



**APPARO ACADEMY**  
2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

PSALM 37:4 • KJV



**OUR MISSION** *is to assist children and their families with the necessary skills to realize their potential and achieve success through educational, nursing and therapeutic services.*

# *A Note from our Board Chair*

**Dear Friends of Apparo,**

I am honored to present the Apparo Academy annual report, a testament to our unwavering commitment to providing a nurturing and supportive environment for children with special needs to thrive alongside their typically developing peers.

Over the past year, Apparo Academy has experienced a period of significant growth and transformation, thanks to the completion of our \$5.8 million capital campaign. Not only have we achieved our fundraising goal, but we have also strengthened our financial position, remained debt-free, and started an endowment. This stability allows us to invest in our programs, facilities, and staff, ensuring that we can continue to meet the needs of our students for years to come.

We could not have achieved and cannot maintain such financial stability without you, our donors, both large and small. Your generosity has made a profound difference in the lives of our students.

Financial success means nothing without tangible

results for the children in our community. We are incredibly proud of the milestones our students have reached this year. Their accomplishments, both academically and physically, demonstrate the positive impact of our programs. Of the 127 graduates of Apparo Academy to date, 60% require no therapy at all, a testament to the power of early intervention. It is hard to believe we will soon have Apparo alumni in middle school!

The success of Apparo Academy is also a direct result of the dedication of our Executive Director, the staff, and the best team of teachers, therapists, and nurses in the region. On behalf of the board of directors and the wider community of supporters, I want to thank these people who treat their work not as a job, but as a calling.

I invite you to visit Apparo Academy to witness firsthand the transformative impact we are having on the lives of our students and their families.

Thank you for your continued support of Apparo Academy.



*John Stewart, MD*  
BOARD CHAIR, APPARO ACADEMY



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 2023 - 2024

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*Founder & Executive Director*

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*Board Chair*

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*Board Vice Chair*

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**Josh Gaudin**

**Will Godwin**

**Keith Johnson**

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**Jeff Richards**

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**Destini Wainer**



### FUN FACT

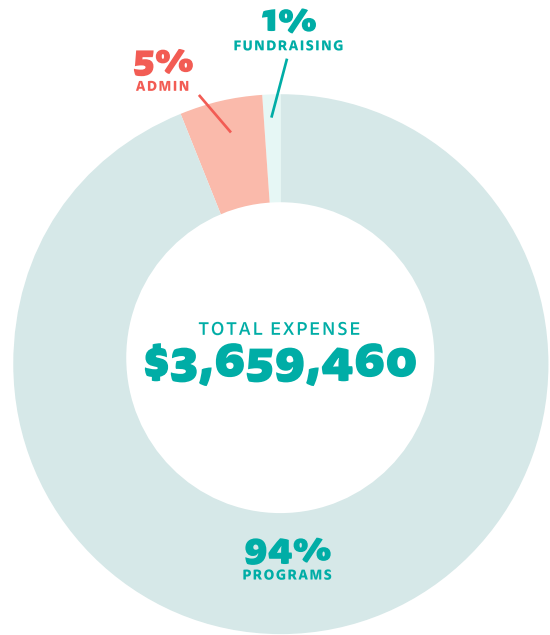
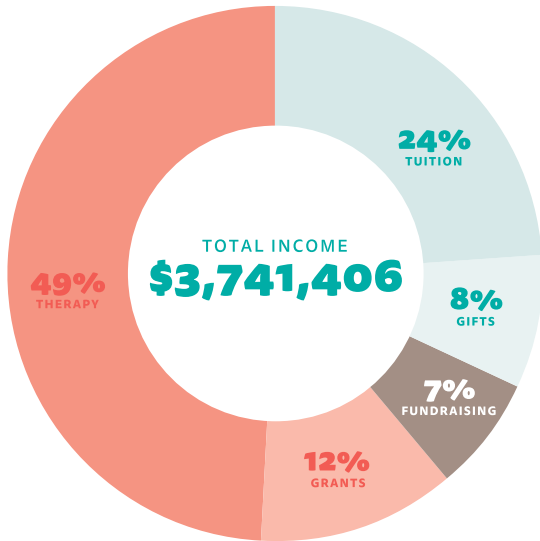
*We have had 212 children come through Apparo Academy over the past 5 years. 76 out of 127 children (60%) who have left our program, do not need therapy services in their new school setting.*

