PATHFINDER VILLAGE

A Decade of Distinction
2010–2020
Members of the Pathfinder Produce team stand tall during a virtual Otsego County Chamber of Commerce Awards presentation as the 2020 Breakout Business of the Year. Pathfinder Village was also honored as the Chamber’s 2019 Business of the Year, and inducted into the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce’s Hall of Fame in 2018.
What a decade at Pathfinder Village!

In our fourth decade, 2010-2020, we've traveled far on our collective journey to realize Pathfinder Village's mission, “…that each life may find meaning.”

After the Great Recession in 2008, nonprofits struggled to rebuild. We had to be resourceful, plan well, and remain focused on the Village's importance to community members and families. In the face of this economic challenge, Pathfinder's mission grew. We continued to build new paths and erased the lines between the Village and the broader community in many ways.

Today, the world faces the COVID-19 pandemic. This ongoing challenge hits much closer to home for our residents, but we face it with the same determination that propelled us through past hurdles. Through flexibility and innovation, we make progress in a rapidly changing landscape; we realize that together, we can do more, and we can be more.

Just before the pandemic hit in the early months of 2020, Pathfinder Village was bustling with activity much like Main Street, Cooperstown, in July. Today, while access to our campus is restricted, the community’s roots endure, firmly in place. Residents safely enjoy the freedom and independence of our campus, as we provide social connections and daily variety through physically distanced events, online opportunities, and engaging day programs.

Some may view the last decade as bookended by crises. At Pathfinder, we see pages of triumph, progress, and relevant connections bound together by our community members and their families, the financial support of donors, and the work of our staff and volunteers.

The challenges of today and the past illustrate how, together, we can do more. Thank you for joining us on this journey and helping turn the dream of enriching opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities into reality through an inclusive community.

Be healthy, be kind, be patient,

William F. Streck
Chair, Board of Directors

Paul C. Landers
President & Chief Executive Officer
THE PROGRESSION OF COMMUNITIES

EXCLUSION
SEGREGATION
INTEGRATION
INCLUSION
The new decade brought steep challenges and change for Pathfinder Village. A dramatic transition in the disabilities landscape, along with the 2008 recession, had a significant impact on Pathfinder’s traditional care model.

With optimism and faith in our community living model, our Board of Directors and Leadership Team mapped a transformative plan for the Village. Listening to families and aligning services with current expectations, Pathfinder created new opportunities for families and individuals, expanded our definition of “community,” and became a stronger organization.

**Emerging trends in the decade:**

**GREATER LONGEVITY**
- Adults with Down syndrome are living longer – many now outlive their parents.
- There are greater needs for enhanced care and healthcare supports.
- Aging supports require additional resources, staff training, certifications, and partnerships with disability aging leaders.

**CHANGING NEEDS**
- Unlike past generations, families are more interested in a wider range of care options.
- Families desire programs that exceed government expectations; the bar is much higher today.
- Community engagement and social inclusion are primary drivers for choosing a learning and living setting.
- Families prefer to have their family member live near the family home.
- More and more, siblings are key decision-makers.

**SHIFTS IN PUBLIC POLICY**
- In 2014, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented the 2009 U.S. Supreme Court’s *Olmstead* decision, which held that states must ensure persons with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Strict interpretation of the decision drove states’ policies, which threatened congregate communities.
- The growth of in-state Medicaid spending by border states significantly reduced referrals to Pathfinder.
- Person-centered planning drew adherents among regulators and agencies, which directed program design toward smaller settings, less supervision, and full community inclusion.
**New Directions, More Options**

Pathfinder faced the decade’s challenges with a reframed vision that was focused on providing new and varied opportunities through person-centered supports. Even as the Village faces unprecedented global events, we remain committed to serving individuals based on their expressed needs and valued outcomes.

**2011 CAMP PATHFINDER**

Camp Pathfinder, our annual week-long summer sessions for young adults, is an independence-building opportunity that offers an ideal way for campers to experience time away from home in a welcoming, safe environment. Campers make new friends and learn new skills as they explore the outdoors and regional attractions, express themselves through music and movement, and gain confidence living independently.

Campers come from East Coast states; most attend for consecutive years and camp feels like an annual reunion. Once campers have realized success through short summer stays, many explore Pathfinder’s other options, including Otsego Academy or full-time residency. Camp Pathfinder offers seven sessions each year, a 1:3 staff to camper ratio, and activities overseen by Pathfinder’s Enrichment staff.

2020 was to have marked the camp’s tenth anniversary. However, this summer’s session was canceled with concerns over COVID-19. This precaution does not overshadow the camp’s growth since 2011.

**2012 GRANT’S FIELD**

As community inclusion for persons with disabilities gained importance, Pathfinder had to develop connections for its campus and programs with our local communities and organizations. The president of the Tri-Towns Youth Commission called one day in 2011 to ask if Pathfinder would become the home field for the Edmeston Youth Soccer program.

A few phone calls later and with the support of the Stubbs Family and the NYCM Foundation, Pathfinder built two beautiful soccer fields just east of the Village. The complex was named “Grant’s Field” after long-time resident and Pathfinder athlete Grant Stubbs.
The field’s opening led to unexpected benefits: During soccer seasons, three generations of local families would be at our campus several times each week. Families from all over Otsego County would come for weekend games, many for the first time. Naturally, they visited the Bakery. In time, the soccer folks became regular customers and we had to expand our Bakery to accommodate increased business. The Bakery became a busy gathering spot where persons with and without disabilities connected as equals and as neighbors.

2013 PATHFINDER PRODUCE

Other unanticipated benefits through community ties occurred when Pathfinder was invited to participate in a rural health initiative with Bassett Healthcare and other organizations to help reduce childhood obesity. Healthcare professionals identified limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables as a contributing factor to unhealthy weights; most families in our rural areas must travel over 30 minutes to purchase fresh produce due to the decades-long demise of small-town grocery stores.

