

envision possibilities



explore choices

westchester**Arc**
westchester**Arc** Foundation
ANNUAL REPORT 2004



westchester**Arc**

westchester**Arc's** Mission

To empower children and adults with developmental disabilities to achieve their potential based on personal choices, abilities and interests. This is accomplished through person-centered services, support to families, advocacy and leadership, which together inspire the community to value the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

westchester**Arc** Foundation's Mission

To increase public awareness and to raise financial support from the community, generating income through long-term investments and distributing funds to support services for people with developmental disabilities in Westchester County.

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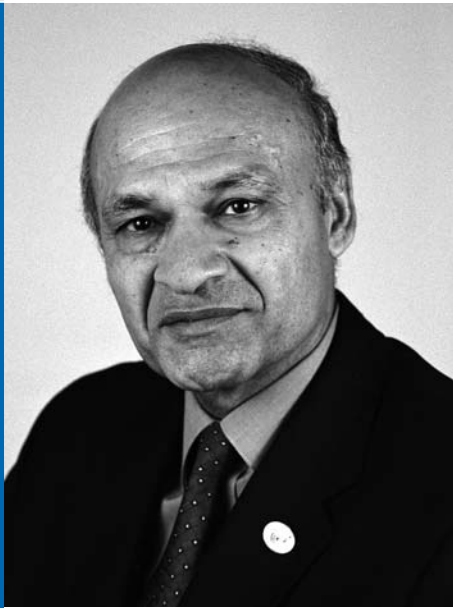
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From Our President

Mohan Mehra

For 56 years, Westchester Arc has been a pioneer in meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Throughout our history, as you will read in these pages, families with vision and determination have worked hard to remove obstacles to education, employment and general community acceptance for their loved ones. Such successes, in turn, have resulted in greater expectations for self-advocacy, inclusion and personal fulfillment. To acknowledge these unfolding opportunities and challenges, and how we meet them, we have changed our name, logo and tagline.

This recognition coincides with the findings of research that we conducted last year among the people we serve, their families, donors and others. Among other things, we addressed what people think about our current name. We learned that most people believed “ARC” was an acronym, that the word “retarded” had developed many negative connotations and that people with developmental disabilities felt stigmatized by that label.

The new name can no longer be read as an acronym. The word “Arc” symbolizes our efforts to bridge gaps and build supportive connections between those we serve and their communities. At the same time, “Westchester Arc” is a link to our heritage, echoing our affiliation with NYSARC and The Arc of the U.S.

Similarly, our new logo builds upon the earlier one. It communicates the theme of reaching for opportunities and journeying towards a wider world. “Envision Possibilities, Explore Choices,” our new tagline, captures the heart of our mission. We are committed to person-centered planning and individualized services because every individual’s needs are different. In addition, this tagline invites the greater community to enrich itself by embracing people with developmental disabilities as students, employees and neighbors.

In these pages, you will sample the successes of those we serve, people who cast ballots, compete in international sporting events and inspire others with their writing. These individuals embody the quest for personal growth that people with disabilities are increasingly undertaking. It is Westchester Arc’s privilege to assist them as they build their own bridges to the community.

From Our Executive Director



Richard P. Swierat



Westchester Arc is in transition. Both the populations we serve and their expectations are changing. Cultural diversity has greatly increased. Autism rates are growing. And people with disabilities, due to improved health care, are living longer.

At the same time that we are seeing demographic shifts, people with disabilities and their families are demanding more options. They want to be seen as the individuals they are. To have the option to live, work and socialize within the greater community.

These changes are shaping our services, challenging us to focus on personal possibilities rather than pre-defined programs. Person-centered planning, with its emphasis on individual potential, will play an ever greater role in our work. Education, jobs, residences and social life will be increasingly community-based. And a widening circle of partners will be required to deliver the needed variety of services.

With 56 years of experience advocating for people with developmental disabilities, and a well developed framework for coordinating resources from throughout the county, Westchester Arc is well positioned to help families formulate the individual solutions that will lead to independence and fulfillment.

This annual report explores important dimensions of that quest: personalized services, inclusion, individual accomplishment, in-community services, partnering and advocacy. People with developmental disabilities are redefining their place in society, and Westchester Arc is committed to assisting them in their journey towards a wider world.

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Life Planning Provides Focus

Ellen G. has many interests in life. “I love to write, sing, and dance, and I’ve always wanted to be a teacher,” she says. “With all that I want to do, it’s hard to figure out which things are the most important.”

Enter Westchester Arc’s life planning services. The Charles R. Kingsley Life Planning Center provides planning and referral services to young adults who have developmental disabilities and are aging out of the school system’s support network. Life planning brings together students, professionals from across the agency, parents, teachers and administrators to focus on goals relating to career, social life and residential choices. A life planning professional works with students and families to design customized maps identifying their abilities, skills, and resources. The maps serve as a basis for “life plans” and are used to chart personal growth. Working with teachers, administrators and other Westchester Arc staff, the Life Planning Center helps students build on strengths and abilities in order to achieve individual goals.

“Westchester Arc helped Ellen identify realistic expectations and put her life into perspective,” comments her aunt, Jean Morris. “They provided Ellen with opportunities she may not have otherwise had.”

When Ellen began working with the Life Planning Center in 2003, staff discovered her overwhelming desire to find a job where she could be a team player, as well as her strong memory retention and love for computers. They eventually found her an internship with the agency’s micrographics department that suited her skills. Once on the job, Ellen worked with S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) to develop her vocational skills. They helped her understand her responsibilities and explained the importance of punctuality and attendance. They also taught her to use the public bus system so that she could get to work on her own. Her new skills enabled her to move to a paid job at the law firm of O’Connor, Redd, Gollihue & Sklarin, LLP. Since last fall, she has organized client records, which has increased her problem-solving, organizational and time management skills.

“I really enjoy working here,” says Ellen. “I feel like part of the team.”



Spencer P. (right) is a model employee at Blockbuster Video.

Guardianship Promotes Independence

Spencer P. is an independent person. He lives in his own home, supports himself through a job at Blockbuster Video, manages his own finances and uses public transportation. If, however, there is something Spencer needs assistance with, he calls on his Westchester Arc guardianship advocates. “I like taking care of myself, but it’s nice to know Westchester Arc is there for me if I need help,” he explains.

Westchester Arc has been Spencer’s legal guardian for the past year. In that time, his guardianship advocates, Joneen Fabrykant and Roberta Nickelsen, have shared in holidays, birthday parties and special lunches. “I liked it when we went to Friendly’s for my birthday. That was really nice,” Spencer says.

