



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2019-2020



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Some Photo Highlights from our 2019-2020 Year

Cover image - Barbara Boese leading our Friendship & Socialization Workshop
 Table of Content Images left to right: Social activity at the Botanical Gardens; our student speaking about having a disability in college at a CCDA event; Anne & Barbara at Pitch 10

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

In 2015, the transition program I worked for left Buffalo, leaving my students without options to complete their college education. The students who could not afford to follow that transition program were suddenly left without an option to complete their education. I began coaching and tutoring those students independently with the goal of seeing them through to graduation. During this time, I realized there was a lack of services for college students with disabilities and that a new transition program was needed. Other existing programs were either prohibitively expensive or students couldn't complete classes for credit. Students with disabilities have the highest college drop-out rates - additional support services are critical to their success.

Fortunately, I met incredible people who have contributed to this dream - making it a reality for our students. Together, we founded Accessible Academics in 2016 and have worked tirelessly to grow this program. We had a dream of offering a free transition program that supports academic endeavors to low-income students with disabilities. This year - we accomplished that dream!

We can now offer our services free to students through
Medicaid Self-Direction and ACCES-VR.

This year is also incredible, as the last of my original students graduated!

I always say that Accessible Academics is the "Little Engine that Could." In a challenging disability services landscape that has now been impacted by COVID-19, we have continued to support our students, launch new programs, seek opportunities for growth, and focus on long-term sustainability. I have no doubt that Accessible Academics will continue to expand services and be a source of stability that the students and families we serve can count on.



Anne Showers
Chief Executive Officer
July 10, 2020

OUR MISSION

Accessible Academics is a non-profit agency that advocates and provides life, academic, and job skill support to people with disabilities transitioning from high school, to college or trade school, to independence.



**MAKING
INDEPENDENCE
ACCESSIBLE**

About our students

Our students have academic and career aspirations, goals that they want to achieve, along with drive, creativity, and talent. Our students aim to complete their high school equivalency, post-secondary degree, or career training and be gainfully employed in their field of interest. Although their disabilities impose challenges to achieving their goals, with our support, they learn the skills and strategies needed to realize success. We serve students with autism, learning disabilities, mental health disorders, cerebral palsy, among others.

Making Independence Accessible with Individualized and Group Services

- Individualized Coaching based on the student's life, academic, and career goals
- Tutoring to promote mastery of academic material
- Mentorship in career and life areas
- Workshops on Mindfulness & Meditation, Social Skills, Career Skills



Participants in our Friendship & Socialization Workshop with their Certificates of Completion