Pathfinder leaders saw another chance to “create community,” expand job training for students and residents, and collaborate with other agencies to solve a community need. In time for World Down Syndrome Day 2013, Pathfinder opened its first Thursday afternoon produce market in The Commons Vocational Room; soon, our market had over 60 regular shoppers and Pathfinder became a regular destination for our neighbors.

Pathfinder Produce has expanded into a growing operation as well, with three large hoop houses on campus where Adult Day Service (ADS) participants grow seasonal produce. In 2018, the market “took it on the road” with our Mobile Market van that delivers grant-funded “Feel Good Boxes” to those with chronic medical needs in the area. This program now provides paid employment for four ADS participants. And through the addition of ADS artist-created cards, recipes, and positive messages in the weekly deliveries, the program has helped recipients feel healthier and more connected socially. Pathfinder Produce and the Mobile Market were honored in 2020 as the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce’s Breakthrough Business of the Year.
2014

**OTSEGO ACADEMY**

Pathfinder opened Otsego Academy, a two-year post-secondary educational program that offers creative, individualized options for high school graduates with disabilities. With its small class sizes and focus on students’ needs, Otsego Academy provides a strong foundation based in academics and employment skills. Through dorm living at Delaware House, the program also strengthens students’ social and independent living skills. The Academy has grown to include:

- Skills teaching for workplace success.
- Opportunities to build individuals' portfolios of academic and vocational competencies.
- Internships at local employers, with every Year 2 student logging in 300 internship hours.
- Vocational instruction and assessment.
- Peer relationships with students from Colgate University, the State University at Oneonta, and with others through community nonprofits and businesses.

2016

**ADULT DAY SERVICES**

With an aging population and government mandates that closed sheltered employment sites for people with disabilities, Pathfinder Village launched its own person-centered planning campaign to determine what service recipients wanted from their day services. The responses were clear: “I want to find a job.” “I want to enjoy things in my community.” “I want to learn new things.” “I want to spend time with family and friends, and I want to be near Pathfinder.” Another new program was born: Pathfinder Adult Day Services.

Today, we have a robust day program operated out of three sites: The Village Commons building on campus, the Newton Farmhouse, and Mill Creek, a former church in the hamlet of Edmeston that was recently renovated. The program presently has 69 participants, including area adults who live at local group homes, with their families, or those who are enrolled in Self-Directed programs.
2018 SELF-DIRECTED LIVING
Over the past decade, Pathfinder has expanded on its traditional residential model to offer new living options for independent adults. Through successful introductory experiences to Pathfinder through Camp Pathfinder and Otsego Academy, campers and graduates have gained interest in full-time residency programs.

Pathfinder renovated a stately Victorian-era home on its property and began its new Self-Directed program in 2018. The residents at Butler House are responsible for their own finances, time management, possessions, meal planning and household tasks, and have a formal lease agreement with the Village. Pathfinder provides staffing and supports as needed to ensure the Butler residents enjoy and grow through their living arrangement. With this nascent program’s success, the Village is now researching an inclusive cohousing-mixed tenancy model to determine what living at Pathfinder may look like in the future.

2019 THE KENNEDY WILLIS CENTER ON DOWN SYNDROME
The Kennedy Willis Center on Down Syndrome was founded in 1996 as Pathfinder Village’s education and outreach arm to families, professionals, and external audiences on topics related to Down syndrome and other disabilities. Over the past decade, the Center gained stature as it entered professional partnerships with research organizations, initiated aging specialty and quality care programs, and sponsored peer-reviewed studies and benchmark conferences in aging (2014) and workforce development in human services (2017). To support new collaborations, advocate for families, promote Best Practices, and to prepare for new opportunities that may exist with states’ transitions to managed care, the Center was formally incorporated as a separate nonprofit organization in 2019.
New Paths for Fundraising and Community Engagement

For any nonprofit, finding ways to raise funds is an ongoing challenge. Building off the tremendous community engagement activities that were taking place, Pathfinder Village leaders explored additional events to raise funds and make friends in support of programs, infrastructure, and scholarships.

2010  CHOBANI TENNIS CLASSICS
Created as a sister event to the long-standing Pathfinder Village-Baseball Hall of Fame Golf Invitational, the Chobani Tennis Classic is the region’s preeminent charity tennis tournament. The Tennis Classic, held at the Cooperstown Country Club, attracts participants from far and wide and has raised more than $140,000 to support the Pathfinder Village Foundation’s Scholarship Endowment.

With the success of the Tennis Classic, the Chobani Juniors Tennis Classic was started in 2015 to engage youth players in a fun event that focuses on sportsmanship, competitive play, and encourages student athletes to become involved in supporting Pathfinder.

2014  SPLASH PATH 5K AND FUN WALK
For over seven years, Pathfinder Village has hosted its popular Splash Path 5k and Fun Walk, an inclusive run-walk that welcomes athletes of all ages and abilities. Even during the 2020 pandemic, the event was held, reimagined as a virtual 5k with participants walking or running safely in their own neighborhoods.

Since its inception, Splash Path has raised over $92,000 for community inclusion and health projects and has turned into an annual celebration that brings new friends to Pathfinder.
2015 COMMUNITY TRICK-OR-TREAT
To share our beautiful community and provide a safe Halloween event with local families, Pathfinder’s staff launched our annual Community Trick-or-Treat event in 2015. Residents and staff enjoy dressing up, welcoming guests, and handing out treats; photos of the event are posted on social media so ghouls and goblins can share their costumes with grandma and grandpa. Since 2017, haunted houses have been created at the Village Commons by residents and volunteers from NYCM and Hamilton College to add to the fun.

