



FISCAL YEAR 2024 -2025

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



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"ALL ROADS LEAD HOME"

I've always believed small towns hold something special—neighbors show up, gratitude grows, and belonging runs deep. At esp, we see that same homegrown spirit in everything we do.

For nearly four decades, esp has been more than programs and camps—it's been home. A place where every laugh, friendship, embrace, and opportunity reminds us that everyone belongs. This past year, as we expanded into a new city and served more families than ever, we did so with that spirit of "home" as our guiding light. Walk through the doors in Athens, Rome, Atlanta, or Savannah, and you're met with the same warmth that makes esp feel like family.

Growth brings challenges, but like any strong community, we face them together. Our families, volunteers, and supporters prove that when gratitude is at the center, we can weather any storm.

Home isn't just a place—it's a feeling. It's the laughter that echoes at camp, the friendships that form in programs, the embrace at a family event that says 'welcome', and the joy that comes from meaningful employment for people of all abilities. None of it would be possible without you. You are the neighbors who keep the porch light on, the friends who make sure no one is left out, the heart of our story.

As we look ahead, we know the road is still winding. But with you by our side, every road leads back to a place of joy. And boy, do we have a year of joy to come!

With much love and with deep and wide gratitude,

Laura Hope Whitaker

esp, Inc. CEO and Java Joy Co-Founder

Scan to follow!



Instagram



LinkedIn

Our Mission

We exist to create transformative experiences for people with disabilities and their families, changing communities for the better.

Our Vision

We envision a world where every person, of every ability, in every community has universal access to transformative experiences.

Our Values

Infused with Joyful Hospitality

Goes the extra mile for a priceless welcome. Exchanger of thoughtful generosity. People first, always.

Fascinated With Fun

Embraces a playful attitude central to a culture of celebration. Entertains with enthusiasm.

Activating the Abilities of All

Sparks superpowers, flames them with coaching. Universally adapts all, for every ability.

Connecting the Unconnected

Builds a bridge between people, one hug (or smile) at a time. Communicates, even when it's uncomfortable.

Innovating Possibilities

There's always more than one way. Plants seeds, waters them. Clings to what is possible, not the status quo.

Compassion Freely Given

Leans into the awkward. Small acts with big impact, given to all. No indifference.

Persevering, Together

One team with a collaborative spirit. Sees a hurdle as an opportunity and jumps it with support.





A YEAR OF IMPACT

1228

PARTICIPANTS

731

SUMMER
CAMPER

190

CAMP
COUNSELORS

137

FAMILIES ATTENDED
MONTHLY FAMILY NIGHT
DINNERS ON AVERAGE

27

CLUB
EVENTS

8

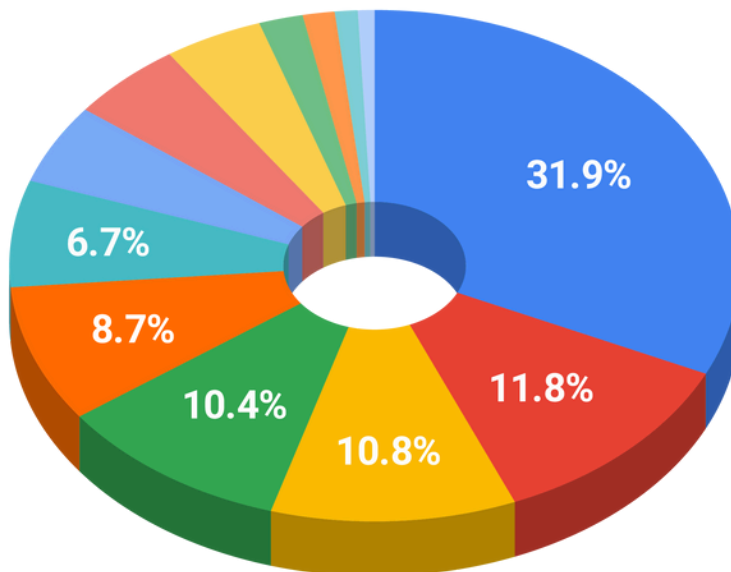
MIRACLE LEAGUE
TOURNAMENTS

0-65

AGES SERVED
NEWBORN - OLDER ADULT

esp Abilities

- AUTISM SPECTRUM
- DOWN SYNDROME
- GLOBAL DELAY/
INTELLECTUAL DELAY
- ADHD/ADD
- OTHER
- LEARNING DISABILITY
- CEREBRAL PALSY
- SEIZURE DISORDERS
- GENETIC DISORDERS
- DEAF
- TBI
- WILLIAMS SYNDROME
- BLIND



"This past year, we were able to joyfully, safely, and hospitably serve over 1,200 individuals. What an honor it is to pour into that many people's lives, get to know them, and make their experience at esp one where they feel seen, known, and loved for who they are! Whether you're a volunteer, counselor, participant, or family member, esp's community is one of open arms and joyful celebrations. Thank you for making this happen!"



