They need you now.
“It was a perfectly normal road for the first two years of Jarrod’s life...and then he completely stopped talking. I was terrified.”

“This was 40 years ago, and the whole attitude about autism was that you’d never break through. A doctor told me I should institutionalize Jarrod and get on with my life,” reflected Gail Parrish of Manchester.

A single mother, Gail quit her job to fight for the special education Jarrod needed. They got by on public assistance. She spent countless hours being trained by learning specialists.

**Jarrod’s labels piled up:** autism, atypical pervasive developmental disorder, ADHD, intermittent explosive disorder, organic mood disorder.

Gail’s parents died weeks apart.

“I started to realize, ‘Okay, you’re in this alone. There’s no one left to take care of him once you’re gone.’”

At 19, Jarrod’s aggression spilled over, leading to an emergency psychiatric visit.

“**His behaviors were escalating,** especially towards me. I had to accept the fact that he needed a structured situation.”

**Gail made the wrenching choice** to move Jarrod to a group home. Journey Found began running the home in 2013.
Meet Jarrod now. He’s in the middle with Gail by his side. Cory’s on the left, the Journey Found job coach “who’s like a big brother, best friend and father rolled into one,” says Gail. Jarrod was at Cory’s wedding. Sharon’s on the right; she’s worked with Jarrod for 19 years at Journey Found.

Jarrod is no longer aggressive. He’s formed relationships. He makes his bed, does his laundry, communicates with a mix of signing and one-two word phrases. He’s less medicated.

He’s had a paper route for 16 years! He volunteers.

“I’m proud of him every time I’m with him,” says Gail. “I marvel at the sweet, loving man he’s become. Every day he still grows and he continues to impress, surprise and astound me.”

“I believe in Journey Found and in what they’re doing for the people they serve.

They all love each other and the work they do. When I’m gone, that is so important to me! I want Jarrod to be happy and to always have a sense of community and family—and he has that at Journey Found,” she says.
You probably know the desperation of parents like Gail.

They agonize over who will care for their kids—during and after their lifetimes.

You also may know one of the thousands of people with intellectual and behavioral disabilities in Connecticut who are isolated in their homes.

They are cruelly excluded from support services that could help them live more independently and safely. Why? Critical funding from government sources is scarce.

**Journey Found seeks your contributions to expand its services to every person with intellectual and behavioral disabilities in need of supportive living in north central and southeastern Connecticut.**

Our 300 dedicated staff members, visionary leaders, gifted job coaches, and welcoming group homes are waiting.

We’ve got models for assistive technologies and innovative shared living models that could be game changers for people aching to live as independently as possible.

**All that’s missing is YOU.**
The Devastating Human Costs of Waiting to Help

At this moment, **1,600 individuals** with intellectual and developmental disabilities are on Connecticut’s Department of Developmental Services wait list for supports and services.

Drastic state budget cuts to agencies including Journey Found have harshly hindered the lives of these vulnerable individuals. Often isolated, they can’t just leave and go out to the store, go to a doctor’s appointment, or take a bus. They’re not able to navigate many situations on their own.

The clock is ticking.

Who will care for adults with disabilities waiting for services now and when their aging parents die?

Overwhelmed Parents and Families

Parents often face impossible choices—to leave jobs or to retire early so they can take care of their child with behavioral or intellectual challenges. The financial, social and emotional hardships can be devastating.

“One of our founders used to say that everyone becomes disabled in the family. They experience so much isolation because it’s their kid that’s hurting the other kids or acting out in class or distracting others, so the parents end up outside the normal activities. It’s almost like they become autistic themselves because their socializing and opportunities are limited, too.”

—Tracey Walker, CEO
Like you, we believe every person living with an intellectual or developmental disability deserves the chance to be all they are capable of being.
Journey Found needs your help to realize its vision of safe homes for every person in north central and southeast Connecticut who needs it.

We take on people with the most challenging intellectual and developmental disabilities and—with heavy doses of love and respect—we help them create their success stories.

“Journey Found can’t survive solely on government funds. They don’t fund 100% of our operation—and they certainly don’t fund happiness,” says Tracey Walker, our CEO.

$447

Provides a home for one person for one day at Journey Found

13 years

Since the State of Connecticut increased its reimbursement rate for Journey Found’s services

“Mathieu is like a sponge; he’s responding to everything. For years he needed medications to control his behavior, but he doesn’t need them anymore because he is surrounded by people at Journey Found who are so willing to listen, pay attention to his needs, and teach him things.”

—Maryse Wicker, on her son Mathieu
90 days.

They were 51 intellectually disabled and behaviorally challenged adults living in group homes across north central and southeast Connecticut. The agency that housed them told the State of Connecticut it was pulling out.

The people served, their parents, and employees panicked.

They appealed to the State, which said everyone could stay in their homes if a new nonprofit agency could form—in 90 days—for the sole purpose of continuing their care.

Six determined parents stepped up.