2017 PATHFINDER VISIONARIES
The Pathfinder Village Foundation renewed its planned giving program by forming the Pathfinder Visionaries legacy society. Intending to diversify and ladder the Foundation’s revenues, the society engages donors and stakeholders about their estate plans to fully support Pathfinder services, staff development initiatives, and ongoing infrastructure costs. To learn more, please contact President and Chief Executive Officer Paul C. Landers.
As Opportunities Evolved, the Scholarship Fund Grew

With our donors’ generous support through four decades, the Scholarship program has evolved as individuals have come to Pathfinder at life’s different stages. Traditionally, scholarship awards have helped families through annual stipends to support full-time residencies. Over the past decade, the program also has offered awards so individuals may expand their horizons and gain independence through Camp Pathfinder or Otsego Academy.
Through its strengths as a residential community, Pathfinder Village has worked with many families who value a full range of opportunities for their loved ones. In 2000, Gloria and Peter Cagnacci enrolled their son, Michael, age 31. The family wanted enriching social and work experiences for Michael in a close-knit and inclusive community.

Gloria said at the time, “Having a child with Down syndrome is different, your whole life is different. You’re always thinking about their future.” Her worries about Michael’s life stemmed from the loss of her eldest son, Peter Jr., in 1996. Gloria and Peter’s long-term plans were shattered, and they feared what would happen to Michael when they were gone. At about this time, they learned of Pathfinder Village from a friend, visited, and loved it.

But how could they make Michael’s life at Pathfinder happen? Peter was a retired sheet metal worker and resources were limited. Advised by a financial planner, they downsized their home, and eliminated non-essentials. They used Peter’s monthly pension to fund a life insurance policy and formed an irrevocable trust to future-proof Michael’s funding.

But despite their plan, the family was shy of their financial goals. They sought help from the Pathfinder Village Foundation through a partial scholarship, allowing Michael to join the community.

Once on campus, Michael’s life took off: He made friends, worked, played sports, created art, and contributed to the community pulse. As a Village news reporter he wrote, “Pathfinder was built to make our dreams come true… Pathfinder is my future and it’s about life.”
Some may view the Cagnacci’s disciplined fiscal plan as burdensome, but Gloria and Peter embraced it out of their love for Michael; they found joy and community through his new life. They would call several times a week to stay connected, advocated for new opportunities, and showed their appreciation to staff with homemade goodies during visits.

A key part of everyone’s life is having someone to share with. Michael found Holly through their love of dancing. Finding and sustaining love — an extraordinary experience for anyone — was the apex of Michael’s life. He and Holly would share quiet moments, holding hands walking the campus, sharing coffee at the café, enjoying dates at their favorite eatery. Whenever Michael spoke of Holly, his eyes would softly glow, and a blissful smile would convey all he felt.

But as it offers joys, life also presents change: Gloria, then in her 80s and widowed in 2014, found comfort through her son’s full life, made possible through annual scholarships. She wrote in her holiday card, “Do you know how many lives you touch? Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

Michael and Holly grew older together; she remained his muse even as he battled dementia in his 40s. He couldn’t see her often in his last months, but at their last Annual Formal his eyes still grew bright upon seeing her. Heartbroken over his demise, Gloria relied on her deep faith and was supported by staff and family during his final days.

Michael passed away at home on October 23, 2019, and Gloria — her mission as a mother complete — followed peacefully on St. Patrick’s Day 2020. She was fittingly memorialized by her nephew, Robert Dondero, “La famiglia a tutto — family is everything.”
As a final tribute, the Pathfinder community rang the Chapel bell for Gloria on the cold, bright March morning of her passing, marking the close of three exemplary lives that burned brighter through the power of sacrifice and unconditional love.

“La famiglia a tutto — family is everything.”

**The New Jersey Six: Family Advocacy Matters**

Mid-decade, Pathfinder Village faced a daunting challenge aimed at the well-being of six founding community members who were originally from New Jersey. Earlier in the decade, the State of New Jersey had started forcing the return of publicly funded residents living in out-of-state programs to New Jersey-based programs.

The State reasoned that New Jersey had adequate in-state programs and that returning residents with developmental disabilities would result in cost savings. While this may have been “the bottom line,” these moves failed to consider the significant human costs of forced relocation. The six Pathfinder residents, all elderly and with health issues, had called Pathfinder their home for decades, had strong ties to friends and their living environment, and had flourished in their Village home.

Pathfinder and its families worked tirelessly for several years with advocates and lawmakers to introduce legislation to stop the transfers and ensure that individual and family choice is the determining factor in all relocations. This landmark legislation was signed by Governor Chris Christie in 2014, permitting Pathfinder’s “New Jersey Six” to remain residents and continue to benefit from all that the Village offers.
Eric sticks with it
Post-It Notes — they’ve reminded us to buy laundry soap, go to appointments, and more since becoming an essential item in the ’80s. One man, Eric Mackiewicz, put them to a novel use to help set out on his path to Pathfinder Village.

In 2012, Pathfinder announced plans for a new program, Otsego Academy, to offer high school grads with Down syndrome and other disabilities a post-secondary option centered in functional academics, job internships, and the social/independence-building aspects of campus life. Eric learned of the Academy through our initial marketing efforts and decided, “I’m in!”

Eric is quiet but gregarious, his own man in making choices. He shares a great sense of humor with friends, coworkers and staff. His eyes flash, in mirth and mischief, as he relates stories or jokes with his close social circle.

To enroll in “OA,” Eric began his own methodical and inspired marketing campaign: Using sticky notes, he wrote out why he wanted to sign up. One reason, one note. These were shared with his mom, Jayne. All together, they made a compelling written case for Eric’s choice of plans.

