RUTGERS–NEW BRUNSWICK
Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center

Annual Report 2025-2026



Service • Training • Research

TO SUPPORT THE AUTISM COMMUNITY



Serving the Autism Community Since 1972

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Message from the Dean's Cabinet

Congratulations to the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center (DDDC) on another outstanding year of advancing its mission through exceptional service, high-quality training, impactful research, and steadfast dedication to individuals with autism and their families. As a cornerstone of the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP), the DDDC continues to demonstrate excellence and leadership across all aspects of its work.

As the 2025–2026 academic year came to a close, the DDDC and the GSAPP community mourned the loss of Sandra L. Harris, founder of the DDDC and a pioneer in the field of autism. Since establishing the Center in 1972, Dr. Harris transformed countless lives and helped shape autism services, education, and research well beyond Rutgers. The achievements highlighted throughout this report reflect the enduring impact of her vision and the generations of professionals, researchers, educators, and advocates who continue her work.

Building on that legacy, GSAPP launched the Autism Training Hub this year. The Hub reflects more than five decades of innovation in autism services, research, and professional preparation, bringing together the wide range of educational and training opportunities that have grown from the Center's pioneering work. As a centralized resource, the Autism Training Hub highlights GSAPP's comprehensive continuum of autism-focused learning, from undergraduate and graduate education to specialized professional training, practicum experiences, certifications, continuing education, and interdisciplinary collaboration,

As we look ahead to 2026–2027, GSAPP welcomes Dean, Dr. Joshua Langberg to lead the school into its next chapter. Dr. Langberg brings extensive GSAPP experience, a distinguished record of leadership, and a career dedicated to improving outcomes for children and families through his work in the field of ADHD. Together, we remain committed to advancing knowledge, expanding opportunities for training and service, and enhancing the lives of individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.



On behalf of the GSAPP Dean's Office, thank you to the faculty, staff, students, families, and community partners whose dedication makes the DDDC's work possible. We celebrate all that has been accomplished this year and look forward to the continued impact ahead.

GSAPP Dean's Cabinet, 2025-2026 (L to R): Dr. Lara Delmolino Gatley, Dr. Timothy Cleary, Dr. Jennifer Durham, Dr. Daniel Hart, Bernadette Cariaga, Dr. Ryan Kettler, and Daniel Rice. Not Pictured: Dr. Joshua Langberg and Dr. Linda Reddy

Message from the Director

CATRIONA FRANCIS



Dear DDDC Friends and Partners,

As we look back on the past year, I am deeply appreciative of what we have accomplished together and of the remarkable community whose support makes our work possible. For more than five decades, since our founding in 1972, our Center has served as a trusted resource for school-aged children with autism and their families. As a university-based program, we continue to advance our integrated mission of service, training, and research, three pillars that collectively strengthen our impact and guide our efforts to foster meaningful change.

At a time when access to autism services remains inconsistent, our Center is committed to understanding where needs are greatest and responding with purpose-driven solutions. By identifying statewide service gaps and developing specialized, evidence-based programs, we strive to ensure that children and families receive the support they need to thrive. Our approach is informed by research, inspired by compassion, and shaped by close collaboration with the communities we serve.

Over the past year, we have continued to expand our reach beyond the Center itself, reinforcing our belief that meaningful impact happens in partnership with others. Through collaborations with large urban school districts, we have brought our expertise directly into classrooms and communities, increasing access to high-quality services for more children across the state.

