



RCS Learning Center

Annual Report

2024



Helping
students
reach their
full potential
since 2006

Our school's highlights
and growth over the
past year.



TO OUR DONORS AND COMMUNITY



Denise Rizzo-Ranieri
President and Co-Founder



Eric Lousararian
RCS Board Member

Dear Friend,

As we end 2024 and look ahead to 2025, we are deeply grateful to our community of students, families, staff, Board of Directors, and all of our supporters.

This year was a period of transformational change for our school that took place alongside a continuation of an unwavering commitment to our students and families. Our students have thrived this year as we continue to focus on helping each of them gain communication, independence, and social skills. We are proud to share this year's report with you and know you will join us in celebrating our students and staff.

Thank you for your support.

In Gratitude,

Denise Rizzo-Ranieri
President and Co-Founder

Eric Lousararian
RCS Board Member

RCS LEARNING CENTER

Our Mission: Realizing Children's Strengths (RCS) Learning Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide the highest quality of individualized behavioral and educational services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disabilities. We believe that every child has unique skills and we are dedicated to helping each child develop these skills and reach their full potential.

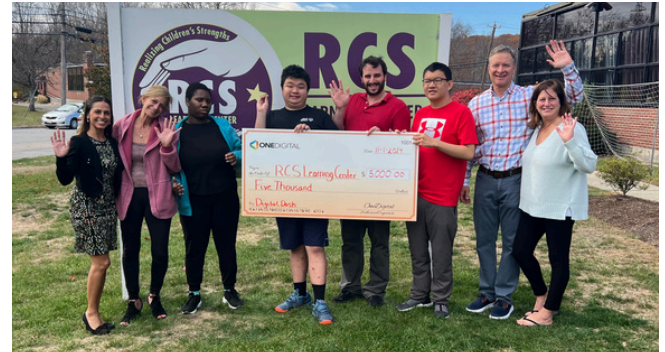


2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 5 students successfully graduated from our program
- 2 Renovated the RCS Student Café into a restaurant-style vocational space
- 3 Held our most successful Autism Awareness Month initiatives, raising \$12,000 in donated time and donations
- 4 Partnered with Special Olympics Mass. to hold the Second Annual RCS Learning Center Special Olympics event
- 5 70 hours volunteered during our first ever Volunteer Day

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

WE WERE SELECTED BY ONEDIGITAL TO BE NONPROFIT RECIPIENT FOR DIGITAL DASH



Pictured: Board Member and OneDigital Principal, John Snyder, joined by Director of Client Strategy & Solutions, Archana Kansagra, present RCS President, COO, and students with a check from funds raised.

RCS Learning Center was selected as the single Massachusetts nonprofit recipient for OneDigital’s Digital Dash event that has raised over \$1.5 million since 2009. Alongside other nonprofits across the country, RCS Learning Center was selected by OneDigital’s team because of our core mission and high-impact work serving students with autism.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



A JOURNEY TOWARD INDEPENDENCE:

Max joined RCS as an elementary-aged student, communicating with just one to two words at a time. His parents dreamed he would one day advocate for his daily needs.

Now, Max communicates in full phrases and manages his self-care. He loves community outings like visiting museums and shopping centers along with his peers and friends.

His family shared, “RCS has cultivated a space where both Max and his family feel fully supported and involved. The close-knit community...is a constant source of encouragement for our family.”

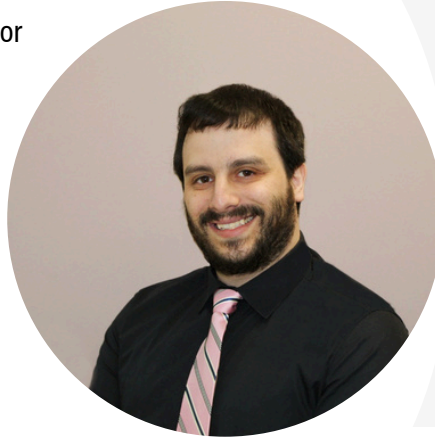
Max’s inspiring progress reflects the heart of RCS’s mission of achieving ‘Progress For All Children’ every day so they can gain future independence.

**All parent quotes and student highlights are unsolicited from clients and informed consent was given*



**HIGHLIGHTING OUR NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR:
JEREMY LASKY, M.S., ED.**

Jeremy Lasky, M.S., Ed., is the Program Director & Special Education Team Chair for RCS Learning Center. Jeremy is responsible for overseeing IEP development and implementation, as well as the daily operations at the Learning Center. Prior to joining the RCS team, Jeremy began his career in 2013 as a Behavior Therapist, and then taught 6th grade for 5 years for students with social/emotional disabilities in Waltham, MA.



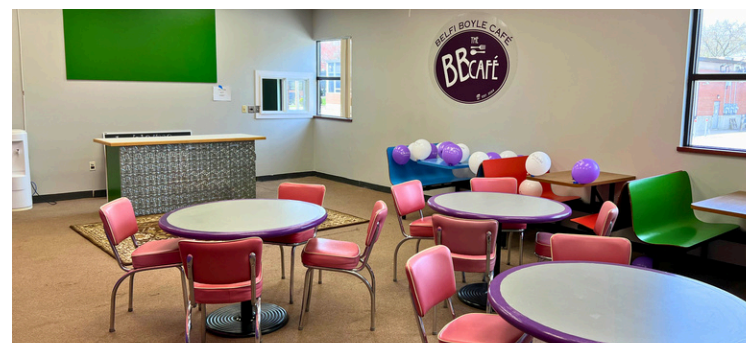
“ The best part of my job is getting to work with an amazing team of staff and students. I truly appreciate everyone I see every day, and it makes me excited to get up at 5:00am and go to work.”

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & STUDENT WELLNESS

OUR NEWLY RENOVATED B.B. STUDENT CAFÉ

During April Autism Awareness Month our community, families, Board of Directors, and staff members came together to renovate our Student Café! Upgrading this space was a critical step in the long-term initiative to provide a well-developed and impactful Wellness & Nutrition Program at RCS Learning Center.

Not only will the café provide a welcoming and student-centered social space focused on nutritional education, it will also serve as a mock restaurant environment and seamless addition to our vocational program at RCS.





OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

AS WE CLOSE OUT 2024 AND LOOK TO 2025, OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN CLEAR:

43% of schools in the region report staffing has been a challenge and RCS is among those facing a challenge in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified staff. **In 2025 we will focus on professional development for our staff and recruiting committed educators.**

Children with ASD are 400% more likely to develop unmet health care needs when compared to children without disability. **Our Wellness and Nutrition Program will head into its third year with a focus on supporting both students and staff.**

85% of adults with autism are unemployed. **Our vocational program will grow in 2025 by building more partnerships with local organizations to better support transitions to career and life after RCS.**

WELCOMING A NEW BOARD MEMBER:

AMY FABIANO, J.D.



Amy Fabiano, J.D., joined the RCS Board of Directors in 2024 and is a higher education attorney at Bowditch & Dewey. Amy counsels clients on the complex legal and compliance issues facing colleges, universities, and independent schools today in areas such as labor and employment, civil rights, and board governance. Amy is also actively involved with the Lexington Playcare Center and is a volunteer with the Newton Public Schools.



**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE PROVIDING
CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM.**



rcslearning.org/donate