But one day the notes stopped coming. Had Eric decided against Otsego Academy because of the costs? No — he’d simply run out of notes. Eric and Jayne completed his application, used the notes as supplementary attachments, and requested financial aid to make his education possible.

Eric’s “stick-with-it-ness” and the Post-Its did the trick — he received a scholarship and moved into the Academy’s dorm in November 2014.

As a student, Eric flourished. He and his classmates took courses at Colgate University, enjoyed social programs with peers from Oneonta State, and grew as independent adults through campus life. He fine-tuned his cooking skills making dorm dinners and gained valuable job skills as a food service intern at the NYCM Kitchen, Edmeston.

Two years flew by; the inaugural Academy Class graduated in May 2016. Eric’s NYCM coworkers, friends and family helped celebrate his big day. Afterwards, he returned to his family home, but like his brothers, Dylan and Craig, Eric was ready to be on his own and use the lessons learned at the Academy to live independently at Pathfinder Village.

Through Pathfinder’s new housing options created in the last decade, Eric could take that next big step. In 2018, he and his Academy friends moved into Pathfinder’s first rental apartment at Butler House, where they are responsible for their finances, schedules, belongings, chores and choices. His living arrangement is complemented by a new career too — he has become a key team member at Pathfinder Produce and its Mobile Market, where he helps package weekly food deliveries, researches recipes, and assists customers at the weekly Thursday market.

“My scholarship was surprising and important,” said Eric. “It started me at Pathfinder Village, and helped me get a job and an apartment. I like my life and I am independent.”
Katie takes center stage
With her ruby slippers and matching jacket, Kate Sullivan followed her mom, Brigid, and her sister, Kelly, in speaking before a hushed crowd at the 2019 Golf Invitational banquet. “I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting my dreams. Otsego Academy is the best place to go … we learn a lot of things. Most of all, I would like to thank all the donors to the Scholarship Fund. Thank you.”

Soft-spoken and under five feet tall, Kate has a drive that is disarming. That spark helped her stand out as the youngest of nine siblings, helped her achieve at Pathfinder School, and propelled her studies as an Academy student. It has even ignited a passion for acting — she has stepped into the limelight in nearly 30 local musicals including Annie, Shrek, and even The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

Katie’s spunk “takes center stage” in other ways, like the times she’s fearlessly zoomed down zip lines and when, at 13 years old, she headlined an interview for the Girls On The Run website. She also was one of 29 recipients in the spotlight at the 2008 Yes I Can awards from the Council for Exceptional Children. Sen. Ted Kennedy was inspired by all the recipients in his keynote, “I’m so overwhelmed by these remarkable young people… All you have to do is listen to any of these young people receiving the award…they are going to continue to inspire us.”

As Kate transitioned from Pathfinder School in 2013, she and her parents explored different options for day programs. Being independent and wanting to be on Pathfinder’s campus, she attended Camp Pathfinder for several summers. But it wasn’t enough to meet her goals. After reviewing her choices, Kate wanted something lasting and kept voicing her heart’s desire — Otsego Academy. Her family researched and applied for scholarships, started a GoFundMe, pooled other resources, and finally approached the Foundation’s Scholarship Committee about a financial aid package.

“I liked to go to pre-vocational activities at Pathfinder School (during high school). I wanted to come to Otsego Academy to learn a lot of stuff, like more musical arts and math. And make new friends,” explained Kate. “I wanted to study so I can do theater, and so I can move into my own apartment at Pathfinder.”

“Kate would not have been able to attend Otsego Academy without her scholarship. It has meant so much to her to attend her final year and graduate from the Academy,” said her mom, Brigid. “We are a middle-income family with five adult children with Down syndrome … As a parent, I cannot thank you enough for giving our gal the opportunity of a lifetime to be a part of this magical place called Pathfinder Village.”
### 1977
The Otsego School submits plans to NYS authorities to transition to a new nonprofit, Pathfinder Village. New buildings, new programs and a new lifestyle are planned for 43 residents.

### 1978
Pathfinder secures its first 23-acre site from Lillian Hood. Fundraising for seven homes and the School continues as Village plans are finalized.

### 1979
Resident Nick Dougherty helps at the Village groundbreaking held at the local school due to rain. Construction goes on over the winter.

### 1980
July 29: The residents move into their new homes and settle in to the new rhythms of their community. A sense of belonging takes root.

### 1981
Residents plant 63 donated maple trees around the Village in May to provide shade and add a heightened sense of community.

### 1982
The Bell Choir is started under the direction of Ray Paradise of Oneonta. The first benefit golf tournament is held to raise scholarship funds.

### 1980
The School’s groundbreaking is held in Oct. The four classrooms will offer an enriching environment for K-12 students. Pathfinder’s Phase 1 projects total $1.6 million.

### 1981
Bids are let out in June for the Meeting House and Central Kitchen, which cost $267,679. Residents may now enjoy an inviting space for community events.

### 1982
The Bell Choir is started under the direction of Ray Paradise of Oneonta. The first benefit golf tournament is held to raise scholarship funds.

### 1990
Plans form for the International Conference Center, to share PV’s cumulative knowledge on Down syndrome and to promote professional research.

### 1991
The Sports and Rec Center opens, offering diverse recreation, arts, and social opportunities for the residents.

### 1992
Residents are the stars of the show during performance workshops with Circus Flora of St. Louis, Mo.

### 1993
2-bedroom/bath apartments are built at Hudson and Butternut Houses, meeting family expectations and offering adults more independence.

### 1994
Thunder, a regal Irish Setter, serves as the Village’s first companion dog. Summit IRA opens to extend residential options off-campus.

### 1995
Bassett Healthcare President & CEO William F. Streck, MD, succeeds Founding Chair Dan Raasch on the Board of Directors.

### 1996
The Kennedy Willis Center on Down Syndrome opens in October, and offers workshops, conferences, staff training, and referrals focused on Down syndrome.

