

7 5 Y E A R S O F S E R V I C E



R E P O R T T O O U R C O M M U N I T Y

T O Y O U T H A N D F A M I L I E S



## “We will take care of you.”

That statement of assurance, first spoken by the Sisters of St. Joseph, represents both our history and our mission. It was our undertaking seventy-five years ago, and it is our promise today.

*Photo of Delithia and her infant son, both residents this past year at our Spencerport Road Young Mothers group home program.*

## Message from Villa Leadership

Since 1942, Villa of Hope has risen to meet the needs of the community time and time again. Through caring for increasing numbers of young people whose lives were impacted by abuse, poverty and family histories of mental illness and drug problems, the Villa evolved into a leader in behavioral health, mental health, substance abuse treatment and trauma-informed care.

Seventy-five years later, the world and our community has changed so much. One thing remains: our youth and families need love, they need help . . . they need Hope. The work being done by the Villa for youth and families is absolutely critical, particularly now when our community is facing extreme poverty, deadly opioid epidemics, teen suicide, cyber-bullying, sex trafficking and violence. We know more than ever before about the consequences of trauma, how it impacts brain development in youth, and how it can tear families and

communities apart. Programs at Villa of Hope are tailored to meet the needs of each youth and family to heal from trauma and renew Hope for their future.

Seventy-five years ago, the Sisters of St. Joseph packed up over 100 kids and rode the bus out to their new home on Dewey Avenue. They made the same promise we make today to our youth and families, “We will take care of you.” We may have evolved in what we do and how we do it, but deep down we live the values the Villa was founded upon and continue to bring Hope to life every day.



Michael Amico  
Board Chair

Christina M. Gullo, MSW, MBA  
President/CEO



# A Brief History of the Villa



3300 Dewey Avenue was once a seed farm run by James Vick & Son, which was sold to George H. Clark as a summer home around 1900.

Clark was a native Rochesterian, and was one of the original investors in the Eastman Dry Plate and Film Company – now known as Eastman Kodak Company. He became one of the area’s great philanthropists, and the Villa benefited from his generosity. In 1938, he sold his summer home and land to the Catholic Diocese of Rochester for \$25,000, with the request that they “keep it filled with children.”

Four months later, Clark donated \$25,000 back to the Diocese to be used for their charity work.

**In the early 1940s**, St. Mary’s Boys Home, St. Patrick’s and St. Joseph’s orphanages merged, and many children were moved to the newly formed



foster care system. The remaining 100 boys and girls were assured by the Sisters of St. Joseph, “We will take care of you.” When St. Mary’s closed its doors in 1942, St. Joseph’s Villa’s doors opened. Referred to as “a humble start with a noble purpose,” the children and Sisters who moved to 3300 Dewey Avenue that year could never have imagined how the Villa’s role in the community would grow in the decades to follow.

**The 1950s** saw a shift in the Villa’s direction to meet the emerging need for mental health services for youth. An Infirmary was added to the campus in 1954.

**In 1960 the Villa served 1,200 youth and families.**

A new administration building and convent were built to replace the Clark home in 1964, and in 1966, the Villa opened the first group home for youth in the city of Rochester.

A second group home was opened in 1968; and the pool was built in that same year.

An addition was built to the Campus School **in the 1970s**, which allowed for consolidation of classes; and in 1979, St Joseph’s Villa Campus school program was approved for children with special educational needs.

Growth continued also, when in 1976, the Villa assumed management of two more group homes.

**The 1980s** began with the opening of additional group homes in Greece, NY and Wayne County. Construction was begun on a brand new school building. The Education complex was formally dedicated in 1985.

The 80s also mark the birth of programs that have become the backbone of Villa services: the



Avalon School Day Treatment program in 1983; Preventive Services in 1985; and in 1987, LIFE (Live in Freedom Early) Chemical Dependency Program opened. 2017 marks LIFE’s 30th anniversary!

**In the 1990s**, the Campus School that we know today opened. Additionally, a transition classroom opened at Greece Olympia High School.

1997 was the year that the Palermo family gifted the beautiful park on campus, dedicated to the memory of Peter M. Palermo, Sr.

**In the 2000s**, the Campus School Science lab was built, and the Horticulture and Culinary Programs were established.

The Chemical Dependency Outpatient Clinic opened in 2002.

