Persevering Through the Pandemic
Since March 2020 Melmark has spent more than $1 million dollars in unplanned expenditures on COVID-19 testing kits and personal protective equipment (PPE). Ongoing testing and use of PPE ensures optimal virus mitigation within our programs.

In addition to the cost of testing and PPE at divisions in Pennsylvania, New England and the Carolinas, Melmark has spent $200,000 on retrofitting existing program space, increasing sanitization measures and creating isolation units.

Including the cost of hero pay, staffing bonuses, extended time off benefits, short term disability and pandemic related costs, expenses have exceeded $2.1 million.
Melmark’s Mission

Melmark is a multi-state human service provider with premier private special education schools, professional development, training, and research centers.

We are committed to enhancing the lives of individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families by providing exceptional evidence-based and applied behavior analytic services to Every Individual, Every Day.

VISION

Our vision is to expand and raise the quality of service delivery systems throughout the country by disseminating and replicating the Melmark Model of Program Development and Clinical Treatment.

MELMARK’S CORE COMMITMENTS

Compassionate Care

Melmark provides a culture of ongoing care, support and respect for the individuals we serve, their families and our staff.

Integrity in Everything We Do

Melmark consistently assesses the fidelity of organizational and staff systems to ensure educational and clinical standards are achieved and maintained.

Highly Skilled Workforce

Melmark applies performance-based training and professional growth opportunities to enhance the skill set for all staff.

Evidence-based Practices

Melmark uses scientific evidence and performance data to inform all decision-making.

Best Outcomes

Melmark affects positive change in the quality of life of the individuals we serve by implementing data-driven trend analyses.
As we continue to usher in 2022, we see hope because of our Melmark heroes. In this issue of the Melmark Messenger, you will read about just a few of the mission-first moments we have been so moved to see emerge from our day and residential programs along the East Coast. From the compassionate care of our highly skilled workforce to senior leadership’s focus on evidence-based practices and following the science to ensure best outcomes during this COVID-19 pandemic and every day, there is integrity in everything we do.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first emerged in the US, we quickly armed ourselves with as much information as possible from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and a number of other national, state and local regulatory agencies. Our teams then utilized that data to inform decisions about everything from daily program operations, visitation restrictions, COVID-19 testing protocols, the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), facilities redesign, travel guidelines for staff and families, activities of daily living for those we serve, and a hyper-vigilant focus on all aspects of COVID-19 mitigation. It has been an exhausting two years, but our staff have not faltered. I continue to be humbled by their mission-first focus on maintaining the health and safety of the individuals we serve, their families, and one another.

I have also been moved by the generosity displayed by the Melmark community. Words simply cannot express my gratitude for the historic gift made by two individuals who have enjoyed a life well-lived at Melmark. In the pages ahead, you will read more about the $21.5 million endowment gift from the Anne and Brutus Kenan fund to further secure Melmark’s mission well into the future. You will also read about the courageous work our team did on educating our staff and community about the new COVID-19 vaccine and administering the vaccine on-site to our employees and individuals and their families.

We are grateful for the support of so many stakeholders, and we celebrate this new year with a renewed sense of mission-first commitment as we look toward a brighter year. As we continue to focus on the hope of 2022, we will follow the science in everything we do, from vaccinations to continued virus mitigation measures. We will continue to work to provide a safe and healthy community and are committed to doing our very best to keep our individuals and employees safe.

Sincerely,

Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA
President and CEO
Nearly seventy days into the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government had not yet designated a single dollar of emergency relief specifically for Medicaid-funded disability providers. Melmark called on its families, friends and other supporters to advocate for the HEROES Act to become law. This funding was vital, as Melmark and other providers faced a 50% reduction in reimbursement funding for the remainder of fiscal year 2020 and the first quarter of 2021. This unanticipated loss was created when day programs were ordered closed and federal waiver fund matches were not paid.

In addition to advocating for its own mission-first staff, Melmark, under the leadership of President and CEO Rita Gardner, expanded focus to the greater landscape of disability providers. Working with MAAPS: Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, a proposal to reopen Massachusetts schools safely before fall was created. Still, children’s and adult day programs across Melmark’s service divisions in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and the Carolinas remained closed while residential programs continued to restrict visitors.