Guardianship has been there when he needs advice or to answer questions about medical issues. Knowing that Spencer enjoys socializing, guardianship encouraged him to remain involved with a local senior citizens social group and with Westchester Arc’s Reunion Club, a recreational group for individuals with developmental disabilities. “I like shopping with my seniors group and bowling with Reunion Club,” comments Spencer.

Recently, guardianship even arranged a trip to Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum in New York City. “I’ve always wanted to meet Julia Roberts, and now I have,” he jokes.

S.T.A.R. Launches Careers

Jessica L. loves her new job at Modell’s Sporting Goods in Mohegan Lake, a position she found through Westchester Arc’s S.T.A.R (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) program. S.T.A.R partners with local high schools to help students, 15 and older, prepare for the working world. The program brings together family, school faculty and the Charles R. Kingsley Life Planning Center to develop each student’s career plan.

Jessica worked one-on-one with a S.T.A.R. career planner, who learned that she was interested in sports and in working with other people. Staff then identified the opportunity at Modell’s, which sounded as if it would satisfy her criteria.

Three months of on-the-job coaching, followed with bi-weekly visits, ensured that she got off to a good start, then stayed on track. It’s been six months since she began at Modell’s, and things couldn’t be better. “Jessica continues to learn new skills and take on more responsibilities,” says her manager, Randy. “She’s doing an excellent job.”

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Lenora B.

Lenora B. is non-verbal, but that doesn't mean she can't communicate. She recently became a pen pal to new friends with the assistance of Cherry Charlton, her assistant residence manager.

"Lenora was really unhappy. She felt disconnected from the world because she can't speak and couldn't adjust to her environment," Cherry explains. "I thought this would be a great way for her to express herself."

Lenora began by corresponding with Cherry's granddaughter, Ashlee, as well as her niece, Kadaja, who lives in Barbados. Then Cherry introduced Lenora to a neighborhood friend, Alenda, who's a Marine sergeant. The two became close, and when Lenora learned Alenda would soon be sent to Iraq, she asked to be her pen pal, too. Alenda happily accepted. "Reading and writing letters has made a world of difference. Words can't even begin to describe how happy Lenora is now," says Cherry. "And it fits in nicely with one of her other hobbies—stamp collecting."

Letter writing has spurred Lenora to find other ways to communicate, as well. A music lover, she recently convinced her housemates to choose personal "theme songs." Lenora selected "The Prayer," while other picks included "Don't Worry, Be Happy" and "I Will Survive."

Consumers Hit the Polls

Seventy individuals with developmental disabilities signed up to vote in last November's elections through an agency-sponsored registration drive. Croton House had a perfect record, with all nine residents going to the polls. "It's important that people with disabilities get their voice heard," says Melanie Fields, who organized the effort.

"Voting made me feel equal to everyone else and like a more productive member of society," commented Janet S., who voted for the first time in 2004. Lenora B. also voted for the first time. "We followed the election every day, reading the newspaper and watching the evening news," says Cherry Charlton, her assistant residence manager.

Brianna R. Graduates to Community Kindergarten

Brianna R., a student at The Children's School for Early Development, will be moving on to a mainstream kindergarten in fall 2005. "I'm thrilled with my daughter's progress," says mom, Jo-Ann. "The pre-school has been a wonderful foundation for her to get all of the services she needs to develop and grow."

When Brianna first came to The Children's School at age two, she could hardly walk or talk. She also had fine motor and balance issues. Early intervention services provided in the toddler developmental group at the Small Miracles Early Childhood Center in Ossining helped her develop speech patterns and improve her motor skills. By age three, she was speaking in full sentences and could walk a straight line.

"Early intervention can change a life," says school director Fran Porcaro. "We work with children from birth to five years of age, and it's remarkable what can be accomplished through a highly focused program that addresses individual needs."

After early intervention, Brianna participated for one year in the pre-school's full-day special class in an integrated setting at Small Miracles. In September 2004, she moved to a morning inclusion class in her home school district at the Roosevelt School in Ossining. In-community classes enable students with disabilities to learn from the behavior of their typically developing classmates. In turn, typically developing kids are exposed to the concept of individual differences. They learn compassion and tolerance at the same time that they benefit from the increased staffing provided by The Children's School—state-certified teachers with gradu-



ate degrees, as well as psychologists, clinical social workers, and speech, occupational and physical therapists.

"In-community classes made all the difference for Brianna," continues Jo-Ann. "She picked up on her classmates' speech and behavior very quickly. She's now more aware of her surroundings and feelings, carries on full conversations, remembers stories and even sings the alphabet. I have this program to thank for it."

Over 80 percent of this year's pre-school graduates are expected to move into regular or inclusion kindergartens in their neighborhood schools next fall. There are now 17 community-based classes in The Children's School's growing network.

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Ingeborg Childs: Fighting for Educational Rights

Ingeborg Childs remembers the days when parents seldom spoke of having children with developmental disabilities. “Our doctor felt that my daughter, Patti, should be institutionalized, that she would never talk or walk.”

But Ingeborg and her husband, William, thought otherwise. They wrote of their experience and helped establish Westchester Arc’s first school.

“We had a lot of obstacles to overcome. We struggled to pay the mortgage on the school building. We spent most of our time trying to raise funds.” As the agency’s first elected treasurer, Ingeborg remembers working far into the night, after her two children had been put to bed, keeping the books and sending out bills for membership dues. She and other volunteers held raffles, dinner dances and even placed coin canisters in public places.

What’s the most important change Ingeborg has witnessed? “Educational opportunities,” she says without hesitation. Parents sued in court to be able open that first school, and now every child with disabilities has the right to a public education. “It really amazes me sometimes,” Ingeborg muses, “but we proved our point. We had no idea how far it would go.”



Evald Gasstrom: Employment Pioneer

It was 1949, but as our nation looked toward another decade, there were certain people who were left behind.

“I remember walking down the street with my son, John,” says two-time Westchester Arc President Evald Gasstrom. “People would give us the strangest looks. People with disabilities weren’t supposed to be seen or heard. And working or even living in the community was out of the question.”

But Evald helped change all that. He organized other dedicated parents to “bring the needs of people with disabilities to the forefront of society.” Under his direction, the agency opened its first workshop in Mount Vernon. Evald then partnered with the county’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to open a second, larger site in White Plains.

In addition, Evald was instrumental in convincing the New York State Department of Mental Health to create a separate category for individuals with developmental disabilities, setting the population apart from the mentally insane.

As Executive Director Ric Swierat points out, “Evald shaped Westchester Arc’s approach to civil rights and strategic planning.”