**In 2004, the Villa served 1,500 youth and families.**

This brings us to the current decade; a time of enormous growth in the history of the Villa.

In 2012, the Irwin Metzger Memorial Sitting Area was dedicated. Also in 2012, Path Forward, a Critical Care Facility, opened.



St. Joseph’s Villa was rebranded as Villa of Hope in 2013. In 2015, Chapel renovations were completed; and an additional classroom

was added to Avalon.

2016 marked the opening of our CD and Mental Health Outpatient Clinics, located together in one office space. It was also the year the Villa made a smooth transition to Managed Care, with the Health Homes and Children’s Health Homes programs.

As the Villa celebrates its 75th anniversary, 2017 marks the year we became the only **certified Sanctuary® agency** in our region.

**This year, the Villa served 3,500 youth and families.**





# Meet Shalinda.

Talking with Shalinda today, she is nothing short of **impressive**.

An activist who has a job with Teen Empowerment, she is a frequent speaker at local churches and City Council, and has had the ear of the Mayor, the Rochester Police Department and local politicians for her work and research on incarceration trends, especially as they pertain to young African American males.

Yet even a year-and-a-half earlier, everything was quite different.

Her childhood had been filled with hardship. In an environment surrounded by gang activity, trauma, neglect and poverty, every day was clouded by worry. Due to extenuating circumstances, she had no choice but to take care of an entire household, younger siblings and her mother, and then, at the age of 12, was herself a pre-teen Mom with a daughter of her own.

Exhausted under the weight of her responsibilities, she began to miss school. Her story could have ended there, except for the miracle of two elements coming together at once: she became involved with Rochester's Teen Empowerment, and she was placed into the Villa of Hope residential program.

"When Shalinda first came to us in early 2016, we recognized her connection to her community, and Teen Empowerment, and we moved heaven and earth to make sure she made it to meetings, and ultimately, to her job there as a Youth Organizer," says Jane DeRue, Senior Intake Social Worker with the Villa.

Shalinda at first lived on the Villa campus, and attended the Campus School; and her progress was so impressive that within six months, she moved into the Villa's Stone Ridge group home, and began attending school at Rochester Early College International High School.

She acknowledges lots of help along the way at the Villa. "My life before had pretty much been hopeless," she says. She gets quiet and reflective. "People here care. Without the help of a lot of Villa staff, I probably wouldn't have made it."

Within the safety of the Villa, Shalinda found who she truly was, and found her voice. Shalinda has plans for her life. She is an accomplished writer and poet, and an activist who someday wants to advocate for youth, perhaps running her own branch of Teen Empowerment. She graduated this year from Rochester Early College International High School, and plans to attend MCC to study Psychology and African American Studies. And this determination has not gone unnoticed.

Shalinda's work, which has taken her to speaking engagements all over town, caught the attention of the Princeton Club of

Rochester this Spring, where she competed with 14 other students from all corners of the county, and presented her research on breaking the "school-to-prison pipeline." She outlined her facilitation of 22 focus groups encompassing about 334 students in the Rochester City School District, exploring various aspects of the pipeline's impact on minority youth.

At the end of the evening, she was the winner of the prestigious Princeton Prize in Race Relations. She won a cash prize, and attended a national symposium on race at Princeton University this past April.

When she returned from Princeton, she attended our Portraits of Hope Gala, where she was this year's recipient of a \$2500



scholarship to Monroe Community College, courtesy of the MCC Foundation.

When asked to sum up what the Villa has given to her, Shalinda's response is, "The Villa gave me a chance to be different." A second chance is something every kid deserves. Where she is headed now is markedly different from the world she had come from. Completing her education – for herself and her daughter – and making a difference in the world has become her goal.

Jane DeRue reflects, "Shalinda is not the result of the bad things that have happened to her, but of the grace that has followed."

Shalinda is moving decidedly, confidently, and purposefully forward; and doesn't look back.





