

Summer Camp 2026



Our music program got everyone up and moving!

Rising Treetops opened its 2026 Summer Camp on June 14, and by the last day, we held seven sessions with 357 campers attending the camp!

Children and adult campers had an engaging and fun summer in our swimming, sports, arts and crafts, music, drama, iPad media arts, nature/gardening, cooking, and puzzle and games therapeutic activities.

In addition to running the first full summer our **Life Experiences and Practical Skills Program (LEAPS)** in all seven camp sessions, this summer was also noteworthy in that we hired 60 dedicated and dynamic summer camp staff from 19 countries, including: Poland, Australia, Columbia, New Zealand, Mexico, South Africa, Jamaica, England, Scotland, Wales, Turkey, Hungary, Jordan, Guatemala, Ireland, Isle of Man, Czech Republic, India, and of course the United States.

A highlight this summer was Francois Mobasser, back for a third summer as an amazing and dedicated volunteer in our therapeutic music program, who helped lead our music activity with the LEAPS Program participants nearly every day during the first half of the summer camp.

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Carnival Day 2026



Petting Zoo at Carnival Day.

FROM COTTON CANDY TO DINING & DANCING!

What a day! Our annual Carnival Day was pure magic. It was a true celebration for our campers of all abilities. Our dunk tank was the star of the show with campers lining up to dunk their favorite counselors! The petting zoo brought so many cuddles with goats, bunnies, and sheep. Campers enjoyed cotton candy, popcorn, games with prizes, face painting transformations, and a round of karaoke where every performer got a standing ovation.

AN ELEGANT EVENING

As the sun set, our campers traded carnival fun for an elegant evening. We were honored to have chefs from Sysco host a formal fine dining dinner for our entire camp family. Tables were beautifully set, and our campers were treated to a restaurant-quality meal served with care and dignity. It was a wonderful opportunity to dress up, practice dining etiquette, and feel truly celebrated.

THE GRAND FINALE

And we didn't stop there! We ended the night with a campus-wide dance party under the lights. Music pumping, dance floor packed, friends dancing together—campers, counselors, and chefs all celebrating together. It was the perfect ending to a perfect day.

Thank you to our incredible staff, volunteers, and our friends at **Sysco** for this unforgettable day.

A Successful Summer Benefit Despite the Weather



Members of the Rising Treetops at Oakhurst Board of Directors.

On a dark and stormy night, Rising Treetops held its **20th annual Summer Benefit** on Saturday, July 18, at the home of Dan and Joy Jones in Rumson, New Jersey. We are grateful to our sponsors, raffle donors, Peter's Cabin renovation contributors, Board of Directors, Benefit Committee and volunteers for making the event an outstanding success.

Guests enjoyed wonderful food by **Cornerstone Gourmet Provisions & Catering** and **Chef Bryan Noury**, music by **Sam Simms**, cocktails, and the opportunity to celebrate with friends who share a passion for our mission.

We were also honored to recognize **Trinity Hall**, **Christian Brothers Academy**, and **Rumson Country Day School** for their outstanding commitment to youth volunteerism and their longstanding support of Rising Treetops at Oakhurst. Hearing from their student representatives was an inspiring reminder of the impact of service.



Student speakers from Christian Brothers Academy Trinity Hall and Rumson Country Day School.

The event raised \$224,000 to benefit Rising Treetops at Oakhurst and their outstanding programs for children and adults with special needs.

During the event, guests also purchased \$2,800 worth of raffle tickets for the annual Shore Friends raffle and donated \$165,000 to our Peter's Cabin Renovation Campaign.

Our deepest gratitude to our sponsors including:

Diamond Sponsors: Caitlin and Rob Bovo, Marilyn Friedman and Thomas Block, Marrus Family Foundation, The Fund for Individual Potential

Platinum Sponsors: The Byren Family, Dana and Will Herrman, Anonymous, Anonymous, Susan Rudin

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Entertainment Sponsor: Earl Jackson Architecture Workshop

Shore Friends Raffle

Our heartfelt thanks to our Shore Friends volunteers, board member Adelle Rathe and Caroline Ansell, for their dedication and tireless efforts toward to another successful summer raffle, raising over \$45,000 this year! Thank you also to all our hundreds of loyal raffle ticket buyers. Prizes this year included a 3-night stay at La Samanna, St. Martin, a two-night stay at the Loews Regency Hotel, four tickets to a regular season 2026-27 Knicks game, a \$1,000 Amazon gift card, a \$750 Bloomingdales gift card, a Shark CryoGlow LED Face Mask, a \$300 Gift Certificate to The Butcher's Block Restaurant and a Skylight Digital Picture Frame.

Rising Treetops Volunteers



Trinity Hall students volunteer for fall clean up.

