



Aspire. Achieve. Celebrate.



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



*In Memoriam—In 2024 we lost a beloved participant.
This report is dedicated to his memory. Rest in Peace*

TRISTAN ROWLAND

We love and miss you.



302-731-0301



www.forwardjourney.org



info@forwardjourney.org

Fiscal Year 2024

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Mission

To enrich the lives of adults with multiple, severe disabilities and, in turn, their families through an active, personalized day program.

A message from Cindy Jenkins, Board President

It's been another busy year at Forward Journey, a year in which we were deeply involved in advocating for financial support to provide the services we offer. We must raise our voices so decision-makers understand our dilemma: the current rate is not enough to cover the costs of operating our program. This isn't just a Forward Journey issue; it's a systemic issue across I/DD service providers.

As the parent of an adult child with significant disabilities who attends Forward Journey, I can tell our story to legislators and funders in a way that hits home, especially when I talk about what would happen if those services went away! Our advocacy must continue to garner a reimbursement rate that recognizes the critical nature of the work of a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The current funding level is several dollars per hour per employee below what we must pay to recruit and retain qualified employees!

Our work is cut out for us, but we're up to the task! **If you are reading this and want to help, please get in touch with us at info@forwardjourney.org.** We can help you develop your advocacy speech or letter. The more voices heard, the greater the impact!



Good Bye and Thank You Terry

Talk about bittersweet! After nine years, we said goodbye to Assistant Executive Director Terry Cipolla when she retired in November 2023. During her time with us, Terry's involvement was far-reaching. She managed strategic planning and oversight, marketing, public relations, special events, our volunteer program, and agency grant writing. Terry, we miss you and wish you all the best!



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Executive Director Update
Vivian J Turner, MPA

Partnering with Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA)

In FY2024, we were privileged to be selected along with six other agencies to participate in the Accelerator program offered by DANA. This innovative program “accelerates” a nonprofit’s ability to serve its community with continual technical assistance, coaching, and consulting over a three-year period.

The program includes a peer learning cohort for Executive Directors, fully customized training, and a bank of support hours in various topics for anyone in the agency needing support, including the board and all staff. Technical assistance hours and access to DANA workshops and on-demand courses are also available and being put to use!

As of the end of FY2024, the following has been completed:

- Work plans for strategic planning and technology assessment were developed and signed.
- Initial planning meetings for the strategic plan were held. The plan itself will be finished in FY2025.
- Technology assessment was completed, and plans were made to transition paid time off from paper-based to online. This will be completed in FY2025.
- Staff began training on cyber security awareness.
- The Board of Directors had training in “Sustaining Board Leadership,” which was extremely helpful.

More board training and work will be done in FY2025. I look forward to bringing additional updates in the future!

Tristan Rowland

Forward Journey Participant
7/2018-3/2024



Tristan was an amazing young man who was a steadfast member of the Forward Journey location through COVID-19 and beyond. He was funny and energetic and loved to hang out with “his boys” in the Smyrna location.

We miss him terribly and send our love to his parents.



Employee Spotlight



Sharuanda Robinson

"I enjoy the laughter and smiles of the individuals and watching them be active throughout the day."

It is rare to hear anyone say they have worked with an organization for five or even ten years. However, we are fortunate to have someone on our team who has been with Forward Journey even longer. In 2024, Sharuanda Robinson celebrated 17 years of employment at Forward Journey!

"Forward Journey has been my second home and family since I was 23 years old. The loyalty and love that I feel for the family I created is the same loyalty I hold for Forward Journey. FJ invests in our participants with honor, passion, and care, and I feel blessed to have a career at such an organization. In my eyes, this was destiny – heaven sent."

Thanks to her skills, abilities, and dedication to our participants, Sharuanda has been promoted four times throughout her career at Forward Journey, always being the first employee to occupy newly created positions. She was the first employee to advance through the levels of the DSP Program Associate position (PA1, PA2, and PA3). Each year, The Ability Network of Delaware (A.N.D.) recognizes Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) with annual awards. Sharuanda received the STAR award in 2011 and again won the Leadership Award in 2015. As our program grew, in 2019, Sharuanda was promoted to Assistant Program Manager for the NCC site, a position she held through FY2024. **BREAKING NEWS:** As of July 2025, Sharuanda will transition to become the agency's first Training & Compliance Administrator. We are proud of her dedication and commitment, and we look forward to seeing her excel in this new position.