HUNTER ANDREWS
Director of Programs

Bold Beginnings: Savannah



When esp Savannah launched on January 13, 2025, the small but mighty staff hit the ground running. The Savannah community was ready—and the need was undeniable. In just months, over 100 families have already joined programming!

"When I see there's a need, we're going to figure out how to make it happen."

Serving so many, so quickly, required determination, creativity, and problem-solving on the fly. Executive Director Jennifer Wilkins, with the support of her board and team, successfully launched esp's summer camp in 2025, a year earlier than the original 2026 schedule.



JENNIFER WILKINS
Executive Director

Today, esp Savannah is laying the foundation for the growth ahead, building the infrastructure needed to meet the community's expanding needs. Exciting times are just around the corner in 2026!



Ric and Becky Brown with their daughter, Maryn.



Sixteen-year-old Maryn Brown is vibrant, full of life, and loves to sing and dance. But the stroke she suffered in utero left her with global developmental delays and ongoing seizures that require multiple medications. These challenges made it difficult for her to keep up in traditional dance or gymnastics classes, often leaving her without a place where she could truly belong.

When Maryn found esp, everything changed. Her abilities are now celebrated, and any obstacles that might hold her back are removed. Maryn has a new place where she can shine! This year brought new milestones—Maryn attended her very first summer camp, including a full week of overnight camp. It was a huge step for her and a joyful one. The memory she treasures most is riding on the esp float in Savannah's St. Patrick's Day parade, waving and singing as the crowd cheered. She still talks about it every day.

Maryn's story shows esp at its best: a community where every person is seen for who they are, and given space to thrive. It's the support of caring individuals and corporate partners that makes stories like hers possible in Savannah.



TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

785 Participants

505 Summer Campers

1,568 Volunteers

19,498 Volunteer Hours

One of the most memorable experiences for our Athens community is Bulldogs and Buddies, where esp members and their families get an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at a UGA football practice. After cheering on the Bulldogs from the sidelines, members have the incredible opportunity to meet and interact with the players—sharing high-fives, smiles, and unforgettable moments that make our athletes true hometown heroes.



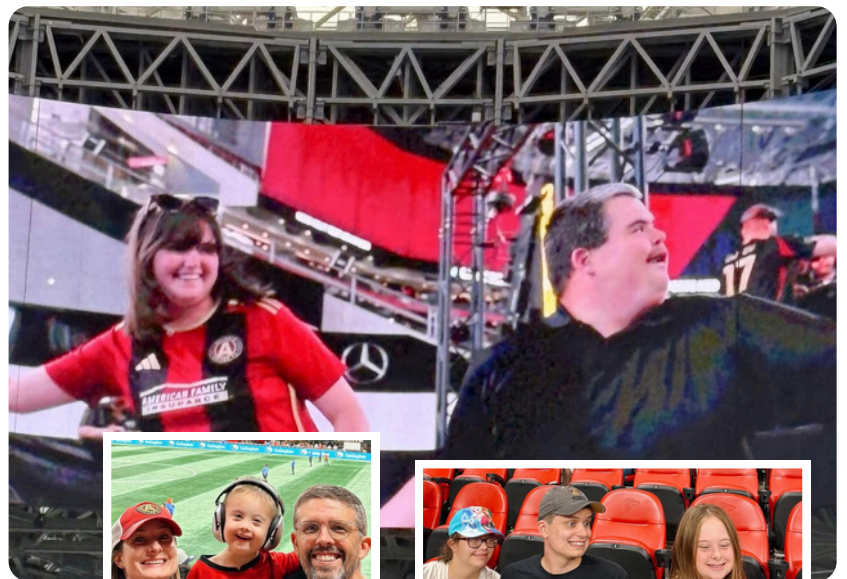
esp Atlanta families united together for a night of joy and celebration at an Atlanta United soccer game. Cheering side by side, families celebrated inclusion both on and off the field—capping off the evening with pure excitement as esp made it onto the jumbotron for the entire stadium to see.

172 Participants

87 Summer Campers

170 Volunteers

270 Volunteer Hours





This summer at esp Rome, Ayden, an esp camper who uses a wheelchair, experienced the thrill of many firsts. One of the most exciting was sliding down a waterslide at the city pool—something he had never imagined possible. With the support of his camp buddy, Ayden was able to safely enjoy the slide every day, turning a simple moment into an extraordinary memory. His adventures didn't stop there. Ayden also took on the role of camp security, proudly carrying a badge and walkie-talkie, and was officially "sworn in" by officers from Georgia Public Safety Training Center. These experiences gave him a deep sense of pride, responsibility, and belonging, making his summer truly unforgettable.