Volunteers are integral to Rising Treetops' success by generously donating their time, goods and services to help improve the quality of our buildings, grounds and activities for our summer campers and respite clients. This past year, our volunteer activities grew significantly, led by our new Family Liaison and Volunteer Coordinator, Maria Monzon. So far this year we have hosted 355 volunteer visits that include:

- 156 individual volunteers
- 14 different volunteer groups
- 48 returning volunteers

For a total of 1,782 hours volunteered (valued at \$30,000)!

Our volunteer spotlight goes to Dr. Carmela Rochette and Deidre Spiropoulos. Carmela and Deirdre, along with their daughters, Elena and Julianna, sponsor themed days for RTO client events throughout the year. These events are something our clients really enjoy and always look forward to.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER PARTNERSHIPS

In the next few weeks, RTO will be hosting an entire **Christian Brothers Academy** class of approximately 270 students for a day of service. **The Agora Guild Young Professionals** are also coming in early September. Further on, RTO is currently coordinating volunteer dates with **OceanFirst Bank** and the **Withum** accounting group. Not only this, but RTO has also been in contact with **Liberty Mutual** regarding potential volunteer opportunities and is working with **Kids Give** to identify a potential date for their group to visit the facility. Additionally, RTO will begin a partnership with the Boy **Scouts of Lincroft**. We are very grateful for each and every volunteer and the meaningful contributions they make towards our programs!

Peter's Place Cabin Renovation

In July of 2023, Rising Treetops launched its **LEAPS (Life Experiences and Practical Skills)** Program. This unique and specialized program focuses on providing hands-on training for life skills, opportunities for community interaction and vocational readiness for those who are interested in living a semi-independent/independent lifestyle in the future.

Since then, the program has grown in popularity and demand, prompting Rising Treetops at Oakhurst to increase capacity by renovating a second cabin (Peter's) to accommodate additional program participants. Peter's Place Cabin was constructed in 1974 and was named for is named for long-time supporter Frances Lehman Loeb, known as Peter.

Currently we are raising funds to pay for much needed renovations of the 52-year-old cabin and hope to move towards the construction in 2026. Stay tuned!

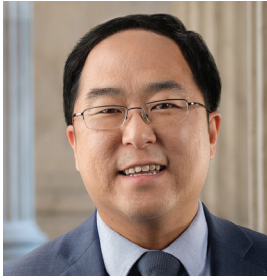
LEAPS Engages in Community Service



The LEAPS program has participated in several community give-back initiatives throughout the year. This is an important initiative as we teach our clients the value of civic engagement and volunteerism.

This year, RTO began a partnership with **Fulfill NJ- Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties**, where the clients have volunteered and given back to the community. LEAPS has also participated in service projects at **Monmouth University's** community garden and completed community service projects with **Meals on Wheels**.

Special Visits From Our Legislators



Senator Andy Kim

Rising Treetops staff and leadership were thrilled to host tours of our Campus and programs to **Senator Andy Kim** and **Assemblywoman Margie Donlon** this year. On May 27, 2026, Senator Kim and his team arrived at our Campus and received a full tour of our programs and campus, interacting with our staff and

clients alike. He also took the time to meet one on one with a parent and board member to discuss the challenges of caregiving. As a caregiver himself, Senator Kim prioritized caregiving in his legislative actions and advocacy. Towards the end of his visit, Senator Kim created a video about the incredible services that Rising Treetops provides to the community—which he posted on his website. We look forward to our continued partnership with Senator Kim and his team.

Check out Senator Kims video about Rising Treetops:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1723359578680766>



Assemblywoman Margie Donlon

On August 26th, 2026, we welcomed **Assemblywoman Margie Donlon** to Rising Treetops for a visit of our programs and facilities. Assemblywoman Donlon has been a great supporter of Rising Treetops. She along with Assemblywoman Luanne Peterpaul and Senator Vin Gopal were instrumental in securing a \$100,000

allocation in the NJ State Budget for the Peter's Cabin Renovation project. Assemblywoman Donlon who also sits on the Assembly Health committee, is a board-certified practicing physician, specializing in caring for patients with injuries and disabilities. We were delighted to share our programs and specifically our therapeutic recreational programs with the Assemblywoman—as our mission closely aligns with her personal and professional goals.

We thank both **Senator Kim** and **Assemblywoman Donlon** for taking the time to get to know Rising Treetops!

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Responding to Our Communities' Needs



Thanks to our dedicated staff!

This summer, Rising Treetops experienced an overwhelming waitlist for our camp and respite programs. To meet the needs of our families, we added a Special Session in September. This bridged the end of our summer season and the beginning of our fall respite season.

This session reduces the waitlist, providing additional respite support for caregivers, and gives more campers the opportunity to spend a week at Rising Treetops. We are grateful for our staff who have made it possible.

Overnight Respite In Full Swing!



Cooking classes during our Respite program.