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

PROVERBS 22:6 • KJV

# CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



## GRANTS

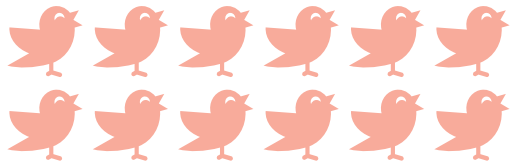
Augusta Exchange Club Charity Fund Inc.  
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Children's Hospital Association  
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Creel-Harison Foundation Inc

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United Way of the CSRA  
United Way of the Midlands  
Women In Philanthropy



2023-2024 AT A GLANCE



**109 STUDENTS**  
in the **Apparo Preschool Program**

**93.5**

**TOTAL GRADUATE &  
NURSING STUDENTS**

**16,640**

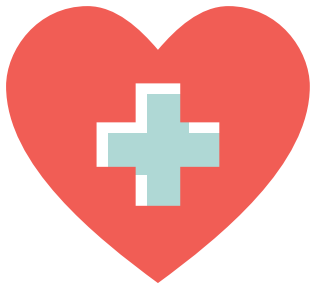


**HOURS OF  
THERAPY**





## 2023-2024 NURSING INTERVENTIONS



**UNPLANNED**  
**3,369** & **PLANNED**  
**4,265**

**RESPIRATORY TREATMENTS**

**1,070**

**MEDICATIONS ADMINISTERED**

**2,877**

**TUBE FEEDINGS**

**3,283**



**55**  
**FLU CLINIC**

*"Apparo is thankful for our amazing community partnership with the Children's Hospital of Georgia"*

Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

**JAMES 1:17 • KJV**

## GRADUATE HIGHLIGHT

# Congratulations Levi!

Nearly half of all infants born extremely premature have significant learning and physical disabilities by the time they reach school age. Our Levi is among this group of micropreemies. Born at a mere 24 weeks, the odds were very much against him from day one. On day 3 of his sweet little life, the doctors found a grade 2 brain bleed on one side of his brain, and a grade 3 on the other. At exactly 1 month of his life, we received a call that Levi had NEC, and the chances of survival were very slim. We trusted God in both of those situations, and Levi is here today, thriving and flourishing in only a way that only God could provide. He sent some angels on the way. A lot of those angels came from Apparo Academy.

Knowing what we know of the education system, (we have 2 older children) we weren't sure what options would be best for Levi. We knew he would need extensive therapy and knew the amount of therapy given at schools, though helpful, would not put a dent in his needs to progress. Many schools face budget constraints that limit the availability of specialized services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy support. We had actually begun his IEP process at a school in our county. He was set to start there in August! But then the impossible happened and Apparo was set to open in August as well. There was no doubt what choice we were going to make. As soon as we found out there was a place for Levi at Apparo, we jumped at the opportunity and never looked back. Apparo was designed for all children in all walks of life aged 13 months to about 8, intending to be inclusive to children with

special needs and typical learning children, all while providing therapy and nursing needs to the children that required those. Most importantly, it's a Christian based school, with its foundation being of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The goal was to make Levi ready for first grade. On August 5, 2019, Levi entered the doors of Apparo Academy, and that is where he has been until his new journey of first grade on August 5, 2024. All of Levi's therapies were in his classroom, on his playground, or in his therapy gym, where all his friends were around him, and he had full access to interaction with typical developing children, and children like him. For the past five years, my husband and I have looked on in awe as Levi has grown leaps and bounds. Having such a diverse group of children in his classes has really brought him out of his shell, to show off just how verbal he is. He loves interacting with all of his friends in his class, and even loves to visit other classes to say hello. Having physical therapy on HIS playground gives him the confidence that he can do everything any other kid can do, because the playground equipment is adaptive and the perfect size for his little body. Getting speech and feeding right next to his typical learning friends shows him that though he may need help with his spoon, he is also a cool kid sitting at the lunch table. Thanks to his occupational therapy team, Levi is ready for the special olympics! He will play basketball with the best of the best if you give him the chance. Having all of his needs provided at the same time as essential learning is taking place is monumental. There's no other place like this in our area.