The Annual Appeal

The annual appeal raised \$9,892.25, which was 99% of our goal of \$10,000. So close... Please consider donating to Forward Journey today to get us to our next goal!! You can donate at forwardjourney.org/support-us



Do More 24

This was a fantastic fundraiser - in just 24 hours, we had 25 funders and raised \$ 2,725. Thank you everyone for your support.



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Walk For A
Healthy Community

HIGHMARK Bright Blue Futures



Contributions in 2024
totaled **\$5,545!**

Forward Journey is grateful to again be invited to participate in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. Our success is due to those who continue to support our fundraising efforts for this event.

2024 Highmark Walk Sponsors

\$1,000 Gold Sponsor

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international**



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New Board Member Alert



Mike Guida received his B.S. degree from the University of Delaware with a concentration in operations management. His work experience was focused in the chemical analysis and life sciences fields. Mike's entire career was spent with Hewlett Packard / Agilent Technologies where he was a senior manager responsible for supply chain management and instrument manufacturing.

Mike has a daughter, a son, and two grandchildren. Since retiring, Mike has moved to the Delaware beach area with his wife Debbie and their son Kevin. Kevin has multiple disabilities and has recently moved into a nearby group home. In this spare time, Mike volunteers at Casa San Francisco in Milton and does plenty of biking and kayaking.



Erika Grimes is an Operations Analyst for Barclays Bank in Delaware. She joined Barclays in 2022, prior to that she worked at AAA for 14 years, where she held various roles, including Project and Program Manager. She graduated from Wilmington University in January 2020 with a Master's Degree in Management and Management Information Systems. She earned her certification as a Project Manager in 2015. She is a member of the Project Management Institute Delaware Valley Chapter and enjoys volunteering to support others working towards certification.

Erika resides in Delaware and has four adult children and three grandchildren.



Sneaker Ball and Prom



The Sneaker Ball was a great opportunity for our participants, their families, and staff to get dressed up and boogie down! It was a full-day event that included games, photo opportunities, lunch, dancing, and voting for the winners of categories like "best dressed," "best sneakers," "Mr. And Ms. Personality," and, of course, our sneaker King and Queen. We look forward to seeing the Sneaker Ball become a bi-annual event here in New Castle.

Melina Coates

Assistant Program Manager (to take effect 2025)



NCC Gardening Program

Gardening Program



The first year of our gardening project at the New Castle location was a big success! Participants enjoyed the sensory experiences of all the stages of our garden beds; planting seeds, transplanting seedlings, watering, and, of course, harvesting! We learned a whole bunch, too, and can't wait to see how much better next year's crop will be!

-Melina Coates



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION – For Year Ended June 30, 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION – June 30, 2024

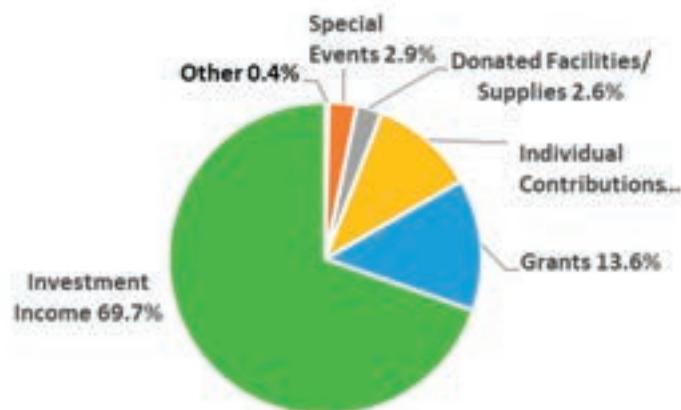
ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash & cash equivalents	\$282,660	Operating lease liability	\$1,234,739
Certificate of deposit	102,930	Accrued Compensation	<u>51,185</u>
Accounts receivable	180,004	Total liabilities	1,285,924
Investments	1,010,712		
Property & equipment - net of accumulated depreciation	228,071	NET ASSETS	
Security deposits	21,717	Without donor restrictions	1,774,909
Right of use asset	<u>1,234,739</u>	With donor restrictions	<u>0</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$3,060,833</u>	Total net assets	1,774,909
		TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u>\$3,060,833</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUE, GAINS & OTHER SUPPORT		EXPENSES	
Contributions	\$19,781	Program services	\$1,429,668
Government grants	28,732	Management and general	415,405
Donated facilities/supplies	4,800	Fundraising	<u>59,361</u>
Program revenue	1,773,612	Total expenses	1,901,435
Special events	5,295		
Other income	680	Change in net assets	55,038
Net assets released from restrictions	0		
Investment income	<u>127,367</u>	Net assets – beginning of year	<u>1,719,871</u>
Total revenue, gains & other support	\$1,956,473	Net assets – end of year	<u>\$1,774,909</u>

Financial statements provided were prepared by Wheeler, Wolfenden & Dwares Public Accountants

FY2024 Income other than Program Revenue
\$182,861 / 9.3% of Total Income



Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.



