

About Hawthorne Foundation Inc.



A Behavioral Approach to Lifelong Care ®

History

HFI is a not-for-profit organization that has provided education to children with significant disabilities for forty years. In 1980, the Margaret Chapman school (predecessor to HCDS), became the first ABA-based (applied behavior analysis) education program to provide services to children who were diagnosed with severe developmental disabilities, autism, and other behavior disorders. HCDS is the longest running and most successful ABA education program in NYS. Over subsequent years, we have expanded our programs to include a full continuum of lifespan services from birth through adulthood, including Early Intervention, Preschool, School Age, Self-Direction/Fiscal Intermediary, Group Homes, and Day Habilitation.

For forty years, HFI has been a leader in the field of special education and developmental disabilities. HFI is distinguished amongst other special needs organizations in that we provide a continuum of care to 500 of Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and New York City's most educationally challenged children and adults. Many of the children and adults attending HFI's programs have been turned away from district and adult programs because of their behavioral and educational needs.

HFI provides a behavioral approach to lifelong care that meets the needs of these individuals, who have in turn, provided educational opportunities for our faculty, student teachers, psychologists, related service professionals, and the community at large.

Our Mission:

An Applied Behavior Analysis approach to life long quality Education, Habilitative, Vocational and Recreational programs for individuals with autism and other Intellectual Disabilities.

Using evidence-based education practices to promote Independence, Integration, Individualization and Productivity.

Our Vision:

To foster independence, integration, individualization and productivity while enhancing the quality of the lives for the people we serve. Our goal is to enable each and every individual to reach his or her maximum potential in the least restrictive environment by selecting and promoting educational practices that are grounded in research and science-in particular Applied Behavior Analysis and to assist each and every individual in identifying and realizing his or her own goals.

Philosophy



To provide a learning environment that effectively teaches and supports children and adults with disabilities and their families



To select and promote educational practices that are grounded in science and applied behavior analysis in particular



To give families a reliable way of evaluating the services their loved ones receive



To maximize self-determination and dignity for all individuals in our care.

HAWTHORNE FOUNDATION INC.



Staff



Our school faculty includes certified teachers, teaching assistants, and one-to-one aides who have been trained in applied behavior analysis. Adult services staff are also trained in ABA and meeting the needs of adult learners. The high staff to student/participant ratio supports the intensive educational and behavioral needs of the children and adults we serve. The staff in all programs operating at Hawthorne Foundation Inc. receive on-going training in the care and education of people with disabilities through a module system that ties training and job advancement within the Agency to increased student or adult outcomes. Trainings are supervised and conducted by Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). Additionally, Hawthorne Foundation Inc. has several program affiliations with local colleges and serves as a training site for future educators and clinicians.



Contact Us

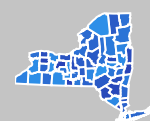
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Residential Services
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Programs, Supports, and Services for Children with Disabilities

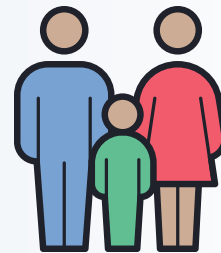


Early Childhood Services

Early Intervention (Birth-3 years) Westchester County Campus

Consistent with our behavioral philosophy, services are offered to children from birth to three years of age and their families in the home. These services include instruction and family training.

**The HCDS Early Intervention program is funded and regulated by the New York State Department of Health and Westchester County Department of Health.*



Preschool (3-5 years): Westchester County Campus

The HCDS preschool is a center-based program for children ages three to five years who have been identified by their school district as eligible for special education services. The program focuses on verbal behavior, play skills, social skills, and academic readiness through intensive 1:1 and small group instruction. Class sizes in the preschool are six children, one teacher and two teaching assistants, and classes are conducted from 8:30 until 2pm five days a week. Parent education, speech, OT, and PT are provided in accordance with each child's IEP (Individual Education Program).



Related Services (Speech, OT, PT, Counseling, Parent Education)

Related services are provided in accordance with each child's IEP. Services are provided either individually or in a group, depending upon individual need. Related services in preschool include speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, parent education.