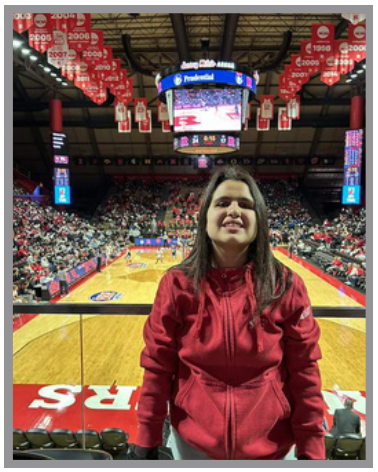
This 2025-2026 Annual Report reflects both the progress we have made and the unwavering dedication of our whole community. To all who have contributed time, resources, and advocacy in support of our mission, thank you. Your confidence in our work, and in the potential of every individual we serve, drives us forward. Together, we are not only making a difference today, but also helping to create a future where comprehensive, specialized autism services are accessible to all who need them.

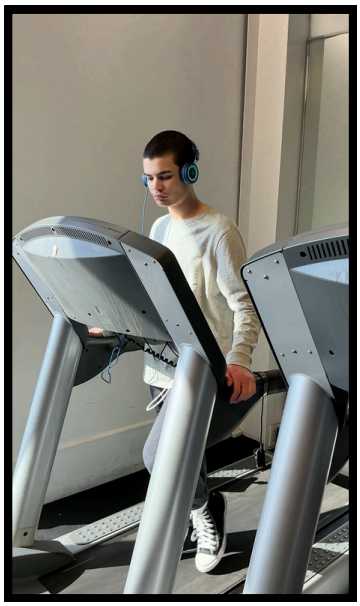
With heartfelt thanks,

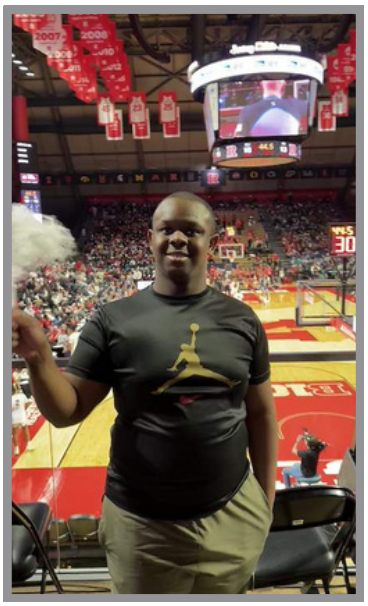




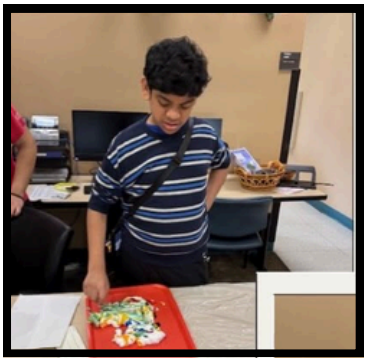








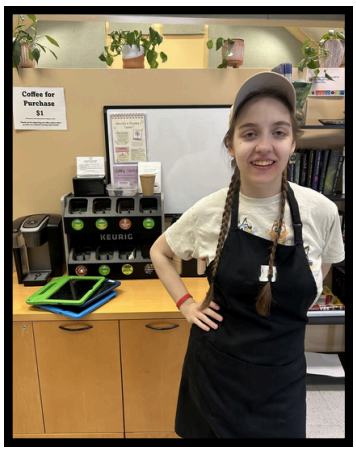





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SCARLET KNIGHTS
RUTGERS.




RUTGERS


Coffee for Purchase $1
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CLASS OF 2026

Our Impact by the Numbers
2025-2026

Service

Center-based School Program
29 Students from **18** New Jersey School Districts

Community-based Program
78 Students from **3** New Jersey School Districts



Students Served:
107



Training

37 - Psychology Undergrads
40 - Medical (Family Practice, Pediatric Residents, Nursing Students)
16 - Psychiatry Fellows
3 - Occupational Therapy Students
3 - Social Work Students
2 - Speech Students
2 - Horticulture Students
2 - Volunteers
1 - Exercise Science Student
24 - NJLEND Trainees (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities)

