



Because
of *you*

Because of You, the Impossible Becomes Possible

Every day, we work with families of children with disabilities who face challenges that can feel overwhelming. Whether it's navigating specialized therapies, securing adaptive equipment, or finding educational and recreational opportunities that match their needs and strengths, the barriers are real. Too often these opportunities come with a price tag that insurance doesn't cover and that families can't afford on their own.

But because of you, the impossible becomes possible.

Your generosity removes barriers and turns what once felt out of reach into real, life-changing opportunities.

For many families, the Family Fund isn't just a grant—it's a lifeline. As one parent shared:

"When my husband was laid off and we lost our health insurance, continuing my child's occupational therapy felt impossible. Thanks to the Family Fund, she was able to keep her weekly sessions, making a huge difference in her motor skills, emotional regulation, and self-confidence. We are incredibly grateful. This support gave our family a lifeline during an overwhelming time."

That's what the Family Fund is all about.

Since its founding in 2017, you have helped raise more than \$382,000 for children with disabilities in our community. In 2025 alone, you helped provide \$113,600 to 96 families across Maryland. These numbers represent real children, real families, and real outcomes.

Because the Family Fund is 100% donor-funded, every therapy session, every adaptive device, and every breakthrough you'll read about in this report happened because of you.

The children thank you. Their parents thank you. And we thank you—for your incredible generosity and your belief in what's possible.

With deepest gratitude,



Sara Pease,
Assistant Director of Children, Youth & Their Families



Caroline Slobodzian,
Director of Development



The Family Fund: Your Generosity at Work

Thanks to your generous support in **2025**:

96

families were supported

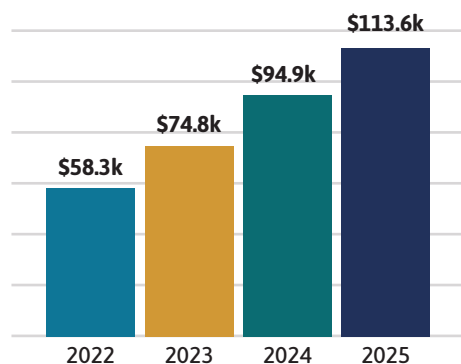
\$113,600

in grants were distributed

\$382,000+

has been granted since its founding

Grants Given Over the Last Four Years



These are real children, real families, and real outcomes.

About The Family Fund

Created in 2017, the Family Fund breaks down financial barriers so children with disabilities can access life-changing resources. From specialized therapies and equipment to camps, educational tools, and recreational opportunities, the Family Fund supports needs that insurance doesn't cover—helping children learn, grow, and thrive.

The Family Fund is 100% donor-funded and continues to grow every year because of people like you, who believe every child deserves access to opportunity—regardless of what insurance covers or what a family can afford.



What You Supported

We received nearly 150 applications in 2025, some of the top requests included:



Specialized Therapy:

Supporting targeted therapies that help children develop or refine skills, build independence, and gain confidence.



Adaptive Camps:

Giving kids the chance to explore, play, and learn in camps designed to meet their needs—where they can grow socially, emotionally, and physically.



Riding Therapy:

Providing equine-assisted therapy that combines the joy of horseback riding with targeted support for development, balance, and emotional well-being.



Specialized Equipment:

Supplying adaptive technology, mobility aids, and other essential tools that help children move, learn, and engage with the world around them.



Tanner is Interacting More with His Family

For Tanner, communication was always a challenge. He doesn't use words to communicate, and his family struggled to find a therapy that both engaged him and helped him express himself.

That changed when Tanner began music therapy. With support from the Family Fund, he was able to attend weekly sessions for the first time. Consistency made all the difference. In a structured, enjoyable environment, Tanner explored new ways to connect through rhythm, sound, and movement.

Within just six sessions, Tanner is already using instruments like drums and bells to have back-and-forth interactions. Simple hand gestures evolved into meaningful exchanges, and the confidence he gained in music therapy carried over into his other therapies. At home, his family joins him in rhythm exercises, watching him light up as he mirrors the patterns and builds new communication skills.