151	Participants
87	Summer Campers
160	Volunteers
5,215	Volunteer Hours



104	Participants
40	Summer Campers
151	Volunteers
481	Volunteer Hours

In Savannah, Matthew, an esp member who always dreamed of becoming a firefighter, saw his wish come true in an unexpected and unforgettable way. During summer camp, Savannah's local firefighters stopped by to give esp members a fun cool-down with the firehose. What started as a playful visit turned into something much more meaningful when Matthew was invited to take the lead—holding the hose, spraying water alongside his friends, and living out his dream of being a firefighter. It was a powerful reminder that with creativity and community support, dreams really can come to life.

INVESTING IN THE FULL FAMILY



The Drew Swan Sibling Scholarship was created in honor of Andrew "Drew" Swan, beloved brother of esp participant Samantha Swan. Drew's life was marked by quiet strength, service, and deep love for his sibling.

Each year, this one-time \$1,500 award is presented to a sibling of an individual with disabilities in Georgia. Applicants must be accepted or enrolled in a two- or four-year nonprofit higher education institution and go through a competitive process reviewed by an esp committee.

This year's recipient is Hannah Nichols, who plans to study Engineering with the goal of designing more accessible solutions for people with disabilities. Growing up alongside three siblings with disabilities, Hannah credits those relationships with shaping her character.

"Those early lessons in patience, compassion, and responsibility shaped me into a leader who can stay calm under pressure and lead with empathy. These experiences did not make me weaker, they made me wiser," said Hannah.



"I am so grateful to receive this award. I'm glad there is an organization that recognizes families like mine."

-Hannah Nichols

Siblings Program

esp's Sibs Program was created to provide a supportive space for siblings of individuals with disabilities to connect, grow, and feel seen. Through therapeutic and recreational activities, the program fosters advocacy, ability awareness, and emotional resilience while celebrating both siblings' unique identities and important roles in the world.



SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

At esp, we strive to create a place where not only our participants, but their entire families, feel a deep sense of belonging – a place where they are seen, known, and celebrated. From family dinners that bring everyone together around the table, to Jolly Jubilee where new traditions are born, to esp by the Sea where lifelong memories are made at the beach, each experience strengthens the bonds that make our community so special. It is a true privilege to walk alongside our families and witness the beautiful community they continue to build together.



ALEX BRUGGEMAN
Senior Program Coordinator



Family Dinners

Athens	72
Atlanta	22
Rome	19
Savannah	24

**AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE
BY SITE**

NEW FAMILIES SEPT. 2024 - AUG. 2025

Athens	58
Atlanta	29
Rome	19
Savannah	95



Jolly Jubilee

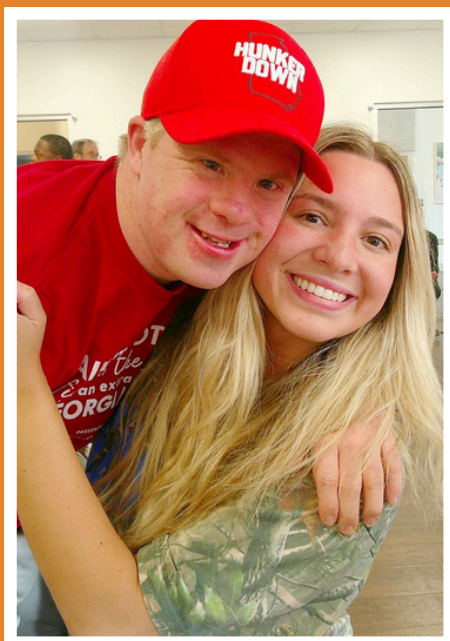


Jolly Jubilee is a Christmas Celebration for esp families complete with treats and a visit from Santa. This year, over 200 people enjoyed this annual tradition in Athens, Rome and Atlanta.



2,049 Volunteers

25,461 Volunteer Hours



“When I first signed up to volunteer at esp, I thought I was just showing up to give back and pour into others. But after that very first day, I realized esp was pouring into me just as much. Over the past two years, this place has changed me in ways I never expected! It’s taught me about joy, love, and what it means to show up fully for people.

esp is truly extraordinary because every time I pour into others, I leave with my own cup overflowing. The experiences are intentional, the friendships are genuine, and the impact is lasting. I owe so much of who I am today to esp, and I’ll always be grateful I decided to become a small part of the whole!”

– Abi Pettis



**Interested in
becoming a volunteer?
Scan the code
to get started.**

PURPOSE

Lia loves being a Joyrista—and you can see it all over her face. Spreading joy to others is her favorite part of the job. “You never know what another person is going through,” she reflected. “A hug or a smile can go a long way.”

Through esp’s Java Joy, Lia has traveled near and far—serving coffee and sharing joy at businesses, golf tournaments, and even special events in Colorado and Savannah, where she helped launch esp’s newest community.