The clouds did part during May of 2020 as Melmark saw a flurry of activity surrounding the advancement of the organization. The spring appeal, themed “Planting the Seeds for Tomorrow” was in full swing. Volunteers continued to support staff through any means they could. Some donated money or sewed masks while others created notes of thanks and delivered treats for distribution. Melmark celebrated Nurses’ and Teachers’ Appreciation Week across divisions.

Perhaps the most exciting development of May 2020 was when Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf lifted restrictions on the construction sector. This allowed work on the new Melmark School on Melmark’s Berwyn campus to resume. The renewed activity on such a vital project helped maintain focus on the preservation of Melmark’s legacy in being a mission-based provider for Every Individual, Every Day.

While some important projects resumed in May of 2020 Melmark leadership continued to monitor updates from governors in all three states that are home to Melmark’s service divisions. During this time of monitoring, Melmark teams at every level of the organization were planning for its day programs to resume in a safe and seamless manner.
Finding the Silver Linings During a Global Pandemic

If there was one silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was our ability to reach the broader Melmark community wherever they were throughout the first six months of this historic event and beyond. Melmark’s Coffee with the CEO series proved to be a successful way for President and CEO, Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA to share live updates real-time with the organization’s philanthropic partners. With donors positioned all across the country and even internationally, these virtual sessions provided more flexibility for Melmark stakeholders who wanted to learn about how they could support the mission-first work continuing despite the extraordinary landscape created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Family meetings, Individualized Education Program (IEP) sessions, family town halls and staff town halls also went virtual, creating a more efficient mode of communication about vital information that was changing at a lightning-fast pace. While dissemination of information was optimized during this time, Melmark’s highly skilled staff also got creative, learning new technology to ensure families did not miss a loved one’s birthday or other special celebration.

On September 29, 2020, Melmark New England students emerged from their classrooms to look up at the skies for a treat! Above the Clouds (ATC) offered ‘Dream Flyovers’ to children facing particularly challenging circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The organization partners with local firefighters and police to add a drive-by component to planned flyovers to create what ATC calls “a full ground-to-air friendship mission.” These missions have benefited more than 200 children across Massachusetts and New Hampshire, including some very excited young audience members from Melmark!
Excited to return to in-person special events in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Melmark New England hosted its 16th Annual fore Melmark New England Golf Tournament on Monday, October 4, 2021, at The Golf Club at Turner Hill in Ipswich and raised $202,000 to support individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities. Local sponsors included New England BioLabs and the Institution for Savings. In addition to golf, sponsors, donors and guests at this year’s fore Melmark New England Tournament bid on an array of items in the Silent and Live Auctions, and were treated to an Awards Dinner featuring Emcee, Kendra Petrone of MAGIC 106.7 and Auctioneer, comedian Paul Gilligan. A number of guests attended the annual ladies afternoon event held in conjunction with the tournament. Martini, Mani and More was hosted by Salon Forza, in Andover and Carol Mouradian of Mary Kay.

It was a gorgeous day on the greens at Olde Sycamore Golf Plantation, when Melmark Carolinas hosted their first golf outing on October 12th. More than $7,600 was raised to support the Charlotte-based day school. Volunteers interested to help us plan a Fall 2022 tournament are welcome!

The Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic annual golf tournament was held on Monday, October 11, 2021, at two locations- The Philadelphia Country Club and Gulph Mills Golf Club. Members of the Schoemaker Classic Advisory Board have remained dedicated in their mission to raise funds for the not-for-profit organization’s programs. The 16th annual golf fundraiser raised $314,600 while weaving social distancing measures and virus mitigation best practices into all aspects of the event.

Schoemaker Classic Advisory Board Co-Chair, Rich Decker, speaks of the importance of this event: “It is integral that we continue Hubert Schoemaker’s work to help ensure ongoing strength and vitality for Melmark’s services. The programs at Melmark depend a great deal on fundraised dollars, and I cannot think of a better way for the life sciences industry to pull together during this unique time in all of our lives. Hubert Schoemaker improved millions of lives. Not just through his work and contributions to the biotechnology industry, but as a philanthropist. We are grateful for the opportunity to support such a meaningful mission.”