## 2017: Sanctuary® Certification



### The journey began for the Villa in 2011.

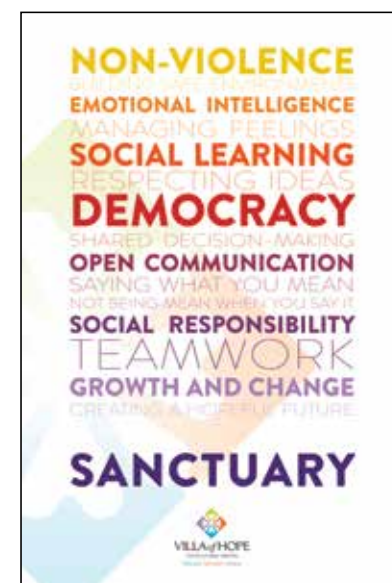
After extensive research, the Villa implemented Sanctuary®, a trauma-responsive model of care that not only guides treatment but also shapes the culture and values of the entire organization. “Sanctuary® is a whole-system approach,”

says Chris Gullo, Villa President/CEO. “It focuses on the people who seek treatment, and equally on the community of people and systems that provide it.”

The process of implementing Sanctuary® progressed under the guidance of Aaron James, who has worked at the Villa for over two decades, and now serves as the Vice President of Sanctuary and Trauma Education. The journey culminated this year in successful

achievement of Sanctuary® Certification from the Andrus Sanctuary Institute. This makes Villa of Hope the only Sanctuary® Certified agency in our region.

**What is the Sanctuary® Model?** The Sanctuary® Model is a blueprint for clinical and organizational change. At its core, it promotes safety and recovery from adversity through the active creation of a trauma-responsive community.



*These 7 Commitments are part of the Villa's fabric, and Sanctuary® is a fundamental component of training for all new Villa staff. It has become the Villa's operating system.*

### It has been an ideal road map for the Villa

for understanding the effects of trauma, chronic stress and adversity on our youth and families, in order to better serve them.

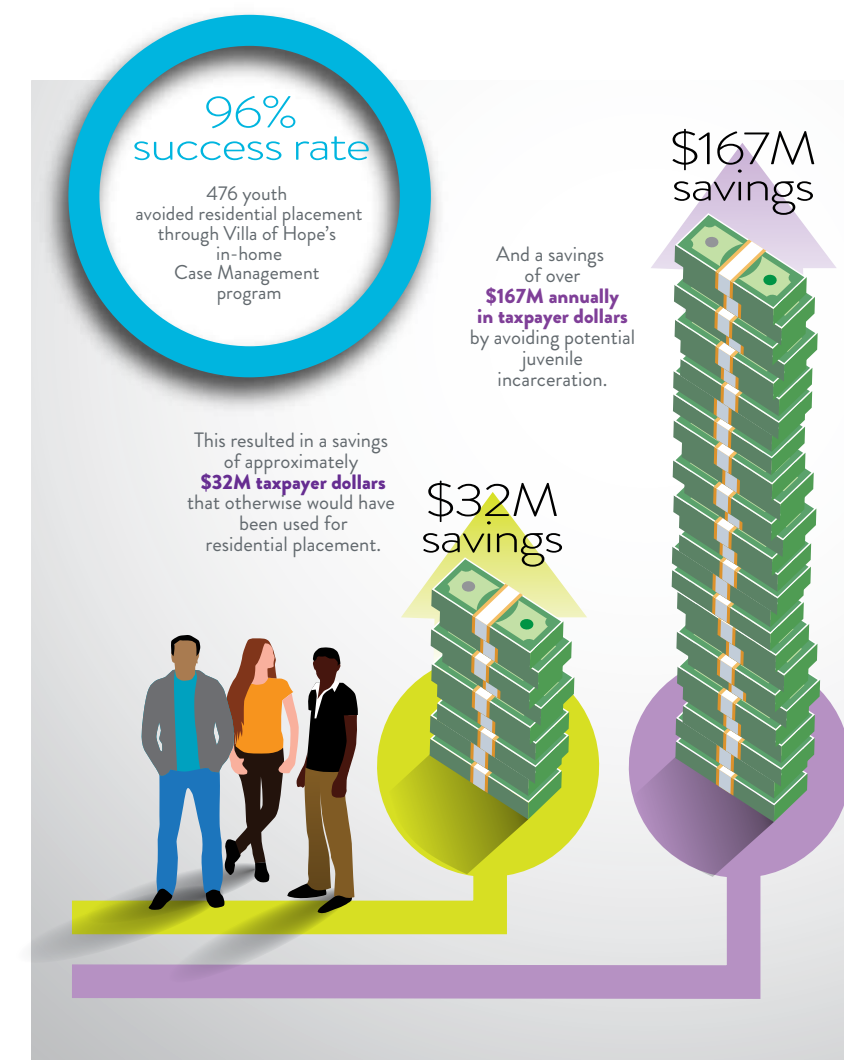
It has become a way of life for Villa youth and staff, alike. Through training and continuous counseling with staff and youth, Aaron has guided the organization through the integration of the 7 Commitments of Sanctuary, listed in the graphic at left.