Parent Education

The HCDS parent education program is uniquely designed for educating and training parents on the principles of behavior as they relate to their children with special needs. The goals of the program include generalizing newly learned student skills from the classroom to home, encouraging parent advocacy, and providing parents with the tools to manage difficult behaviors. The program offers workshops, support groups, and individual consultations for those parents who wish to address issues specific to their child. Participation is voluntary, but strongly encouraged.

School Age Services

School Age (5-21 years): Westchester County Campus

School Age (5-21 years): Manhattan Campus

Our school age program is the largest of our programs and serves children ages 5-21 years of age with a diagnosis of autism, intellectual disability, speech and language impairments, multiple disabilities, and other health impairments. The students are grouped in classes by age (within 36 months) and skill level to form the most conducive learning environment. Our class sizes include a ratio of six children, one teacher and two teaching assistants (6:1:2), or eight children, one teacher and three teaching assistants (8:1:3), and classes are conducted from 8:30 until 2:30 pm daily. Parent education, speech, OT, PT, and counseling are provided in accordance with each child's IEP. The HCDS curriculum is based on principles of applied behavioral analysis and reflects the NYS Common Core & CDOS Learning Standards.

Physical Education

Physical education is a vital element in the development of our students and is offered three times per week and daily as required. The curriculum is based on targeting individual needs of the students with an emphasis on gross and fine motor coordination, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We also have a traveling basketball team that competes with other similar schools in the area.



Working-Based Learning (WBL)

All HS students attending HCDS have opportunities to participate in WBL experiences reflective of their interests as self-reported on transition assessments, or by other means, and linked to their IEP goals. Teachers, Job Coaches, & TAs provide in-situ training during on-campus internships, such as operating our school-store and Peer Mentoring. Students with appropriate prerequisite skills travel to community-based sites across Westchester and the NYC for externships in local businesses.

Transition Planning

A Transition Timeline is implemented for all students in order to prepare them for exit from high school. It can involve:

- Student transition planning meetings
- Applying for eligibility for OPWDD and/or ACCES-VR services
- Applying for guardianship, SSI, Medicaid
- Exploring/applying for post-secondary options (day/residential programs, vocational/post-secondary education, employment)
- Connections to other HFI depts. (Self-Direction, Fiscal Intermediary, Adult Community Services)

Related Services (Speech OT, PT, Counseling)

Related services are provided in accordance with each child's IEP. Services are provided either individually or in a group, depending upon individual need. Related services in preschool and school age programs include speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling.



Programs, Supports, and Services for Adults with Disabilities



Day Habilitation - Westchester County



Day Habilitation with Walls



The day habilitation center offers our adult participants a full day, structured environment where they learn vocational, social and daily living skills and engage in a range of community-based activities through which they can practice and generalize these skills. Principles of applied behavior analysis are utilized throughout the program in order to assist each person in achieving maximum independence. Individuals are provided with the specific skills training needed, along with the tools necessary for person-centered decision making.



Day Habilitation Without Walls (WOW)



Day Habilitation **Without Walls** gives adults the ability to fully integrate into their local community through various daily activities, based on the interests and skill levels of the participants. Individuals develop interpersonal, communication, vocational and independent living skills. These important life skills are taught through a behavioral approach at various volunteer sites, and through peer activities, physical exercise, participation in cultural activities, learning money management, safety and self-advocacy skills and more. Participants in the WOW program spend the majority of their day in the community.

Employment Services - Westchester County

Community Based Prevocational Services (CBPV)

Day Habilitation **Without Walls** gives adults the ability to fully integrate into their local community through various daily activities, based on the interests and skill levels of the participants. Individuals develop interpersonal, communication, vocational and independent living skills. These important life skills are taught through a behavioral approach at various volunteer sites, and through peer activities, physical exercise, participation in cultural activities, learning money management, safety and self-advocacy skills and more. Participants in the WOW program spend the majority of their day in the community.