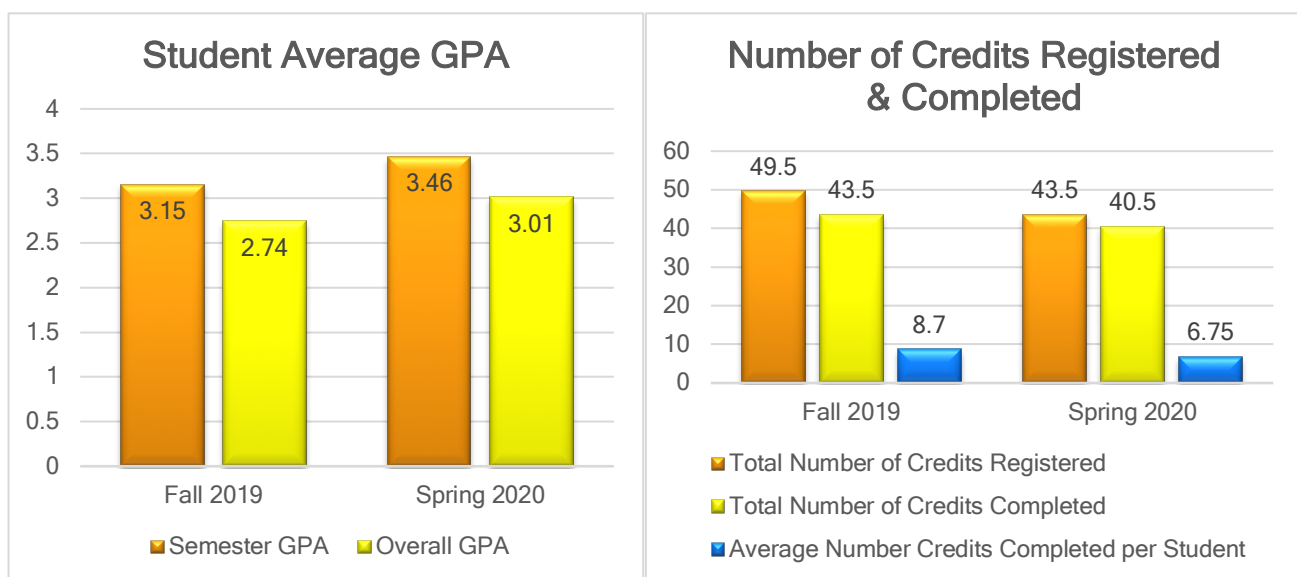
OUR PROGRAMS & IMPACT

Transition Program

Our Transition Program is at the heart of what we do. Students outline goals they want to achieve in their career, life, social, and academics areas. Based on these goals, our Transition Coordinator crafts a support plan that outlines the services we will provide to help them achieve those goals. Our program is student-centered, with services tailored to the student's goals. Students can receive individual coaching, tutoring, mentoring. The Coach is the student's main source of support and coordinates their tutoring and mentoring. The Coach partners with their student to work on the skills related to their goals. All of our support staff receive applicable certifications through the National Tutoring Association in Tutoring and Coaching, and Mental Health First Aid training. Coaches receive additional training in Motivational Interviewing.

Transition Program - Student Academic Achievement

In the U.S. only 58% of college students attain a degree in 6 years. At Accessible Academics, **100% of our students made progress towards graduation, with a "B" average.** Our students completed at least 90% of the credits they registered for, and on average completed at least 7 credits a semester.



Transition Program - Student Skills Progress

We assess students each semester on different skills that they are learning in order to accomplish their goals. The learning outcome areas that are assessed include life skills, academic skills, self-regulation skills, vocational skills, and transition to adulthood skills. On average, staff assessed students on 121 skills for each student! Students are rated based on how independent they are at a skill, with 1 as completely dependent on another person, 2 as needs prompting or reminders, and 3 the student is fully independent at the skill.

Average student independence level improved 13% in only 1 semester!

Transition Program - Parent & Student Satisfaction Surveys

100%
Student
Satisfaction

We asked students and families to rate their satisfaction with our services. Both students and families highly rated the services they received.

96%
Family
Satisfaction

Transition Opportunities Fair – January 27th, 2020

We offered our first Transitions Opportunities Fair to provide a place for students and families to receive information about relevant programs, agencies, and schools. We had over 20 vendors and 67 families attend!

Workshops

Workshops are open to the general public and are offered in a variety of areas. These workshops have moved online through Zoom.

Koru Mindfulness Basic & 2.0 - Mindfulness & meditation workshop and coaching to manage stress. 30 participants attended both Koru Basic and 2.0 held throughout the year both in person & fully remote.

- 100% would recommend the workshop to others



Eventbrite - Free Workshops - In response to COVID-19, Accessible Academics launched a series of free workshops to promote mental health and community inclusion. Our workshops were in a variety of topics including: cooking, baking, meditation retreats, yoga, and support groups.

117
Workshop
Attendees!

Friendship & Socialization - A 5-day summer social skills workshop based on the PEERS curriculum. Seven students attended the workshop.

- 13% increase content knowledge
- 100% of students reported a positive experience
- 80% families reported students demonstrating what they learned at home



New Workshops:

Three new workshops have been developed and piloted to be launched remotely.

Job Seeker Strategies - How to build a resume, career search and exploration, and interview.

Skills to Pay the Bills - Workplace soft skills to help maintain and advance in your career.

Empowering Your Best Self Workshop - Workshop on self-advocating and community engagement.

AGENCY GROWTH

Transition Program Enrollment

We started this fiscal year with three students, and by June 30th, we had 8 students - a 160% growth in enrollment! We anticipate an additional 3-5 students will be starting with us Fall 2020. Our goal is to serve 12-16 students next year. We are optimistic - however, COVID-19 has delayed funding approvals for new students.

Staffing & Volunteers

We hired a new Coach to work with students in March 2020. We've had support from over 30 skilled volunteers on various projects and initiatives to further our mission. Next year we anticipate hiring at least three new tutors and a coach. Our CEO is now a certified trainer through the National Tutoring Association and can train staff to be certified tutors and academic coaches.