### 1997-1990 BUILDING: Parents and board members create a new community in a cornfield to save the best of The Otsego School. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

### 1991-2000 GROWTH: Residents and students flex their wings and find their voices through new supports and opportunities. Step by step, the Village grows.
"... that each life may find meaning."®

1979-1990 BUILDING:
Parents and board members create a new community in a cornfield to save the best of The Otsego School. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

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Residents and students flex their wings and find their voices through new supports and opportunities. Step by step, the Village grows.

1982
The Commons are Oct., providing 4th opportunities residents.
Bakery attracts the Village.

1983
The 8th house, Susquehanna IRA and the first apartment are built.
That fall, the Pathfinder Village Foundation forms to raise awareness and support.

1984
Bassett Hospital opens the Health Clinic at Butler House. This partnership supports the residents' acute care needs and provides a larger space for the community-based practice.

1985
Rotary District 7170 is an important community partner to Pathfinder and hosts an international auction, raising $25,000 for scholarships.

1986
The All Faiths Chapel is dismantled, moved and rebuilt at the Village, offering new opportunities for spiritual fellowship and enrichment.

1987
Pathfinder acquires the 140-acre farm next door. The Farmhouse today serves as a key site for PV’s Adult Day Services.

1988
Chenango House opens and provides a comfortable home to support the needs of aging residents.

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1990
Pathfinder celebrates its 10th anniversary with a September Open House and groundbreaking for the new Sports & Recreation Center.

1991-1996:
Aging experts from OPWDD create a video on aging challenges that features Chenango House as a model residence.
Pathfinder gets ready for Y2K.

1997
Apartments are built at Otsego and Delaware Houses, in keeping with family and resident preferences. Residents take pride in their living spaces.

1997-1998
The residents stage their production of “The Wizard of Oz,” which was enjoyed by the entire town. Written by the residents, the play cast the entire Village in acting roles.

1997-1998
Using large arches from the 1990 National Baseball Hall of Fame Induction, the Pavilion is built for summer concerts, picnics and other gatherings.

1999
The Activity Center is built for fitness and exercise.
Live summer concerts become a mainstay on the PV calendar.

2000
The PBS documentary, “The Visionaries,” hosted by actor Sam Waterston, debuts and attracts a national audience to Pathfinder Village.
Pathfinder Village through four decades:

2000
Marian Mullet's 25 years as chief executive are celebrated at a gala at The Otesaga. Plans begin for a development to the east of the Village.

2001
CEO Paul Landers joins the Village. Rotary Intern Jad Saade of Lebanon has a six month internship with the KWC. American college students also participate in PV internships.

2002
15 area employers are honored at the Donor Appreciation Dinner for providing community jobs for adults with disabilities.

2003
Dr. Edward A. Shafer, a career educator, is named CEO, as Mr. Landers heads to start a new agency in Memphis, Tenn. The KWC supports studies by The IBR on the ties between Down syndrome and dementia.

2004
A Village-wide generator is installed. Cell phones come into use with the new tower on Clock Hill. Daryl Forsythe becomes co-chair of the Golf Tournament.

2005
The Village celebrates its 25th Anniversary with family visits, a dance, and the dedication of a blue-and-gold historic marker on NYS Rt. 80.

2006
Pathfinder remains safe during June floods in Otsego Co. PV athletes Lisa Barnhart and Nancy Gordon attend the SO USA Games, Iowa.

2007
Two bedrooms are built, and a sprinkler system is installed at Summit House for enhanced safety for aging residents.

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2010
Pathfinder redesigns its website to reach new audiences. Paul Landers is featured on the national broadcast of Summerall Success Stories on FOX News.

2011
Pathfinder becomes a community hub through new events, cross-system collaborations, short-term services and regional engagement.

2012
Grant's Field opens and brings the community to PV. Major IT upgrades are made with a Scriven Foundation Grant. The Button Greenhouse & Vocational Center open at The Commons.

2013
The Pathfinder Produce market opens to provide neighbors with fresh foods and offers job skills training. The “Utica Study” documents the value of our community model.

2014
Pathfinder's post-secondary program, Otsego Academy, opens to young adults with disabilities seeking more independence, academic classes, internships and social engagement.

2015
The Streck Community Health Center opens for everyone. PV shifts to digital health records; enhanced staff training is offered for all departments.

2016
The J. Couper Lord Family announces an unrestricted $1.2 million gift to PV. The new Adult Day program offers more service options for area adults with disabilities.

2017
The KWC hosts the Workforce Summit to showcase employment trends in Human Services. PV partners with Lifeplan CCO for service coordination.

Pathfinder Village through four decades:

2001-2010 TRANSFORMATION Village leaders focus on stewardship, new services, and outreach as they support the diverse needs of individuals and families.

2011-2020 REIMAGINED Pathfinder becomes a community hub through new events, cross-system collaborations, short-term services and regional engagement.
2007
The Hand Bell Choir and Golf Tournament mark their 25th anniversaries. Residents/students expand their horizons as community volunteers.

2008
Pathfinder’s Family Weekend offers sibling workshops and the dedication of the totally renovated Meeting House.

2009
Dr. Edward Shafer retires; Paul Landers returns as CEO. Pathfinder Village celebrates its 30th anniversary with the announcement of the $1 million Hamilton Endowment in support of Aging Services and Supports.

2011
Gilbert House is built; the Wharton House expansion is completed. Casey’s Sports Court is built to offer new options for fun. Pathfinder buys the Turner property to complete an 80-acre buffer around the campus.

2012
Former CEO Edward Shafer and the Shafer Family dedicate the new Day Treatment Addition at Larsen House in honor of Mary A. Shafer.

2008
Through a DASNY grant gained with the help of Sen. Jim Seward, new additions are built at Delaware and Hudson Houses to support residents with aging needs and independence goals.

