The future is bright
Dear Donors, Friends & Stakeholders:

Take a good look at the cover of this Impact Report. The title says, “The future is bright,” as a child looks back over his shoulder.

If our future is bright, you may wonder, why he isn’t looking ahead? He’s looking back because our past is the strong foundation on which we build that bright future.

Many of you already know our organization, while for others this publication will serve as an introduction. Whether you’ve been part of our past or you’re part of that future, we promise you’ll see things in these pages that will warm your heart, spark your mind, and move your soul. You’ll learn about children and families who achieve success in our care and about the passionate, talented workforce who helped make that success possible. You’ll learn about our growing role in the community as we continue to make this a better world for every person. And you’ll get a sneak peek at what’s coming next as we develop innovative new ways to meet every challenge.

Every child and family in our care, from our first day in 1829, has taught us something. Their strengths and talents, their challenges and struggles, their questions and their needs—each one has provided an opportunity for us to learn and grow as an organization. We have used that knowledge to develop innovative solutions, challenge conventional wisdom, and most importantly give children and families the chance to live the lives they deserve.

Many people are involved in making Northern Rivers the great place it is for our children. We’d like to thank the board members for their service, especially the board members who have completed their terms: Mark Bryant, Angela Colvin, and Nina Tyzik. Their service has been invaluable.

As we prepare to step boldly into a future that integrates our services even more fully into healthcare and public welfare, we do so because of you. Your faith, trust, and support give us the power to provide life changing care to those who need help. We are honored to call you our friends and look forward to walking into that bright future together.
More than 2,891 children, adults, and families received therapy and counseling in more than 35,035 sessions.

Responded to more than 1,324 emergency intervention calls for children and adults in crisis.
+ 3,840 children safely maintained in their homes and communities

+ 95 students participated in vocational program, giving them valuable work experience
Financial Report: July 1, 2016 — June 30, 2017
Presented below is a summary of our organization’s financial results subject to final audit. To view the complete audited financial report, visit northernrivers.org/financialimpact.

Operating Report: Revenues
- 95.1% Public Sources
- 3.0% Client Third-Party Fees
- 1.3% Investments
- 0.6% Fundraising

Operating Report: Expenses
- 89.5% Services
- 10.0% Management & General
- 0.1% Investments
- 0.4% Fundraising

Statement of Financial Position Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2017
- Cash & Investments: $14,778,705
- Accounts Receivable: $13,734,582
- Property: $21,012,992
- Other: $336,375
- Total Assets: $49,866,654
- Liabilities: $35,457,330
- Net Assets: $14,409,324
- Total Liabilities & Net Assets: $49,866,654

The schools serve 50 school districts in the Capital Region.

Early Head Start served 203 children, with 50 children moving on at age 3 to other programs such as Head Start or Preschool.
Our Golf Tournament and Summer Celebration in July 2016 at Saratoga National Golf Club was the party of the season. Our friends from Rose & Kiernan, major sponsors of this event and supporters of our other special events and holiday campaign, put in a great showing on the course.

Honorary chairperson Rodger Wyland (second from left) kept everyone in line. Special thanks to American Clothing, Marvin & Company, and all of our sponsors for helping make it possible!

Pop quiz: How great was our Trivia Challenge? Answer: Amazing! Master of Ceremonies Chris Onorato from WNYT NewsChannel 13 and our friends from Pioneer Bank and Rose & Kiernan were the unquestioned stars of the night at Revolution Hall in Troy. Kudos to the brainiacs from Barclay Damon who took first place.

Our Trivia Challenge is a great way to build teamwork and camaraderie. The team spirit award went to the colorful employees from Hoosick Valley Contractors.
In-Kind Support
$250,000 estimated value
More than 1,000 donations

Volunteer & Intern Support
$830,618 value
29,602 hours
Nearly 450 volunteers & interns

Total Community Impact
$1,710,618

This year’s Champions for Children of the Capital Region, Albany Medical Center, Upstate Cakes for Kids, Siena College, and Paula Stopera and the CAP COM Cares Foundation (at left with CEO Bill Gettman and Congressman Paul Tonko) were some of the best we have had the privilege of honoring.

The GE Asian Pacific American Forum (APAF) held their annual Walk for Education, raising funds to support educational initiatives at Northern Rivers. CEO Bill Gettman and students from the School at Northeast in Schenectady joined more than 30 APAF members, who raised more than $5,000 to benefit our educational programs.

Berkshire Bank is a longtime corporate sponsor of our signature annual events, and they are also committed to giving back at the program level. The employees have provided grant funding for career services programming to help our young adults build their lives and for our Early Head Start program that supports new mothers and young families. And they’re not afraid to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty—they take part in a number of beautification projects on our campus as part of their annual Xtraordinary Day volunteer event.