Funding Sources & COVID-19

This year we secured long-term state funding for service reimbursement through ACCES-VR and OPWDD Medicaid Self-Direction. However, COVID-19 has impacted funding approvals for new students. To support us during this challenging time, we applied for the Payroll

Protection Loan and an SBA Disaster Loan. As government agencies reopen or adjust their processes, we anticipate new student approvals and continued growth in our agency.

Upcoming Programs

COVID-19 impacted the launch dates of several new in-person programs. We expect those to begin after restrictions are lifted based on New York State and CDC guidelines.

Garden Program - We have planted our first garden beds, with a full program launch for next year.

Culinary Exploration Program - A collaboration with Fantastic Friends of WNY to teach the life skills of cooking for yourself and others, hosting meals, and exploring culinary careers. This is an in-person program.

Tech Force Training Program - A collaboration with Tech Workforce Training Program (TWTP) and Staff Buffalo to provide computer programming skills, career readiness, and individualized assistance to students interested in computer programming career.

EVENTS 2020-2021

Accessible Academics is always seeking opportunities to celebrate disability, present on transition or education topics, and represent at events. Here is a list of upcoming events and presentations that we are currently planning on attending:

- July 26, 2020: Disability Pride 2020 - Facebook Live Stream celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the ADA. <https://www.facebook.com/DisabilityPrideWNY/>
- August 21-23, 2020: Inclusion Festival Online - A virtual music and wellness festival for every body. Accessible Academics is presenting in a live stream on how to help students build independent living skills prior to moving away from home for the first time. Learn more by visiting <https://inclusionfestival.com>
- October 2020: College Night - Accessible Academics a member of the WNY Collegiate Consortium of Disability Advocates, which hosts College Night for prospective college students with disabilities. College Night is held October of each year, but may be held virtually in 2020. For information on College Night, please visit <https://wnyccda.org/college-night.html>
- May 2021: Developmental Disability Day (DDDay) - Accessible Academics is a sponsor and will have a table at their next event.

If you have a live or virtual event that you would like to invite Accessible Academics to attend, please contact Anne Showers at ashowers@accessibleacademics.org



Anne Showers representing
Accessible Academics at
Disability Pride 2019

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Medicaid Funding

- Approved as a transition program through OPWDD Self-Direction
- Workshops are reimbursable as Community Classes

ACCES-VR

- Contract awardee for up to \$60,000/year for Academic Coaching services and vocational services

Grants

- Recipient of a Strengthening Partner's grant from the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation

Pitch 10

- Selected as a finalist to compete in the United Way's Pitch 10 competition

Catchafire

- Recipient of a sponsored membership by the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation to Catchafire - to connect with skilled volunteers
- Volunteers completed 30 projects or calls valued at \$112,523

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

George

George was of the original group of six students that stayed in Buffalo to work with Anne to finish their degrees when the transition program moved. George is leaving Accessible Academics, having successfully completed both his associate's degree at Erie Community College and his bachelor's degree in Arts & Letters at Buffalo State College.



George & Anne at his graduation dinner



George & a tutor working together

George had struggled in the past with college, but with the additional support available to him through Accessible Academics - he excelled. George gained the skills and confidence he needed to realize his success.

George is a hard worker, and a talented artist and writer. He aims to be a graphic designer, and plans to work as a graphic designer for a company, as well as do side projects for non-profits. Now that George has left our program, he has taken a volunteer project with Accessible Academics through Catchafire to prepare graphic artwork for our upcoming fundraiser. We are excited to work with George, this time as his client. We have just started this project together and are already impressed with the work!

We are so proud of George's accomplishments and know that he will go far!

DONOR & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

It has been a privilege to be on the Board of Directors for such a wonderful non-profit agency as Accessible Academics. Our CEO Anne Showers has really been the heart and soul of AcAd from the beginning. Anne brought me in early and I have been with the agency since day one, joining as the Vice President of the Board in 2016 - before we were even officially a non-profit. I've since seen and helped AcAd grow into the wonderful agency that it is today. In October of 2019, I was honored to step up to the role of the President of the Board of Directors.

We would not have made it as far as we have without all the generous support of all our wonderful donors and volunteers. As a small local non-profit, every little bit helps, and we really notice all the small and large things that our supporters do for us. We would like to thank the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation for their generous grants, which provided the seed funding we needed to grow our program.