Community prevocational services are habilitation services that assist the individual to develop employment readiness skills and that are provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual receiving such services. The services consist of learning and work experiences, including volunteer work, that are not job-task specific but contribute to an individual's ability to attain paid employment in the community. HFI provides community prevocational services that include the following activities:

- **Training the individual to follow directions, attend to task, multi-task, complete tasks,**
- **Problem solve, work safely, increase productivity, adapt to work routines, and carry out**
- **Assigned duties in an effective manner;**
- **Helping the individual to acquire appropriate attitudes and work habits, including**
- **Instruction in socially appropriate behaviors on and off the job site;**
- **Assisting the individual to adjust to the demands of the workplace;**
- **Familiarizing the individual with job production and performance requirements;**
- **Providing travel training, including the use of public and para-transit systems;**
- **Transportation between activities;**
- **Instruction in the appropriate use of job-related facilities (e.g., lounge areas, lunch**
- **Rooms/cafeterias, and rest rooms);**
- **Assessing the individual to determine his or her work interests and skills;**
- **Instruction in benefits planning**



Supported Employment (SEMP) and Employment Training Program (ETP)

Hawthorne Foundation supports individuals who wish to obtain and maintain competitive employment in the community through skills and interest assessments, volunteer placements and internships, job development and matching, and on-site job coaching.



All Hawthorne Foundation Inc. employment services are provided by staff trained in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Residential Services

Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA)

HFI operates five IRAs in Westchester County. An Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) is a type of community residence that provides room, board and service options for people with disabilities. In an IRA, OPWDD provides supports for people with developmental disabilities to live in a certified home in the community with a small number of other people with developmental disabilities. HFI provides staff in the house to meet the needs of the people living in the home, according to their Life Plan.



Housing Navigation

Housing Navigation is a focused, outcome oriented, and time limited service that helps people with disabilities who need or want to move to community based housing to obtain and maintain stable, long-term housing of their choice. Navigation services include: housing start up services, developing an individual housing action plan, implementing a housing action plan, including finding a home and coordinating a move, and creating a housing sustainability plan and transition to ongoing service providers.

Individualized Supports and Services (ISS) Housing Subsidy

Hawthorne Foundation Inc. is an OPWDD approved ISS provider. We support people to live as independently in the community as possible by helping to manage individual ISS housing subsidies and providing assistance with the following:

- Viewing and approving the housing unit and reviewing the lease with the prospective tenant
- Processing and delivering rent checks
- Assisting the person to coordinate the move and setting up his/her home and utility and cable accounts and in maintaining his/her tenancy in conjunction with others as applicable
- Ensuring that the tenant is meeting their housing responsibilities

Individuals interested in pursuing ISS funding to live in the community in an apartment or non-certified single family home should have their Care Manager contact HFI.

Self-Directed Services



OPWDD Self-Direction and Fiscal Intermediary Program

Children and adults who are eligible for OPWDD services and enrolled in the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver can choose to self-direct their services. Self-direction gives individuals with disabilities flexibility to choose the mix of supports and services that are right for them. The individual (or their parent/advocate) chooses their services, the staff, and organizations that provide them, and a schedule that works best for them. Self-direction empowers people to design supports based on their unique strengths and needs. It gives them more control over the funding used to buy their services. Individuals in self-direction can choose if they want an agency to help them self-direct (agency-supported self-direction) or if they'd like to manage their own budget and staff with help from a Fiscal Intermediary and Support Broker (Self-Direction with Budget and Employer Authority).

Hawthorne Foundation Inc. is an approved Fiscal Intermediary and can help individuals and their families/advocates manage self-direction budgets/staff.

Our Executive Staff



Gail Nachimson, MS.Ed., SAS, SDA - Executive Director
gnachimson@hfdm.org

Gail Nachimson has over thirty five years of experience working with individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism and other developmental disabilities in a variety of settings, as both an educator and administrator. After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Psychology, and Elementary Education Certification, Cum Laude from Vassar College, and a Master's degree in Special Education, Magna Cum Laude from C.W. Post College-Long Island University, Ms. Nachimson started her career as a preschool special education teacher and also taught at the elementary and secondary levels at public and private schools.

