DEAR FRIENDS,

This past year has represented a turning point for Walker—a culmination of years of planning for clinical and educational practice and program improvements that have improved our ability to meet the growing and changing needs for our services. With guidance from a committed and visionary Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team, and the professionalism of our truly extraordinary staff, Walker has responded to those changing needs with wholehearted insight and dedication. As a result, we have broadened and deepened our impact throughout the community.

We are also making significant investments in our staff and resources. We recognize that our reputation for excellence is reliant on our outstanding people and programs. We are fully aware that in order to meet the growing and increasingly complex needs of the children and families we serve, Walker must continue to attract and retain the very best workforce it can, and equip it with the resources necessary to make a difference in the lives of the children with whom they work.

In this 2018 Annual Report, you will see glimpses of the investments we have been making, and I hope you will recognize the potential those investments have to enhance our impact. We are grateful to each and every one of our supporters for the myriad ways in which they help us transform the lives of the children we serve. We are excited for the year to come, and look forward to your continued interest and involvement.

With very best wishes,

Jake Layton
Chair, Walker Board of Directors

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ABOUT WALKER

Founded in 1961, Walker is a leading non-profit that provides intensive, highly specialized therapeutic and academic services for children, youth, and families facing complex mental health, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges.

In addition to offering services on campuses in Needham and Watertown, Walker provides community-based programs which include clinical services, parent education and youth development programs, and professional seminars and consultations. Walker’s programs positively impact thousands of children, youth, and families each year throughout Greater Boston, the North and South Shore, and Central Massachusetts.

MISSION

Walker transforms the lives of children and youth who are facing complex emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges by partnering with these children and youth, their families, and communities to nurture hope, build strengths, and develop lifelong skills.

VISION

All children will thrive in their family, school, and community.
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES:
FAMILY VOICE/FAMILY CHOICE

Walker Community Counseling (WCC) provides outpatient therapy for individuals, couples, and families. In addition, WCC offers psychiatry for clients seen through our clinic. Clinical services are provided on our Needham campus, in family homes, and in the community. Over the past two years, the number of clients served through our community counseling program has increased exponentially.

Walker has provided behavioral health services through the Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) since January 2017. CBHI ensures that youth enrolled in MassHealth have access to comprehensive, coordinated behavioral health services in their communities. Walker’s Therapeutic Mentoring and In-Home Therapy are CBHI services that enable youth who have significant social-emotional challenges to safely stay at home and thrive in their communities. These services are effective in large part because of our staff’s commitment to addressing the unique strengths, needs, and goals of each youth and family. This past year, we expanded our staffing in order to meet the growing number of requests for CBHI services. In FY18, Walker’s CBHI staff provided Therapeutic Mentoring and In-Home Therapy to 62 families, quadrupling the number of families served the previous year.

Walker’s Therapeutic After School Program is located on our Watertown campus and serves youth ages 6–13 who require more support and structure than a typical after school program. The program offers therapeutic groups and activities to assist with peer relationships, self-esteem, social skills, and identifying and expressing emotions.

Walker’s Community-Based Acute Treatment (CBAT) is a short-term emergency stabilization and support program for children ages 3– to 13-years-old who are actively experiencing severe emotional, behavioral, and/or psychiatric crises. The program offers an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization that is often more clinically appropriate and places greater emphasis on family work and community reintegration. While a child is enrolled in the program, the CBAT team equips families with the resources they need to recognize and support their child’s progress.

IN FISCAL YEAR 2018, THE CBHI TEAM QUADRUPLED THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES THEY SERVED
Through the Walker Trieschman Institute, Walker has become increasingly known for our work to advance permanency for children and youth in out-of-home care. For the past couple of years, we have convened a professional advisory council (PAC) focused on advancing policies and practices that promote legal permanency for children and youth in Massachusetts. The PAC comprises state leaders from child welfare, children’s behavioral health, juvenile justice, and the courts, as well as provider and parent representatives. In June 2018, the PAC hosted a permanency summit at Walker. The summit, designed to deepen and expand collaborative efforts to advance permanency, was attended by over 100 participants from state agencies and provider organizations seeking to connect more deeply within and across the teams in attendance. Teams came together to share strategies that promote permanency, identify challenges that impede permanency efforts, brainstorm solutions to these challenges, and develop a plan of action to build on and implement lessons learned during the summit.