The sessions have become more than just therapy—they're a source of joy and connection for the whole family. "We jump to be the one to take him to the session even though it's in the middle of the workday, it's also relaxing for us to

“*The impact The Family Fund has had on our family has been incredible. We were able to send Tanner to Music Therapy once a week and watch him thrive in his sessions and at home, gaining new communication skills and confidence in himself.*”

sit and listen to their music and the therapist sing, knowing he's learning and enjoying his time there.”

Because of you, Tanner is learning to connect in new ways, building confidence, and bringing joy to those around him. “We cannot thank the donors enough. Because of you, Tanner is thriving, building communication skills, and bringing joy to our entire family.”

Rowan is Breaking Down Communication Barriers

“What may feel like a simple donation to you has been life-changing for our family. It lifted the financial burden of care, eased our stress, and most importantly, opened new doors for Rowan to connect with the world around her.”

Raising a child with speech delays often comes with unexpected financial pressures. Private speech therapy sessions can cost hundreds of dollars each month, and insurance coverage often falls short of what children need. For Rowan's family, the out-of-pocket expenses for consistent, high-quality therapy would have been a financial burden, forcing them to choose between this essential service and other financial responsibilities.

With a grant from the Family Fund, Rowan's family was able to access specialized speech therapy with private sessions and communication tools specifically tailored to her needs, allowing Rowan to practice and strengthen her communication skills consistently in a supportive environment.

With regular access to therapy, Rowan developed clearer articulation, an expanded vocabulary, and greater ability to form complete sentences. She can now express her needs, emotions, and thoughts more effectively than ever before. With her growing language skills, Rowan is less frustrated, better able to regulate her emotions, and more confident engaging with others.

"There are no words strong enough to express how grateful we are for the hope and opportunity you've provided," her family shared. "Though we may never know your names, please know your impact is deeply felt and forever appreciated."



Ellie is Bursting with Confidence After Summer Tutoring

“Only 2 days into the school year and bursting with excitement, which I have not seen since the pandemic, and those were her best school years. She is oozing confidence.”

Ellie is a bright and determined 13-year-old who loves to learn. She works hard to keep up with her studies so she can stay in the same classrooms with her peers. But like many students, she struggles in certain subjects like reading and math. While her school district offered Extended School Year (ESY) services, the program was limited, and her parents noticed that Ellie wasn't reaching her full potential.

Private tutoring was the clear answer—but the expense was substantial. Earlier in the year, Ellie experienced a serious hospitalization, adding to the family's medical bills and stress. Her parents worried that without additional support, she might fall further behind academically.

With support from the Family Fund, Ellie was able to attend three private tutoring sessions each week over the summer, focusing on her greatest needs—reading comprehension, writing organization, and real-world math. This also allowed her parents to focus their financial resources on critical medical costs, easing an enormous financial and emotional burden.

The difference was clear almost immediately. With one-on-one tutoring, Ellie began to master skills that had always been a challenge. She learned how to identify characters, settings, and main ideas in stories, then used graphic organizers to summarize what she read. For the first time, she wrote a complete paragraph with a clear beginning, middle, and end—an achievement her mom described as transformative.

Math became an area of newfound confidence, too. By practicing fractions, percentages, and ratios through real-life scenarios like budgeting or buying a treat from the ice cream truck, Ellie not only advanced to 8th-grade concepts but also gained practical independence. Each tutoring session reinforced her skills and built her confidence: “She's really getting it,” her tutor said.



The impact went beyond academics. This fall, just two days into the school year, Ellie's mom noticed a remarkable change—Ellie was eager, excited, and confident, raising her hand in class and fully engaging with her teachers and classmates, more confident than she had been since before the pandemic. For the first time in years, she was raising her hand in class and showing her teachers and peers what she was capable of.

“Above all else, the tutoring grew her confidence,” her mom explained. “She's more willing to speak up, and that gives her teachers a boost, too. They can see how capable she is.”