I don't know if the child we have today would be the same child if not for a setting like Apparo. What I do know is we have no doubt that he is ready for his 1st grade year at his new school. His confidence in all things is because of the encouragement that he can be just like his friend, who is running around the playground. Or like his other friend who can write the alphabet. Our family is grateful for the foresight of Jennifer. Even though she says everyone looked at her crazy when she spoke of the idea, we didn't. It was an answered prayer.

*Tanaya and Patrick Harris*



Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

**EPHESIANS 3:20-21 • KJV**

## TRIBUTES AND DONORS 2023-2024

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Liz and Bill Hopkins

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*in Memorial of* Jane Stewart

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*in Honor of* Lee Wills and Hampton Wills

Stifel Financial Corporation

*in Memorial of* Jane Stewart

Nichols Land & Investment Co.

*in Memorial of* Dr. George Kitchens

Charities Aid Foundation America

*in Memorial of* Jane Stewart

## FUN FACT

*21 of our 23 single parent moms have obtained employment after enrolling their child at Apparo.*



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS 2023-2024

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 Ameris Bank  
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## WHY DO I CHOOSE TO SUPPORT APPARO ACADEMY?

“South State Bank donates to Apparo Academy because we believe in their mission to help make children ready to reach their full potential through education and individualized therapies.”

 *Jay Forrester*  
SSB DIVISION PRESIDENT

“From the moment that I took a tour of Apparo, I realized that I don’t have any real problems in my life. Who cannot be moved by seeing the passion the staff does for this group of children and what better need is there than to create an environment for these kids to excel in life, especially when there really aren’t other options? It’s very moving to feel like I can contribute to a cause of this nature!!”

*Jeff Richards*

“Apparo opens its doors to children, its heart to nurturing, and its arms to healing. The fortunate children who learn and grow at Apparo open OUR hearts beyond measure.”

*Elizabeth Hopkins*  
THE KNOX FOUNDATION

“Apparo Academy is a tremendously impactful gift to our community that is literally transforming the lives of the children and families they serve in the most positive way imaginable. Malisa and I are proud to support such a vital organization where the results of the school’s compassionate care for these children is something that is both inspiring and tangible in the results being lovingly achieved.”

*Malisa and Deke Copenhaver*

“I was drawn to Apparo because of my background as a special needs teacher. Barry and I were so impressed with what Jennifer and her team are doing. They offer support and encouragement to families, in addition to helping children develop to their full potential. We also believe a faith-based approach is the most valuable thing you can emphasize in the midst of any circumstance or challenge. We are fortunate to be able to give to such an amazing school!”

*Beth and Barry Storey*

**ABIGAIL TRIBUTES**

Lee Benedict  
Beatriz and Jeremy Halbgewachs  
Tom Holterman  
Eva McDonald  
Ella Sharp  
Grace Steck  
Michelle and Charlie Weston  
Robin Anne and Bob Wills

*Celebrating the Life of  
Abigail Scarlett Holterman*

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2016 - DECEMBER 18, 2023**



## TESTIMONIALS - FELICITY & MICHAEL

One thing that is true for all parents is the desire for their children to be known and loved. Known and loved by God. Known and loved by their family. Known and loved by others. That desire is amplified with a child with unique needs. The question becomes “will my child ever be known and loved” by others? At Apparo Academy, that answer is a resounding YES!

In Felicity’s time at Apparo, she is truly known and truly loved. Everybody knows Felicity. Not just her classroom teachers. Everybody celebrates Felicity. Everybody loves our daughter, and they truly want what is best for her. It’s no surprise to us that Felicity is truly thriving due to her time at Apparo.

She’s learned to walk. She’s learning to eat. She’s learning to talk. And she’s learning to be a friend...a friend to other children regardless of their abilities. Moreover, Apparo has been a true blessing for our family.

Before Apparo, our days were full of bussing Felicity to and from different therapies. Looking for preschool programs that would take a child who couldn’t walk by 15 months or isn’t potty trained by 2. And our days often ended in frustration. Frustration that our world was not designed to help all people thrive. But Apparo shifted that entire paradigm, and we count ourselves fortunate to have found it.