In late June, Walker hosted another permanency event of note: a kickoff training for the Caring Together Permanency Learning Community, a permanency change project funded by the Department of Mental Health in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families. Walker’s role in the learning community is to serve as one of two lead organizations matched with other providers interested in changing their culture and practice to be more permanency-driven. Walker’s cohort includes 6 providers in the MetroBoston and Northeast areas.
In 2018, we broke ground on our new multipurpose building, an exciting milestone that marks the beginning of a five-year plan to ensure that the living and learning spaces on our Needham campus support the highest levels of program quality. The new building is intentionally flexible—it can be used as a gym, a meeting space, an event space, and more!

We have also begun a series of improvements to ensure that our classrooms and residential spaces are accessible, state of the art and able to accommodate a range of child and family needs. Very soon, all classrooms will be in a single building, and the learning spaces will fit into a coherent classroom structure. We are also renovating the residential area to ensure that each child has their own room, and that families have comfortable spaces in which to connect: one space where families can spend time and share meals in a safe, private, staff-supported environment; and another that is more recreational in nature, with areas for games and entertainment.

All of these campus improvement efforts support our ongoing commitment to expanding and improving the quality of our programs. They are tangible proof of the investments we continue to make in order to deliver innovations in child and family services. And we’re just getting started...stay tuned!
DIFFERENT KINDS OF HURT: ISAAC’S STORY

Walker collaborated with the Department of Mental Health, Express Yourself, and FableVision Studios to produce Different Kinds of Hurt: Isaac’s Story, an animated film and storybook for elementary and middle school children that show how a conversation between two classmates can have a life-long effect.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14; three-quarters by age 24. Early intervention and treatment are vital for recovery, but stigma is one of the biggest barriers to seeking help. There are often long delays between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.

Different Kinds of Hurt: Isaac’s Story examines the parallels between mental health and physical health. The two main characters, Isaac and Mia, have recently experienced hospitalizations - one for a mental health condition and one for a broken leg - and through conversation, they learn that their experiences are similar in many ways. The film and storybook are at the core of a soon-to-be launched public education campaign targeted at elementary and middle school children, educators, and families.

Thanks to our incredible committee members, sponsors, players, and volunteers, Walker’s 28th Annual Fore the Children Golf Tournament raised more than $145,000 in support of children who deserve a brighter future!
KIDS BEING KIDS.
FAMILIES BEING FAMILIES.

We firmly believe in the value of children and families having typical experiences… whether that’s regular Saturday soccer games or an overnight stay at a hotel. With an in-depth understanding of each child and family’s needs and interests, we help create those typical experiences. In FY 2018 that included karate, swimming, soccer, basketball, singing…all of which took place in surrounding communities.

We also hosted two signature experiences—an overnight trip to a hotel/water park and a camping trip in New Hampshire. The grant-funded water park trip allowed 150 family members to enjoy being together, to see their children play with friends, and to connect with other families in a family-oriented, staff-supported environment. The post-Labor Day camping trip is a “true camp experience”… outdoor living in the middle of Lake Winnipesaukee! It all adds up to a little bit of dirt, a few burnt marshmallows, screech owls, fireside stories, and a whole lot of fun! //

Congratulations to our winners:
First Place Gross: Bob Ernst, Brian Nadler, Jeff Piltch, and Rich Piltch
First Place Net: Jay Hirsh, Matt Malatesta, Brad Spencer, and Pat Stevens
Second Place Net: Mike Comtois, Chris Keeley, Jeff Shute, and Gene Takahashi

And many thanks to our FY18 Golf Committee:
Mike McArdle and AJ Robichaud, Chairs Robert Lavelle, Rodney Lukowski, Colin Ryan, Deke Schultze, Paul Shorthose, Jeff Shute, Matthew Siciliano, Pete Simone
WALKER BEACON SCHOOL: CREATING AND EXPANDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

At the Walker Beacon School, students can find new and broader learning opportunities, on and off campus. The teaching team has expanded their use of technology to support students’ learning experience—in fact, every classroom now has a cart of 10 brand new Chromebooks. When students have access to a computer in every one of their classes, not only are their learning needs better supported (for instance with use of speech to text), they can develop the research and presentation skills necessary for success in today’s evolving workplace. The increased presence of computers also creates opportunity for more electives, including digital photography and filmmaking.

At this year’s Walker Beacon day of service, students catalogued books at a non-profit bookstore, and volunteered at the local senior center and food pantry. We also have a large number of students who are dual enrolled at Mass Bay Community College or Middlesex Community College for college credit.