Ellie's story is a powerful reminder of how much targeted support can change a child's life. The Family Fund didn't just provide academic help—it gave Ellie the tools to thrive with her peers, strengthened her independence, and lifted a heavy financial weight off her family.

“To every donor who makes this possible, thank you,” Ellie's mom said. “Your generosity didn't just help our daughter with her schoolwork. You gave her confidence, independence, and hope for the future—and you gave our family peace of mind.”

Sae Found Healing on Horseback

Finding a therapeutic activity that truly engaged Sae and helped her grow felt impossible. Many programs didn't meet her unique needs, leaving her family searching for something that could bring both growth and joy.

With support from the Family Fund, Sae was able to attend therapeutic horseback riding sessions. The specialized program provides a calm, structured environment where she can build skills while forming a healing connection with the horses.

The changes in Sae have been remarkable. She has gained focus, improved her ability to follow multi-step instructions, and strengthened her memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. Most importantly, she has developed a sense of independence and pride that shows in everything she does.

"This program—and your support—has reminded us that our child's challenges don't define her, and that our family is worthy of joy, growth, and support," her parent reflects. "Thanks to the Family Fund, riding has become a joyful, healing experience not just for our child, but for our family."

“ Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome affects every part of our daily lives—routine activities can feel unpredictable and emotionally exhausting. Before horseback riding, much of our time was spent managing impulses, navigating meltdowns, and trying to find extracurricular activities that 'fit.' It was isolating, and at times, overwhelming.





Lucy is Exploring the Great Outdoors

Raising a child with complex medical needs often comes with unexpected barriers to everyday life. For Lucy's family, simple activities like taking a walk outside or enjoying bath time were difficult because of her very low muscle tone and challenges holding her head up.

Insurance denied many claims for adaptive equipment that could improve Lucy's quality of life. Without proper support, outdoor family activities seemed impossible, and basic care routines like bathing were stressful for everyone.

With support from the Family Fund, Lucy's family purchased an adaptive stroller with a five-point harness and an adaptive bath seat. The all-terrain stroller provides the support Lucy needs while allowing her to safely explore the outdoors with her family.

The impact has been transformative for the entire family. "I am able to provide my daughter with a more comfortable bath time, without her fighting and getting any water by her G-tube, which is a huge improvement," her mother said. The adaptive equipment has opened new possibilities, even allowing Lucy to experience ocean waves and sand during a recent beach vacation.

Lucy's mother expressed deep gratitude to the many generous donors of the Family Fund, "You have not only improved my daughter's quality of life, but her older brother's as well. We are able to do more as a family, making memories while we can."



“ Your donations are not taken lightly and are the light we need when navigating such hard times with a medically complex child and an insurance who wants to deny everything. ”

Della Can Stand Tall

“ I'm beyond grateful that I could get a doctor who specializes in the treatment of cerebral palsy and provides a better option than what is close by.”

For Christa, watching her nine-year-old daughter Della's mobility decline was heartbreaking. As her bones grew faster than her muscles could keep up, Della lost the ability to straighten her legs completely for more than four years. "Every step was labored," Christa explained. "I equate it to having resistance bands on your legs." Standing, walking, or even simple movements took enormous effort.

As Della approached her pre-teen years, Christa knew this was a critical moment. Children like Della often experience rapid growth during this stage, and the right intervention can make all the difference for their future independence.

Local doctors recommended invasive surgeries with long recoveries and uncertain outcomes. Christa knew there had to be a better way. "What is offered here is more invasive, harder to recover from, and causes more weakness," Christa said. "It seemed too risky."

After years of research, she found a specialist who offered a less invasive procedure, called PERCs, with the potential to preserve Della's strength and mobility. The challenge was the cost—the surgery, considered "cosmetic" by insurance, was \$25,000, placing it far out of reach.

With support from the Family Fund, Christa was able to move forward with the surgery during the summer months, giving Della time to heal and focus on physical therapy without missing school.

