Through our programs, whether delivered remotely or in-person, we remain committed to fighting the feelings of isolation and strengthening our relationships to each other.
As I write this letter for our 2019 annual report, I cannot avoid thinking about how different the world looks and feels now. Before I discuss our current situation, I’d like look back to 2019, and to celebrate the wonderful developments that took place.

We made it to the Bronx! Directly following The Felix Awards, Extreme Kids began the build-out of our third play space at the Bronx elementary school, Sheridan Academy for Young Leaders. In the fall, we welcomed families for Saturday open play and nearly 70 people—including parents, kids, teachers, and a city council member—joined us for what resulted in one of the largest turnouts for open play in Extreme Kids’ history.

While open play is always a joy, some of my favorite moments of 2019 occurred when members of The Crew got out and about in NYC. Last winter, The Crew took over the Prospect Park ice skating rink; in the spring we met up at the New York Hall of Science; in the summer, we marched, danced, rolled and sweated at the Disability Pride Parade; and in the fall, we petted goats and got lost in the corn maze at the Queens County Farm Museum.

We kicked off 2020 eager to expand our program offerings in the Bronx, and expand our after-school and summer camp programs. On March 14th, we suspended all programming and expansion plans due to the pandemic, and pivoted to providing all offerings remotely. While we missed everyone terribly, we fell upon an unexpected silver lining—we enjoyed delivering programs online and found value in further developing this mode of program delivery.

I’m so proud of the Extreme Kids’ staff, which moved swiftly to develop a wide range of online options. Our parents and partners, kids and funders, volunteers and board members all contributed in ways I will forever be grateful for, proving that our community lives within us and is not bound by neighborhoods or classrooms. Know this: The space may be changing, but the mission is not. Through our programs, whether delivered remotely or in-person, we remain committed to fighting the feelings of isolation and strengthening our relationships to each other.

Stay strong, funny, and empathetic, my friends. Please know that we are here for you if you need some encouragement, or a little reassurance that all is not lost. It’s not, I promise: We have each other, our community, and a future to look to when we can all dance, roll, jump, talk and swing together again. Until then, see you online!

Warmly, Caitlin M Cassaro
MISSION
At Extreme Kids & Crew, we cultivate welcoming, accessible spaces where kids with disabilities and their people create a supportive community through the arts, play and conversation.

VISION
Extreme Kids & Crew seeks to show people that disability is not to be feared, pitied or mindlessly exalted, but understood to be an inherent part of life. We will achieve this by establishing and maintaining creative community centers for the disability community, including a cultural hub that will serve to connect and celebrate people of all ages with all different sorts of disabilities.

RACIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION
Extreme Kids & Crew believes that every child has the right to play and make art as it holds meaning to them, that every family has the right to accurate information and supports, and that every employee has the right to a workplace that embraces a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Disability and race are entrenched ideas that have long been used as tools of division and social oppression. We work to reverse some of the psychic toll this has caused by making space for loving communities bound by the experience of disability. We work in communities with the largest African American and immigrant populations in the world, and we recognize that the experience of disability is more difficult and dangerous for our Black and Brown members. Through a combination of vision and action, we work to create more equity and understanding of intersectionality within our community, and in the general population as a whole.
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, their parents, and their siblings are more likely than their neurotypical peers to be judged, treated unfairly or discriminated against. Families at the intersection of disability, racial inequality and poverty are further excluded and vulnerable because of ableism compounded by racism.

According to the NYC Department of Education, 225,000 children in NYC have at least one disability.

According to The Arc’s FINDS survey (2010, 2017): 44% of families reported diminished services in their communities.

9 out of 10 caregivers reported that they were stressed with 48% feeling very or extremely stressed.

83% found supporting friendships and inclusive community experiences challenging in meeting the needs of their family member with disabilities.

"Due to discrimination, children with disabilities are at increased risk for low self-esteem, poor health and education, and may be at a higher risk for violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation" [Early Childhood Development and Disability: A Discussion Paper (World Health Organization)].
A place where Joaquin can be loud, different, brilliant, appreciated and never judged.

- Edna Garces, parent member
WHY EXTREME KIDS & CREW?

