



MISSION:

TO SERVE CHILDREN THROUGH INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL, THERAPEUTIC, NURSING, AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

DEAR FRIENDS,



During this uncertain time, the members of the Sisu community are using current data to help guide us with our decisions about health, safety, education, and work. It is important to understand how this data is reflected through our preschool and community. And there is no better way to share the essence of Sisu during the 2019-2020 school year except through its storyboard timeline of crucial accomplishments, which concurrently engages and benefits our community at large.

This past year, the entire team at Sisu completed the comprehensive SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools)/Cognia review. This evaluation of our school and its teaching strategies involved meeting and successfully implementing 368 separate criteria to ensure reaccreditation of our school and its curriculum. Our team is proud to share that Sisu not only met the necessary criteria, but additionally received two commendations at the final conference between Sisu's school officials and the accreditation team.

Also this year, Sisu was a part of the LITTLE (Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language Rich Environments) grant this past year—an award that required our school to track the number of audible engagements between an adult and a child. Through the data collected for this grant, our team at Sisu learned that by increasing a child's interactions, there is potential to increase a child's vocabulary and create a foundation for reading success in their future. This professional development for 15 of our teachers and paraprofessionals was beneficial for 42 students—we look forward to continuing this grant next year and counting the number of verbal exchanges with a new group of students.

The addition of one BCBA (Board Certified Behavioral Analyst) to Sisu's team of 8 therapists in August was a decision driven by data, as Sisu sent out a survey to gauge parents' interest in their child receiving ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) services during the school day. The administrative team anticipated only four or five inquiries from the survey—the team received 24 inquiries in 24 hours, well over the expectation and a substantial description of the heavy need for this service in North Georgia. Sisu applied for and received a grant from the North Georgia Community Foundation which supported this pilot program and helped Sisu add four Registered Behavior Technicians in January.

Mar-Jac Poultry provided funding for 22,000 square feet of new flooring for Sisu's center—their partnership with the school has been incredible for the past decade. They are one of 124 partners that help Sisu's mission to thrive.

The mission at Sisu is to serve children through innovative educational, therapeutic, nursing, and family support services in an inclusive environment. During the recent pandemic, Sisu's board of directors and administrative team shifted the mission's focus from serving children to highlighting family support. The #ShowYourSisu campaign engaged the generous community in which Sisu works—members from as far as South Atlanta drove to Sisu to donate diapers, food, formula, chicken, clothing and essentials for our families as they work to nurture their children. What started as a one-time food drive has evolved into an eight week support network for families and staff.

Over the last two years, it has been my privilege to serve as Sisu's board chair. I've enjoyed experiencing the growth of this unique school and wholly understanding what 'sisu' means: the ability to reach beyond perceived capabilities.

Sincerely,

Jenny Floyd, Board Chair

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Remembering OUR FOUNDER

Jean Willers

February 22, 1945 ~ September 17, 2019



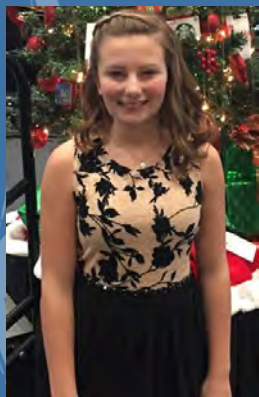
It all started in 1981, when Jean Willers wanted to help her neighbor's son, Randy Owens, who had just been injured in an accident. With her occupational therapy and special education degrees, she worked to create a school environment in her home to help with his social and educational development when he was just 2 years old.

Then, Jean discovered more about a lack of programs for students with special needs in the community; she started her own program in a donated space at First Baptist Church of Gainesville, with six students enrolling the first year.

In 1985, Jean founded Challenged Child, now Sisu, as a nonprofit, offering educational, nursing and family support services as well as physical, occupational and speech therapy. Sisu now serves about 300 students a year.

Nancy Copper SISU SPARK AWARD

Addi Bales



With a smile that lights up any room and a determined grit, Addi finds joy and fights on for healing in her battle against cancer.

❄️ **ADDISTRONG**
❄️ **JOYFUL**
❄️ **RESILIENT**



Thank you to the Copper family: Caleb, Jen, Chad, & Austin for sponsoring the Sisu Spark Award in memory of a beloved wife and mother, Nancy Copper.

DeAnn Sams



DeAnn never complains about the barrage of medical issues the dearest people in the world to her face, showing up to a stressful job and still putting others before herself.

