Dear Friends,

2015 was a pivotal year for NCLD. It was a year filled with discovery and accomplishment. It was a year of re-envisioning, not because something was broken, but because it was time for us to grow. It was a year during which our entire team rolled up sleeves and did the hard but creative work of reinventing NCLD for the future. We knew the moment had come to increase our impact, so we began to create a plan for what we now call “NCLD 2.0.”

This comprehensive plan has four main components:

• Expanding NCLD’s board and its role in the organization
• Building a strategic plan focusing on NCLD’s mission and programs
• Creating a comprehensive development plan to resource NCLD’s ambition
• Crafting a communications plan to ensure that NCLD can effectively communicate its purpose, impact and unique role in the learning and attention field

As we worked to carve this path forward, we continued to focus on our mission and do the important work at hand. Our efforts led to a number of major outcomes this year. Among these are:

• The launch of Understood.org, a comprehensive free online resource to support parents of children with learning and attention issues, created by 15 non-profit partners and managed and operated by NCLD
• Unprecedented support in the areas of public policy and law, especially surrounding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
• A grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for our study of personalized learning, which has allowed us to convene experts and thought leaders and develop recommendations for the field
• The beginning of our Schools That Work program on Cape Cod and Islands region of Massachusetts, an ambitious systems change initiative that implements a comprehensive framework for students who struggle

2015 saw the most significant impact in our organization’s history, building on the foundation of our innovative programs and services. We look forward to sharing this story with you as we continue to inspire others, engage our constituents and transform the landscape for all those whose lives are touched by learning and attention issues.

As always, thank you for joining us on this journey.

James H. Wendorf
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Frederic M. Poses
CHAIRMAN
Empowering Parents

We empower parents by giving them the resources they need to advocate for their child and allowing them to see the world through their child’s eyes.

Providing resources and inspiration

By June 2015, Understood.org is a comprehensive free online resource to support parents of kids with learning and attention issues and empower them to help their children thrive in school and in life. Created by 15 non-profit partners and managed and operated by NCLD, Understood provides parents with a safe online community of fellow parents, daily free help from experts in the field and toolkits for their child’s unique circumstances. They can also interact with “Through Your Child’s Eyes,” a unique simulation that allows them to experience learning and attention issues firsthand.

Understood also shows parents that their children aren’t alone. On the site, families from different backgrounds share their stories about living with learning challenges and thriving not just in spite of their differences, but because of them.

“I first learned I had dyslexia when I was 7 or 8 years old ... My mom... would always be there to help supplement... The thing for me was stress, the frustration, the anxiety, this self-esteem issue—that I'm just dumb, I'm not capable. And so her thing was just being a mentor and a coach and saying it's OK, it's OK, it's OK.”

—Gavin Newsom
Lieutenant Governor of California

Understood was founded by 15 non-profit partners including NCLD:

Visit Understood.org to see what's new!
Check out our recent articles, infographics, videos, tools and other new features.
### Building communities, online and in person

By the end of the fiscal year, Understood had served more than 4.5 million unique users in just eight months. Thousands of people watched Understood’s daily expert events. Then, in Spring 2015, Understood won the 2015 Webby Award in Best Parenting/Family Site – an achievement referred to as “the Internet’s highest honor” by *The New York Times*.

Offline, NCLD built in-person relationships with individual parents. Understood hosted live-streamed expert panels for parents and participated in many conferences, solidifying NCLD’s place as a community builder in the field.

### Sharing resources and raising awareness

Understood is empowering parents to get their children the help they need. More than 2,000 new pieces of content were created for the site, and over 250 expert live chats were held in the 2015 fiscal year and viewed by over 6,000 parents. Experts included thought leaders like Ellen Braaten, Ph.D., director of the Learning and Emotional Assessment Program at Massachusetts General Hospital and assistant professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School. Like Dr. Braaten, all of the Understood experts shared a commitment to children with learning and attention issues, though they each offered a different perspective from his or her position as an educator, psychologist, lawyer or specialist.

Understood is also raising awareness across the country. The Ad Council has helped secure donated placement of Understood ads throughout the United States on TV, on the radio and in print media. Billboards were featured in Times Square, an iconic New York landmark where more than 300,000 pedestrians walk each day. The Understood PSA campaign garnered $45.6 million in donated media support over its first year.