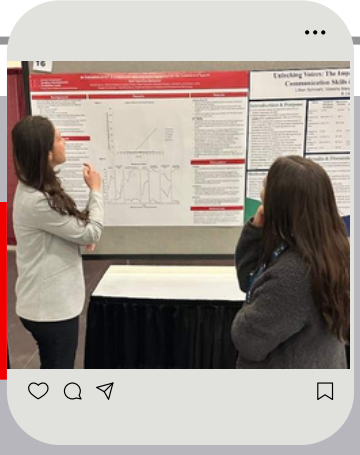
Total Trainees:
130



Research

24 - Research Posters
20 - Conference Papers
13 - Workshops + Trainings
3 - Peer-reviewed Journal Articles
3 - Guest Lectures
1 - Book Chapter





Serving School-Aged Students

Our Center-based School Program

The Douglass School Program provides comprehensive educational services for children and young adults ages 3–21 diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who have more significant support needs. Grounded in the evidence-based principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), the program designs and delivers individualized educational plans tailored to meet the diverse and complex support needs of each student.



"With the help, support, knowledge, guidance, and compassion from DDDC's program and staff…our son is able to safely remain home with us, enjoying so many more things with our family. I cannot express how grateful I am for DDDC. I have never felt so supported as a parent as I do by my son's team at DDDC." - DDDC Parent

Community-based Programs

The Douglass Outreach Program expands access to high-quality applied behavior analysis (ABA) services for school-aged children in the community by providing expert training and consultation to New Jersey schools.

"This has been by far the most beneficial program I have witnessed in nearly 24 years working in public schools. Thank you very much." - School District Representative



Service

Serving School-Aged Students

Our Scarlet Hope for Autism: The Road to Excellence in Education (SHARE) Program



Debra Paone
Director of Training and Consultation; Co-Director of SHARE



Marlene Brown
Associate Director of Consultation; Co-Director of SHARE

In September 2023, with strategic funding from Rutgers–New Brunswick's Chancellor's Office, DDDC launched Scarlet Hope for Autism: The Road to Excellence in Education (SHARE). This innovative initiative reflects our deep commitment to community engagement through partnerships with underserved, urban school districts in New Jersey to expand access to high-quality services for children with autism. In addition to strengthening educational supports in underserved communities, SHARE provides graduate students with meaningful hands-on experience while helping to address critical statewide staffing shortages in education. The program demonstrates the DDDC's capacity to create lasting, measurable impact by reducing barriers to service access and advancing excellence in autism education.