It's an unprecedented time to be a part of a non-profit, when it's impossible to host in-person events and everyone is stretched thin for resources. Because we have been able to secure funding from Medicaid and ACCES-VR for services, I know that once we get through this pandemic, we are set up for success and able to better serve disadvantaged students. Students are struggling more than before with the uncertainty of academic resources and employment opportunities. Accessible Academics bridges the gap in services, improving their chances of success. We are not a non-profit agency whose issues have been thrust into the national spotlight, and as such we need your help more than ever for our students.

We truly appreciate all your love and support. With your help, we will be able to serve students with disabilities for many years to come and continue to make a huge, impactful difference in their lives.

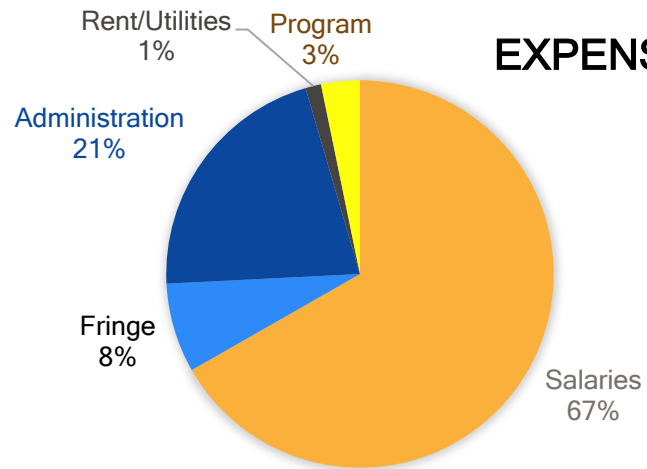


Lois Rosenbloom
Board President

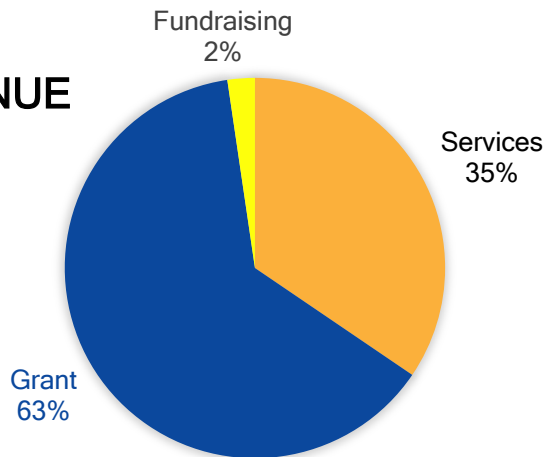
FINANCIALS

Total Assets	40,739.32
Total Liabilities	<u>31,200.00</u>
Total Equity	9,539.32
Total Revenue	90,593.35
Total Expenses	<u>84,973.01</u>
Net revenue	5,604.34

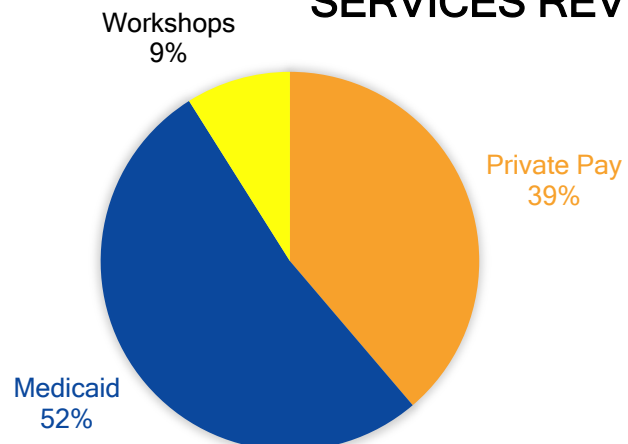
EXPENSES



REVENUE



SERVICES REVENUE



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & TEAM

Chief Executive Officer Anne Showers, EdM

Board of Directors

President	Lois Rosenbloom	<i>Trek10</i>
Vice President	Nathan Brandwein	<i>Home Depot</i>
Treasurer	Greg Collesano	<i>Gregory Collesano CPA CFE</i>
Secretary	Annette Pinder	<i>Buffalo Healthy Living</i>
	Sachin Bhargava	<i>Self-Employed - Real Estate</i>
	Adrian Roselli	<i>Digital Accessibility Consultant</i>
	Lynn Pullano	<i>All Good Pro</i>

Supervising Staff

Transition Coordinator Barbara Boese, BA
Coach Allison Lakomsi, PhD