This summer, the esp community honored her with the **Fascinated with Fun** award at the annual ESPYs dinner. Lia was amazed! “I wondered, ‘Did she really just call my name?’ And when I realized she did, I felt so lucky and blessed to be part of esp.”

Opportunities like Java Joy are about more than coffee—they provide meaningful employment for adults with disabilities. Every individual deserves the chance to work, contribute, and shine.



This year, after the esp community honored Lia with the Fascinated with Fun award at the annual ESPYs dinner.

JOYRISTAS:

70

HOURS OF
EMPLOYMENT:

6,536

EVENTS:

268

CUPS SERVED:

52,770

HUGS GIVEN:

COUNTLESS



Lia Johnson

SIGNATURE EVENTS

esp's signature fundraising events bring each community together in unique and meaningful ways, showcasing the heart of our mission while raising vital support for participants and families. Together, these events fuel esp's growth, celebrate the abilities of our participants, and strengthen the communities that make our mission possible.



ALL OF ESP

\$1,358,528

raised

2 Talent Shows

1 Gala

43 Community Sponsors

Combined 445 Volunteers

1600+ Gala Guests

Big Hearts Talent Shows —where participants shine on stage sharing their gifts—are inspirational and full of joy! The elegant Big Hearts Gala, unites the entire esp community through fine dining, entertainment, and auctions. Each event is designed to celebrate and sustain our mission.



ALL OF ESP

\$240,096

raised

37 Teams

36 Celebrity Players

40 Community Sponsors

71 Volunteers

The Big Ball Fore All celebrity golf tournament combines fun on the greens with the joy of seeing esp participants serve as caddies alongside local celebrity athletes.



ATHENS

\$151,598

raised

60 Jumpers
11 Community Sponsors
20 Volunteers

In Athens, Big Jump brings the thrill of skydiving together with a family-friendly fall festival, complete with accessible games, a costume parade, food trucks, and more—all fueled by skydivers raising funds to take the leap for esp.



ATLANTA

\$101,303

raised

37 Teams
16 Community Sponsors
18 Volunteers

esp Atlanta's Big Dill pickleball tournament and Sneaker Bash blend camaraderie and competition with community-building energy.



ROME

\$145,453

raised

30 Team Players
60 Community Sponsors
87 Volunteers

In Rome, Big Hoops rallies the town as two local community teams face off on the court, all to support programs that remove barriers and create transformative experiences.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



A Legacy of Belonging and Hope

For Jon Williams and Amy Stone, esp isn't just an organization—it's family. Their connection began nearly twenty years ago with a simple introduction: a babysitter who volunteered at esp. When Jon was asked to cook BBQ for an esp event, he didn't hesitate. That one act of service became the start of a lifelong relationship built on generosity, inclusion, and love.

Inclusion runs deep in Jon's story. Growing up in South Georgia, he often witnessed his father, Jay, welcome individuals of all abilities into their family owned grocery store—a rare act of belonging in the 1980s. His dad would even check him out of school to volunteer at the Special Olympics, teaching him that everyone deserves to be seen and celebrated. That example, and the family mantra of 'leave it better than you found it,' continues to guide how Jon and Amy raise their own children—JD, Bay, Garrett, and Amelia—and why they choose to give back today.

Over the years, Jon has helped shepherd esp's growth from a small, parent-led program into a thriving, statewide organization. Among his proudest moments is helping bring the Watkinsville campus to life—and now helping bring esp's overnight Camp Hooray in Jackson County to life—a place where families experience the joy of true belonging.

This year, Jon and Amy deepened their legacy through the creation of The Windmill Fund, esp's first endowed Emergency Family Support Fund. The fund provides direct financial assistance to families in crisis, helping them weather the unexpected challenges of raising a child with disabilities.

The name draws inspiration from the poem "Welcome to Holland," which describes the unexpected beauty of raising a child with disabilities. Like the windmill—strong, steadfast, and full of grace—the fund will stand as a source of hope and stability for families when life takes an unplanned turn.

"It's generational change," Jon says. "esp changes how the next generation will view individuals with disabilities—through kindness, awareness, and inclusion." Through their vision, Jon and Amy are ensuring that change endures for generations to come.