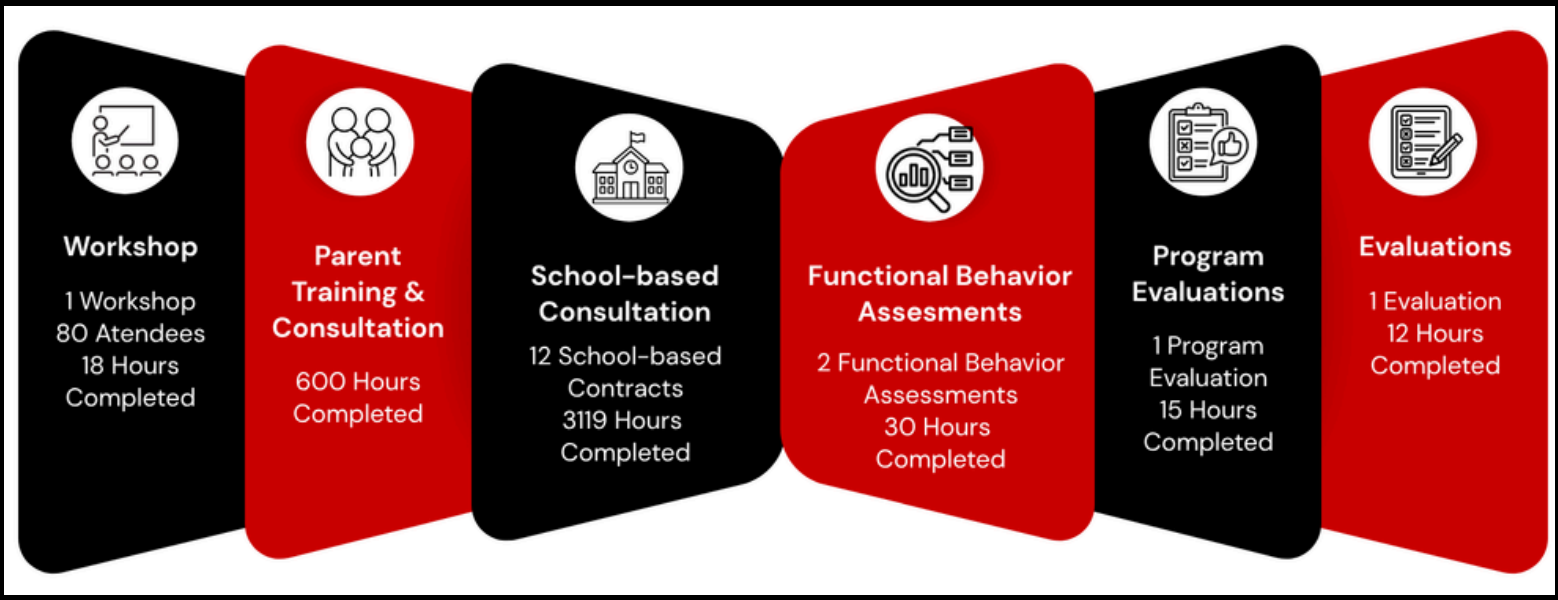






Training in the Community

Douglass Outreach Services





Outreach Behavior Analyst serves on panel during Autism Acceptance Month event hosted by Newark Board of Education and Ryder's Room, Inc.



2025-2026 Community-based DDDC Supervised Fieldwork Students gain valuable experiences in partnering public schools.

Training Future Practitioners

Graduate Student Training in ABA

A central component of our mission is preparing the next generation of professionals for high-demand careers supporting individuals on the autism spectrum. The DDDC provides intensive training in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to master's and doctoral level students in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology and other Rutgers University programs.



Congratulations Class of 2026!



Interdisciplinary Autism Training

In addition, the DDDC offers interdisciplinary training opportunities for professionals across health and medical fields, including nursing, psychiatry, family medicine, and pediatrics. Our goal is to equip professionals across a variety of disciplines to better provide specialized care to individuals on the autism spectrum.

"I appreciated witnessing how ABA techniques are utilized in a real-world setting. I really enjoyed the experience."
- Psychiatry Fellow

"I honestly loved everything, it was very nice interacting with other professionals, and the inter-professional parts were great." **- Occupational Therapy Intern**

"I gained a lot of exposure during my visit and leave knowing practical applications for my patients."
- Family Practice Resident

"I really liked getting to work hands-on with the students and learning new skills that could help when I conduct medical exams." **- Pediatric Resident**

Research

Conference Presentations










Disseminating research findings and evidence-based practices to advance the literature and inform effective approaches for individuals with complex learning and behavior needs.

Scholarly Journal Publications

Isenhower, R.W., LaRue, R.H., Budge, J.L. (2025). *A component-based leisure activity assessment for adults with autism spectrum disorder: A preliminary investigation.*. Behavior Analysis in Practice. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-025-01071-y

Maraventano, J. C., LaRue, R. H., Budge, J., Tran, K., & Juma, J. (2026). *Utilizing vocational assessments to repair performance issues at community-based job placements of adults with autism.* Behavior Analysis in Practice. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-026-01167-z

Olgun, D., Deshais, M. A., Kahng, S., & LaRue, R. H. (2026). *Reducing social media use via contingency management: A replication and extension.* Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 59(2), e70061-n/a. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.70061

Media Recognition

A comprehensive autism initiative at the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology brings training to the masses

Featured in RUTGERS TODAY

University Forms Autism Training Hub to Close Gaps in Services | Rutgers University

Dr. Robert LaRue awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching

Celebrating exceptional achievement in teaching, research, public service, and scholarly excellence!