Extreme Kids & Crew exists to increase feelings of confidence and self-worth, and decrease the feelings that often accompany those who are neurodiverse or have a disability, feelings of isolation and loneliness. Through arts and play programs for children and parent seminars and support groups, we are creating a welcoming community of disability, where all voices are heard and all modes of expression are acknowledged and celebrated.

In 2019, we offered programs, at no cost to participants, in three different programmatic areas:

**Family**
These programs welcome the entire family to take part and join in the fun.

**Parent/Caregiver**
These programs are geared towards adults who are parenting a child with a disability.

**Drop-Off**
These programs are for children only, and take place after school and during the summer.
TEENS CREW AND GIRLS CREW SOCIAL GROUPS

Our Girls Crew and Teens Crew programs provide a space for neurodiverse children to socialize with their peers. Meeting monthly, these social groups allow our kids to feel a sense of belonging and support while building friendships with each other and the program facilitators. Girls Crew is a structured, activities-based get-together split into younger and older age groups. Events involve dance, yoga, theater, and more. Teens Crew sessions are more self-led and allow room for opened-ended socializing and play.

20 Girls Crew events
10 Teens Crew events
52% Retention rate for Girls Crew and Teens Crew

“Teens Crew gives kids with special needs and their families a chance to simply be themselves, build friendships, and have fun together! The monthly meet-ups give my twins something exciting to look forward to.”

—Lisa Kruger, member since 2017
ALL PROGRAMS

Child participants - 588
Adult and Caregiver Participants - 719
Total Individuals - 1,307
New families - 326

Total visits - 4,950
Total visits since 2011 - 30,698

Visits per year by P.S. 15 & P.S. 71 students and teachers - 560

OPEN PLAY

Historically, open play has been the most popular program that Extreme Kids facilitates. It takes place every weekend from September to June and allows families to play and socialize on their own terms in an accepting environment. Children can play in the sensory gym on equipment normally reserved for therapy, explore their creative side, or delve into the world of imaginary play. Caretakers join in the fun while socializing with other adults who understand their experiences.

The success of this program at our Red Hook and Ridgewood spaces led us to open a third space in Concourse Village in December 2019.

937 unique visits from parents and children
115 open play sessions
345 hours of open play programming

“I found the relationships that we made over the year were very important for both of our kids as well as for us. The fact that we could rely on seeing the same staff regularly meant our kids would be excited to engage—which is as important to our autistic child as his neurotypical brother.

To us, it was about being able to have conversations about anything with the volunteers or staff or to have a moment of knowing what a particular parent is going through and knowing how to help.”

-Another anonymous survey quote from parent member

Extreme Kids families living at or below the poverty line 29.4%
Based on families who reported whether they qualify for benefits or family earns less than $25k annually.

VOLUNTEERS

16

16

It creates a space for kids with disabilities to connect, and also parents of kids with disabilities to connect, so they won’t feel like they’re alone in this journey.

-Anonymous survey quote from parent member
CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY AT THE FELIX AWARDS.

COUNCILMAN CARLOS MENCHACA IS A CONFIRMED CREW MEMBER.

A YEARBOOK OF FACES AND PLACES

HANDS IN THE AIR IF YOU’RE READY FOR SUMMER CAMP!

IN FULL CELEBRATION MODE AT THE 2019 DISABILITY PRIDE PARADE.

SAVING THE DAY WITH FRIENDS OF FIREFIGHTERS.
DON’T LET GO!

ICE SKATING IN PROSPECT PARK WITH A LITTLE HELP, OF COURSE.

WE’RE JUST HANGING OUT...

SPREADING THE LOVE.

EXTREMEKIDSANDCREW.ORG
In 2018 Grace was honored with an award for her leadership skills by SparkYouth NYC (formerly Catalog for Giving). We can only take partial credit for Grace’s growth along with her teachers at P.S. 15, because the most influential impact has been her family. Toni, Sam, Tati, and Evan are why Grace will continue to grow and develop into a happy and well-adjusted citizen of the world, and we are grateful for the time we’ve had to spend with all of them.

Grace Gathers began attending our free after-school program when it launched in 2014, and has now participated consistently through the entirety of her time in elementary school. She also attended summer camp in 2018 and 19.

Grace completed her fifth year with us in the 2019/20 school year, and has grown into a grounded and flexible preteen, and after-school leader, who is excitedly looking forward to moving up to middle school.