❄️ **HARDWORKING**
❄️ **HONEST**
❄️ **GRIT**

Services

5,379
THERAPY INTERVENTIONS



(ABA, OCCUPATIONAL, SPEECH, PHYSICAL,
DANCE-MOVEMENT, MUSICAL, PET)

+ 2,501 PLANNED INTERVENTIONS
+ 4,023 UNPLANNED INTERVENTIONS

6,524 NURSING INTERVENTIONS*

*(RANGES FROM BOO-BOOS TO MEDICAL TRANSPORT TO HOSPITAL)
(MEDICATION DISTRIBUTIONS, TUBE FEEDINGS, ETC.)

249
CHILDREN SERVED

 37 GRANTS WRITTEN

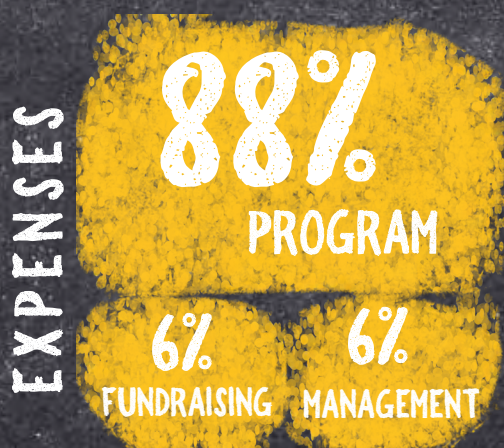
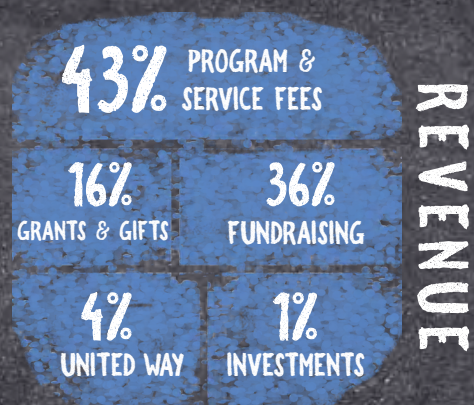
 23 GRANTS AWARDED

 \$757,913
IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
TO FAMILIES

527 VOLUNTEERS
WITH 4,209
HOURS OF SERVICE

156 
NURSING STUDENTS
FROM

33 
COUNTIES ACROSS GEORGIA

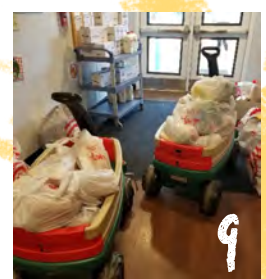


124 Community Partnerships :

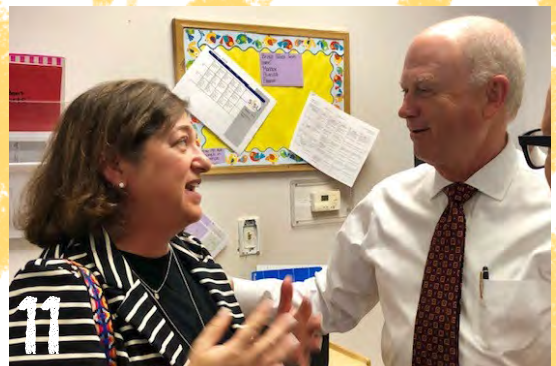
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- 1) Thank you to Mar-Jac Poultry for helping Sisu replace its floors!
- 2) Sisu was proud to be reaccredited with SACS/Cognia this year.
- 3) We love our grandparents!
- 4) Kendall's Krazy Kickball game was a blast at Forsyth's Miracle League Fields!
- 5) Thank you to Eagle Scout Austin Copper for building mobile planters for Sisu's students.
- 6) Thanks to all the grandparents who helped fund the installation of a water fountain on our playground!



- 7) Thanks to the NGCF's grant that supported the training of Registered Behavioral Therapists for our ABA therapy program.
- 8) Working on occupational skills makes Sisu students smile!
- 9) South Hall Kiwanis helps to support students at Sisu.
- 10) We were excited to work with the Georgia Mt. Food Bank for COVID-19 relief efforts.
- 11) Senator Butch Miller and Mindy Binderman discuss early intervention education at Sisu.



Thank you to our donors & supporters! *^

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Despite our best efforts, there may be inaccuracies in this report. Please call 770-535-8372 with any corrections and our sincere apologies.

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