2009
The Susquehanna Apartment is renovated; the Unadilla Suite is built. The Memorial Garden is built. The Village starts its Facebook Page.

2011
Camp Pathfinder opens to offer young adults short-term Village stays for making friends and gaining independence. The program is successful and has many returning campers each summer.

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Innovation in Aging
Over the past few decades, improved diagnostics and medical advances have helped increase longevity in people with Down syndrome. Longer life spans are, of course, an amazing development. Children born today with Down syndrome can look forward to lives filled with many opportunities — to live, learn, work, be challenged, and thrive.

However, as the path of life lengthens, health risks become more common. In some ways, the challenges faced by Village residents are similar to those of the general aging population. Many older adults prefer to age in place, enjoying the comfort of their own homes and delaying nursing home care for as long as possible. At Pathfinder Village, we use the phrase “aging in progression” as an enhancement to aging in place — one that nearly eliminates the need for nursing home placements.

A DECADE OF AGING IN PROGRESSION

The aging-in-progression strategy is well underway at Chenango House, an accessible ranch-style campus home that was built in 1989 to support medically fragile and aging residents. Chenango’s original goal was to support aging in place until a person required more intensive nursing home care.

Fast forward to 2010: With improved medical care for everyone, residents routinely were living past age 40. Village leaders realized that Chenango House needed major updates to meet the more extensive daily care and service needs of those experiencing dementia, mobility loss, and other age-related conditions. At its 30th anniversary celebration, Pathfinder visionaries Jane Hamilton Warriner and Ed Klees announced their intentions to support aging Pathfinder residents through the new $1 million Jane Davey Hamilton Endowment. The goal of the fund is to support system-wide improvements that allow residents to age in progression within their Pathfinder community.

As plans evolved in 2012 to renovate Chenango, staff received a call from Lance Bendann of Baltimore. He wished to make a gift in support of Village residents to honor his late wife, Anne, an interior decorator and human rights advocate who had a special affinity for people with Down syndrome. Through the Bendanns’ gift, along with funding from the Gladys Brooks Foundation and other donors, Chenango was transformed to better support individuals’ daily care.
Improvements included:

- The new 580-sq.-ft. Anne’s Room, for ongoing individualized OT/PT and daily support activities.
- New home lighting and safety rails for easier navigation.
- A new private medication administration area.
- Upgraded fire suppression and alarm systems.
- Fully renovated ADA-compliant bathrooms and lift equipment.
- New décor, an updated kitchen, and new flooring to better assist with cleaning and infection control.
- Single-occupancy bedrooms for privacy.

Along with $350,000 in upgrades completed in 2014, programmatic improvements were made with increased staffing ratios, push-in day habilitative services, and wheelchair vans for community outings. Medical services were enhanced through case monitoring by the Village’s medical director, David Haswell, M.D. of Bassett Healthcare, who works closely with Pathfinder’s team of RNs, LPNs, and nursing assistants. Close relationships have been formed with area palliative and hospice agencies, and specialized training is regularly provided to direct care staff, who offer loving, constant supports to help residents and families through end-of-life transitions.
AGING AND DEMENTIA

As people with Down syndrome age, developing Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia becomes more likely. According to the Alzheimer’s Association and the National Down Syndrome Society, 30% of people with Down syndrome in their 50s have Alzheimer’s dementia, a figure that increases to 50% by their 60s.

Dementia poses a particular challenge as adults with Down syndrome often will not self-report memory loss. At Pathfinder Village, we’ve faced these challenges over the past decade by continuing to grow a community that has the right balance of supports and independence. By cultivating community, and providing many opportunities for social and intellectual engagement, we can better identify the early stages of dementia, and offer services that keep our residents active in the mix of our Village life.

And, through the Kennedy Willis Center, we have developed innovative practices, programs and services as part of our Aging Initiative, focusing on education and outreach, health and wellness, the physical environment, program enhancements, aging research, early detection and screening, and workforce training.

Dementia impacts more than just the diagnosed individual. It affects families and the entire community. Recently, we have been able to better appreciate the full impact of dementia by utilizing the Second Wind Dreams’ Virtual Dementia Tour.™ Through sensory-adaptive tools and instructions, evidence-based VDT training encourages empathy and accommodation toward those with dementia.

“I have a new perspective on what people with dementia experience constantly, from feeling lost and confused to an inability to filter out noises and distractions,” said Pathfinder staff member Monica Clark. “And knowing more about Alzheimer’s memory loss—it is understandable when a person you know may not recognize you, as their memories are now from earlier times.”

Because of early onset Alzheimer's, my son needs support. Pathfinder Village stepped up to the plate and is doing a great job, both medically and socially.

Pathfinder Village Parent
COMMUNITY-BASED CARE FOR ALL

Area residents and workers have long valued convenient healthcare services to meet their families’ needs; likewise, Pathfinder Village has relied on community-based health services. The Village supported one of Bassett Healthcare's first community-based clinics in the early 1980s. However, it became apparent to Village leaders that the clinic operated at Butler House, a repurposed Victorian-era home, was insufficient to meet growing patient and resident needs and modern care standards.

In 2013, planning and fundraising began to build a 3,800-sq.-ft. modern clinic, effectively doubling the former clinic’s size. The new health clinic would also enhance medical operations and better ensure patient privacy. Pathfinder families, business partners, and community stakeholders quickly supported the proposal to gain partial state funding for construction through the Empire State Development Corporation. Other key donors, such as the NYCM Foundation, the Nicolais family, and the C.J. Heilig Foundation, also backed the project, which promised to transform local healthcare.

With a community groundbreaking ceremony in May 2015 and a formal dedication in November, the new $1.5 million facility was named after William F. Streck, M.D., the longtime chair of Pathfinder’s Board of Directors and the past president and CEO of Bassett Healthcare Network.