WHEN STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A COMPUTER IN EVERY ONE OF THEIR CLASSES, NOT ONLY ARE THEIR LEARNING NEEDS BETTER SUPPORTED, THEY CAN DEVELOP THE RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS IN TODAY’S EVOLVING WORKPLACE.
This year, ten amazing individuals braved the cold, the rain, and the hills of the 122nd Boston Marathon on behalf of Walker. We are honored to have been selected to participate in the 2018 John Hancock Marathon Non-Profit Program and we are incredibly proud of our runners, who raised more than $185,000 to support Walker’s programs.

Congratulations to Team Walker and thank you to everyone who cheered them on along the way!
We are incredibly grateful to our Gala Committee, sponsors, supporters, and volunteers who helped raise $415,000 to benefit children facing significant emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges... without these incredible individuals this event would not be possible. Master of Ceremonies Trenni Kusnierek of NBC Sports Boston led a delightful evening complete with spectacular live and silent auctions, a gourmet dinner, and entertainment by the incredibly talented dance band Soul of Boston. Our heartfelt congratulations to Bank of America, recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Community Leadership Award.

Thank you to our amazing 2018 Gala Committee and Auction Volunteer Committee:

Shimna Sameer, Chair
Megan Burns
Chrissy Cassa
Jennifer DeSisto
John DeSisto
Valerie K. Frias
Jack Harrington
Laurel Lyle
Wendy Paul
Jessica Clain
Amy Johnson
Amanda LaFave
Jaime Gutowski

THE GALA RAISED
$415,000
TO BENEFIT CHILDREN FACING
SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL,
BEHAVIORAL, AND LEARNING
CHALLENGES
This year, over 200 volunteers donated over 1500 hours… planning and participating in a wide variety of events and activities.

Walker is proud to have participated in TripAdvisor’s Global Volunteer Day, where twenty-six TripAdvisor employees volunteered their time and talents to help clear garden beds, organize our bikes and storage sheds, and create amazing decorations for our graduation day events!

Thank you to Brown & Brown of Massachusetts! From participating as guest “scientists” at the Walker School Science fair and gift wrapping at our annual holiday toy drive, to serving on our Gala Auction Committee, more than 15 volunteers from Brown & Brown have helped to make a difference in the lives of children and families this year.

Thank you to NESN Connects! Through their dedicated partnership, NESN volunteers have made a tremendous impact at our annual “Turkey Bowl” flag football game and our Lives in Bloom Gala!

We are incredibly grateful for the support of our dedicated, energetic, and caring volunteers.
FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2018

WALKER REVENUE BY SOURCE

- Tuition Reimbursement: $10,315,216
- Department of Children & Families: $6,066,535
- Third Party Billing: $3,073,298
- Donor Contributions: $1,303,087
- Department of Mental Health: $819,925
- Contracts with Local Education Agencies: $579,500
- Grant Revenue-Programs: $305,630
- Private Clients: $209,455
- Other Revenue: $323,372
- Total Revenue: $22,996,018

WALKER EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

- The Walker School: 41%
- Walker Beacon School: 4%
- Needham Residential Programs: 14%
- Community-Based Acute Treatment/Group Home: 37%
- Walker Trieschman Institute: 19%
- Walker Community Counseling: 13%

WALKER REVENUE BY PROGRAM

- The Walker School: 21%
- Walker Beacon School: 20%
- Needham Residential Programs: 14%
- Community-Based Acute Treatment/Group Home: 37%
- Walker Trieschman Institute: 4%
- Walker Community Counseling: 4%
LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gene Takahashi, Ph.D., LICSW, MBA
President & CEO

Barbara Bjornson, CPA, MBA
Vice President of Finance

Edie Janas
Vice President of Program Operations

Scott M. Preston, Ph.D.
Vice President of Performance Improvement

Roberta Goldman-Wilkinson
Vice President of Human Resources

WALKER LEADERSHIP EMERITI

Richard W. Small, Ph.D.
Executive Director Emeritus

Nancy C. Lincoln
Beacon High School Director Emerita

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Wendy W. Paul, MSHA
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Shimna Sameer
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Steven M. Tannenbaum

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J. Linzee Coolidge
David White
Anne A. Wolf

Current Board of Directors and Leadership Team as of October 15, 2018