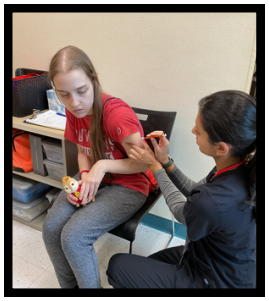
Catriona Francis featured in the New Jersey Family article titled: Ways to Help Your Neurodiverse Child Navigate Success at School

2026 Community Partnership Award
Dr. Meera Navadia

Dr. Navadia helped develop and implement a practice physical experience for DDDC students... Dr. Navadia worked thoughtfully and skillfully with students, incorporating tips and feedback she had learned throughout her visits to ensure a positive and supportive experience... This partnership provided substantial benefits for all involved. While Dr. Navadia gained invaluable clinical experience, the impact on our students was especially meaningful.









Spotlight on Donors

AUTISMMVP FOUNDATION



GREENWICH AUTISM ALLIANCE FOUNDATION





Cultural & Charitable Club of Somerset Run

Thank you for supporting our graduate students!



Celebrating THE LIFE OF Sandra Harris

April 15, 1942 - June 1, 2026

FOUNDER OF THE DDDC & THE SANDRA L. HARRIS GRADUTE FELLOWSHIP IN PSYCHOLOGY

Spotlight on Supporters

Mrs. Maria S. Arnold and Mr. Frederick T. Arnold
Ms. Catherine C. Avasso
Mrs. Meredith J. Bamond and Mr. Nicholas P. Bamond
Mr. James Baron
Gillian A. Beauchamp, M.D. and Mr. Daniel Higgins
Ms. Tanya Beauchamp
Mrs. Bonnie L. Bertino and Mr. Joseph E. Bertino
Ms. Shelley C. Bertino
Mr. Mike Bolewicki
Ms. Kimberly R. Boley
Ms. Marlene P. Brown and Mr. George Escoffery
Mr. Scott D. Brown and Mrs. Kathryn N. Brown
Cultural & Charitable Club of Somerset Run
Mr. Dave Ciarrocca
Mr. David V. Cocuzza and Mrs. Sharon L. Cocuzza
Dr. Gep Colletti
Michelle F. Daniel, Psy.D.
Ms. Loris T. Decker
DiLeo Family Foundation
Dr. Seth M. Ersner-Hershfield and Dr. Robin R. Ersner-Hershfield
Mitchell L. Ferges, M.D. and Mrs. Elizabeth Ferges
Ms. Katherine Fernandez
Ms. Kayla A. Fittipaldi
Ms. Termerra T. Flournoy
Mrs. Catriona B. Francis and Mr. Thomas A. Francis
Mr. Gerard M. Franz and Naomi Lawrence, M.D.
Lara D. Gatley, Ph.D. and Mr. Christopher Gatley
Ms. Sharon T. Grant
Greenwich Autism Alliance
Dr. Anne Gregory
Mrs. Daniela L. Guido and Mr. John Guido, C.P.A.
Dr. Robert W. Isenhower
Lisa A. Kamean-Silva, Psy.D.
Ms. Susan M. Kaufman and Mr. Matthew Mester
Barbara L. Kristoff, Ed.D.
Dr. Joshua Langberg
Dr. Robert H. Larue, Jr.
Ms. Bobbi Block LeVine
Ms. Sarah K. LeVine
Mr. Kevin A. Lyons and Mrs. Kathleen Norris Lyons
Ms. Bhavika Mali
Mr. Denis B. Massey
Ms. Margaret D. Mateyka
Mr. Michael Patrick McCarthy and Mrs. Catherine McCarthy
Mr. Sheldon Melnitsky and Mrs. Nancy Melnitsky
Ms. Jacqueline Molnar
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Sri Sai Ram LLC
Ms. Mary Suto
Ms. Faith M. Torres
Mrs. Debra A. Weber and Mr. William P. Weber
Mrs. Carla Zadroga and Mr. Scott Zadroga

We are very grateful for the donors who supported our work at the DDDC!









