DEAR FRIENDS,

THIS YEAR YOU HELPED US GROW BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS.

As we approach our 30th year of operation, we remain proud of our students and their vast and varied accomplishments. Our faculty and staff are motivated and enthusiastic about the work they do and the collective support of the entire Cooke community which helps our children grow and develop.

87% OF COOKE ALUMNI ARE MEANINGFULLY ENGAGED IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

Parents often tell us how happy their children are to wake up and get to school. That speaks volumes about the warm and welcoming environment Cooke provides. At each stage of their development, Cooke helps our students be their personal best. Whatever the activity, task, or lesson that is placed before them, our students face challenges with a keen desire to do better each day. This is why we are here and this is why we do what we do. Helping our students accomplish their goals, big and small, and seeing the look of pride on their faces is what it’s about. The success of our students is demonstrated by the fact that 87% of Cooke alumni are meaningfully engaged in their community.

YOUR SUPPORT THIS PAST YEAR HAS OPENED UP MANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN.

Through your partnership, we developed our Therapeutic Horticulture Program, which is now a tremendously successful component of the Cooke curriculum. We have also been able to expand Cooke’s Creative Arts Services and academic partnerships with organizations such as St. John’s University, School of Visual Arts, and the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. Music therapies are now provided for our grammar school and high school students. These services are crucial to helping our children find their voices and to communicate their thoughts through the arts.

WE INVITE YOU TO READ OUR STORY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS AND OUR EMERGING INITIATIVES.

It is our hope that with each page you turn, you will share our pride in our incredible students. These young people have futures filled with hope and promise, and it is all a result of your generosity. It is with heartfelt thanks that we share this annual report with you.

Sincerely,

Michael Termini, PsyD
President

Eileen Caulfield Schwab
Chair

October 2015

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Cooke Center envisions a world in which all people with special needs are included as valued members of their communities, leading independent and purposeful lives. To realize this vision, our school educates students with diverse developmental disabilities and backgrounds, from early childhood through young adulthood. Through innovative programming and intensive, experiential instruction designed to foster students’ independence, we integrate academic, social and life skills to prepare our students to discover and fulfill their life goals. We also strive to promote the world we envision by cultivating community partners and sharing our knowledge.

**OUR MISSION**

**OUR CORE MISSION IS GUIDED BY THESE PRINCIPLES:**

**EMBRACING THE WHOLE CHILD**
Embracing and valuing the whole child in a joyful, inclusive environment where meaningful progress towards independence is realized.

**CREATING PARTNERSHIPS**
Creating strategic alliances with community partners to provide authentic learning environments for our students and inspire public acceptance and accommodation of people with disabilities.

**NURTURING DIVERSE LEARNERS**
Enhancing learning by carefully selecting a well-balanced mix of students with diverse learning profiles and cultural origins.

**SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE**
Sharing our knowledge with other educators and advocates to improve the educational experience for all children.

**INNOVATING AND EVOLVING**
Innovating and adapting to meet the evolving needs of our students, parents, and consulting partners.
Grounded in Cooke’s mission, the Cooke Center Institute (CCI) partners with schools and organizations to support teachers and school leaders across New York City to develop and strengthen teaching skills and improve the educational experiences of thousands of children in underserved neighborhoods each year. Multi-week consultations and professional development workshops equip teachers to educate students with diverse needs and a range of abilities.

Planting the seeds to learn and grow through individualized academics and therapies

Cooke Center Grammar School uses a multi-faceted approach incorporating traditional and innovative methods that address the specific needs of our students. By integrating programs such as therapeutic horticulture and musical theater, students experience learning that stimulates their interests and helps them to identify areas that cultivate their strengths.

A robust high school experience that prepares students for life

Cooke Center Academy (CCA) is our specialized high school that meets a critical need in New York City. CCA offers superior, individualized, special education not accessible to most high school students with special needs. CCA is recognized for its rigorous academics and integrated therapeutic programs which offer students the opportunity to develop academic, social, vocational, and adaptive living skills at a pace best suited to their needs.

Growing toward independence and meaningful engagement

SKILLs is a specialized program designed for students aged 18-21 to transition them from high school to adulthood. Students acquire the additional academic and vocational training they need to pursue their interests—through paid internships or volunteering—and move toward independent adult living.