DONORS

FY 24-25 Number of Donors

Friend Level
\$1 - \$299 **3646**

Celebrator Level
\$300 - \$2,499 **908**

Transformer Level
\$2,500 - \$4,999 **163**

Connector Level
\$5,000 - \$9,999 **111**

Innovator Level
\$10,000 - \$24,999 **101**

Founder Level
\$25,000 + **48**

FOUNDER LEVEL \$25,000+ Donors

Akins Ford Dodge Chrysler Jeep RAM
Andrew and Katherine Almeida
Andy, Christa, Molly, Grace and Griffin Welborn
Anonymous x2
Apalachee United Methodist Church
Athens Church
Athens Seed Company Inc
Atrium Health Floyd-Polk Foundation
Becky and William Mathews
Bethlehem Church
Brad and Vanessa Akins
Braxton and Ashley Culler
Brittany and Chris Sjogren
Bulldog Kia
C.W. Matthews Contracting Co., Inc.
Camp Twin Lakes Summer Camp
Carter and Kim Strickland
Chris and Leigh Swanson
David and Jennifer Covington
Doug S Witcher Family Foundation
Frances Wood Wilson Foundation
Gillespie Family Charitable Fund
Griffin Insurance Agency
Gwen and Matt Sirmans

Jackson EMC (Corporation)
James and Linda Owens
James Hammond
Kathleen and James Smithson
Linda and Roy Mulholland
Madison County Board of Commissioners
Marilyn Congdon Nowell
Mark and Marjorie McClain
McLeroy Family Foundation
Peter Hopkins Foundation, Inc.
Randy and Patti Grayson
Ray and Charyl Schroeder Grace Foundation
Riverside Auto Group
Robin and Wayne Hoover
Rome Strength and Fitness
State of Georgia
STEPS Savannah
Steve and Melanie Hollis
Terri and Harry Pierce
The Pollack Family Foundation
The Ray and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation
The Whitcomb Family Foundation, Inc.
ULM Family Foundation
Walton EMC



We Need YOU!

Would you like to be a
part of our mission?
There are so many
ways to make a
difference. Donating
is just one!



Donate

CORPORATE PARTNERS

We are truly grateful for the steadfast support of our corporate partners! esp is able to serve more families each year because so many businesses choose to make people and community a priority.



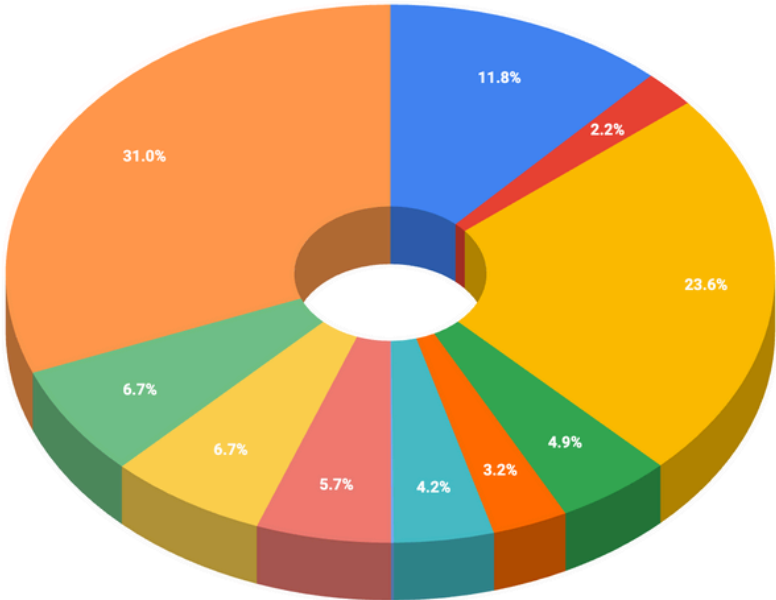
3tree REALTY	ABILITY WEALTH GROUP	Akins	Allied PAYING CONTRACTORS INC.	ALLOTURF "Keeping Georgia Green"	American Pest Control, Inc. OF ATHENS	ANYTHING REAL ESTATE MICHAEL CARR & ASSOCIATES
ATHENS Dental Group	Athens Orthopedic Clinic	ATHENS ROOFING	Athens Seed Lawn & Garden	BankSouth	Bobcat of Athens	Body Modern SHOP
KIA BULLDOG	BRANCH ENVIRONMENTAL INC.	CEI CABLE EAST	Chastain & Associates Business • Auto • Home • Life • Health	CHICKEN SALAD CHICK	CLASSIC CITY DENTISTRY	COOK & TOLLEY ATTORNEYS AT LAW
DCO COMMERCIAL FLOORS	Peach State Pride Stay Southern	EMPIRE SOUTH	EPTING	EXPEST EXTERMINATING	First American Bank & Trust	FBG
GEORGIA SKIN CANCER & Aesthetic Dermatology	Ginny's Custom Embroidery	THE HONEY BAKED Ham	HOWELL ORTHODONTICS	Inspired CLOSETS	JACKSON ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION	PHIL Hughes Honda
JORDANAIR AIR • HEAT • PLUMBING • ELECTRIC	LANDMARK PROPERTIES	LINDSAY GROUP	Mar-Jac	OCONEE STATE BANK	the SIGN BROS.	ZAXBY'S OF WATKINSVILLE
Piedmont ATHENS REGIONAL	Primrose School of Athens	RestorePros	SAC STANFIELD AIR SYSTEMS	STRIPLING'S GENERAL STORE	WALTON EMC EMPLOYEE CHARITIES	
Thornton 80 BROTHERS	United Community	W&A Engineering				
BankSouth	CHICKEN SALAD CHICK	C.W. Matthews CONTRACTING CO.	LATREIA	LUMMUS SUPPLY CO.	Narwhal Capital Management	THRIFT MCLEMORE
BENJAMIN F. EDWARDS INVESTMENTS for GENERATIONS	big Dan's	CHICKEN SALAD CHICK	Christian Insulation Services	DA DEMPSEY APPRAISAL	FLYING STAR	FOREVERGREEN
Mark E. Fisher D.D.S. FAMILY AND COSMETIC DENTISTRY	River City Bank	RIVERSIDE AUTO GROUP	RSF ROME	RYAN COX ORTHODONTICS	THREE OF SEVEN	
ADVANCED CARE PARTNERS	ARCO DESIGN/BUILD	BankSouth	CHICKEN SALAD CHICK	consort pediatric THERAPIES	OMEGA CONSTRUCTION	
Colonial Group, Inc.	DTG DESIGN BUILDER	Gulfstream A GENERAL DYNAMICS COMPANY	JOYE Psychology & Wellness, LLC	MCO MAHANY CONSTRUCTION CO.	PCI PIONEER CONSTRUCTION INC.	