*Megan and Matt Wehman*







“Apparo Academy is undoubtedly one of our family’s biggest blessings! Our three-year-old son, Michael, has cerebral palsy and a brain-based vision impairment. Michael just started his third school year at Apparo. Although Michael is currently nonverbal and immobile, he has made remarkable developmental progress since he became a student three years ago.

He is starting to intentionally speak new sounds that he hears in Speech Therapy, and he just graduated from Feeding Therapy after recently mastering drinking from a straw and eating age-appropriate foods. Additionally, he is strengthening his walking and standing skills in PT and increasing his fine motor skills in OT! We know that Michael’s progress would not be possible without the school’s

dedicated therapists, teachers, and medical staff. His therapists work together on cross-curricular goals in their sessions, and they work hard to carry those goals over for him to work on in the classroom and at home.

Our family also benefits from Apparo’s inclusive environment, as our 1-year-old son, James, is a typically developing student in the Chickadees classroom. James loves what he is learning from his teachers and greatly benefits from interacting with both his typically developing and special needs classmates. We know that his exposure to this inclusive environment will help him to develop empathy and understanding for both his big brother and his peers at an early age.”

*Kristin and Lee Malchow*

# Donors

## SPARROWS

**\$250K & UP**

Zach McLeroy

## CARDINALS

**\$100K - \$249,999**

Rosanne and Anderson Jones

## PARAKEETS

**\$25,000 - \$99,999**

Malisa Copenhaver  
Liz and Bill Hopkins  
Sabrina and George Rush

## DOVES

**\$10,000 - \$24,999**

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Vera and Andy Kilpatrick  
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Anna and Max Vallotton

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Lee Benedict  
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 Mario Segneri  
 Elisabeth Sharp  
 Joshua Shiver  
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 Kaitlyn West  
 James Weston  
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 LJ Wilhelmi  
 Madeline and Charles Wills  
 Leslie Wise  
 Earl Wright





# Events

THE APPARO GOLF TOURNAMENT  
ON SEPT. 18, 2023 RAISED

**\$182,000!**



PRESENTED BY:  STOKES HODGES  
AUTO GROUP

## SPONSORS INCLUDED:

Stokes Hodges Auto Group  
The Healing Bank  
American Concrete  
M. Austin Jackson Attorney at Law  
Meybohm



*The Blanchard and Calhoun Team; Gross Champion*

THE GARDEN EVENT ON  
SEPT. 17, 2023 RAISED

**\$81,728!**

## SPONSORS INCLUDED:

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Liz and Bill Hopkins | Gold Mech | Christine and Frank Anderson | Nimmons and Malchow, P.C.  
Riverside Refreshments | Maura and Brandon Dial | Mimi and Barry Goldsmith  
Bayla and Walter Pipkin | Therese and Brian Rhodes | Joye and Jeff Richards | VERA  
Tina and Alan Whitehouse | Mary and Tennent Houston | Rosanne and Andy Jones | Charleston Street

# Get Involved

How can YOU be a part of the excitement at Apparo? Our Academy operates and thrives with support from our philanthropic community. With this support we are able to subsidize 15% of our therapy revenues and 30% of tuition revenues. Please consider being a part of changing the lives of children and families in our community.



- » Volunteer
- » Give to our Endowment to ensure that Apparo Academy continues to thrive!
- » Therapy Pals: Donate to support therapy subsidies
- » Sponsor-a-Child: Monthly giving to support tuition subsidies
- » Redirect your personal or business taxes to Apparo Academy through the Quality Education Tax Credit to support tuition subsidies – We use the Georgia Student Scholarship Organization ([www.georgiasso.com](http://www.georgiasso.com))

## GASSO CHILD TUITION SUBSIDIES

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South State Bank\*

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Susanne Hodges and Christopher Walzer\*

Joe Wills

Connie and Frank Wills

Robin Anne and Bob Wills\*

\* Early pledges for 2025

*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give;  
not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 • KJV

[apparoacademy.org](http://apparoacademy.org)



*3104 Skinner Mill Rd.  
Augusta, GA 30909*