Noreen Koenig: Social Advocate

The first time Noreen Koenig visited Westchester Arc, she was left with a powerful impression. “I remember looking up at that big white building and thinking ‘This place represents hope.’”

Noreen is a selfless advocate, working at the state level with OMRDD’s (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) New York Cares initiative to help individuals with disabilities find residences. She has also advocated for smaller mental health facilities through NYSARC.

She is proudest, though, of her work at Letchworth Village, a large mental health institution. Noreen was horrified to discover that the graves of residents who had passed away were buried anonymously. Determined to that they be treated with dignity, Noreen lobbied for individual headstones. Today, Letchworth Village remains the only mental health institution in the state that has adopted this practice.

“Noreen is an encyclopedia of legislative knowledge,” comments Westchester Arc Executive Director Ric Swierat. “She understands the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and will study every last detail to successfully advocate for them.”



Justin Israel: Longtime Fundraiser

Over 50 years ago, Justin Israel joined a group of social activists with a common goal—to help a family member with a developmental disability lead a full, enriching life. Meeting in basements throughout White Plains, those pioneering advocates formed an organization that would evolve into Westchester Arc.

A former board president and current Westchester Arc Foundation board member, Justin appeals each year to family and friends for donations. He has also bequeathed a major portion of his retirement fund to the Westchester Arc Foundation, a decision he feels very strongly about and encourages others to consider. “We’ve accomplished so much in the last 50 years. I wanted to contribute to the great things to come in the next 50,” he explains.

Justin’s son, Johnny, has lived in a Westchester Arc residence for nearly 25 years. He is also employed at an agency work center and has flourished as a painter through the Echo Arts program. Justin is a great supporter of Westchester Arc staff and Johnny’s fellow housemates, personally funding music and art programs, holiday parties, baseball games and even a trip to Disney World.

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 Mr. Christopher Dudley



Westco Productions: Dreams Come True

Emily F. has always dreamed of being a performer. “Her older siblings are very active in theater,” explains her mom, Althea. “Every time Emily saw them onstage, she wished she could be up there, too.”

She got her big break last summer through Echo Onstage, a workshop for young adults, sponsored by Westchester Arc in partnership with Westco Productions, the county’s premier theater company for young audiences. Echo OnStage was launched in 2004 at SUNY Purchase in conjunction with Westchester Arc’s Echo College. Participants built self-esteem and muscle tone, while learning dance numbers. Improvisation exercises promoted creativity and improved verbal skills. At the end of the week, Emily and fellow attendees performed a variety show for family and friends. “Seeing my daughter onstage moved me to tears,” recalls Althea. “I’ve never seen her looking so confident and having so much fun. She’ll definitely be returning to Echo Onstage this year.”

Also popular is the Musical Theatre Workshop for Children with Down syndrome. Now in its third year, the workshop helps the children’s memory retention and motor skills, while they enjoy learning how to act, dance and sing. The program is a partnership between Westco, Westchester Arc, and PACDS, a volunteer support network that helps parents of children with Down syndrome to understand their youngsters and develop their full potential. The 10-week session concludes with a performance for family, friends and the community. One recent show, “Give Our Regards to Broadway,” featured typically developing kids alongside children with Down syndrome, promoting community inclusion and the acceptance of diversity.

Writers Shatter Stereotypes

Elizabeth Albert, Bob Smith and Janet Steiner use the written word to challenge stereotypes concerning people with developmental disabilities. “When I’m writing, I feel good about myself,” comments Janet. “And when others read my work, I want them to feel good about themselves and also see me as something other than disabled.”

Janet started writing poetry nearly 20 years ago. “I was just walking down the street one day and was inspired by all of the beauty around me,” she recalls. Her poems have appeared in Westchester Arc’s *Lifetime* newsletter and on the agency’s website. Though the subject of her poems may vary, Janet’s central theme is consistent. “My poems are meant to bring people closer together.” Janet’s favorite authors include Judy Blume and her good friend, Elizabeth Albert.

Author Elizabeth Albert is a college graduate and social activist. Her book, *Magic in the New Millennium*, contains short stories and personal essays that confront stereotypes concerning people with disabilities. “If, as the saying goes, all men are created equal, this applies to the physically or developmentally challenged, as well. It may take us longer to do things, but they get done!” she writes. Liz, as friends call her, draws inspiration from family, friends and life experiences. “There are so many good expressions in the English language, my favorite is self-expression,” she says.

Another individual who knows about self-expression is Bob Smith. Though he has cerebral palsy and requires full assistance with daily living skills, he has realized his dream of becoming a writer. Bob uses a Dynavox synthesizer to recite his poetry, dazzling audiences with deeply personal accounts of growing up in an institution, overcoming cerebral palsy and seeing past people’s disabilities. Bob became an entrepreneur in 2003, establishing Handmade Poetry with the help of Westchester Arc. His book, *Reflections of My Life*, sold out in its first printing. Bob makes regular public appearances throughout the state.

Art Classes Build Confidence

Westchester Arc’s Echo Arts program promotes self-esteem, individuality and creative thinking. “Painting makes me feel good,” says Elizabeth W. In the three years that she’s been taking classes, she has matured as an artist.

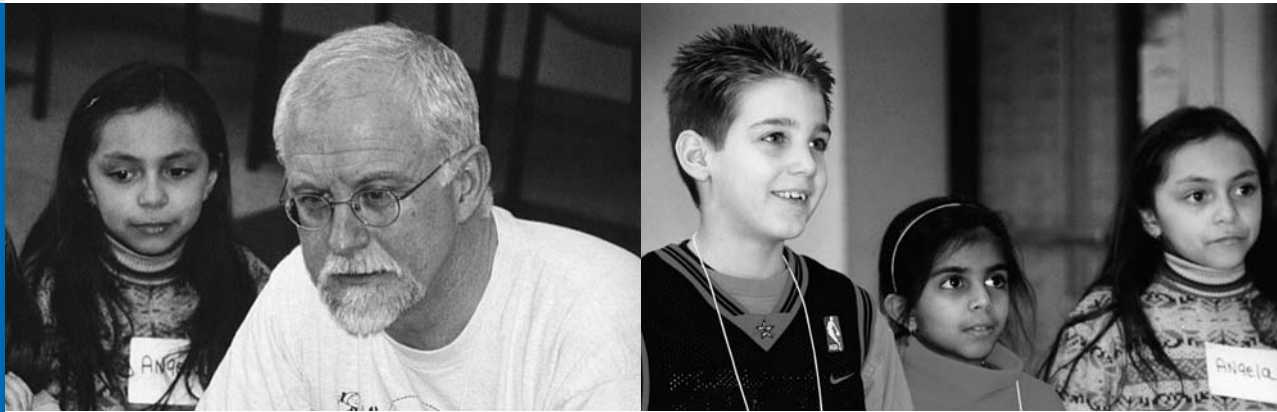
“The first thing I noticed about Elizabeth was that she had a lot of energy, but she was shy and unsure of how to express herself,” recalls instructor Steve Lipkin. Steve helped her experiment with a variety of art forms, but it was painting that attracted her. “The more classes she took, the more comfortable she got with her art, creating paintings filled with vibrant colors and electrically charged shapes. Painting has been a great way for Elizabeth to displace her energy. Her self-esteem has also increased.”