Thank you for your support in FY 2024!

Thank you to our parents and caregivers, our new and continuously gracious supporters, and large and small local businesses. We would not be as successful without you.

Forward Journey received funding for operating expenses from the **Delaware Division of the Arts, DFRC, and Grant-in-Aid**. Awards from the **Mid-Del Foundation, The Kent County Fund for the Arts, and the Kent County Levy Court** were granted to be used specifically for the Kent County site.



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Consider a Planned Giving Donation to Forward Journey

Since 2006, Forward Journey Adult Day Services has served individuals with multiple, severe disabilities, many of whom are not able to attend other programs due to their complex medical needs. As we look toward the future, our goal is to ensure the support provided continues to be available to those people currently attending the program as well as those yet to need our services. Your gift will ensure future participants the opportunity to benefit from Forward Journey support and services. Please choose to include Forward Journey as part of your estate with one of the planned options listed below.

Direct Gifts & Bequests – A gift of cash, property, or other assets from your estate.

Charitable Gift Annuities – With this option Forward Journey receives money, securities, or real estate in return for agreeing to pay you a defined payment for life. This is an option to donate substantial assets, minimize taxes, and retain consistent income flow throughout your lifetime.

Charitable Lead Trust – This occurs when you contribute the assets of a trust for a defined period to benefit Forward Journey.

Qualified Charitable Contributions – A gift can be made right from your IRA account. This gift doesn't get a tax deduction but it also is not recognized as personal income so the charity gets the full amount of the gift.

Gifts of Stock – During your lifetime, you can gift stock. If the amount of your donation differs from the amount at purchase, the difference can be a tax write off which could result in tax savings for the donor.

Charitable Remainder Trust – The remainder of a trust is donated to Forward Journey Adult Day Program after you receive the assets for a specified period or the rest of your life.

As you plan with a financial advisor, please consider a gift to Forward Journey. Doing so will help ensure that future support remains available for this vulnerable population.



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FY 2024

Board Members

Phone: 302-731-0301

Fax: 302-731-0201

Cindy Jenkins, President
Jessica Jordan, Vice President
Bill Hudson, Treasurer
Amy Haughey, Secretary

Erika Grimes
Michael Guida
Maryanne Payne
Blerta Profiri
Dave Sisson

E-Mail:
info@forwardjourney.org

WEBSITE:
www.forwardjourney.org

We're on
Facebook, too!



Forward Journey is a
recognized nonprofit
under IRS Tax Code
Section 501(c) 3

EIN#: 01-0592853

Designate Gifts:
[United Way #9618](#)

[DE State Employees
Charitable Campaign #71036](#)

2024 Forward Journey Employees- as of 6/30/2024

Administrative Staff

Vivian Turner, MPA – Executive Director
Tracey Miller – Director of Development
Michelle Shorter, SHRM-CP – Operations & HR Manager
Erin Chandler, BSN-RN – Director of Nursing
Melissa Beaty, MS – Program Manager, New Castle
Darlene Myers, RN – Program Specialist/Nurse, Kent
Kaylyn Gibbs, LPN – Program Nurse, New Castle
Sharuanda Robinson – Ass't Program Manager, New Castle
Deanna Pedicone – Administrative Assistant

Program Associates

New Castle Site

Melina Coates
Samantha Covey
Corrina Klair
Ebony Mathis
Cherinity McRae
Ikedah Murray
Chantel Scott
Katherine Smith
Tajuana Warren

Kent Site

Sherry Hopkins
Brady Council
Brandi Dougherty
Jillian Oldham

Contributions can be made
anytime at
www.forwardjourney.org
through PayPal.
Select the
"Donate Now" button
or use
Venmo under business
[@Non-profitforwardjourney](#)



Legal name:
Collaborative Effort to Reinforce
Transition Success, Inc.
Doing Business As:
Forward Journey Adult Day
Services



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