Julie Cavanaugh, Vice-Principal at P.S. 15, described Grace’s growth this way: “Grace has blossomed during her time with Extreme Kids. Her social-emotional aptitude, expressive and receptive language skills, and her self-confidence have dramatically improved and this would not have been possible without the opportunity to take part in after school and summer camp programs with Extreme Kids. There is no doubt that Grace will live a more independent and happier life with increased achievement throughout her schooling due to the strong foundation Extreme Kids has fostered.”

In 2018 Grace was honored with an award for her leadership skills by SparkYouth NYC (formerly Catalog for Giving).

We can only take partial credit for Grace’s growth along with her teachers at P.S. 15, because the most influential impact has been her family. Toni, Sam, Tati, and Evan are why Grace will continue to grow and develop into a happy and well-adjusted citizen of the world, and we are grateful for the time we’ve had to spend with all of them.

“...The outside world is screwed up in so many ways, but when you come to Extreme Kids & Crew, you have a relationship, you’re safe, you can talk about your issues, and it’s just...you know...free.”

-Antwanette [Toni] Garner, Grace’s mom, member since 2014
BRONX GRAND OPENING

Madeline Holder, parent member

“Jonathan and I had a blast on Saturday! He was so thrilled that he used WORDS: “thank you Mama” & “very happy!!!!” Yay!

When we were officially approved to create Concourse Village Space at The Sheridan Academy for Young Leaders, Principal Febus emailed our Executive Director Caitlin Cassaro and ended her note by saying, “Oh, this is so emotional for me!!!! Let’s do it for the Bronx Families!”

69 children and adults attended the grand opening, including Principal Febus and Councilwoman Vanessa L. Gibson (dist. 16)
The Felix Awards honor artists, writers, thinkers, dancers, actors, and other individuals who have helped deepen the public’s understanding of disability. The annual event, which is named in honor of our founder’s son, is a celebration for our entire community.

Members of our play spaces, longtime donors and friends, community leaders, staff and board members, enjoy an evening of cocktails, delicious hors d’oeuvres (mmm bacon wrapped dates mmm), and of course, a ball pit to jump in.

May 15, 2019

2019 Award Recipient: Jerron Herman
An interdisciplinary artist and principal member of Heidi Latsky Dance. He joined the company in 2011 having never danced before. Since then he’s been featured at Lincoln Center, American Dance Festival, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and abroad in Athens.

2019 Felix Awards Sponsors
Halstead Development Property Marketing
Budweiser (Stella Artois)

A Special Thank You...
501 Union; Atelier Roquette;
Dry Dock wine + spirits;
Movers, Not Shakers; Van Brunt Stillhouse; and Filip Wolak
Every season, we offer free special events for children with disabilities and their families by partnering with other organizations and institutions. Public outings can be daunting for families due to prevalent ableism. We created these events as a way to introduce children to new artforms, for kids and adults to feel less isolated, and for families to have fun together with peers all while doing similar activities as neurotypical families.

2019 Special Events included visits to the New York Hall of Science, New York Transit Museum, Queens County Farm Museum, Sonic Arts for All!, FIGMENT NYC, Circus Afloat, Hinds Combat Sports, MusicWorks concerts and Fire Truck Days with Friends of Firefighters, plus the two events listed below.

**NYC DISABILITY PRIDE**

*July 14, 2019*

The NYC Disability Pride Parade is an annual event to promote inclusion, awareness, and visibility of people with disabilities. The event founders’ vision is to remove the stigma of disability, and to celebrate disability as a natural and diverse part of the human experience. Extreme Kids & Crew families, friends and volunteers marched down 5th Avenue in Manhattan, and for the fourth year in row we celebrated our PRIDE!

Number of Extreme Kids participants: **30**

**ICE SKATING WITH THE CREW**

*February 18, 2019*

For the second year, families joined us at Prospect Park for a disability-friendly ice skating event with the help of the New York City Parks Department. This was one of the only environments in NYC for recreational skating catered towards children with disabilities thanks to Extreme Kids and our event sponsor, Planet Fitness. Families had access to adaptive skating equipment to allow fun for all, while disability-aware staff and volunteers were on-site facilitating a safe environment and having fun!