Helping others grow

An active Cooke Alumni Association offers ongoing support, recreational opportunities, and continuing education to Cooke graduates growing toward independence and meaningful engagement.
“I can raise my hand and be confident that if I need help, I can get help, you know?”

“I am good at writing, social studies, art, and science. Oh, and I am also nine years old.”

“I can raise my hand and be confident that if I need help, I can get help, you know?”

“I like it a lot, I really like the independence we get and how we get treated like adults.”
Therapeutic horticulture, the purposeful use of plants and plant-related activities to promote health and wellness, has produced amazing results over the past academic year. For Cooke students, the garden provides sensory experiences in a controlled environment that helps address sensory integration deficit. The therapeutic horticulture program has become an effective component of the Cooke curriculum and a beloved feature of Cooke’s educational environment.

Grammar School students plant, collect, and clean produce from the garden which yields enough food for our annual harvest festival.

CCA students learn about the life cycle of a plant and the concepts of sustainable farming both in the classroom and in the garden. They weigh, bag and distribute produce for our Cooke Center CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

All SKILLS students participate in internships of various kinds. Some choose to utilize the culinary knowledge they have accrued to explore possible careers in the culinary arts.
THERAPEUTIC CREATIVE ARTS

Drama, Art, Music and Dance: Our arts program combines all these disciplines to help our students build confidence through self expression, developing their communication skills. Our motivated and talented teachers and therapists are the main facilitators of these programs. Additionally, Cooke has formed partnerships with arts organizations around city, including School of Visual Arts and the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. These organizations have been a great complement to our already robust arts program. Serving the entire student body, these therapeutic services are supported by the Council for Creative Arts who believe that success in the arts leads to enhanced academic, social and adaptive life skills.

Integration of technology into our children’s learning supports and contributes to their class curricula. iPads and laptops are used to teach, review and reinforce literacy, math, social, speech and other fundamental skills.

CCGS students utilize technology for word processing, organization, research, and accessing networks. They learn video creation, coding and programming (using laptop programs and iPad apps), internet safety, and digital citizenship.

CCA students use various forms of technology for communication. They explore computer programs, internet applications and social media beyond their basic functions. The end goal is for students to be able to use technology to enhance their personal and professional lives responsibly.

SKILLS students can compensate for special needs through the use of specialized programs and applications, enabling them to remain independent, lifelong learners. They utilize technical knowledge for résumé development, to navigate job search databases for internship opportunities, and for communication and recreation within social networks.

GROWING THROUGH CREATIVITY

Drama, music, dance and art are integral to the CCGS curriculum and foster the achievement of motor milestones, facilitate communication skills and help students begin to explore abstract ideas through verbal and non-verbal media.

Through music, dance and drama, CCA students continue to develop their social skills, expand their pragmatic language, and increase their self-expression. Therapy incorporating the arts builds self esteem and enables students to showcase talents in school and in their communities through a variety of performances.

SKILLS students engage in creative art, both in school and in the community. They go to the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and School of Visual Arts and collaborate with community theaters. Some students pursue internships with theater arts organizations where they exhibit their talents.
OUTCOMES

ACADEMICS

Through their engagement with major subject areas, students connect concepts to real world applications and experiences.

SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students begin to formulate independent goals and build a sense of self-determination while identifying personal interests.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION / CAREER READINESS

Through exploration in the local community, students identify important landmarks and community helpers, recognizing the importance of community engagement.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Frequent opportunities for structured and imaginative physical play improve body awareness, sensory and motor skills.

INDEPENDENCE AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Increased expectations and a complex high school schedule facilitate a greater level of personal responsibility and independence.

Increased expectations and a complex high school schedule facilitate a greater level of personal responsibility and independence.

Through the support of consistently integrated clinical services, students enhance conversational, social, and self-advocacy skills.

Health and Adaptive Skills classes enhance concepts of personal hygiene and physical fitness.

Frequent off-site education and interest-driven internships lead to more deeply meaningful engagement in the larger community.

GROWTH

As of 2014 53% of Cooke Alumni were employed, versus only 17.1% of the national population of people with disabilities.*

*www.bls.gov

OUR IMPACT

87% COOKE ALUMNI MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

100% of CCA and SKILLS students gain real world work experience. Thanks to this high level of vocational preparation, 87% of Cooke Alumni are meaningfully engaged in their communities.