TOTAL
FUNDS
RAISED

(September 2024 - August 2025)

ANNUAL FUND TOTALS:	5,945,000
DESIGNATED RESTRICTED TOTALS:	\$7,224,000
TOTAL FUNDRAISING	\$13,169,000

- \$1,572,270 esp Athens Annual Fund
- \$295,073 esp Atlanta Annual Fund
- \$3,128,430 esp INC Annual Fund
- \$645,494 esp Rome Annual Fund
- \$422,872 esp Savannah Annual Fund
- \$557,865 Family Support Funds - Restricted
- \$15,105 Java Joy Expansion Fund - Restricted
- \$752,262 Hooray Fund - Restricted
- \$883,756 Big Idea Fund - Restricted
- \$890,097 New City Expansion Fund - Restricted
- \$4,117,612 Rome Building Income - Restricted



FINANCIAL OPERATING FUNDS

(September 2024 - August 2025)
unaudited financials

FY25 Revenue

ANNUAL DONATIONS & EVENT INCOME:	\$5,945,000
PROGRAMMING INCOME:	\$805,000
OTHER:	\$342,000
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE:	\$7,092,000

FY25 Expenses

FACILITY OPERATIONS:	\$862,000
DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING:	\$1,166,000
PROGRAMS AND JAVA JOY:	\$1,547,000
PEOPLE:	\$3,434,000
EXECUTIVE:	\$446,000
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES:	\$7,455,000