The health center features four exam rooms, including a bariatric exam room, technical lab facilities, private offices for medical personnel, a nursing station, welcoming registration and waiting areas, and updated equipment to better serve patients’ needs.

For area residents, the Streck Health Center has made it easier to make appointments and has enhanced the quality of care. The new, larger clinic has allowed Village residents’ ongoing healthcare needs to be met without additional travel to other Bassett clinics. It has streamlined appointments and facilitated closer working relationships among Pathfinder’s nursing staff and their colleagues throughout the Bassett Healthcare Network.

Additionally, residents may now access regular behavioral health services through an on-site clinic with Bassett psychiatrist Richard A. Bennett, M.D., Ph.D.; the clinic provides continuity of care and an interdepartmental, holistic approach to mental health.
Aging in Community: A Sibling's Story

My experience with Pathfinder Village goes back many years; I had a vested interest as my brother had Down syndrome and I had trained as a Special Educator and worked in facilities in Connecticut before moving to New York.

So how did this small, upstate New York area progress in integrating residents into community programs and life? For the last 40 years I witnessed the changes implemented at Pathfinder to address the commitment that was made for broadening experiences for community members. The world changed for those with disabilities and Pathfinder met those changes, advancing their services to bring their residents into the community and the community into Pathfinder.

Surely Pathfinder Village creates a lovely country residential setting. However it is more than that. It is a diverse community offering the choice and opportunity for everyone who is there to be the best that they can be. To define community is important: It is not a place, a building or an organization. Community is both a feeling and a set of relationships. Members of a community have a sense of trust, safety and caring for each other. It’s a sense of belonging that springs from feeling that other people accept you despite, not because of, who you are. For those who call Pathfinder home and for those who work there, there is a renewed sense of commitment to bringing neighbors and neighborhoods together.

Back to my story: My brother, Richard, lived at home for 50 years with our family. The onset of dementia required us to seek a safe environment for his care that would be the most home-like. His health required continued assisted care as his disease progressed. We turned to Pathfinder and received years of support and care, not only for him but for our entire family as well. Visits were always welcomed; we forged relationships with other members of "his" house, staff and the entire community — bonds that extended past his death and that will always be cherished. Richard's memorial service was held at Pathfinder’s chapel. A full gathering of family, friends, and residents celebrated a life lived within this exceptional, caring community.

Richard always felt that he had two families: his birth family and his Pathfinder family. Both were equally important and dedicated to him forever.

The supportive atmosphere at Pathfinder Village allows for all who go there to find the best there is for themselves. The message of Pathfinder, "that each life may find meaning," holds true for all.

Margaret Savoie
Cooperstown, New York
February 2020
Investments in the Future
At Pathfinder Village, our strategic planning is continuous planning, always forging forward on a path to our shared community goals. Over the past decade, we’ve examined and responded to changes, making investments in our people, our services, and our physical footprint.

These investments serve as the architecture that reinforces the Village, growing strength for the known and unforeseen challenges, aligning with our renewed vision of building community, one person at a time.

A STRONG AND SKILLED WORKFORCE
From enhanced training to improved benefits, Pathfinder Village invests in its people. We’ve developed a strong workforce that supports our mission and vision—a strategic reserve of human capital that helps us face challenges, including the recent pandemic.

EXPERTISE
Beyond investing in our staff and leadership, the Village has sought expertise from research programs and progressive leaders in the intellectual and developmental disabilities field (I/DD). Over the past decade, we have implemented a unique Aging Support Model in partnership with Thomas Jefferson University’s Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health, and we’ve worked with the National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices to develop trainings and workshops that support Best Practices in our field.
FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Following disciplined financial strategies that began over 40 years ago, Pathfinder has expertly managed its operational funds, endowments and broadened its revenue sources with new programs, grants, and planned giving opportunities.

An unrestricted $1 million gift from the Estate of J. Couper Lord Jr., announced by his family in 2016, kickstarted the formation of the Pathfinder Visionaries, our legacy society.

The Visionaries campaign invites stakeholders and donors to help diversify Village support through estate and deferred gifts for scholarships, services, infrastructure investments and workforce development. These gifts will help new generations of families realize fulfillment through the Pathfinder community.

BOARD AND STAFF LEADERSHIP

From the outset, Pathfinder Village has been privileged to attract and retain exceptional Board volunteers with relevant personal and professional experiences that provide our community with steady guidance and leadership.

Over the past decade, Pathfinder has maintained a strong senior leadership team, representing decades of combined experience in nonprofit administration and the I/DD field. The average tenure of leadership team members is 20 years’ service to the Village.
SOCIAL CAPITAL AND TECH SUPPORT
This past decade has also seen the continued expansion of social media and information technology. Pathfinder invested in community partnerships and extended its outreach through social media posts, website improvements, and enhanced marketing, all to engage diverse audiences and increase awareness of the Village. With the help of our marketing partner, Vibrant Brands of Latham, our exchanges with new families and the greater disabilities community have grown, and we’ve become more responsive individuals’ needs and interests.

The Village’s technology infrastructure is continually updated through careful management with our IT partner, Directive of Oneonta. Knowing how vital digital communications and records are in human services, our efforts have been focused in strong cyber security, safe data storage, and disaster recovery plans. With grant support, record-keeping and service documentation have transitioned from paper forms to a digital platform. Our entire technology infrastructure was significantly upgraded through a major grant from The Scriven Foundation, which provided funds for enhanced video capabilities, new servers and software, fiber optic cabling and networking equipment.