For sponsorship or participation information, contact:

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or visit www.schoemakerclassic.com

Ellen M. Kallman  
Melmark New England and the Carolinas  
Director of Advancement  
ekallman@melmarkne.org  
or visit www.melmarkne.org/fore
Melmark New England celebrated its second fundraising gala, Mission Possible: Planting the Seeds for Tomorrow, and more than $200,000 was raised to support Melmark New England’s premier, special needs human services organization.

Held outside, on a night that featured live entertainment from renowned Latin percussionist and Berklee Professor, Eguie Castrillo, a formal dinner, silent and live auctions, 230 guests also enjoyed Kendra Petrone, MAGIC 106.7’s morning co-host, as master of ceremonies. The funds raised from ticket sales, sponsorships and the auctions will go toward enhancing the lives of individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families who receive exceptional evidence-based and applied behavior analytic services in our day and residential programs.

Melmark Pennsylvania celebrated 56 years of being a premier special needs human services organization. At its 10th biennial fundraising gala, The Dream Maker’s Ball: Planting The Seeds for Tomorrow, more than $490,000 was raised to support Melmark Pennsylvania’s mission.

On a night that featured Trang Do, former CBS3 news anchor, as master of ceremonies, a formal dinner and silent and live auctions, 200 guests also enjoyed live entertainment from Del's Groove.

The highlight of the evening, held on October 23rd, was the award ceremony, honoring area residents for their philanthropy and commitment to Melmark. The Good Neighbor Award was given to Allan Myers, a self-performing heavy civil construction and construction materials company based in Worcester, Pennsylvania. The Good Neighbor Award recognizes those organizations that are champions for mission-centered work aligning with Melmark’s focus.

The Golden Hero Award was presented to Dennis McAndrews, Esquire, of McAndrews, Mehlick, Connolly, Hulse, Ryan and Marone P.C. McAndrews has worked tirelessly throughout his career to fight for the rights of individuals with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities. He has represented parents, guardians, children and adults to ensure each receives appropriate services. Dennis has selflessly advocated for and supported families affected by disability not only at Melmark, but throughout a number of Pennsylvania communities.

Finally, the Humanitarian Award was presented to Karen Lally, Dorothy Wilhelmy, Louise and Jim Elkins, the steadfast volunteers (who put in more than 40 years of service) of the Melmark Service League. This award honors those individuals who, through their selfless acts of compassion, understanding and public service, share Melmark’s ongoing mission to improve the lives of all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism.
November 2020 proved to be an historic month for Melmark with the receipt of a $21.5 million endowment gift from the newly established Anne and Brutus Kenan Fund. The generous donation is from two siblings whose lives have been transformed by Melmark's programs in Pennsylvania.

The gift honors the joy Anne and Brutus bring to all they meet and recognizes the compassionate care provided by Melmark's highly skilled workforce. As expressed by Anne and Brutus' family, “it is a circle of deep gratitude for Melmark’s passion and commitment to those they serve” that made this gift possible. “We look forward to the day when major gifts to organizations serving individuals with disabilities are normalized and just as common as major gifts made to other educational institutions.”

This transformational gift will provide the foundation for Melmark’s Planting the Seeds for Tomorrow fundraising campaign to increase its endowment, while continuing a deep commitment to honor all individuals with disabilities served at Melmark and beyond.

For the fourth consecutive year, Melmark New England has been named among The Commonwealth Institute and The Boston Globe's List of Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts. MNE and Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner were ranked number 33 among companies from across the Commonwealth during the virtual reveal breakfast, held in November.

The annual rankings honor outstanding women and the businesses they lead. While the majority of these businesses went remote because of COVID-19, Rita led Melmark through the pandemic while providing in-person services. This is a huge honor for Melmark, especially during such a uniquely challenging period of time. This recognition shines the spotlight on the organization’s commitment to employing a diverse, highly skilled workforce and maintaining an acute focus on the Melmark’s commitment to remain Mission First. Every Individual, Every Day.