“The Sanctuary® Model has transformed the Villa for the better,” says Aaron. “It has been a long, complex, and extremely rewarding journey to certification; and we are thrilled with the outcome. Integrating the research-based strategies of Sanctuary® truly sets the Villa apart.”



**Aaron James**  
Vice President of  
Sanctuary and Trauma  
Education

## About Our Other Successes



### AVALON GRADUATION FACTS . . .



**25%** of our students graduated with the CDOS (Career Development and Occupational Studies) credential



**27%** of Avalon kids are on the honor roll (with an average of 90 or above)

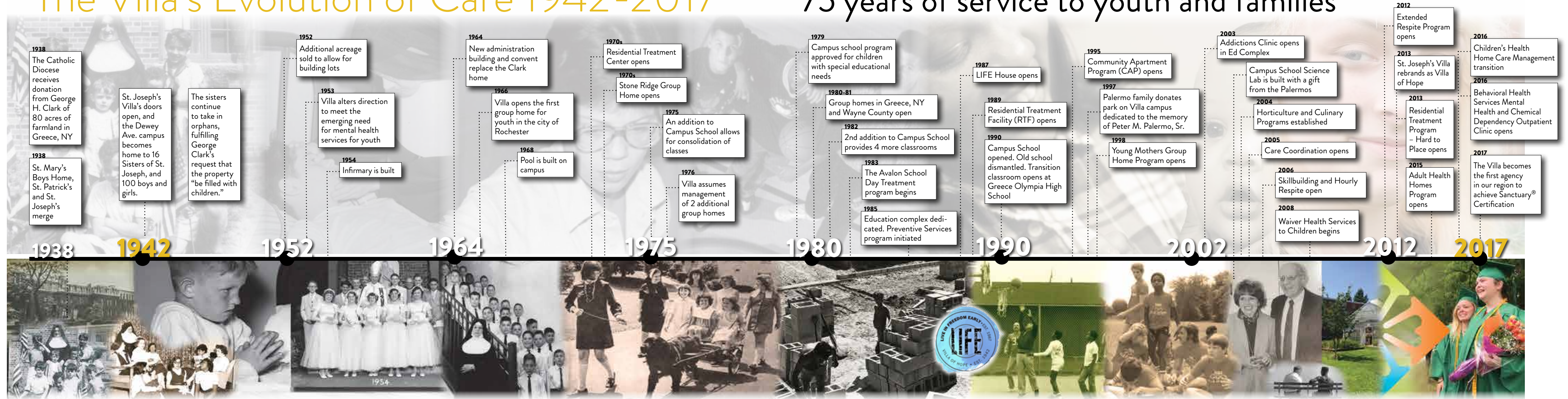


Avalon saw a **100%** graduation rate for 2017 seniors



# The Villa's Evolution of Care 1942-2017

## 75 years of service to youth and families







# Meet Mercedes and Philippe.

Philippe says that when things were at their worst before he came to the Villa, he was arrested for stealing and pawning his mother's belongings for money to buy drugs. He spent a lot of time in non-secured detention. "My family and friends didn't trust me, and no one believed anything I said," he explains. "They couldn't trust me being around them. It was lonely, and I didn't know who to go to for help."

When he was referred to Villa of Hope's LIFE (Live In Freedom Early) House, it was a chance at a fresh start; though he may not have initially perceived it that way. "Most of our young men who come to our program don't want to be here," says Mercedes

McNeill Robinson, formerly LIFE House Program Manager, and now Director of OASAS Programming. "Can you imagine being fifteen years old, and having to say you're going to rehab?"

Though our program is voluntary, most of our young men don't have a choice but to come here. In some cases, the alternative is jail; in other cases, they have family members

telling them they cannot return home until they address their issues with addiction."

LIFE is a part of the Villa's Behavioral Health Services department, and was established in 1987; which means that in addition to the Villa's 75th anniversary, LIFE will be celebrating 30 years of service this year. A celebration is planned for September, which is Recovery Month.

