Center

5311 Markel Road, Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 612-1947

Peninsula School at The Faison Center

803 Diligence Drive, Suite 300, Newport News, VA 23606
(757) 223-0558