"I love this school, especially the amazing staff."

- Parent



At the center of all we do are the dedicated professionals whose unwavering commitment and compassion help our students with autism thrive.

"The care and professionalism are absolutely outstanding at DDDC."

- School District









DDDC Leadership



Daniel Hart
INTERIM DEAN AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR,
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF APPLIED AND PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY (GSAPP)
Ed.D.



Lara Delmolino Gatley
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ADMINSTRATION AND STRATEGIC OPERATIONS, GSAPP
DIRECTIOR OF AUTISM TRAINING HUB, GSAPP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DDDC
Ph.D.



Catriona Francis

DIRECTOR OF THE DDDC
Ed.M., BCBA



Debra Paone
DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND CONSULTATION
CO-DIRECTOR OF SHARE
Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA (NJ)



Robert LaRue
CLINICAL PROFESSOR,
DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL SERVICES
Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA (NJ)



Robert Isenhower
ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROFESSOR,
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDENT TRAINING
Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA (NJ)



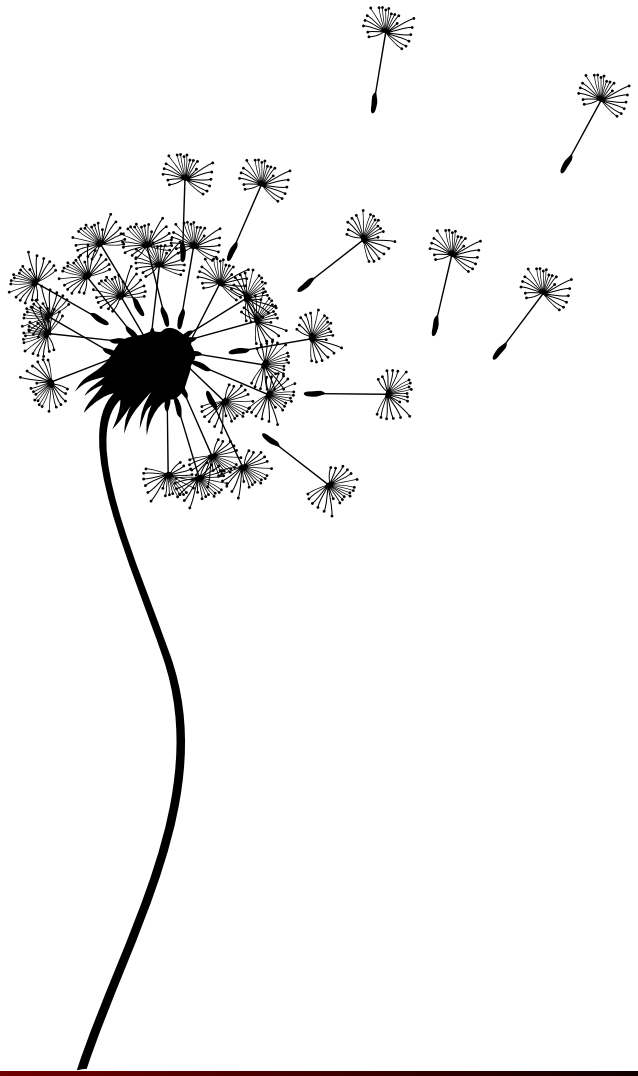
Rachel Davis
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL PRACTICE
Ed.M., LDT-C, BCBA, LBA (NJ)



Marlene Brown
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CONSULTATION
CO-DIRECTOR OF SHARE
M.S., BCBA, LBA (NY), LBA (NJ)



Sarah LeVine
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL
M.A., M.Ed, CCC-SLP, BCBA



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Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center