Faced with the prospect of their intellectually disabled children losing their homes and loving caregivers—and knowing that instability could wreak havoc on their lives—the parents mobilized.

A dedicated director agreed to stay on and take charge.

They got a fleet of vans, a human resources director, new offices, a volunteer Board of Directors, and established policies and procedures.

The group persevered.

Journey Found was born.

51 people with disabilities stayed in their loving homes.

192 employees cared for them.

Not a single employee left.

Not. One.
Safe and supportive living looks like this.

> Journey Found currently provides **behavioral, residential and other support services** to more than 80 adults with pervasive developmental disorders and intellectual disabilities.

> Every person’s **care is individualized!**

People live in our small group homes with 2-4 others, staffed up to 24 hours every day of the year. Support may range from a few hours per week to all waking hours and can include shopping, recreation, medication assistance, daily living skills or forming healthy relationships.

> With our support, adults can **thrive in their homes or apartments**—whether they live on their own, with family, or others.

> Our family can go to sleep at night knowing Rachel’s in a safe and good place. *We didn’t always have worry-free nights. We weren’t sure what kind of phone calls we were going to get or if she ran away. We don’t have those worries today.*”

—Chris Paradiso of Stafford Springs, brother of Rachel, a 20-year Journey Found resident
At Journey Found, you’ll find:

1. **Caregivers brimming with compassion and respect**
   We “care about” not “care for.” Every person we support has a personalized plan based on their choices and preferences. Says parent Maryse Wicker, “Journey Found is extremely good at what they do. They try to hire the best people—administrators and direct care staff. We can ask them any questions and I always find love and understanding.”

2. **Exceptional, person-centered care**
   We’re one of only eight “living the mission” mentoring agencies in Connecticut, earned through training by nationally renowned experts in person-centered thinking and practices. We continually educate our staff to implement the highest standards of behavioral therapies, rehabilitative services and residential care.

3. **A “can do” culture—no matter how challenging the disabilities**
   As an agency of choice for families and for the State of Connecticut, we take on the most challenging cases. We listen to families and we partner with them—often when other agencies have turned their backs.

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"We call them the Dream Team."
— parent Maryse Wicker of Mystic, on the Journey Found staff

"Our people deserve the same rights of passage as their siblings without a disability had. They should be able to have their own place and be able to live separately from their parents as they age."
— Tracey Walker, CEO
4. “Out-of-the-box,” forward-thinking leadership

Creativity and innovation are encouraged and rewarded. It starts at the top: CEO Tracey Walker is a long-time, leading advocate and visionary for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

5. Care for the whole person

Gail Parrish, Jarrod’s mom, said it best: “Journey Found takes a holistic approach to each and every person. It’s not just their diagnosis and how to treat it. They also consider: Who is this person? What are their needs physically, emotionally, mentally, socially?”

I like my roommates. I like the staff a lot. Because they’re caring. They help us do stuff.”

—Rachel P., Journey Found group home resident, Special Olympian in swimming, volunteer at local assisted living home for the elderly, works at Journey Found as a paper shredder
Your investments can help Journey Found create more supporting, loving homes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

No one should have to wait. With your help, we can:

> **Open more doors to services**—particularly for adults with autism—who are sitting at home with no supports.

1,600 people are languishing on wait lists for supports and services. Your dollars can help us reach them. Faster.

> **Accelerate use of assistive technologies.**

Remarkable assistive technologies are now available to help people with disabilities live more independently in their homes and communities.
Ramp up “shared living” residences—a win-win for people with disabilities and regularly abled ones. In these situations, a regularly abled person (not staff) is paid to move in with a person with a disability, helping with daily living tasks and any emergencies that may arise.

Research and create new partnerships, mergers or business plans to generate new funding streams to support programs and services for more people who need them.

Build reserves and a capital fund to buy and maintain homes for people supported. Owning and leasing homes is costly. We currently own 10 homes, but we need more in order to care for more people. The state takes 10-12 years to reimburse us for expenses like a new roof for one of our homes. With a reserve fund, we can move faster to help the people who need us.

Recruit and train more staff with specialized skills who can provide the individual assistance needed by people with very high needs.
Ready to make a gift and change a life?

Take the first step.
Let’s talk about how you can help Journey Found.

Contact
Monica Carr
Director of Development
mcarr@journeyfound.org
860-643-9844, x137

Journey Found
60 Hilliard Street, Manchester, CT 06042
www.journeyfound.org

Thank you for your kind consideration.

We accept charitable donations via cash, check or credit card. Giving online is easy at journeyfound.org/donations/.

You can also donate to Journey Found through your donor-advised fund.

Please consider including Journey Found in your estate plans or will. We are happy to discuss options with you.

All contributions to Journey Found are tax deductible.

“Journey Found makes such a difference and Mathieu feels it. He knows the staff is proud of him and we’re proud of him and it makes him feel good. He feels safe, he feels loved and he feels comfortable. Sometimes I leave my regular visits with Mathieu in tears—and they’re tears of joy.”

—Maryse Wicker