Cross-Division Speaker Series

Melmark has been hosting an Expert Speaker Series since 2008, which features leaders in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis. These educational opportunities focus on a wide range of topics in ABA and are open to staff, families and the public. Events are rotated between service divisions and live-streamed to audiences at each location. To view Melmark's calendar of speakers, visit www.melmark.org.
In October of 2021, Melmark Senior Leadership from all three divisions participated in a three-day Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training in Melmark New England.

Representatives from the Institute for Diversity Certification hosted the daily training seminars where the group studied comprehensive theories, methods and practices within diversity, equity and inclusion.

Those who attended will work together on a candidate project and take an exam in the upcoming months to earn Diversity Certification. These practices will further inform our upcoming strategic planning process across Melmark to further strengthen our mission for the individuals and staff we serve. Melmark will evaluate all current initiatives and practices, and will make additions and revisions for improvement.

In November, Melmark Senior Leadership from all three divisions participated in a three-day Strategic Planning Session that took place in Pennsylvania.

Over the course of the retreat, the group reviewed accomplishments that were completed as outcomes of the 2017 strategic plan and created new strategic goals for the future. For each division, and for the entire organization overall, strengths and weaknesses were evaluated in many operational areas including funding, technology, diversity, equity and inclusion, and the workforce.

The team came up with ideas and solutions that will be reworked through reoccurring meetings and executed to continue Melmark’s mission of delivering high-quality, evidenced-based outcomes for those we serve. The plan has an anticipated completion date of June 2022.
Melmark welcomed 2021 with renewed hope, as an evidence-based COVID-19 vaccine was distributed. Again, just as they had done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Melmark’s leadership team worked around the clock to secure doses of the vaccine for the individuals and staff at its service divisions.

As vaccines were rolled out, individuals meeting the age criteria to receive the Moderna and Pfizer doses were vaccinated during clinics and in the residential settings in New England and Pennsylvania. In the Carolinas, senior leadership advocated to have Melmark’s staff and families moved up on North Carolinas’ vaccination distribution plan, as the medically fragile individuals we serve are at highest risk for significant illness and death if infected with COVID-19.

Dani Block, M.H.A., B.S.N., RN, Senior Director of Health Care and Heather Hirst, PT, DPT Senior Director of Rehabilitative Services at Melmark Pennsylvania procured early Moderna vaccine doses for Melmark staff, adult clients, family members and the community.

Brad Stevenson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Melmark Carolinas’ Director of Program Administration and Clinical Services and Jalen Burrell, ABA Counselor at Melmark Carolinas share why they got vaccinated.

Melmark Pennsylvania nurses don personal protective equipment.

Melmark New England students ages 18 and older were among the first recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine in the state.
Mission-First Moments

Jasmin with her teacher Stephanie Fell, working the lunch ticket station at Melmark Pennsylvania.

Sean with Mike Proietti, ABA Counselor, has a graduation ceremony at Melmark New England.

Railyn, cooling off in the hot summer sun with Lindsay Bly, M.S., CCC-SLP, Speech Language Pathologist, at Melmark Pennsylvania.

Brendan becomes the first graduate at Melmark Carolinas and gives a graduation speech with Keri Bethune, PhD., BCBA-D, Melmark Carolinas’ Director of Education Services.
2021 Research and Publications

Pennsylvania, New England and the Carolinas


Melmark is expanding and raising the quality of service delivery systems throughout the country by disseminating and replicating the Melmark Model of Program Development and Clinical Treatment. Through an advanced program called EnvisionSMART™, Melmark showcases professional practitioner manuals, proprietary software and a four-book practitioner series. Combined, this program provides an all-encompassing array of well-researched, documented tools to enable other providers to utilize the Melmark Model for Program Development. This will elevate the standard of services, while addressing every aspect of the critical educational, clinical and administrative functions that are vital to evidence-based, human services programs.
There are a number of convenient ways for you to support Melmark’s mission. Gifts received may be unrestricted or designated for restricted purposes. Donations can be made securely online through Melmark’s website or by check, cash or stock. For more details about all the ways you can give, visit www.melmark.org.

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**PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)**

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**Tributes and Memorial Gifts**

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**Planned Giving / Krentel Legacy Society**

**Special Events**

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Dates to Remember:

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