Dear Friends of ANDRUS,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer! We have had another busy and exciting season at ANDRUS. On June 5 we had our annual Golf Fore Kids event, raising over $200,000 - our most successful outing so far. Shortly after that we celebrated as 23 graduates of The Orchard School received their diplomas. Our valedictorians gave inspiring speeches, and it was an honor to witness how far the children have come on each of their ANDRUS journeys. We also completed an extensive renovation of the pool in McGee Hall - making it safer and more efficient. I am thrilled to report that with additional staffing, we have been able to provide swimming programming for our children every day since the renovation. The summer rounded out with our Camp Week, which once again was full of fun, movement, and creativity. I hope you enjoy the articles and pictures in this newsletter celebrating some of these summer activities.

As we look ahead, please save the date for our annual ANDRUS Gala, which will be held Friday, November 3rd, at the Ritz-Carlton in White Plains.

We are all looking forward to the coming school year and putting our best foot forward for the children and families we serve. Wishing you all a relaxing and fun-filled rest of the summer.

Gratefully,

Bryan

VISION & MISSION

ANDRUS nurtures hope in children by providing care that empowers them to succeed and by promoting innovation and standards of excellence in the care of children in our community and beyond.

ANDRUS nurtures social and emotional well-being in children, families, and communities by delivering a broad range of vital services and by providing research, training, and innovative program models that promote the standard of excellence for professional performance in and beyond our service community.
“When you think about your journey here at ANDRUS, whether it was for months or years, I hope that you see what we all see: how much you have grown, how much you have learned, and how much you offer to the world!” quoted Bryan Murphy, ANDRUS President and CEO as he addressed the 23 eighth graders who received their diplomas from the award-winning special-education ANDRUS Orchard School on Friday, June 23rd.

Truly the sky’s the limit for these youth who came from all walks of life and challenges and are now celebrating an achievement they once viewed as impossible...graduation. Previously unable to thrive in traditional school settings, the Class of 2017 benefited from the efforts of highly trained special education experts, small class settings, individualized attention and support and have gained life skills and the art of managing emotions and academic competency. Some will attend mainstream education at their district high school and others will go to secondary schools specializing in working with youth who have learning, emotional and/or adjustment difficulties.

Bryan shared privately with a group of parents, “Thank you for allowing ANDRUS to become part of your family’s journey toward possibility and hope. Please know that though our graduates are moving on, we will remain your biggest cheerleaders, always available to encourage and lend a hand where we can. It has been our privilege to care for your precious children. Thank you for sharing these smart, funny, creative, brave, kind and talented young people with us.”

We wish the class of 2017 all the best as they embark on new adventures!
McGee Hall is the home of ANDRUS’ swimming pool, where in addition to cooling off, our students can practice their safety and behavior while learning an essential life skill. That’s why when news broke of the pool being renovated, there was a rush to have it ready for the summer programs so that it could be properly enjoyed.

Fortunately the pool was beautifully renovated just in time for the children to use this summer, and they’ve been getting the most out of it and the new features.

With a brand new filtration system, a permanent tile stepped entrance, and a lipped edge with exterior drainage, the pool is now much safer and more efficient. Brand new non-slip flooring, lifejackets, goggles, and pool toys are all part of the new space as well.

With all of these new features, children and staff alike were eager to jump in and test the water over the summer. With Stephan Spilkowitz, Barry Naft, Adam Tyson, George Pagan, Barry Froehlich, and Ashley Charney Shatz all working as certified lifeguards, ANDRUS has been able to offer swimming activities for children every single day for the first time.

With deep water swim tests and other structured exercises, the ANDRUS staff has a valuable opportunity to provide sensory stimulation input, as well as an opportunity for exercise regardless of weight or ability, all while learning the essential life skill of swimming. As we continue to work towards formalizing our swimming program, we look forward to incorporating lessons and activities into our Orchard School and Residential Programs.

As we approach welcoming our students back for the next school year, it is exciting to be able to offer additional structured programming that is fun, engaging, and beneficial to life after ANDRUS - all in a gorgeous brand new swimming pool!
We Are Innovative

ANDRUS’ Darcy Cunningham Leads Book Drive for Peekskill Clinic

Darcy Cunningham joined ANDRUS just over a year ago as a clinician at our Peekskill Clinic. In addition to her dedication and passion for working with our clients, she has also shown initiative and innovation that represents the spirit we strive for at ANDRUS. This was shown in an incredibly successful book drive for the Peekskill Clinic this summer.

Ms. Cunningham explained that she “had several interactions with clients that really tugged at my heartstrings. I know that storytelling is a powerful tool and that if I found a way to share these situations, other people would be as affected as I was and want to do give.” After having each clinician ask their clients “If you could have any two books, what would they be?” this information was assembled into an Amazon wishlist and shared on Ms. Cunningham’s Facebook page. Incredibly, the need was fulfilled in just a few hours.

In her initial Facebook post, Ms. Cunningham shared some of her experiences with clients: “The kids we treat are the most awesome, passionate, hilarious, resilient, poorly behaved little humans, and it has been the privilege of my life to bear witness to their stories. Our clinic would LOVE to be able to gift them with some new books this summer.

Several months ago, I accompanied one of my 12-year-olds to a book fair. He, one of a dozen siblings placed throughout foster care, brought a plastic bag filled with coins. He counted out exact change and bought a Minecraft guide book. A boy of very few words, he talked more about that book than I had ever heard him speak. Another client of mine was going through a particularly tough period this winter after the incarceration of her father. She told me she survived it by ‘going to Hogwarts’... If anyone would like to buy a book or two for a child, I can wholeheartedly promise you it will be appreciated beyond measure. Thanks for taking the time to read and for making a difference in the life of a child!”

These personal stories brought the needs and circumstances of some clients to light in such an authentic way. With 120 books originally requested, the project concluded with over 230 collected, and the reactions have been wonderful. When one of our female teenage clients received a book of horror stories that she wanted so badly, her face went from pure joy to tears within seconds – “This is the book that got me through my childhood!!!!” she said.

The project was a big success and will bolster the library in our Peekskill Clinic so that we can use books as therapeutic tools for the clients who need them most. We look forward to many more projects in the future and would like to congratulate Ms. Cunningham once again for making a big impact with this innovative project.
Summer Camp Week at ANDRUS is a Big Hit!

This June children at ANDRUS enjoyed an activity filled summer camp with some traditional games, as well as new creative ideas. It was the first camp week for ANDRUS staff members Kristin Cardenas, Rita Moran, and Theresa Smith, and all brought with them innovative games and activities to engage the children. With knocker ball races, hop scotch, chalk art, and field day games such as badminton, tug-of-war, and ring toss, there was plenty to keep everyone moving and having fun.

Our camp week also featured our 4th annual trip to Rye Playland, including full park passes and a barbeque. The children on this excursion displayed incredible behavior, remaining safe and engaged throughout the very hot day! A former ANDRUS resident, CJ VanDuynhoven, an employee at Rye Playland, was on hand working, and was able to talk with current residents and staff.

The week rounded out with daily swimming, ropes course activities, sports, and field day games. It was another fantastic camp week for all involved, and we look forward to next year! Thanks again to our ANDRUS employees new to camp week for bringing your enthusiasm and creative ideas!

It was one of our hottest camp weeks yet, So Jimmy’s Soft Serve was a must!

AcroVinyasa Yoga was a great mind and body centering activity.