ENDOWMENT GROWTH OVER A DECADE
Pathfinder’s endowment funds support and subsidize all areas of Village operations. Without these resources, we would not be able to sustain our quality programs, nor would we be able to recruit, develop, and retain quality staff or properly maintain our beautiful campus. The Boards’ Finance Committee has developed sound policies and works closely with Financial Managers to maximize Pathfinder’s investments.
Infrastructure and Program Improvements

Guiding Pathfinder Village’s trajectory means more than raising funds and managing investments; it requires the prudent use of resources to ensure facilities are maintained and modernized. Over the past decade, $7.6 million was invested in our campus and in community acquisitions. Some of these major infrastructure investments included:

- Additions and renovations at the Village Commons (vocational room, coolers, greenhouse, art room and bakery)
- Three high tunnel hoop houses to support the Pathfinder Produce market
- Program Office renovations and Wiswell Nursing Wing Addition
- Chenango House expansion and renovations
- Building Gilbert House, a new Individualized Residential Alternative home
- A four-bedroom addition at Wharton House
- A bedroom and bathroom addition at Mohawk House
• Building the William F. Streck Health Center to enhance community healthcare
• Installing Grant’s Field, our new community soccer field
• Creating the Pathfinder Community Walking Trails, open to the public
• Butler House renovations to support the Self-Direction program
• Renovations of The Farmhouse for our Adult Day Services program
• The purchase and renovation of Seneca House IRA, West Burlington
• The purchase and renovation of Saranac House IRA, Edmeston
• The purchase and renovation of our Mill Creek Adult Day Service hub, a former church in the hamlet
• Building Casey’s Court, a new outdoor sport court
• Installing a new firepit through Colin Fadale’s Eagle Scout Project
• Larsen House renovations to support the Adult Day Health program
Environmental Quality

Our four decades of providing services to individuals with disabilities have taught us that maintaining welcoming homes, offices, program spaces and grounds supports individuals’ well-being and helps attract new stakeholders to our community. Through regular and consistent upgrades and maintenance, we help develop individuals’ sense of community and pride. Our work over the past decade has included:

- Kitchen remodels, floor replacements and bathroom upgrades at residences
- Deck and ramp upgrades for improved accessibility
- Landscaping and exterior lighting upgrades
- Roadway and parking area repaving
- New windows and exterior doors in all campus homes
- Roof replacements for six Village buildings
- Fire suppression systems installed in all campus homes
- New HVAC equipment at the Sports and Recreation Center
- New boilers in the original nine campus homes
- Routine painting and repairs
- New lighting and a new roof at the Sports and Recreation Center
- A new electrical transformer and an upgraded switch for the campus-wide generator
- A new cooler installation for Pathfinder Produce
- Vehicle fleet additions and maintenance
- New fiber optic cabling throughout the campus for fast, reliable internet and video conferencing capabilities
- The complete renovation of the Pathfinder Pavilion
- Initial Newton Farmhouse and storage barn renovations
FUTURE PROJECTS

Over the next three years, Pathfinder Village has several exciting new projects lined up, including additional renovations and program enhancements:

• The Education & Enrichment Center Expansion at Pathfinder School, which will incorporate a new, inclusive pre-school program
• Upgrades and improvements to the Meeting House staff dining area, to be named "Ted’s Pocket" in memory of former resident and Food Services staff member Ted Taws
• Additional Village Commons and Vocational Center renovations in support of employment training
• A new lighted walkway to link to the west campus, including Gilbert, Butler and Summit Houses
• Renovation of the original Newton Farm barn and additional upgrades to the Farmhouse
• A study for an inclusive cohousing development
Put to the test, Community thrives
We have much to celebrate about Pathfinder Village’s growth and many accomplishments over the past decade. Still, it’s difficult to discuss anything without referencing the far-ranging impacts of the 2020 pandemic. COVID-19 still looms large for the Village, area communities, and for other nonprofits. Our core values guided our response throughout the year; through 2020’s challenges, Pathfinder Village witnessed the best of community-focused and person-centered planning, with fewer transitions and less worry for our residents and their families. We saw the adaptability and flexibility of residential villages in action.

We were prepared for the pandemic because of the cornerstone of community that was set on this campus 40 years ago and through the Village’s planned growth. Of course, our resilience stemmed from our supporters. Continued donations, major gifts, and revenue from our past fundraising events reinforced the Village, so that in the face of an unprecedented health crisis and economic downturn, we could continue to pursue our mission and vision.

OUR PANDEMIC RESPONSE
The core strengths of Pathfinder Village—people, family, and community—framed our pandemic response. Pathfinder followed a comprehensive battery of conservative protocols that emphasized stringent cleaning, strict physical distancing, and restricted campus access. But, while the world shut down, we continued to provide full supports to residents and adopted a gradual reopening strategy to keep individuals and staff healthy.

The Village has changed during the pandemic to ensure our vulnerable community’s safety, but like other neighborhoods and villages in 2020, our sense of community has persevered.

CANCELLATIONS STRAINED RESOURCES
While past fundraising helped us weather today’s challenges, the pandemic also stifled significant sources of revenue, canceling our Splash Path 5k, the Chobani Tennis Classics, and the Pathfinder Village-Baseball Hall of Fame Golf Invitational. In 2019, these events alone raised $107,000 in support of scholarships, the Mobile Produce Market, and more.

Hopefully, each event will return in 2021, but this is part of the uncertainty that Pathfinder Village faces. More than ever, the changing landscape highlights the continued need for sustained giving and pledged support. If you missed connecting with Pathfinder Village in 2020, please consider making a special gift to recognize our 40 years of service. Your donations help us foster a strong and impactful community, where the lives of many are enhanced through innovative programs, person-centered supports, and a true sense of togetherness.
This beautiful quilt was designed by Director of Enrichment Services Paula Schaeffer and sewn by Fly Creek quilters Gail Olin, Dora Cooke, Dayle Evans, Toni Gray, and Sally Bush.