53% COOKE ALUMNI EMPLOYED

17% NATIONAL AVERAGE

As of 2014 53% of Cooke Alumni were employed, versus only 17.1% of the national population of people with disabilities.*

*www.bls.gov

INDEPENDENCE AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

COOKE CENTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Address learning needs more specifically through continued coursework.

Increased expectations and a complex high school schedule facilitate a greater level of personal responsibility and independence.

Strengthen independence and social ties through organized or self-planned leisure activities and Alumni events.

Achieve greater personal responsibility through practicing necessary Adaptive Life Skills such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and shopping.

COOKE CENTER ACADEMY

Develop a sense of individual abilities and interests while building compensatory skills to navigate personal challenges in final preparation toward independent living.

SKILLS

Address learning needs more specifically through continued coursework.

Increased expectations and a complex high school schedule facilitate a greater level of personal responsibility and independence.

Strengthen independence and social ties through organized or self-planned leisure activities and Alumni events.

Achieve greater personal responsibility through practicing necessary Adaptive Life Skills such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and shopping.
The 2015 Food for Thought Chefs’ Tasting benefit was a great success. The honorees for the evening were Ofer and Limor Cohen, whose daughter Ocean attends Cooke Center Grammar School. The Cohens have generously contributed time and resources to Cooke, and their efforts and dedication are truly appreciated.

Mrs. Cohen made very touching remarks about her family and the challenges they faced with having a child with special needs. She also mentioned, with great pride the triumphs they have experienced especially once Ocean joined Cooke Center, the friends she has made, her developmental improvements, and the acceptance, support and attention shown to her as a Cooke student.

Through the generous and selfless contributions of our guests, corporate sponsors, trustees, families and friends, Cooke Center exceeded our fundraising goal for the evening. Thanks to the Benefit Planning committee, the participating chefs, sous chefs and Cooke Center staff, Food for Thought 2015 was a monumental event!

The event featured a combination of 21 chefs and purveyors of fine foods:

- Raj Abat
- Joseph Leonard
- David Bouley
- Bouley
- Maurizio Crescenzo
- Taverna DiBacco
- Frank DeCarlo
- Peasant
- Philio DelValle
- Pier 60
- Abigail Kirsch
- Harold Dieterle
- Perilla
- Filipe Donnelly
- Comodo
- Walter Drobenko
- Caviarenova
- Michael Pollack
- Brooklyn Roasting Co
- Larissa Raphael
- Telepart
- Thomas Raquel
- Le Bernardin
- Jacques Torres
- Chocolates
- Laurence Verbeke
- Le Pain Quotidien
- David Waltuck
- élan

REVENUE

Year ending June 30th, 2015

90% Education Fees $17,394,000
6% Contributions and Special Events $1,191,500
3% Consultation and Training Fees $669,000

TOTAL REVENUE $19,254,500

EXPENSES

Year ending June 30th, 2015

87% Education Services and Programs $15,140,000
11% Administration $1,852,500
2% Fundraising $507,000

TOTAL EXPENSES $17,499,500
The following list acknowledges with sincere gratitude those individuals, foundations, and corporations which contributed to the Cooke Center Annual Fund, for the Food for Thought Campaign or made a grant during the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

We thank all our longterm supporters and welcome new partners to the Cooke family.
SAVE THE DATE
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
WEDNESDAY
MAY 11, 2016
THE LIGHTHOUSE
AT CHELSEA PIERS

LEADERSHIP

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PARTNER WITH US

More than 65% of Cooke’s families are unable to pay tuition on their own. Cooke’s Board maintains a commitment to serving any child who could benefit from a Cooke education regardless of the family’s financial situation. Cooke is the only private special education provider with this level of commitment to serving low income families.

HELP SUPPORT COOKE

MAKE A GIFT
Make a donation of cash, securities, an IRA, or consider a gift in kind of a tangible good or service.

A company match can double your contribution.

PLANNED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES
Name Cooke as a beneficiary of a bequest, retirement plan assets, or life insurance policy.

For more information, please contact:
advancement@cookecenter.org