VIEW OUR FULL LIST OF DONORS AT NORTHERNRIVERS.ORG/DONORS
**OUR SALUTATORIAN — KAIN**

As an adolescent in the foster care system, Kain moved from school to school for a few years. “I got used to being the new kid,” he said. “You can be the new kid and still come out on top.” Then, about two years ago, Kain was placed with foster parents Colleen and Allan, and began working with clinician Meghan Wilson.

Then he stopped being the new kid bouncing from school to school. Now he’s salutatorian of the Class of 2017 at Cairo–Durham High School, heading off to SUNY Oswego, and looking to educate others about foster care. Kain used his salutatorian speech to discuss his journey and talk openly about his beliefs. We’ll let him take it from here.

“Look at me,” he said to the assembled crowd. “If I didn’t tell anybody I was a foster child, you probably wouldn’t guess. I knew I could be special, so I decided to be special. I pressed on every day, and I believe that everybody here can do the same. Pain doesn’t last forever, I promise you. Please don’t quit.

“I’m sure we all have somebody like [Colleen and Allan] in our lives, the influential piece that puts everything together. Meghan is honestly one of the funniest and most hardworking people I’ve ever met. She and everyone on her team are partially the reason I’m as successful as I am. I am a shining example of why foster care works. I urge the world to break this negative stereotype and be more open about the system that’s taken such good care of me.”

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**SA TRI**

Education is one of the keys to a bright future, and our Sidney Albert Training and Research Institute (SA TRI) provides cutting-edge training to staff and the community. In addition to providing free continuing education credit courses to staff, our team of experts build and deliver specialized trainings to meet the needs of school districts, businesses, human services agencies, and colleges.

**This year, we:**

+ served more than 4,500 professionals through our statewide service training contract
+ provided more than 12,000 units of training to Northern Rivers staff
+ served more than 1,300 participants from school districts and other external agencies

Our trainers are some of the best in their field because they have firsthand experience working with children and families. From curriculum development to crisis intervention instruction to customized trainings tailored to specific environments, SA TRI can provide the right educational resources to lead any team into the future.

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**Volunteers & Interns**

The workforce of the future needs experience today, and our internship program provides the training, supervision, and experience that gives aspiring human services professionals a great start to a rewarding career. This year, we welcomed nearly 60 student interns from schools including the University at Albany’s School of Social Welfare, Siena College, the College of Saint Rose, and the Sage Colleges.

Our interns work with multidisciplinary treatment teams, which may include social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers, child-care workers, and education specialists, and participate in agency orientations, weekly individual supervision sessions, staff meetings, and more, and benefit from our extensive internal training catalogue.

We’re always looking for motivated young professionals to join the team and be part of our future.

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+ More than **269** foster families provided the opportunity for more than **612** children and young adults to rebuild their lives
We are fortunate to have a workforce that is both highly skilled and incredibly passionate about helping children and families. That skill and passion is evident to everyone they work with, including Assistant Saratoga County Attorney Michael J. Hartnett. Hartnett was so moved by the work of Christie Tomala, a clinician in our prevention programs, that he took the time to write to us.

Tomala spent months working with a family struggling to maintain a safe home. Eventually the county felt that the best solution was to remove the children, and the case went to family court. Tomala was subpoenaed and testified for hours, including direct examination and cross examination by five attorneys.

“I have personally litigated hundreds of trials and hearings in family courts throughout New York State,” wrote Hartnett. “Ms. Tomala’s testimony was some of the most effective and impactful I have ever heard. . . . Not only did Ms. Tomala go above and beyond in working with this family, she then doubled down on her good work by providing remarkably effective testimony which enabled Child Protective Services to obtain court orders that served the best interests of the children.”

While testifying in family court is difficult, Tomala has the strength to do what is right for children and families. “Knowing in my mind that the professional decisions I make will help a child is what matters,” she said. “I can sleep at night knowing that children are safe.”

In a difficult family court case, emotions run high and conflict is to be expected. In this case, however, Hartnett credits Tomala with bringing the room together. “After she spoke, all sides were in agreement,” said Hartnett. “Everyone left the courtroom nodding yes.”

Our Workforce

Our 1,400-strong workforce is the key to our future. Their passion, talent, diversity, commitment, experience, and skills fuel our success. We’re dedicated to finding, training, and keeping the best professionals in our field—and to do that, we must listen.

This year, we participated in an independent, in-depth survey designed to gauge employee satisfaction. We are proud to say that we ranked seventh out of more than 100 participating organizations of our size throughout the Capital Region. We are even more proud to share some of the things our employees said about us:

“"I love being part of this family.""

“"I believe in what we do as an agency to help families and children.""

“"It is meaningful to be able to make a difference in the lives of young people.""

“"We are part of something bigger, and our agency voice often influences policy.""