In addition to increasing awareness of Understood.org, the campaign has helped motivate parents to take important actions on behalf of their children with learning and attention issues. The Ad Council’s tracking study reported that increasing numbers of parents of children without formal identifications are conducting research online, seeking evaluations and talking to teachers, friends and family about their child’s struggles.
Engaging Young Adults
This year, we let the stories of young adults and their experiences guide our priorities.

Honoring exceptional young adults:
The Anne Ford and Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship Winners

The Anne Ford Scholarship is granted to a graduating high school senior with a learning disability who will enter a full-time bachelor’s degree program.

The 2015 Anne Ford Scholarship recipient was Savannah Treviño-Casias, a graduating high school senior who began attending Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University in the Fall of 2015. In the sixth grade, Savannah was diagnosed with dyscalculia. She remembers “crying in frustration” during math class as a child, but with the support of her mother and grandmother, she met the challenge of AP Statistics. Savannah has faced hurdles on her path to college, but she’s surmounted all of them through hard work, grit and perseverance.

The Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship is awarded to a graduating high school senior with a documented learning disability who plans to enroll in a two-year community college, a technical training program or a specialized program for students with learning disabilities the following fall.

Cody Trine received the 2015 Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship. Cody, a senior at Boonville High School in Indiana, was accepted to Vincennes University and began working toward a career in law enforcement and homeland security. Though Cody struggled in school, he never let it deter him from what he wanted to do in life. He excelled in sports and volunteer work, and he played on a number of varsity teams while mentoring younger athletes in his town. Cody’s experience as a volunteer and a community-builder led him to a career in law enforcement, and he hopes to help others in the same way that his family, school, teams and peers helped him.

“I will live my life to show others that I am a capable student despite my learning disability. I am intelligent, positive and confident, and I will embrace everything college offers to make my future brighter.”

– Savannah Treviño-Casias

“My IEP, school, peers, family and community have helped me in many ways and have given me chances to prove myself... The correct understanding, help and education could change the way people with learning disabilities are viewed... More opportunities need to be given to students with LD because we would be great assets to the world, given chances.”

– Cody Trine
Engaging experts and sharing knowledge

During the 2015 fiscal year, the 2014 edition of the State of Learning Disabilities was circulated widely and reached educators, policymakers and the media. This report highlighted key data points, such as high school graduation rates, and also identified areas where more information and future study is needed.

The annual meeting of our Professional Advisory Board (PAB) took place in October 2014. At this two-day convening, attendees provided insight and guidance into NCLD’s activities in the areas of policy and program development. Over 40 experts in the field of learning disabilities, not only PAB members but also foundation representatives and key NCLD team members, participated.

Embracing the experiences of young adults to show us the path forward

Our Student Voices project, funded by the Oak Foundation, surveyed 1,221 young adults, two years out of high school. We found that 82% of a student’s success is determined primarily by three factors: self-confidence, connection to friends and community, and a supportive home life. We also learned that over half of the students we surveyed were struggling or merely coping rather than successfully navigating their young adult years.

Needless to say, the results of this national online questionnaire were revelatory, and the data we collected guided our priorities as we moved forward. This knowledge culminated in a new strategic priority for NCLD. We built upon our findings in the months that followed—and we continue to do so today.

Understanding Young Adults

Young adults in our study fell into three major subgroups: strugglers, copers and navigators. Young adults in each of the groups have different needs and will need different approaches to transition support.

- **26% STRUGGLERS**
  - 17% Disengaged Strugglers
  - 9% Anchorless Strugglers

- **36% COPERS**
  - 19% Uncertain Worriers
  - 17% Solitary Copers

- **38% NAVIGATORS**
  - 16% Cautious Optimists
  - 22% Confident Navigators

Kids with learning and attention issues have a lower probability of success in high school

19% of students with identified learning disabilities dropped out of school

ONLY 68% of students with identified learning disabilities left high school with a regular diploma

HALF of students with identified learning disabilities faced serious disciplinary action in school

2014 State of Learning Disabilities Report, NCLD

View online and download the results of the study: nclld.org/studentvoices
Advocacy and Public Policy

We worked with parents, civil rights organizations and the U.S. Congress to raise dyslexia awareness, fund a new National Center and more.

Transforming national policy to make sure every student succeeds

In this fiscal year, we achieved a landmark result in December 2014. As a result of NCLD’s continued and targeted advocacy, Congress allocated $2.5 million to create a National Center that will help students with disabilities transition into college. This center will also help faculty provide those students with needed accommodations.