Elizabeth has been Westchester Arc’s Artist of the Month several times. Her work has appeared at the Northern Westchester Center for the Arts and in Westchester Arc’s traveling art shows.

Another individual who has benefited from art is Derwin J. “Derwin has grown as an artist and as an individual. He has learned how to reflect the way he is feeling in his work,” observes Steve. “He paints beautiful, cloud-like designs full of rich color and shape. When Derwin paints, you can see his self-confidence rising. His work is unique, and that makes him feel like more of an individual.”

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Don Meyer with kids who have benefited from his Sibshop format.

Support Programs Strengthen Families

Having a family member with disabilities is undeniably stressful for all involved. That's why Westchester Arc is partnering with a growing list of community organizations to provide family supports to both children and adults.

The Parenting Skills Program for Moms with Special Needs, conducted in partnership with Mount Kisco's Effective Counseling and Consulting Service, consists of weekly childcare workshops on health, nutrition, home safety and basic infant care. "Moms with disabilities may need a little more, but with the right assistance in the home, and community programs such as this one, these moms can do a great job caring for their babies," says Barbara Powell, senior social worker and program coordinator. "I remember one woman who had previously had to give up her children. She was so dedicated to keeping her new baby that she appeared in court the day after he was born. When the judge saw that she was linked to the parenting skills program, he let her keep him. It really does make a difference."

Barbara recently re-teamed with Effective Counseling and Consulting Services to start the Men's Support Group for Individuals with Cognitive Delays. "The goal of this program is to prevent violence in the home," she explains. Workshops and role playing teach anger management and help prevent abuse. Men in this group also learn money management and job skills. "My wife and I work better as a team now," says one group member. "We've even been able to save up and buy a bigger home."

Sibshops support kids from eight to 13 years old, who have a sibling with a developmental disability. The group gives them a chance to freely share thoughts, concerns and experiences, while having fun. The format was designed by Don Meyer, director of the Sibling Support Project at The Arc of the U.S. Westchester Arc hosted six sessions in the last year and partnered with the JCC (Jewish Community Center) of Mid-Westchester to reach a broader audience.

"My daughter Michele really likes going to Sibshops," says Patty Glatthaar. "She enjoys playing games and sharing stories with other kids. Through Sibshops, Michele has realized that she's not the only person on the planet dealing with a sibling who has special needs, and that's helped her a lot."

"What makes Sibshops so special is that the kids build relationships outside of the groups," comments Nancy Succoso, Westchester Arc assistant executive director and program coordinator. "We celebrate birthdays and holidays and go out to dinner. In talking about our families, we've become like family."

Without Walls, Without Limits

Over the last several years, Westchester Arc's day habilitation program has moved from the classroom into the community. "It's much easier to learn by example," says Program Director Avery Valins. "A trip to the grocery store teaches money management and social skills."

Without Walls, as the program is called, gives individuals with developmental disabilities the tools to function in society on a daily basis. "The great thing about this program is that participants gain a sense of independence, yet have the comfort of a trained staff member by their side at all times," notes Leann Coldwell, treatment coordinator.

Activities are based entirely on the wants and needs of the participants and include bowling, movies, museums, library visits and sporting events. One recent favorite was a trip to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's former home, where they learned about American history. "This place is so cool. I want to be president," said one visitor.

Participants in the Yonkers program have become involved with community service. "One member of the group has a fondness for cats, so we volunteered at a local animal shelter," explains Sandra Woods, program coordinator. "We enjoyed the activity so much we began volunteering with the Yonkers Community Action Program, packaging groceries for the elderly."

Without Walls has had a dramatic effect on the lives of many individuals with developmental disabilities. "They have more self-confidence, improved social skills and stronger ties with the community," declares Patti.

In some cases, Without Walls has helped individuals overcome behavioral problems. "One participant was very anxious at first. She would cry every time we would go into the community. Then we took her to an exercise club and established a routine for her. Now she can't wait to go back."

Clinical Services Support Community Living

Seventy percent of Westchester Arc's clinical services are delivered in the community. Physical, occupational and speech therapy, as well as psychotherapy and nutrition, are all available through home visits. "This can provide a more effective means of treatment," says Program Director Tibi Guzman. "It gives clinicians the chance to address a person's specific issues in the environment in which they occur."

"Visiting a patient at home helps build a better relationship," comments Claudia Sickinger, M.D., the clinic's medical director. "You're forming a network of support comprised of family and staff members."

"In some cases, providing clinical services in the community has really improved a person's life," notes psychotherapist Frank Rullo. "I had a patient with substance abuse problems, and treating him at home allowed me to identify certain environmental factors and to support him through his transition. Today that person lives in the community independently and has obtained full-time employment."

"The goal of the clinic is to help individuals with developmental disabilities live a healthy, productive life in the community," says Tibi. "Providing services in the community is an important method of achieving that goal."