“"My coworkers are always there to help and be supportive.""

“"We are change agents.""

More than 260 children and young adults living in a resident group home setting

+20 of our foster children achieved permanency through adoption by their foster families
DAN GOES TO WORK

Like a lot of teenagers, Dan picked up a part-time job to make some money. He started working part-time with the maintenance crew at the School at Northeast during the school year, taking shifts during his free periods. “He did a great job, and they liked having him on the team,” said Kim Klingbeil, coordinator of transition services.

When the school year ended, so did the need for Dan’s services at the school. But the team didn’t want to lose him, so they found him a spot at our Children’s Home. “This is my first job, and I really like it,” said Dan. “I get to meet new people, my boss, Orlando, is great, and I like being able to help out.”

Dan takes such pride in his work that he had to be convinced to take a day off for a special event. “He got the chance to go to a Yankees game, and we had to make sure he knew it was okay to go,” said Klingbeil. With a work ethic like that, you know that Dan will always get the job done.

GAVIN

If it’s a nice day on our Albany campus, you’re likely to see Gavin pushing a cart up and down the sidewalk, transporting his giant orange cooler and a stack of cups, asking everyone he sees if they’re thirsty. Lots of kids sell lemonade and iced tea during the summer to make a little pocket money—but that’s not why Gavin’s out there.

A few months back, Gavin lost a friend in a tragic accident. As he and his classmates struggled with their pain, Gavin remembered that there were others hurting as well. “I wanted to do something to help support the family,” he said.

With the support of his team and some friends, Gavin purchased supplies, borrowed the cooler and cart, and got to work—and the response was incredible. Now, after helping his first family, Gavin’s collecting money for other causes, making donations to those in need. “I want to do things for other people,” he said. “It’s why I’m here.”

MANNY

When we first met Manny, he was very shy and withdrawn. He kept his head down and his thoughts to himself. Then he connected with some volunteer opportunities, and he began to blossom. First he worked with the recycling program at his school, where he made weekly rounds and worked with school staff to help the environment. But that was just the beginning for Manny.

He then began to help out with a local free lunch program, handing out meals to children struggling with poverty. He volunteered with the Regional Food Bank, helping sort donations every week. He made weekly visits to the Hope Club, visiting with and supporting cancer patients. It seems like every day, Manny finds someone new to help.

“He’s a wonderful young man and a role model,” said clinician Jessica Mintzer. Manny is modest about the praise. “I just do what I can, like anyone else,” he said. Well, Manny, we respectfully disagree. You do a whole lot more.

KAYLA

Kayla helps out every week at the Shop on Park, a free thrift store for our clients. She helps organize stock and assists customers with their needs. Most importantly, she’s there to make sure that everyone leaves the store happier than when they walked in.

“If I can help someone get in to a better mood, it’s a great day,” she said. And while she’s giving out good cheer, she’s getting something back, too. “Being a volunteer and learning to work with people totally changed my mood and attitude,” said Kayla. “The more I smile and the more I can make other people smile, the more I want to do. More friends means a better life.”

Pay It Forward

The youth in our care face many challenges. They face them with strength, courage, and grace, and they amaze and inspire us every day. They come to us to heal and grow, and for many that growth includes a burgeoning desire to help others. They seek out opportunities to volunteer in their communities, help others, and pay it forward—to make the world a better place for everyone, one day at a time.

Northern Rivers schools (the Neil Hellman School and the School at Northeast) had a strong 85% graduation rate in 2016–2017.
We have come a long way over the past 188 years. The seeds of our growth were sewn in a patch of farmland in Albany and a women’s civic meeting in Schenectady, and we remain rooted in the ideals of our predecessors—to find innovative new ways to give children and families strength and hope. To help them grow and make their future better than their past.

When the community needed orphanages, we built safe, loving homes for children with nowhere else to go. When they needed educational resources for challenging students, we built innovative schools. When they needed community-based resources, we built a forward-thinking continuum of care that helped keep families together.

And because of you, that future starts now.

We were ready to build all these things because we listened and we learned. Whenever our world changed, we not only were able to change with it—but we were also able to lead. And as that world continues to change, we are fortified to lead once again, fueled by the knowledge we have gained, the expertise we possess, and the strength of our supporters.

No single program or service is ever the answer. Only by integrating our services, partnering with others, and collaborating toward a shared goal can we truly provide the help our clients and our community deserve. That’s why we’re embarking on a transformative effort to bring primary care and behavioral healthcare together and more effectively and efficiently manage that care for clients.

In the months ahead, you’ll learn about our innovative new approach to integrating care. Exciting infrastructure changes and new program designs will represent the investment our clients and community deserve. All this is possible because you cared enough to make it all possible. Yes, the future is bright. And because of you, that future starts now.