2025-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

EXPERIENCES

Camps, Clubs, day programming, after-school activities

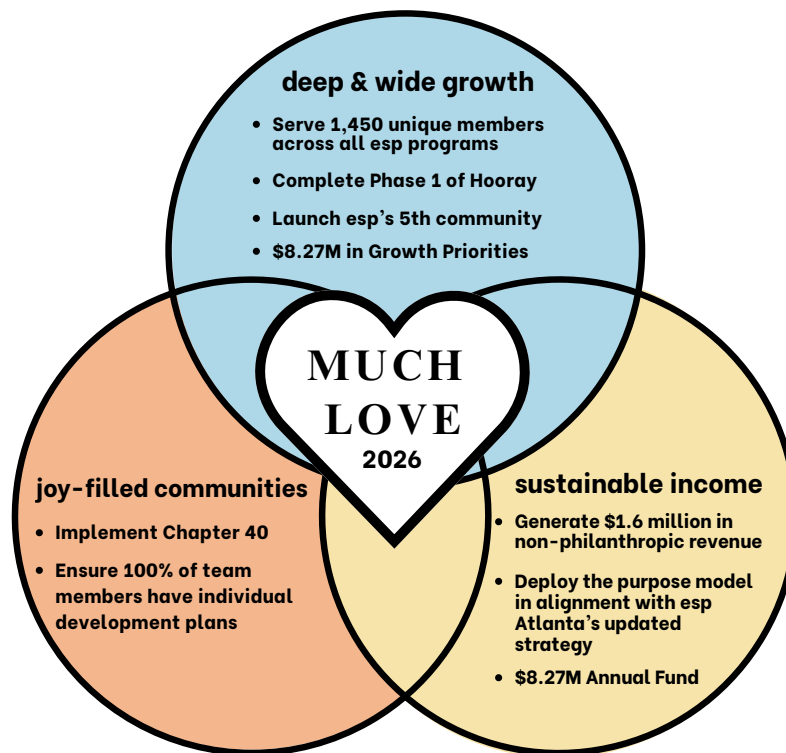
SUPPORT

Family events, emergency support, and sibling programs

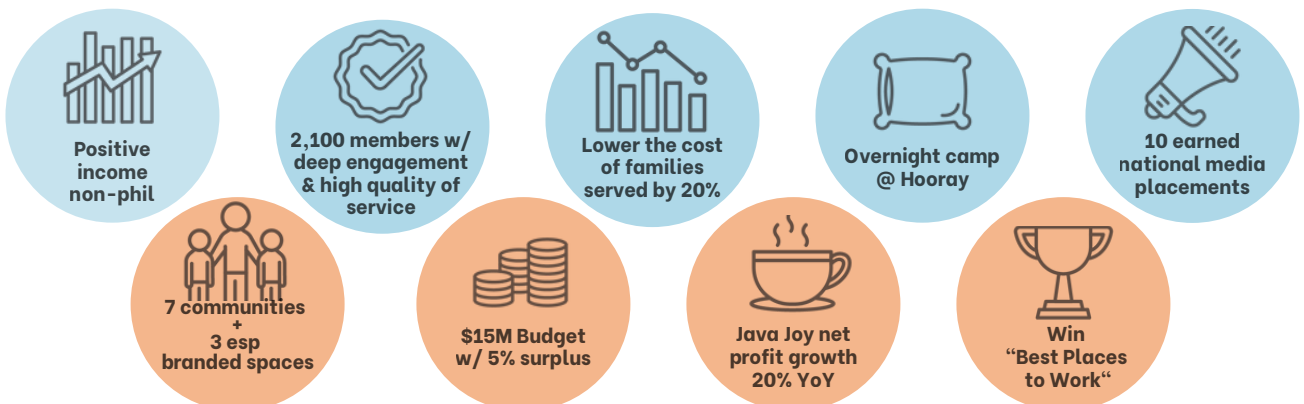
PURPOSE

Employment for people of all abilities through Java Joy & SEEABILITY

**Annual Plan:
by August 31, 2026**



3-Year Picture: 2028



10-Year Target: 2025-2035



Connected through a universally accessible campus in Georgia, esp will be a nationally recognized leader in transforming communities in multiple states through programs for people of all abilities.



"WHAT IF THE WORLD COULD SEE YOU THE WAY YOUR DOG SEES YOU?"

Shop our purpose-driven
merch line from
SEEABILITY!



**Shop
SEEABILITY!**



Vision

At SEEABILITY, we imagine a world where everyone is seen for the goodness they have inside.

Mission

SEEABILITY exists to shift perspectives, championing a world where people of all abilities are seen and celebrated. Through a purposeful merchandise line and media engagement, SEEABILITY will expose people nationwide to the good work of esp, inc. Every item purchased provides meaningful employment for adults with disabilities, as our Joyfillers pack and ship orders for nationwide delivery. Shining a light on esp's mission, SEEABILITY offers multiple avenues for people to join the movement and support the work of esp communities. All proceeds are used to fund esp programs for people with disabilities.

The SEEABILITY brand officially launched with a bang at the 2025 Big Hearts Gala. In just six months, the brand has partnered with fashion influencer Lovely Grey, child superstar Charlotte Tucker, and UGA football legend Aaron Murray to promote esp's mission. The Whitaker family adopted a furry family member as the mascot and SeeMore has become a fixture at esp events. He brings smiles and laughter wherever he goes! A pilot program kicked off in August, partnering with an Atlanta elementary school. This program combines lessons for students on seeing abilities in others as well as a fund raising component for esp programs.

LEADERSHIP



Laura Hope Whitaker
Chief Executive Officer



Steve Hollis
Chief Operating Officer



Bill Toler
Chief Financial Officer



Courtney Broun
Director of People



Hunter Andrews
Director of Programs



Alex Perry
Director of Development



Chris Fralish
Director of Marketing



Jake Sapp
Director of Purpose



Craig Portwood
Athens Executive Director



Aly Clift
Atlanta Executive Director



Jennifer Wilkins
Savannah Executive Director



Sarah Bradfield
Rome Executive Director

As the Director of People, I have the unique privilege of hearing why people want to work for esp. It is rare to have so many talented, passionate people want to be part of one organization! This year, esp focused on ensuring that we have the best people in place to serve our mission. esp is powered by over 200 incredible team members — including 70 Joyristas, 50 full-time staff, 10 contractors, and 80 interns and assistants — all playing a vital role in bringing our mission to life. 35% of our staff is made up of people with all abilities — they each bring unique skills that will help esp continue to build on a culture of welcome, belonging and joy.