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FINANCIALS

2004 Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2004

	2004	2003
Assets		
Current:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,778,086	\$ 7,294,439
Cash - restricted	235,218	258,059
Investments, at fair value	2,766,290	1,603,028
Accounts receivable:		
Government contracts and fees (net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$42,000)	7,213,997	6,731,039
Subcontractors	219,651	176,531
Other	49,598	43,279
Prepaid expenses	20,194	32,903
Due from affiliates	622,208	642,108
Total current assets	17,905,242	16,781,386
Deposits	238,506	75,072
Debt service reserve fund	196,539	153,630
Deferred expenses	199,309	175,058
Fixed assets, net	8,635,691	8,290,820
	\$ 27,175,287	\$ 25,475,966
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities:		
Accrued salaries and vacations payable	\$ 2,222,767	\$ 1,940,238
Accounts and accrued expenses payable	1,815,416	1,675,400
Due to affiliates	-	-
Refundable advances	513,645	446,610
Client funds	170,285	189,151
Other liabilities	69,471	67,862
Current portion of loans payable	376,934	316,241
Due to governmental agencies	781,434	750,899
Total current liabilities	5,949,952	5,386,401
Loans payable, net of current maturities	4,017,412	3,736,341
Total liabilities	9,967,364	9,122,742
Commitments and contingencies		
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	17,107,776	16,253,077
Temporarily restricted	100,147	100,147
Total net assets	17,207,923	16,353,224
	\$ 27,175,287	\$ 25,475,966

2004 Statement of Activity

December 31, 2004

	2004	2003
Revenues and other support:		
Medicare	\$ 97,170	\$ 78,663
Medicaid	31,147,595	28,697,391
Government grants	3,150,861	3,567,559
Tuition and early intervention income	3,570,040	3,079,004
Contract sales	1,215,479	1,241,978
Client fees	397,173	362,163
Rental Income	-	-
Other income	109,087	113,922
Contribution	305,017	971,641
Net realized and unrealized (gains) loss on investments	27,808	89,431
Interest income	135,772	119,298
Prior year income	765,885	764,688
Total revenues and other support	\$ 40,921,887	\$ 39,085,738
Expenses:		
Program services		
Consumer support	\$ 2,957,919	\$ 2,726,186
Day services	5,787,475	5,639,161
Vocational Services	4,390,565	4,127,761
Pre-school	3,832,461	3,327,961
Recreation	439,166	405,768
Intermediate care facilities	8,216,504	8,309,044
Clinic	1,312,575	1,065,946
Waiver	8,417,477	6,979,149
Community residences	1,207,687	1,036,191
Property Operations	165,786	167,117
Total program expenses	36,727,615	33,784,284
Supporting services		
Non-government funded	82,109	153,688
Agency administration	3,229,884	2,951,428
Total supporting services	3,311,993	3,105,116
Total expenses	40,039,608	36,889,400
Change in net assets before loss on disposal of fixed asset	882,279	2,196,338
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	(27,580)	-
Change in net assets	854,699	2,196,338
Net assets, beginning of year, as restated	16,353,224	14,156,886
Net assets, end of year	\$ 17,207,923	\$ 16,353,224

2004 FINANCIAL REPORT

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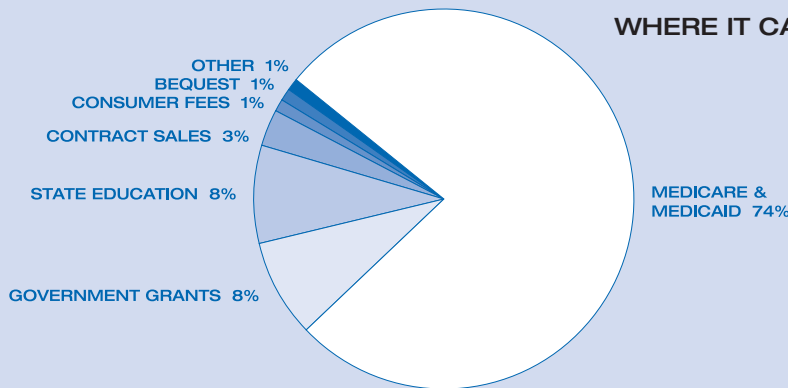
For the year ending December 31, 2004, the agency reported audited annual operating income of \$40,921,887 and expenses of \$40,039,608 which, after adjustment, resulted in an increase in net assets of \$854,699. It is important to note that the total surplus reflected several “one time” items, such as a bequest, state grants and prior year income which, when factored in, yield a net deficit of \$79,544 from 2004

operations. The sharply increased cost of our employee medical benefits will continue to present a budgeting challenge.

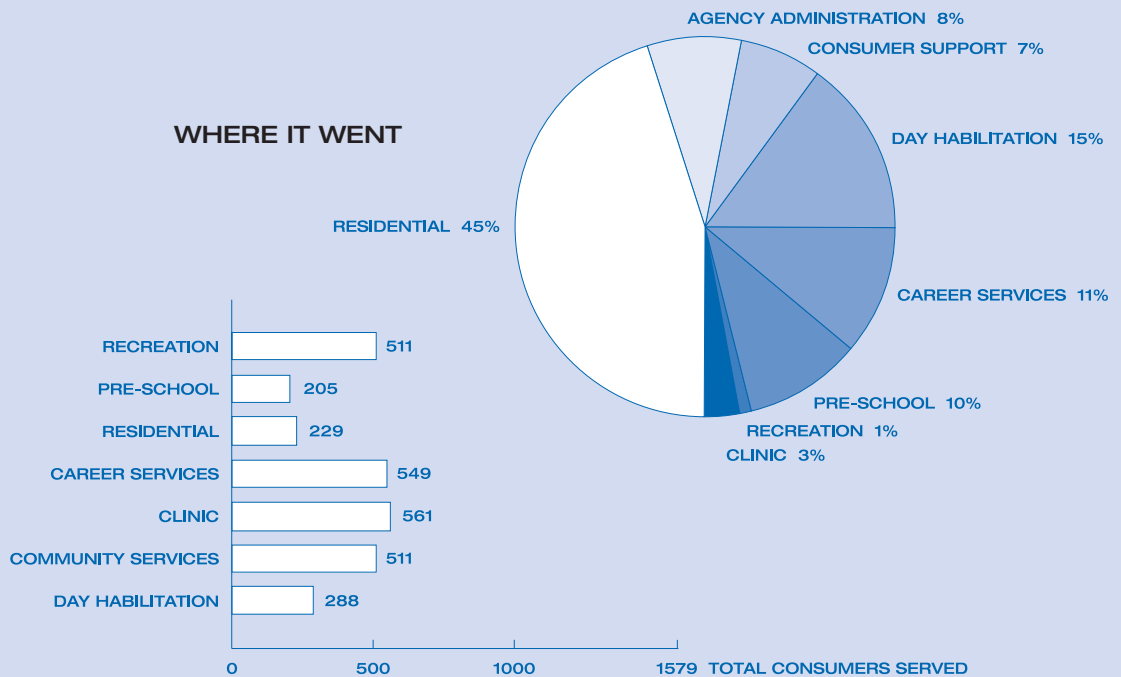
Nearly three-quarters of the funds generated directly by Westchester Arc came from Medicare/Medicaid. Ninety-two cents out of every dollar spent by the agency went directly to services for individuals with developmental disabilities, with almost half of the agency’s outlays related to residential services.