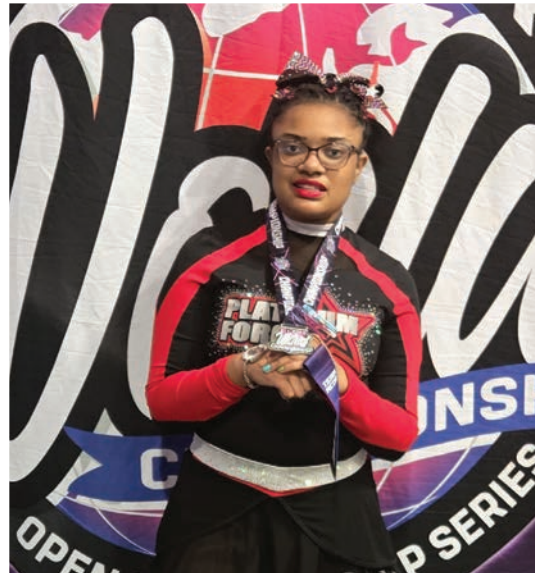
The results were immediate and remarkable. "Immediately she was able to completely straighten her leg and have flat feet," said Christa. "Before she could only do one or the other." Within weeks, Della was back to her normal activities, and in therapy she began doing things that had once seemed impossible—like standing up unassisted. The impact of the surgery was more than physical. "She wants to stand more and use her walker more because it's not as hard," Christa shared. "Now she wants to go outside and have us chase her in her walker and just wants to move more." Della has embraced her newfound independence, often telling her mom with pride, "I got it."



For Christa, the change brings both relief and hope. "This really reduced the stress on me as a mother. Having to watch my child struggle just to move her own body every day just hurts." Christa is looking forward to Della's growing years with greater confidence, knowing they got the surgery she needed at the right time.

"You have blessed my family not just in this moment but for years to come," Christa reflected. "The surgery that my daughter had will essentially affect her whole life. She has greater movement, more comfort, and better stability."

Because of you, Della continues to discover new capabilities and can do more things on her own, opening the door to a lifetime of greater mobility and confidence.



Thank You

“What makes the Family Fund even more special is that our story is just one of many. The Family Fund doesn’t just provide financial assistance, it restores hope, eases burdens, and empowers families like ours to keep moving forward with strength and resilience.”

“A profound thank you for improving quality of life for my family. My wish is for you to feel the feeling of seeing a child make a sound or do a physical action that they were unable to do before. There are not words bright enough to describe this feeling. Perhaps the smallest accomplishments in my children ring the loudest to me, as I know how hard they work to get there.”

How to Stay Involved

Ellie's newfound confidence, Rowan's growing voice, Lucy's outdoor adventures—each breakthrough happened because of supporters like you. But behind each success story is a practical truth: these opportunities require ongoing investment.

Children with disabilities often need consistent access to specialized therapies, adaptive equipment, and inclusive programs. Starting early and sustaining that support can change a child's life, opening doors that were once closed because of a lack of resources.

The Family Fund is 100% fueled by generosity, and every gift, no matter the size, creates life-changing opportunities for children and families.

Because of you, children are building confidence, families are finding hope, and communities are becoming more inclusive. Together, we can ensure every child has the chance to learn, grow, and thrive.

Get Involved



Give Today

Your donation directly supports children with disabilities and their families, providing access to therapies, adaptive equipment, and opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.



Become a Monthly Donor

Ongoing support ensures more families can count on the Family Fund year after year.



Make an Endowment Gift

Create a lasting legacy by investing in the long-term future of the Family Fund, ensuring children and families will have access to life-changing resources for generations to come.



Share Their Stories

Spread the word by sharing Family Fund stories with your network. Awareness is a powerful tool for growing support.



Scan here
to learn more



fello.

**You are creating
opportunities**

for children to learn, grow, and thrive.

To get involved or learn more, contact us at development@fello.org.



@WeAreFello