In the first half of 2015, NCLD partnered with almost 50 business and civil rights organizations to build the foundation for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (previously called “No Child Left Behind”). In March 2015, we hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill called “Raising the Bar for Students with Disabilities.” This briefing featured members of NCLD’s policy committee and Professional Advisory Board, and it focused on ensuring high standards and expectations for all students with disabilities. Later, we broke our own Action Alert record in a mere 72 hours when more than 3,000 parents emailed Congress, all of them asking that the Act better serve students with learning disabilities.

Looking Ahead:

In December 2015, the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law by President Obama. ESSA includes important provisions to better support students with learning and attention issues.

Looking ahead: six things you should know about the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- **3000+** parents took action within 72 hours
- **50** organizations partnered on important issues

We joined together to take action

- **6 Major victories for students with learning and attention issues**
- **Promotes innovation in education**
- **Calls on states and schools to eliminate unnecessary tests while keeping an annual measure of student progress**
- **Keeps students with disabilities on track for success**
- **Gives parents and community more information**
- **Expands the opportunities for parents to play a vital role**

Focuses on improving literacy instruction
Congress holds a hearing on the Science of Dyslexia

In September 2014, NCLD worked closely with the House of Representatives Committee on Space Science and Technology to hold a Congressional hearing on the Science of Dyslexia. Representatives Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Julia Brownley (D-CA), Larry Bucshon (R-IN) and Donna Edwards (R-MD) all spoke from the heart about their experiences as parents of children with learning disabilities. Following the event, more than 100 advocates, parents and school leaders attended a luncheon to discuss ideas, share reactions and push the dialogue forward.

In addition to this hearing, we organized coalition letters to the U.S. Department of Education, requesting guidance for parents and schools on when terms like dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia could be used.

Personalized Learning: Four Myths and Facts

**MYTH:** It just doesn’t work for students with disabilities.

**FACT:** In schools with personalized learning systems, all students have a learning path, similar to an Individualized Education Program (IEP), so the stigma of receiving specialized services is reduced.

**MYTH:** It isn’t realistic for kids at the K-12 level.

**FACT:** Students can better understand their own learning style, empowering them to take ownership of their education.

**MYTH:** It’s a fun approach, but kids don’t really learn much from it.

**FACT:** Creative educators are using personalized learning to motivate and engage students through technology and projects while maintaining high standards for all.

**MYTH:** It replaces the teacher with technology.

**FACT:** Personalized learning doesn’t replace the teacher; it allows teachers to use technology to help all students learn, whether they are in need of intervention or acceleration.

Developing policy recommendations to support students with disabilities in personalized learning systems

In Fall 2014, we were honored to receive a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This grant allows us to examine new personalized learning systems and consult with top national experts on how we can best include students with disabilities in these systems.

We look forward to continuing this work, which allows us to make new discoveries, offer recommendations, and forge new partnerships to improve personalized learning for students with disabilities.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING IN ACTION

E.L. Haynes Public Charter High School in Washington, D.C. is a current innovator in personalized learning methods.

The school’s diverse student population includes a number of teens with learning disabilities and attention issues. Personalized learning has helped set high expectations for every student while simultaneously supporting the unique needs of each learner.

This approach has empowered students to take ownership of their education. It has also led to concrete results: in just two years’ time, E.L. Haynes has outscored the statewide average in reading by 10 points.

View the recommendations at nclrd.org/personalizedlearning
Transforming Schools

We worked with school districts and states to provide in-depth professional development to educators and to support successful academic outcomes for all students.

Concluding the Leadership in Action program

Three years ago, we partnered with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), state departments of education and state NAESP affiliates to launch the Leadership in Action program. This program brought cohorts of principals from Colorado, Kentucky, Minnesota, South Dakota and Vermont together to receive personalized professional development in Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) implementation. LIA came to a successful conclusion in 2015, and we’re proud to have shared our knowledge with 62 school districts in five separate states.
Kicking off the Schools That Work initiative in Massachusetts

In 2015, the Barnstable Public Schools system was selected for our Schools That Work initiative, a program designed to support successful academic outcomes for all students. This district of eight participating schools has already begun working directly with a team of NCLD experts in MTSS, including Dr. George Batsche, Dr. Judy Elliott, Dr. Steve Kukic and Ms. Judi Maynard. The Schools That Work initiative was made possible by a generous two-year grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation.

By the end of the fiscal year, we were looking ahead to launching the Schools That Work program in Mashpee Public Schools, as well as receiving an additional grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation to extend our MTSS outreach and support to the 19 school districts in the Cape Cod Collaborative.