Ms. Nachimson soon became a sought-after staff development trainer and lecturer and has presented workshops across the State and nationally on a variety of topics within the education/developmental disabilities field. She is also a Level 3 Credentialed Trainer for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Ms. Nachimson also served on several non-profit boards and was awarded the Seymour Werbalowsky Leadership Development Award for outstanding work in her community.

Ms. Nachimson received permanent certification as a New York State School Administrator and Supervisor (SAS) and School District Administrator (SDA) and went on to leadership roles in public and private schools, and at Jawonio, a Rockland-based non-profit agency serving people with disabilities, where she was responsible for the overall administration, supervision and coordination of all aspects of special education and OPWDD respite programs for children with disabilities. She collaborated with residential, employment, day habilitation and other service providers to implement programs for children and adults with a wide range of disabilities. During this time, Ms. Nachimson was recognized by the Cerebral Palsy Associations of NYS for her dedicated service to individuals with disabilities and by the Alpha Gamma Pi chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, the international education honor society, for outstanding service as an exceptional educator.

Ms. Nachimson also served as an adjunct instructor in the graduate school of education at the College of New Rochelle and as the education department chair and adjunct instructor at SUNY Rockland, where she was recognized for her dedicated leadership by the New York State Association of Two-Year Colleges. Ms. Nachimson also serves as the Co-Chair of the Education Committee and Board member at Interagency Council of Developmental Disability Agencies, Inc.



Eileen Bisordi, M.Ed, MA, SBL, SDA, SAS - Founder, Chief Quality Improvement & Program Development Officer
ebisordi@hfdm.org

Mrs. Bisordi has been involved in developing programs of inclusion for people with developmental disabilities for more than fifty years. In the early years of her career, she served as a teacher and Education Director of the Soundview School in Yorktown Heights, NY. She served as Executive Director of Margaret Chapman School, in Hawthorne, NY, for twenty-five years. Mrs. Bisordi served as Executive Director of Hawthorne Foundation Inc.

from 1996 to 2007, she now serves as Hawthorne's Chief Quality Improvement and Program Development Officer, she continues to be recognized for her dedication to serve and advocate, promoting for lives of inclusion for individuals with disabilities. As a proponent of community inclusion she founded the Area #3 Special Olympics in 1971 and served on the Board of Directors of the NYS Special Olympics Inc. organization for 18 years. She was instrumental in developing the Very Special Arts organization in New York State and served as Chairperson of that organization for 20 years. In 1976 she was named Very Special Educator of the Year by NYSED & VSANY.

Mrs. Bisordi is currently the President of Startech Inc., an organization that promotes inclusionary arts programs for people with disabilities. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Teachers College, Columbia University Chapter, and was named to Who's Who in American Women, Edition 12 & 13. From 1984-1985 she served as a member of the Metropolitan Advisory Board to the Senate Select Committee for the Disabled- NYS. From 1983-1991 she served as member and Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Mental Retardation Institute, Westchester County Medical Center (now W.I.H.D.). In 1989 Westchester County, NY declared April 28, 1989 "Eileen Bisordi Appreciation Day" in recognition of her contributions to improving the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in Westchester County. In 2004 she was named an "Everyday Hero," awarded by NYS OPWDD for her contributions towards the national recognition of an autistic artist. On October 18, 2013, Mrs. Bisordi received Trustco Bank's Hall of Fame Award for improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. She has written and received funding for grants that encouraged the development of inclusionary programs in the arts and physical education and has been an adjunct instructor at local colleges. Mrs. Bisordi was born in Queens, NY and lived in Westchester County for most of her life. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from SUNY at Potsdam, NY and a Master of Arts and Master of Education Degree from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is permanently certified in New York State as a School District Administrator, School Administrator and Supervisor, Special Education.

Our Program Staff



Darlene McGuirk-Morey, Human Resources Director
darlenem@hfadm.org

Darlene McGuirk-Morey is the Human Resources Coordinator. In 2005 when Darlene joined Hawthorne Foundation Inc., her challenge was to expand an existing personnel department to a Human Resources Department with the growth of the agency. Her initial tasks were to develop and maintain HR systems and processes including recruiting, employee handbook, employee benefits programs, policy and procedures, and wage and salary administration systems. As she expanded Human Resources from a one-person office to a department of five, Darlene continues the work she started and oversees all aspects of Human Resources and Staff Development.