WESTCHESTER ARC DOLLAR 2004

WHERE IT CAME FROM



WHERE IT WENT



Staff Weigh In

Person-centered planning and community-based services are two initiatives changing the way Westchester Arc fulfills its mission. Recently, we asked staff to comment on how the work of their departments has been affected.



People with disabilities seek community involvement, notes Residence Counselor Tia Hall.

Tia Hall residence counselor

People with disabilities want to participate in community activities. Club Echo, Yakkety Y.A.C. and Echo College give them the chance to go on a trip, spend a day at the movies or experience college life. Recreation continues to plan more activities based on the wants of those we serve. We're also working with other Westchester Arc departments to get people involved with art and dance classes.

Barbara Melhado employment specialist

Supportive employment is working to find more long-term job placements within the community. We're focused on closely matching an individual's skills and interests to his or her job and will continue providing job coaching and other support services that encourage an individual to succeed in the community.

Andrea Hudson community habilitation specialist

Day Habilitation is providing more services in the community. Rather than just teach behavioral and social skills in a classroom, we're teaching by example through trips to the grocery store, library, museums, movies and other local businesses. This also promotes social inclusion. I think there's been a big change in the way day habilitation provides services. We're giving individuals in the program the chance to make their own decisions and plan the activities they want.

Cherry Charlton assistant residence manager

Working closely with Dr. Beth Mount, a national expert on person-centered planning, residential staff have introduced the Everyday Heroes initiative to our residents. Everyday Heroes works with each resident on an individual basis to help them achieve their goals and fulfill their dreams. We've taken residents on a cruise, established health and nutritional programs, and helped an individual prepare brunch for friends and family, among many other special activities. Our residences have become more than just houses. They are homes. And we're encouraging our residents to lead active lives outside their homes, helping them get more involved in the community. Our residents now vote, work out at the gym, shop at the grocery and the list continues to grow.

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Chinika T. and Will Horton with Deputy Commissioner Christine Reinhart, Dept. of Community Mental Health.

Self-Advocates Set Priorities

Self-advocacy— people with disabilities communicating their needs and wishes on their own behalf—is the heart of empowerment. Westchester Arc has long had consumer representation on its board of directors and policy-making committees. But now, with an 17-member customer service taskforce, the agency is moving to involve the people we serve even more directly in strategy and operations.

Chaired by Carolyn Holodak, the group evolved from a taskforce examining the language used to describe people with disabilities. Lively discussion about the stigma attached to the term “mentally retarded” reinforced earlier research findings and was summarized in a report to NYSARC, the statewide agency with which Westchester Arc is affiliated. In response to the taskforce’s concerns, shared by many other stakeholders, our mission and vision statements no longer employ that language.

Confronting stereotypes is at the top of their list. “We want to be taken seriously,” explains Carolyn. “That means that we need to tell people about our accomplishments.” Accordingly, the group will generate story ideas for the agency’s newsletter and website.

Respect is another topic of interest. Accepting diversity—whether related to disability, ethnicity or religion—is an important value. “People should be tolerant and polite,” says taskforce member Will Horton.

Job skills and the agency’s role in finding employment opportunities will all be much discussed in the coming months. “This is just the beginning,” says Executive Director Ric Swierat.

Legislative Advocacy Changes Lives

Executive Director Ric Swierat recently wrote to a leading local paper about the potential effects of federal legislation on the lives of people with developmental disabilities. “If Medicaid is cut,” he wrote, “are we to return to institutionalization? Will we lose the valuable contributions people with developmental disabilities make each day in our community?”

“Medicaid is the lifeblood of our services in New York and is Westchester Arc’s number one legislative priority,” declares President Mohan Mehra.

The Arc of the U.S. and NYSARC play key roles in alerting the agency to important issues and advising on strategies for educating legislators about the ramifications of bills under consideration. “Our job is really to put a human face on these issues,” comments Ric, “to help public officials look

Pre-School as Advocate

“Parents are a child’s strongest advocates,” stresses Kathy Higgins. Kathy is the educational advocate for The Children’s School for Early Development, as well as the evaluation coordinator for early intervention. “The Children’s School works closely with moms and dads to assist them in obtaining services for their children.”

Kathy fields between 50 and 75 phone calls each year asking for advocacy assistance. She answers questions about the special education process and encourages open communication with school districts. “In many cases, issues can be resolved when the parents and schools begin communicating,” she points out. Kathy also connects parents to local and state resources, other families in similar situations, and parent groups providing support and networking opportunities.

She recalls one family who very much wanted their child to attend the local elementary school in which their other children were enrolled. Kathy put them in touch with another parent, who is a regular speaker at the state inclusion conference and who, over the years, has proven to be a wonderful resource. The family then



Kathy Higgins helps parents advocate for their kids.

formulated a letter citing the local school’s own mission statement. They were not only successful in having their child admitted, but convinced the school to hire an inclusion specialist, as well. “This has great implications for future students being served by that district,” notes Kathy.

The Children’s School also hosts evening workshops and parent groups to help families understand their rights and the support systems available to them.

“I think one of the most important things parents should know is that The Children’s School is always here for them,” she continues. “We receive many calls from parents whose children graduated years ago. Even if their children are no longer in our programs, we are available to help families.”

beyond numbers and policy to understand what their actions will mean in Westchester County.”

“There’s a very active network for sharing information with families and calling for action,” says Mohan, “whether that means a phone call, email or personal visit.” Mohan serves on NYSARC’s issues and positions committee and, as a member of The Arc of the U.S. board of directors, has attended legislative briefings in Washington, D.C. The Arc of the U.S. posts timely information on federal legislation on its website (www.thearc.org) and publishes *The Capitol Insider*, a weekly emailed newsletter.

“It’s the activism of consumers and families that has made possible over 50 years of progress for people with disabilities,” says Ric. “When legislators hear from their constituents, they respond.”

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The MBIA Invitational supports both Westchester Arc and Special Olympics.

Rain Falls, People Shine

Westchester Arc's partnership with MBIA began with a thunderstorm. Over 20 years ago, Charles Kingsley, then president of Westchester Arc; friend Jack Butler, president of MBIA, and Jerry Peters, executive director, Westchester Putnam Special Olympics (now referred to as the Hudson Valley Region of the New York Special Olympics), planned a golf and tennis event that would provide an ongoing source of funding to both agencies.

Despite heavy rain, forty brave souls came ready to play on the day of the first Invitational, raising \$20,000 for Westchester Arc and Special Olympics. Two decades later, the MBIA Invitational has become the largest event of its kind in New York State. In 2004, an all-time high of 435 people played sports or attended the award banquet to raise a record-setting \$350,000. "The MBIA Invitational is the largest source of private funds for Westchester Arc programs," notes Anne Sweazey, executive director of The Westchester Arc Foundation. "We are very grateful to MBIA for their support with this event through the years."