The Villa's Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Outpatient Clinic opened in 2016, and sees an exponentially growing number of patients each month at its Water Tower Park office. Prevention services have also been offered for several years, with a staff person who presents information to students and families, in local middle schools and high schools, as well as in the community. These community services reflect a trend in service delivery, respecting that families want to stay intact, and receive services where they are.

When residential-based services are required though, LIFE is there for young men like Philippe. He says his time at LIFE House was a game-changer. "They showed me how to be accountable for my actions," he says, "and it was a safe environment, both emotionally and physically, that offered me support." His treatment included holistic care, Evidence Based Practices, structured groups, individual sessions, family sessions addressing life skills, vocational educational planning, on-site school, relapse prevention, and psychiatric and physical health.

Mercede says, "Philippe is absolutely amazing; he has an engaging personality, and while here at LIFE, he was able to attain his recovery, educational and family goals." She stresses that the program has been able to set a foundation for Philippe, and has shown him what recovery looks like. The hard work, though, is that addiction is something he will have to manage for the rest of his life, being mindful of interactions with peers, and situations that may pose challenges to sobriety.



By the time he left the Villa, Philippe was motivated to stay clean and sober. "I was more aware of staying focused on what will be best for me in the future, rather than just 'in the moment.' I also learned many ways to keep my mind off of drugs and other bad stuff."

Philippe has now returned home to his family and school in a local suburb, with new tools for communication, sobriety, self-discipline, and success.







# Meet Rachel.

Only a few years ago, Rachel remembers her Dad sitting down with her and having a serious talk about his concern she would not graduate from high school. It was a horrible day.

As a child, Rachel was happy and outgoing, and, she says, “the well behaved one” in her family. She feels her parents probably anticipated dealing with many things when she became a teenager; but probably hadn’t anticipated challenges with mental health. She began to avoid school in 6th grade, barely passing; some days so nervous she would become physically sick. Her parents took her to a variety of therapists, and tried everything; eventually she landed in a private school, where she was so badly bullied that she refused to go back.

“It was such a bad time,” she says. “Sunday nights and every morning waking up, the struggle would start, with my parents telling me I had to go to school; and me not going. They would eventually give up. My parents wanted me to succeed but just watched me go downhill. I was crying all the time, and genuinely

terrified of having to be in school, where I felt trapped, like a caged animal.”

Days and days of sitting at home left her with no memories of the months that passed. She was transferred again back to public school —for a brief time — and then to a partial hospitalization program. In retrospect, Rachel says she lost friends with each transition; and spent so much time afraid, and “hiding” that she wasted her childhood. “I lost social development time,” she says, “and I’m still catching up.”

And then, in April, 2015, she was encouraged to try a three day trial at Villa of Hope’s Avalon School. She did not go quietly; but she did go.

She made her first friend at Avalon on her first day; the first friend she’d had in a very long time. This turned the tide for Rachel.

In time, she realized no one judged her, called her names, or thought she was “weird.” She saw others around her having their own struggles. Avalon became a safe place.

She found a unique network, including staff with strategies to help her calm down; caring teachers; and a nurse on staff when she needed medical support.

One thing that was a surprise to everyone —especially to Rachel, herself — was that after years of poor grades, she began to excel. All of her courses came easily to her, grades were consistently “A”s, she scored above average on her SATs, and blossomed with artistic talent!

“And,” she adds proudly, “I have a 99% attendance record. I only have missed half a day since I started at Avalon!”

Rachel graduated from Avalon in June, three days after her 18th birthday, at the top of her class. She has been carrying a full course load



this year, and taking art and psychology classes at MCC. She also interned in the Villa’s Marketing Department, where she helped to set up the Villa’s student literary magazine online, and made an appearance in the 75th anniversary agency video, which can be seen on the Villa’s website.

She has received a scholarship to attend the college of her choice, SUNY Brockport, and will be studying Art Therapy, or Arts for Children.

Rachel’s mother, Peggy, is beyond proud with what has been a very happy conclusion to Rachel’s high school years. “She is a busy girl who has really blossomed at Avalon. We are so thankful for the environment and people at Avalon that gave her the opportunity to become the beautiful person that she is.”