Number of Extreme Kids participants: **94**
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Peggy Madison and the P.S. 15 family
Indiana Soto and the P.S. 71 family
Lisette Febus and the Sheridan Academy for Young Leaders family
501 Union
Victor Calise, NYC Commissioner for People with Disabilities
Cynthia & Jonathan Carson
James Cassaro
Stephanie Cherry & Robert Hansen
Cecilia Clarke
Tina Dituri & Charles Casanova
Jason Factor
The Fuqua Family
Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
Jerron Herman, recipient of the 2019 Felix Award for Dance
Joanna Hershon & Derek Buckner
Zach Hochkeppel
Linda Kocieniewski
Lawyers Alliance for New York
Chris McGowan
NY Printing & Graphics
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SparkYouth NYC
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Extreme Kids'
NYC Marathon Team

Craig Breaden
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Tom Fuchs
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Hannah Littman
Kari Murphy
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Volunteers

Craig Breaden
Ariana Carvalho Tavares
Latoya Clarke
Danielle Cumberbatch
Margot Donnellian
Lauryn Duncan
David Einhorn
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Jane Kronenberg
Maya Niclas
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Dia Varano
STAFF

Caitlin Cassaro, Executive Director
Leigh Reid, Senior Director of Development
Claribel Rivas, Communications Coordinator
Teshawn Edmonds, Database Assistant
Russell Abbott, Chief Administrative Officer
Diana Baron-Moore, Head Teacher
Christian Peralta, Program Manager
Sterling Baker, Red Hook Coordinator
Chris Lares, Program Coordinators
Sherri Poall, Program Coordinator
Marlon Curbelo, Greeter
Joshua Iyageh, Greeter

PARTNERS, TEACHING ARTISTS & SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Advocates for Children
AHRC
Allergic to Salad
Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy
Brooklyn College
Dept. of Children and Youth Studies
Brooklyn Conservatory of Music
Brooklyn Public Library
Cleaning with Meaning
Co/Lab Theater Company
Community Resource Exchange
Disability Pride NYC
DJ Reborn
Flamenco Vivo
Four Corners Translation LLC
Figment!NYC 2019
Friends of Firefighters
INCLUDEnyc
Jitasa
Joan Conklin
Kentler International Drawing Space
LeFrak Center at Lakeside
Life is Hard, Fighting is Easy LLC
Lloyd Miller
Monkey Do Yoga
MusicWorks
New York City Aquarium
New York Hall of Science
New York Transit Museum
Nonprofit New York
NYC Development of Youth & Community Development
NYPG Printing and Graphics
Planet Fitness
R. Rubin Family Foundation
Select Equity Group Foundation
SMPS Family Fund
SparkYouth NYC
Sports 4 Life
Stephen Colbert Americone Dream Fund
The FAR Fund
The Joseph H. Flom Family Foundation
The O’Connell Organization Family Foundation
The South Wind Foundation
The Walt Disney Company Foundation
Two Trees Management
Valentine Perry Snyder Fund
William J. & Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation
Youth INC
My family found Extreme Kids & Crew at a crucial time—our oldest son had recently been diagnosed autistic and we were feeling very lost. We very quickly discovered a community of support and celebration within Extreme Kids that changed all of our lives for the better.

Vanessa Connelly, parent member and board president
Extreme Kids & Crew is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 2010. We cultivate welcoming, accessible spaces where kids with disabilities and their people create a supportive community through the arts, play and conversation. Through arts and play based programming, kids discover their talents and forge friendships. Our family education and advocacy services equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge and emotional resources they need to advocate for their children and themselves.

There are many ways to contribute to your community:

- Volunteer to assist with program delivery
- Support the organization through individual donations, sponsorship opportunities, or corporate matches through your workplace
- Join the board of directors or the young professionals board.
- Spread the word!

**FINANCIAL POSITION**
- Total Support - $616,559
- Total Expenses - $538,409
- Change in Net Assets - $79,430
- Net Assets Beginning of Year - $296,220
- Total Assets - $381,006
- Total Liabilities - $5,416
- Total Liabilities and Net Assets - $375,650

**DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES**
- Program Services: 13%
- Fundraising: 9%
- Management & General: 78%