Cynthia Burgos, MS - QA / Incident Management Coordinator
cburgos@hfadm.org

Cynthia Burgos graduated with a BS in Business Administration from Fordham University at Marymount, and a MS in Organizational Leadership from Mercy College. She started her career as a teacher in the NYC public schools, and transitioned into positions in the field of Quality Assurance and Compliance within school, foster care, and residential programs. Cynthia has expertise in program auditing and quality improvement, staff training, and cross-department collaboration. Cynthia is very involved in her local community and volunteers for various non-profits in her spare time.



Sherryl John, BA - Quality Assurance Coordinator/Investigator
sjohn@hfadm.org

Sherryl has more than ten years of experience in the Quality Assurance field in the non-for-profit setting. She earned her Bachelor's degree in social sciences from Dominican University, in Blauvelt, NY. Soon after she started her career as a Quality Assurance Specialist and then QA Coordinator and worked in non-for-profit agencies. Sherryl is a certified New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) trained Investigator through IAC, Connecticut Department of Social Services trained Investigator, OPWDD Death based Investigator, and OMH trained Investigator.



Cynthia Morales - Human Resources Coordinator
cynthiam@hfadm.org

Cyndi Morales is the Employee Relations Coordinator. From training to generalist, from benefits administrator to HR director Cyndi joined Hawthorne Foundation Inc. in 2021 with over 20 years of experience in Human Resources. As an Employee Relations Coordinator Cyndi investigates staff complaints with neutrality, impartiality, and confidentiality, gathering relevant information and documentation to make recommendations on a course of action in consultation with HR leadership.

Our Program Staff



Ann Marie Babcock, BA - Admissions Coordinator
ambabcock@hawthornecountryday.org

Ann Marie Babcock received her Bachelor Degree in Social Work from Dominican College in Rockland County. She began working at HCDS in February 2001 as an Education Coordinator. As Admissions Coordinator, Mrs. Babcock is responsible for receiving and reviewing all referrals and making the necessary arrangements for screening, interviewing, processing, and expediting new admissions to Hawthorne Foundation, maintaining an active wait list, setting up individual tours as well as group tours, sending out letters to districts/care coordinator's regarding status of referrals, sending out letters of acceptance and collecting all admission paperwork required.



Anna Chopra, BA - Day Habilitation Program Coordinator
annac@hfadm.org

Mrs. Chopra received her B.A. in Psychology from G.N.D. University, in India. She has worked with Hawthorne Foundation since 2002 first as a residence manager and then as the Coordinator of Residential Service. Ms. Chopra is now the Day Hab Coordinator. Ms. Chopra has extensive experience working the field of ID/DD and over twenty years with OPWDD.



Shannique Leung-Hall MS, MSW- Residential Coordinator
dwhyte@hawthornecountryday.org

Shannique Leung-Hall became a part of the Hawthorne Foundation Inc. in 2023 as a Residence Manager for one of our community residential programs before advancing to the role of Coordinator of Residential Services. A proud veteran of the United States Army, she holds both a Master of Science degree in Sociology from the St. John's University and a Master of Social Work degree from Sacred Heart University. Mrs. Leung-Hall has been in the OPWDD field for over 10 years. In her role as Coordinator of Residential Services, Mrs. Leung-Hall oversees the supervision of all five IRAs/ residential programs, collaborating closely with residence managers, assistants, RNs, and external stakeholders. Her commitment ensures that residents continue to receive the exceptional level of care that HFI is known for.



Katherine Williams - Coordinator of FI/Self-Direction and Community Services
kwilliams@hfadm.org

Katherine Williams is the Coordinator of Self Direction & Community Programs. She has been with HFI for the past 32 years, starting in the Social Work department when HFI was a residential school. When the first Agency IRA opened in 1996, she became the Residence Manager and remained there almost 20 years, before becoming the Coordinator of the Fiscal Intermediary/Self Direction department. Kathy recently became a NYS Broker for Self-Direction and a NYS Housing Navigator.