The MBIA Invitational is made possible through financial sponsorships and the hard work of 20 committee members from MBIA, Westchester Arc, Special Olympics, and other organizations. They spend the entire year working out the details—running ads, securing sponsors, arranging celebrity appearances and securing raffle prizes. "MBIA is proud of our partnership with Westchester Arc and Special Olympics," comments Gary Dunton, MBIA CEO. "We remain deeply committed to helping these agencies enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities."

S.T.A.R. Works with Local Schools

Westchester Arc's S.T.A.R (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) program currently partners with seven high schools (up from four last year) throughout the county to help students, 15 and over, prepare for the working world. Forty-four young people now receive pre-placement classroom instruction through the program. "S.T.A.R. is a wonderful program that I would recommend hands down," comments Margo Devenni, transition coordinator, White Plains High School.

"Our services are tailored to the needs of each school we serve and include vocational training, job coaching and internship development," explains Rochelle Saks, Transitional Services Director.

In 2004, S.T.A.R began working with three new school districts—Byram Hills, Tuckahoe and Valhalla. At Tuckahoe High, Westchester Arc staff initiated a "job shadowing" program, which gives students an opportunity to visit local businesses. "A trip to the grocery store inspired an individual to pursue a career in the food industry," comments Rochelle.

Pre-School Collaborates with Autism Expert

For the past two years, Westchester Arc's Children's School for Early Development has been working with Dr. Vincent Carbone, an internationally renowned expert on teaching children with autism how to communicate. Each month, the entire staff attend his workshop on the application of principles associated with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), known as Verbal Behavior (VB). This educational framework promotes both structured and naturalistic approaches to learning and is based on learning principles originally defined by behavioral pioneer B.F. Skinner. Dr. Carbone's techniques systematically reinforce target behaviors in the pre-school classroom, then quickly apply them to real-life situations. His insights regarding behavioral principles are applied both within The Children's School's self-contained classrooms in Hawthorne and in community-based classes, where children with autism learn alongside typically developing students.

This educational philosophy embraces the same commitment to individual needs and family priorities as Westchester Arc does. Dr. Carbone explains that a unique program of study is developed for each child, based upon the student's skills and family priorities. "Parents are the best teachers," he claims. "It's important that everyday home life is seen as an opportunity to learn."

Linda Lichtenstein has seen the result. "When my son came to the pre-school, he spoke 10 word "approximations." Now he's speaking in full sentences and attends a community-based class at Mascia Day Care in Tarrytown.



The Case of the Model Employee : Joey L.

Joey L. has worked at the law firm of Pappalardo, Tombini and Wolff for three years, growing as an employee and as an individual.

Joey began by performing data entry as part of an internship through Southern Westchester's Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). "There wasn't a single key stroke error in his work," notes Office Manager Phyllis Brigatino. Upon graduation, he was hired as a full-time employee through Westchester Arc's supportive employment program. Job Coach C.J. Santoianni helped him tone his work skills and build relationships with co-workers. "Within three months of working with C.J., Joey grew more confident in his work and in himself," says Michele Tombini. In addition to data entry, Joey now opens mail and categorizes legal documents, a task he is able to perform from memory. He downloads legal files from the Internet and collates documents for real estate closings. He has his own office and computer.

"Joey pays a lot of attention to detail and has great organizational and memory retention skills. There have been times when he's corrected me on something," says Greg Pappalardo.

Joey recently won three gold medals for swimming at a regional Special Olympics event, and will go on to statewide competition later in the year. Says Joey, "I keep working hard at everything I do."

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Executive Director

The Westchester ARC Foundation is committed to long-term financial stability for Westchester ARC. We expect to realize returns in the future from these initiatives:

Legacy of Love Society

Longtime agency friend Gerard Gleeson's bequest of \$2.2 million is a shining example of how one family's kindness can help others far into the future. But smaller gifts add up to big opportunities for the people served by Westchester Arc. To encourage more of our friends to consider bequests, the Foundation has established a Legacy of Love Society, recognizing the generous people who have notified us that they have made a bequest or a planned gift to Westchester Arc or the Foundation. So far, 20 people, from 16 different households, have let us know that they have made such provisions in their wills. A dinner was held on February 9th to thank them and honor their commitment. Each guest received a beautiful crystal heart engraved with his or her name as a member of the Legacy of Love Society.

Long-term Capital Fund

The Foundation board created a new capital fund for the long-term benefit of Westchester Arc programs, such as guardianship and The Children's School for Early Development, which are unfunded, or insufficiently funded, by the government. A Foundation director offered to match, dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000, all new and increased donations obtained or given by Foundation board members toward this new fund. The board's response was the full \$100,000. The long-term fund now totals more than \$400,000.

The Capital Campaign

A campaign planning committee did major groundwork on the fundraising drive for the new building, which will be located on the property in Hawthorne purchased by Westchester Arc in 2003. Foundation board gifts for the endowment portion of the campaign total \$200,000, and Westchester Arc board members have nearly completed their campaign for board pledges toward the building campaign.

Pooled Supplemental Needs Trusts

The Foundation announced the creation of two trust instruments available to family members and others who want to assure quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. The Foundation has already accepted a check for \$125,000 to open its first Supplemental Needs Trust for the benefit of a young man with disabilities. This is a self-settled trust, meaning that the funds are held in trust, belong to him and are disbursed according to his needs. Family Resource Day was an excellent opportunity to encourage attendees to consider these trusts as part of an overall financial and estate plan.

A Quick View: 2004 Year-End Results for the Foundation and Fundraising

Total Income 2004	Total Income 2003	% Variance
\$1,232,539	\$1,124,102	10%

Last year was an investment year for The Westchester Arc Foundation, whose mandate is to create long-term financial strategies for the benefit of Westchester Arc, particularly for unfunded and under-funded programs such as guardianship, The Children's School for Early Development and recreation.

More Good News

Foundation expenses were down nine percent from 2003, with fundraising expenses totaling \$288,921.

Golfing for Kids, the annual event that raises funds for The Children's School for Early Development, netted \$104,108. The 20th annual MBIA Invitational and Tour de Bresnan raised net funds of \$259,216. Our first Matter of Taste fundraiser, where guests sampled signature dishes from Westchester's finest restaurants and danced to the music of E.T.A., cleared \$82,153 for Westchester Arc programs.