Rising Treetops began their 2026–27 respite season on September 23. Over 36 weeks, there are 20 seven-night and 3 five-night overnight respite sessions scheduled through early June 2027. Sessions include either theme days, holiday parties or off-campus trips. Respite sessions are filling up so please email respite@risingtreetops.org or call 732-531-0215 for more information. Please know we are now able to accept both New York OPWDD and New Jersey DDD funding year-round for eligible individuals for out-of-home respite care as a family support service in both states.

Client Success Stories

Rising Treetops has been busy with our camp and respite services. The following provide a few examples of the need and impact our services have on our families.

Camp Success Story: Maddie



Maddie and counselors enjoying the Gym.

For Maddie's family, RTO is so much more than summer camp. It is a place where their daughter feels happy, safe, and supported—and where they can experience peace of mind knowing she is in good hands.

They see her excitement the moment they arrive. As soon as they pull into the driveway, Maddie recognizes where she is and screams with joy. Her family knows immediately: Maddie is somewhere she loves.

While Maddie enjoys camp, her parents can relax and spend meaningful time with their other children, knowing she is safe, comfortable, and surrounded by people who understand her needs.

"It gives us a peaceful break, knowing that Maddie is in an environment where she is supported and feels safe."

For Maddie, RTO is a place where she can have experiences of her own, build connections, and simply enjoy being herself. For her family, it provides something equally meaningful—the reassurance that she is happy and cared for. When asked what they would say to another family considering RTO, their answer is simple:

"It is a great program."

Behind those words is a family who has found something truly special: a place their daughter is excited to return to, and a community they trust completely.

For Maddie, RTO is a place filled with happiness. For her family, happiness brings peace of mind.

Respite Success Story: Darren



Darren and counselor enjoying the outdoors.

For Darren and his mother, RTO is much more than a camp. It is a place where Darren can enjoy meaningful time away from home—and where his mother can experience the peace of mind and freedom every caregiver deserves.

Approaching his 50th birthday, Darren lives at home with his mother, who has devoted much of her life to caring for him. RTO has given them something priceless: trust, reassurance, and the freedom to enjoy life apart.

"Since I met camp, I feel free. He feels free."

Darren looks forward to coming to RTO and returns home just as happy. Knowing he is safe, supported, and surrounded by people who care allows his mother to grocery shop, enjoy a meal, spend time with family and friends, and even travel. She was able to celebrate her birthday with her children in New York, travel to Bermuda, and attend her brother's funeral, knowing Darren was somewhere he loved.

That is the true meaning of respite: while Darren is enjoying meaningful experiences of his own, his mother has the freedom to live hers. Her trust in RTO runs deep. She praises the caring staff, communication, and thoughtful attention Darren receives, and encourages other families to discover the same support.

"I would give you guys a 10 out of 10. The staff is awesome."

For Darren, RTO is a place to have fun, build independence, and simply be himself. For his mother, it is the comfort of knowing someone she loves so deeply is in good hands.

At RTO, Darren has the freedom to be Darren—and his mom has the freedom to simply be Mom.

From the Desks of the President and Executive Director



It has been an eventful year so far for Rising Treetops at Oakhurst. We began 2026 with a leadership transition, expressing our sincere gratitude to Diana Breen for her dedicated interim leadership and warmly welcoming Lauren Frary as our new Executive Director.

Throughout the year, our programs have continued to provide vital support, services, and opportunities to the individuals and families we serve. We remain deeply grateful to the dedicated team of Direct Support Professionals who live on our campus and provide compassionate care in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment. We are equally thankful for our full- and part-time staff, dedicated volunteers, and our 18-member Board of Directors. Their commitment and service make it possible for Rising Treetops to fulfill its mission each day.

As we look toward the year ahead, one of our priorities is ensuring that our facilities remain well-maintained, safe, and secure. In today's challenging economic environment, meeting these needs requires an even greater commitment from our community of supporters. We are especially grateful to our donors, grantors, and community partners whose generosity provides critical resources at a time when they are needed more than ever.

The costs associated with operating our campus continue to increase, including staffing, meals, transportation, equipment and materials for therapeutic and recreational activities, utilities, and the ongoing maintenance and cleaning of all 14 buildings on our property. At the same time, many of the families we serve continue to rely on scholarships to access our programs and services. Looking ahead, Rising Treetops will also begin renovations to Peter's Cabin, an important project that will help us respond to the growing needs of our community. Through this work, we aim to strengthen our ability to provide the



high-quality services for which Rising Treetops is known, while expanding our outreach and programs to reach even more individuals, families, and communities.

We are grateful to everyone who continues to believe in and support the mission of Rising Treetops. With the dedication of our staff, volunteers, board members, families, and community partners, we look forward to a year of continued growth, opportunity, and meaningful impact.

Marilyn Friedman, President

Lauren Frary, Executive Director



Inspiring confidence and joy
in those with special needs

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