Our Program Staff



Amanda Doll, Ed.M., BCBA/LBA, SDL - *Principal of School Age Program Westchester*

adoll@hawthornecountryday.org

Amanda W. Doll was trained at Columbia University Teachers College, where she earned a MA in Early Childhood Special Education, and an EdM in Neurosciences in Education. In addition, Mrs. Doll studied behavior analysis at Manhattanville College and pursued school building and district leadership at Mercy College, earning a MS with distinction.

Amanda W. Doll is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA), certified special education teacher and school administrator. In addition to her work at other public and private schools and as a college instructor, Amanda worked at Hawthorne Foundation Inc from 2008 to 2019 in various capacities including Senior Teacher, Interim Pre School Program Coordinator, Day Habilitation Coordinator, and Training Coordinator. For the past four years, Amanda has been a school administrator at a residential school for autistic individuals in Dutchess County, NY.



Dr. Randall Glading, MS, PhD, SAS - *Principal of School Age Manhattan*

rglading@hawthornecountryday.org

Dr. Randall Glading received his Bachelor's degree in Physical Education from SUNY Cortland, Master's in Special Education from Long Island University, and Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership from Fordham University. He also holds permanent certification in NYS as a School Administrator and Supervisor. Randall served as Assistant Principal in area school districts for 23 years and as a physical education and special education teacher prior. He also served as an Assistant Professor in the Education Departments at several area colleges.



Kelly Hobbins, MA, MS, SDA, BCBA - *Early Childhood Coordinator*

khobbins@hawthornecountryday.org

Kelly Hobbins graduated with a BA and MA from Western Michigan University in Applied Behavior Analysis. She studied at Teacher's College Columbia University for two years with an emphasis in Special Education/Behavior Analysis, and completed an MS in Administration from Mercy College. She is a NYS certified teacher of general and special education, a NYS certified School Building Leader and School District Leader, and a Nationally Certified Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Over her career, she has worked in various settings for children with disabilities. Including teaching in early intervention programs, self-contained and integrated preschool classrooms, and teaching and supervising school age self-contained classrooms. Ms. Hobbins has worked in the for profit field of educational curriculum development at Headsprout Reading in Seattle, WA curriculum. She began working for HFI in 2004 as a classroom teacher and quickly moved into a Senior Teacher/Behavior Analyst role. Ms. Hobbins is now the Coordinator for Early Childhood Education. She oversees the operations of all early childhood programs including Early Intervention and Preschool.

Our Program Staff



Susan Heitker, MEd, BCBA, Corporate Compliance Officer
susanh@hfadm.org

Susan Heitker came to Hawthorne in 2001 after having earned Masters' degrees at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY in Special Education and Reading. Hawthorne provided her with educational opportunities and mentoring with Dr. Tina Covington to earn her BCBA designation in 2003. She has also since studied at the College of St. Rose to earn a Master's degree in School Administration in 2010. At Hawthorne, she has held the positions of Classroom Teacher, Senior Teacher, Behavior Analyst for Day Habilitation, and Corporate Compliance documents specialist. Additionally, She has simultaneously worked in the position titles of Corporate Compliance Coordinator and Adult Behavior Services Supervisor. At the present time, she works as Corporate Compliance Coordinator in the Corporate Compliance/Quality Assurance Department under the leadership of Cynthia Burgos.



Diego Cáceres, Support Service Coordinator
diegoc@hfadm.org

Diego Cáceres started out at the Hawthorne Country Day School as a Paraprofessional 1:1 in September 2010. Mr. Cáceres transferred to the Support Services Department for Hawthorne Foundation Inc. in 2015 and was promoted to the position of Coordinator of Support Services for the Agency in 2020. Mr. Cáceres supervises the physical plant operations of Hawthorne Foundation Inc., which includes all buildings, grounds, utilities, and energy management systems, to provide a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment for students, faculty, and staff. His department is responsible for maintenance and repair activities, contracted services, and custodial services of all programs and departments which includes the Westchester and Manhattan schools, IRAs, the Day Habilitation Center, Human Resources, and Training. Mr. Cáceres has over 15 years of experience in residential and commercial environments.