Courtney Broun
Director of People

New Hires IN 2025

Melissa Adair
Maggie Austin
Jake Brown

Logan Brown
Aly Clift
Manny Da Silva
Chris Fralish
Hannah Gay
Steve Hollis
Antonio Lewis-Ross
Ansley Martin
Kristina McFadden
Ashley McMullen

Eva McNeill
Griffin Rhudy
Jake Sapp
Carol Schierlmann
Alex Sheppard
McKenna Shirah
Narda Sigala
Monicah Starr
Kate Tracy
Jennifer Wilkins

Staff Webpage



Looking for a particular staff member? Scan for the full listing with contact information.

NATIONAL BOARD



Laura Hope Whitaker
CEO, ESP Inc.



Delena Brockmann
Executive Director,
Piedmont Regional Oconee



Anne Marie Ferriero
President, Luther & Susie B. Harrison
Foundation



Bo Rutledge
Senior Counsel-Litigation, Morris,
Manning, & Martin, LLP



Tyler Barr
CEO, Vexiom Corporation



Keeca Burroughs
Managing Director,
Ernst & Young



Wayne Hoover
Retired VP of Field Operations-Talent at
Chick-Fil-A



Chris Sjogren
CFO, Lovely Grey



Philip Bernardi
Executive VP & Chief Banking Officer,
Oconee State Bank



Gretchen Corbin
President & CEO,
Georgia Lottery Corporation



Aaron Murray
College Football Analyst at ESPN



Jimmy Smith
Managing Director Investments,
Benjamin F Edwards



Bert Brantley
President and CEO,
Savannah Chamber of Commerce



Andrew Costas
Managing Director,
Landmark Properties



Daniel Palawasta
Regional Director of Operations,
Levy Restaurants



Carter Strickland
Managing Partner,
Turnaround Properties
CEO, Winshire Green



Ben Deutsch
Retired VP of Communications,
The Coca Cola Company



Michael Ripps
President & Co-Owner,
Jittery Joe's



Jon Williams
President, W&A Engineering

CITY CHAMPIONS



Athens Champion Board

- Brad Akins
- Will & Ellen Beasley
- Kari Beth Chitwood
- Ceci Curchwell
- Ronald Copes
- Eric Fletcher
- Robin Hoover
- David Kernall
- Tammy Lindsay
- Jean Mullis
- Jason & Christy Norton
- Allison Nealy
- Billy Porter
- Lorie Peterson
- Caroline Thomas
- Jimmy Willis
- Maggie Wilder



Atlanta Champion Board

- Allison Bacon
- Ian & Jenni Clemens
- Ryan & Ashley Edmonds
- Debbie Garcia
- Randy Grayson
- Tameeka Kirkland
- Colleen McElroy
- Hugh & Audrey Merkel
- Myra Searles



Rome Champion Board

- Brent & Andrea Bell
- Lauren Brewster
- Kyle & Jessica Carney
- Gaines & Amy Dempsey
- Andy Edwards
- Paul & Emily Holcombe
- Garret & Lauren Jones
- Brooks Mathis
- Matt & Heather McClain
- Hannah Nabors
- Michele Rikard
- Matt Robbins
- Matt & Mary Sawhill
- Matt & Gwen Sirmans
- Beth Smith
- Jimmy & Holly Smith
- Amos Tuck
- Kate Walton
- Christa Welborn
- Anne Paige Wilson



Savannah Champion Board

- Kathleen Benton
- Tonya Brantley
- Becky Brown
- Laci Culbreth
- Kearney Fender
- Allie Finnegan
- Caroline Gillespie
- Natalie Hogan
- Jenny Mayo
- Wade & Liz Poston
- Anna Salter
- Leigh Swanson
- Matt Wilmont
- Tyler Wilson

CELEBRATING THOSE WHO ANSWER THE CALL



2025 ESPY Award Winners

Joyful Hospitality: Ami Spayd

Innovating Possibilities: Taylor Shannon

Fascinated with Fun: Lia Johnson

Compassion, Freely Given: Alex Bruggeman

Connecting the Unconnected: Troy Van Every

Activating the Abilities of All: Jake Brown

Persevering, Together: Gina Elliott

High Five-Volunteer: Matthew Baltz

High Five-Community Member: “Ranger Nick” Fuhrman

High Five-Champion Board: Hollye Smith

High Five-National Board: Wayne Hoover

High Five-Parent: Melanie Haga

The work of esp is more than service—it’s a calling. Those who answer become part of a dedicated community of volunteers and staff who go above and beyond. Each year, the entire esp family nominates and votes on individuals to be honored with special recognition. The awards are presented at a celebration dinner filled with gratitude, laughter, and plenty of smiles.

These awards not only honor extraordinary service, they reflect the spirit of joy and connection that makes esp a community like no other.



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