Last year saw the inauguration of "A Party for Our Best Friends" to recognize and thank donors to The Children's School for Early Development. Guests included parents, teachers, board members, donors and government officials who heard an update on school activities and viewed the unveiling of a beautiful donor recognition mural.



Clockwise from top: (1) Golfing for Kids volunteer Louann Paladino with guest Debbie Mansfield. (2) Kickathon sponsor Master Chris Berlow and friends. (3) The Manzi family, recipients of the Charles R. Kingsley Award for activism. (4) Anne Sweazey and Co-Chair Steve Palm at A Matter of Taste.





Jessica with County Executive Andrew Spano.

Jessica Martino: Early Ambition Blossoms

“When Jessica was born in 1977, we were told she would never have a fulfilling life,” recalls dad, Luigi. “Our obstetrician recommended we just walk away. The doctor didn’t even want us to hold her.”

One day, as Luigi gazed at his daughter through the nursery window, a woman turned to him and said, “What a beautiful baby!” It was Emily Kingsley, who had a similar experience when her son, Jason, was born a few years earlier. Together with her husband, Charles, Emily urged the new parents to become involved with Westchester Arc’s Children’s School for Early Development. The Kingsleys also directed them to PACDS, a group that helps families understand the needs of children with Down syndrome.

Early intervention involving a speech therapist helped Jessica develop communication patterns, then, at age two, she began taking classes at The Children’s School. “Even at that age, she had so much ambition,” recalls school director Fran Porcaro. “You could tell she was going to go far in life.” At The Children’s School, Jessica worked on gross motor skills and began to read. “The Children’s School gave Jessica the head start she needed to do well in life,” says Luigi.

In her teenage years, Jessica continued her affiliation with Westchester Arc, joining Yakkety Y.A.C., a recreational program for individuals, aged 15 to 25, where she enjoyed bowling, going to the movies and hanging out with friends.

Then Westchester Arc’s S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) program helped her make the move from high school to the adult world. Staff worked with Jessica, her family and education professionals to identify her interests, then develop a career plan for her. A job coach provided one-on-one sessions about work ethic, job skills and interview techniques. Upon graduation, she landed a job as a library clerk at Westchester Community College, where she has worked for five years. During that time, she has continued to receive onsite visits from a job coach under the agency’s supported employment program. Her duties include scanning and reshelving books, maintaining the library’s database and distributing videos to other libraries.

Jessica is also a regular at Echo College, the agency’s weeklong, college campus program, most recently held at SUNY Purchase. Last year she especially enjoyed the science and videography classes, singing karaoke and playing board games.

Luigi and Kay Martino couldn’t be happier with their daughter’s progress. Says Luigi, “Westchester Arc has been the anchor for Jessica’s success.”

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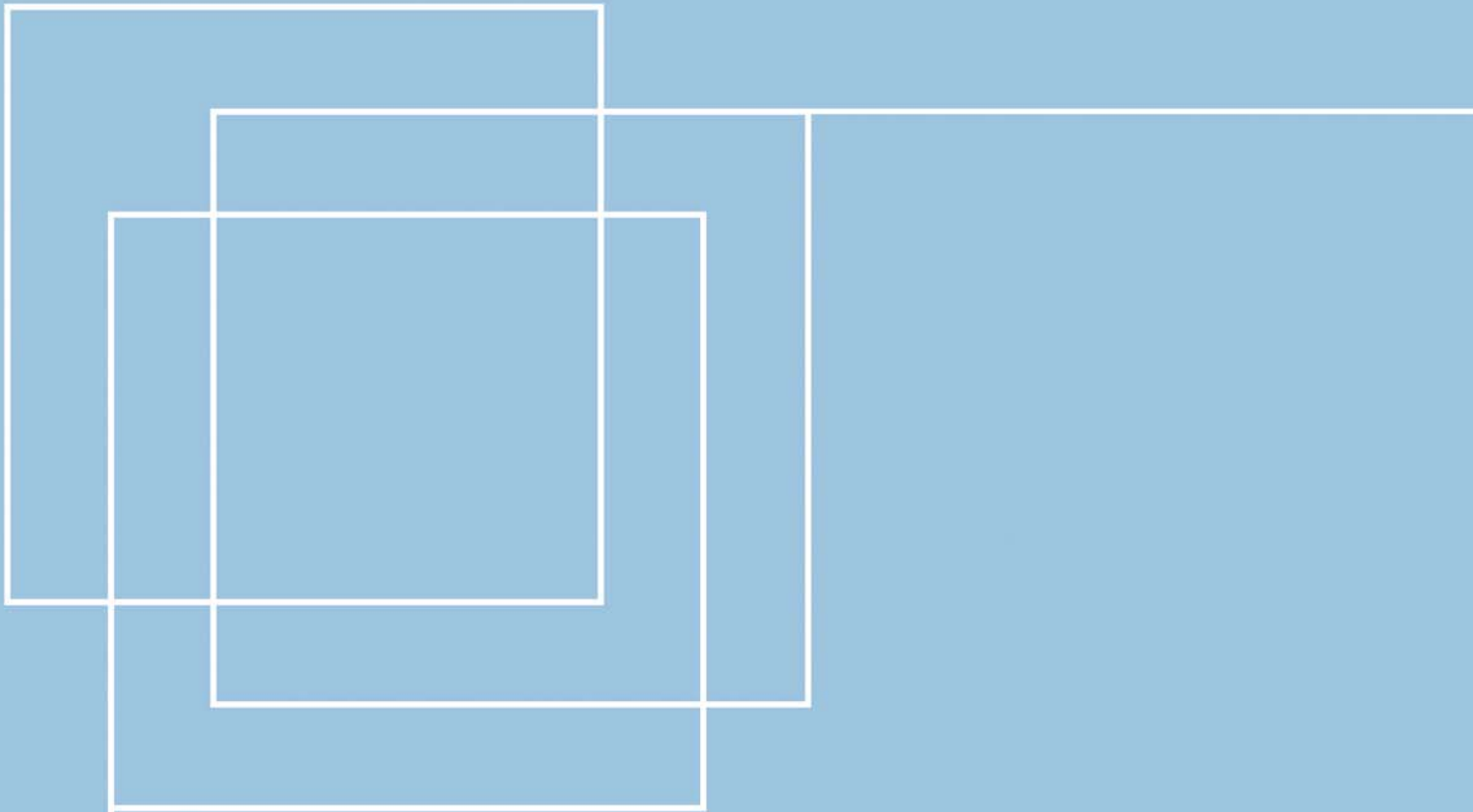
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