*In honor of the Villa’s 75th anniversary this year, Rachel had the chance to meet Joe Miller (one of the original residents on the Dewey Avenue Campus in 1942), and his wife, Julia. Rachel and Joe appear in the Villa’s 75th anniversary agency video, on the “About” page at [www.villaofohope.org](http://www.villaofohope.org).*



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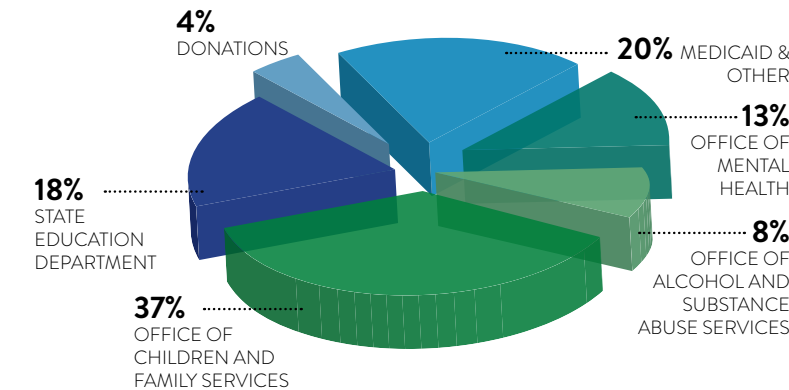
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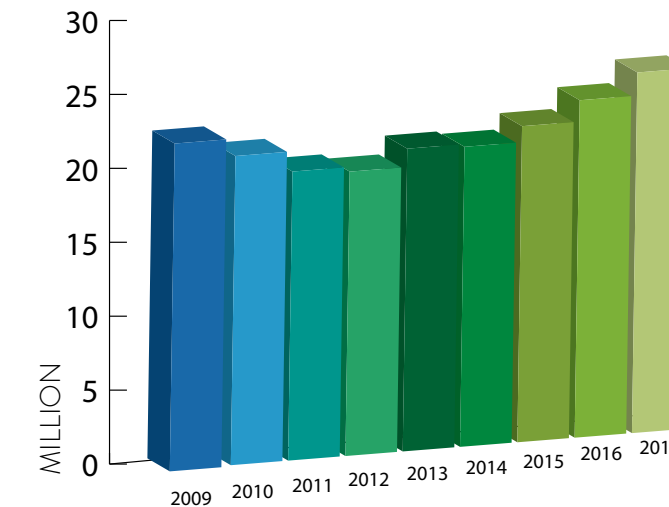
*\* This list shows cash and pledges for 2016-2017. In-kind gifts are not included*

# Financial Highlights

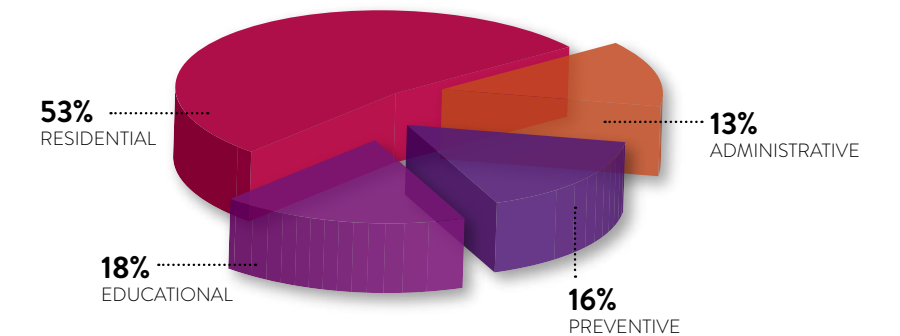
## Revenue



## Revenue trend



## Expenses





# Villa Leadership

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New York State Office of Mental Health

## Memberships and Partnerships

American Association of Children's  
Residential Centers  
Alliance for Strong Families and  
Communities  
Bivona Child Advocacy Center  
Building Bridges Initiative  
Child Workforce Wellness Initiative  
Consortium of Alcohol and Substance  
Abuse Services — Region II  
Council of Family and Child  
Caring Agencies  
Darkness to Light Collaborative  
East High School  
Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School  
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce  
Greece Chamber of Commerce  
Mount Morris Central School District  
New York Association of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Providers  
New York State Coalition of 853 Schools  
NYS Coalition for Children's Mental Health  
Services  
Recovery Net Collaborative  
Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative  
Safer Monroe Area Reentry Team  
United Way of Greater Rochester



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