Our Board of Directors



Richard Billson, Esq., *President/Treasurer*

Mr. Billson received his MA in French and Italian from the University of Edinburgh, and then went on to complete his Postgraduate Law Degree from the College of Law in London. During his employment in the UK, Mr. Billson served as European General Counsel for Microsoft Online Services (MSN) in Paris, and was a private practice attorney in London. Mr. Billson and his family relocated to the United States in 2005. He has been the Vice President for AIG Product Development, and is currently the Vice President, Proposition Development for Zurich North America.

Jason Palmer, *Vice President*

Mr. Palmer majored in Computer Science at SUNY ALBANY,, earning a BA in Computer Science. He has strong interpersonal skills and proven ability to communicate and implement new technology. His specialization is in e-commerce, website functionality, marketing, SEO and SEM. Mr. Palmer participates in Fundraising & Charity activities and was a recipient of the prestigious Fairfield County "30 under 30" award. Other organizations Mr. Palmer has participated with include the Parent Association (President) at Hawthorne Country Day School, Manhattan Campus and Membership with FAB (Friends of Autistic People) in Connecticut.

Melanie Meyers, *Secretary*

Ms. Meyers received a BA in history from Purchase College and a MS in Library and Information Science from Long Island University. She currently serves as the Director of Collections and Engagement at The American Jewish Historical Society. Ms. Meyer is also an adjunct instructor at the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University. Ms. Meyers has presented at numerous conferences across the country and internationally, and has published widely in her field. Ms. Meyers has a long-standing history of support for HFI and is an active participant in fundraisers and events.

Our Board of Directors



Susan George, B.A., Director

Susan George is an accomplished non-profit leader who is passionate about education and making an excellent education accessible to all students regardless of economic status. As the Executive Director of Inner-City Scholarship Fund (Inner-City) since 2004, she has raised more than \$450 million in donations to help underserved families in the Archdiocese of New York access a Catholic school education. Susan has transformed the board of three organizations through her ability to connect alumni and business leaders with the mission of their colleges and education. Today she manages a board of over 30 individuals including many leaders from Fortune 500 companies. Susan holds a B.A. from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Letters from Drew University where her thesis was "Corporate Philanthropy."

Saniah Syeda, Director

Saniah Syeda studied Genetics and Chemistry at Anwar-ul-Uloom College, India in 1992. She went on to receive her Masters in Genetics from Aligarh University two years later. Ms. Syeda has worked as both a high school science teacher as well as a Junior Scientist at Veritas Inc. in Rockville, Maryland. She has been a Certified Broker with OPWDD since 2021. Her experience in genetic research has instilled a deep passion for finding solutions for various genetic disorders. She is committed to leveraging her skills and experiences to contribute significantly to the Foundation's growth and the realization of its mission.

Laura Slack, Director

Laura Slack has an outstanding record of community leadership, demonstrating a deep commitment to education, philanthropy, and advocacy. As a dedicated member of the South East Consortium, Ms. Slack has served on the board since 2022, contributed significantly to various committees, and co-chaired fundraising efforts since 2015. Beyond education, Ms. Slack has made a lasting impact through philanthropic endeavors. She co-founded and co-chaired several caring committees that have enriched the lives of families and schools in the community. Her involvement with the Rye Women's Club as a Founding Member in 2014, including serving as Co-Chair for Holiday Giving, underscores a dedication to fostering community well-being and life enrichment.

Thomas J. McCauley, Director

Tom McCauley is a Senior Vice President and Benefits Consultant at USI Insurance Services, leading the Northeast Region's Not-for-Profit and Healthcare practice. With over 30 years of experience, he specializes in creating innovative, cost-effective employee benefits and risk management solutions. Tom joined USI in 2017 after working with Wells Fargo Insurance, Wachovia, and Stephen H. Douglas, Inc. An active supporter of the nonprofit community, Tom serves on various boards, advises on industry trends, and frequently speaks at nonprofit conferences. He holds dual licenses for Life/Health and Variable products and earned a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Ithaca College.