Developing a new toolkit to fill a glaring gap in the field of learning disability identification

We also began developing a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) toolkit for identifying specific learning disabilities (SLD) in 2015. This online toolkit provides a free, first-of-its-kind resource to parents, educators and school leaders and is designed to be shared.

View and share on rtinetwork.org/toolkit
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NCLD’s Professional Advisory Board (PAB) includes leading educators, psychologists, researchers, physicians and advocates. The PAB guides NCLD program activity and advises the executive team and Board of Directors on educational needs, program opportunities, public policy development and strategic planning.

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Kim Woodward
Senior Director, Individual Philanthropy

* as of July 1, 2016

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Graphic Designer

Melissa R. Fall
Content Writer

Julia Heitner
Editor

Board and Team
The Year in Numbers

**REVENUE**
- Fee for Service/Other: 27%
- Special Events: 29%
- Corporations & Foundations: 40%
- Individual Giving: 4%

**EXPENSE**
- Parent Empowerment: 60%
- School Transformation: 5%
- Public Policy: 11%
- Young Adult: 6%
- Fundraising and Development: 10%
- Management and General: 8%

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**NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES, INC.**
**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION**
*June 30, 2015 and 2014*

**ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$471,288</td>
<td>$1,640,834</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable*</td>
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<td>1,365,614</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses and other assets</td>
<td>162,374</td>
<td>141,817</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70,920</td>
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<td>Security deposits</td>
<td>79,144</td>
<td>16,810</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property and equipment, net**</td>
<td>685,874</td>
<td>284,196</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,925,309</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,520,191</strong></td>
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**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$344,110</td>
<td>$747,418</td>
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<td>Accrued vacation</td>
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<td>168,073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>281,966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred rent</td>
<td>62,375</td>
<td>86,772</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>656,345</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,284,229</strong></td>
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**NET ASSETS:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>493,592</td>
<td>890,788</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted**</td>
<td>775,372</td>
<td>1,345,174</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,268,964</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,235,962</strong></td>
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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$1,925,309</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,520,191</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES, INC.
#### STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
**Years Ended June 30, 2015 and 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUE, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue from annual fundraising event</strong></td>
<td>$2,407,875</td>
<td>$2,521,527</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct costs of annual fundraising event</strong></td>
<td>(155,027)</td>
<td>(157,460)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net support from fundraising event</strong></td>
<td>2,252,848</td>
<td>2,364,067</td>
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<td><strong>Contributions</strong></td>
<td>545,353</td>
<td>579,040</td>
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<td><strong>Fee for service</strong></td>
<td>1,387,618</td>
<td>5,467,222</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rent income</strong></td>
<td>183,740</td>
<td>183,740</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-kind contributions</strong></td>
<td>396,863</td>
<td>69,000</td>
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<td><strong>Investment income</strong></td>
<td>5,679</td>
<td>15,531</td>
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<td><strong>Net assets released from restrictions</strong></td>
<td>3,658,441</td>
<td>2,391,360</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue, gains and other support</strong></td>
<td>8,430,542</td>
<td>10,886,220</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Services:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School transformation</td>
<td>436,547</td>
<td>1,153,123</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent empowerment</td>
<td>5,328,391</td>
<td>8,388,809</td>
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<td>Public policy</td>
<td>963,102</td>
<td>562,712</td>
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<td>Young adult</td>
<td>564,361</td>
<td>571,137</td>
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<td><strong>Total program services</strong></td>
<td>7,292,401</td>
<td>10,675,781</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support Services:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>667,993</td>
<td>312,235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising and development</td>
<td>867,344</td>
<td>444,824</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total support services</strong></td>
<td>1,535,337</td>
<td>757,059</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>8,827,738</td>
<td>11,432,840</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change in net assets</strong></td>
<td>(397,196)</td>
<td>(890,336)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td>$890,788</td>
<td>$1,345,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending</strong></td>
<td>$493,592</td>
<td>$890,788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Year in Numbers
We Would Like to Thank Our Donors

$100,000+
Ascend Performance Materials LLC
Mr. and Mrs. G. Peter D’Aloia
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
The Hirsch Family Foundation
The Posse Foundation

$50,000 - $99,999
Henry Ford II Fund
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For parents of children with learning and attention issues

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Where young adults living with learning differences share their stories

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Let no children be demeaned, or have their wonder diminished, because of our ignorance or inactivity; Let no adults be deprived of discovery, because we lack the resources to discover their learning needs; Let neither children nor adults—ever—doubt themselves or their minds because we are unsure of our commitment.

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