

LI  ENU

Home. Heart. Soul.



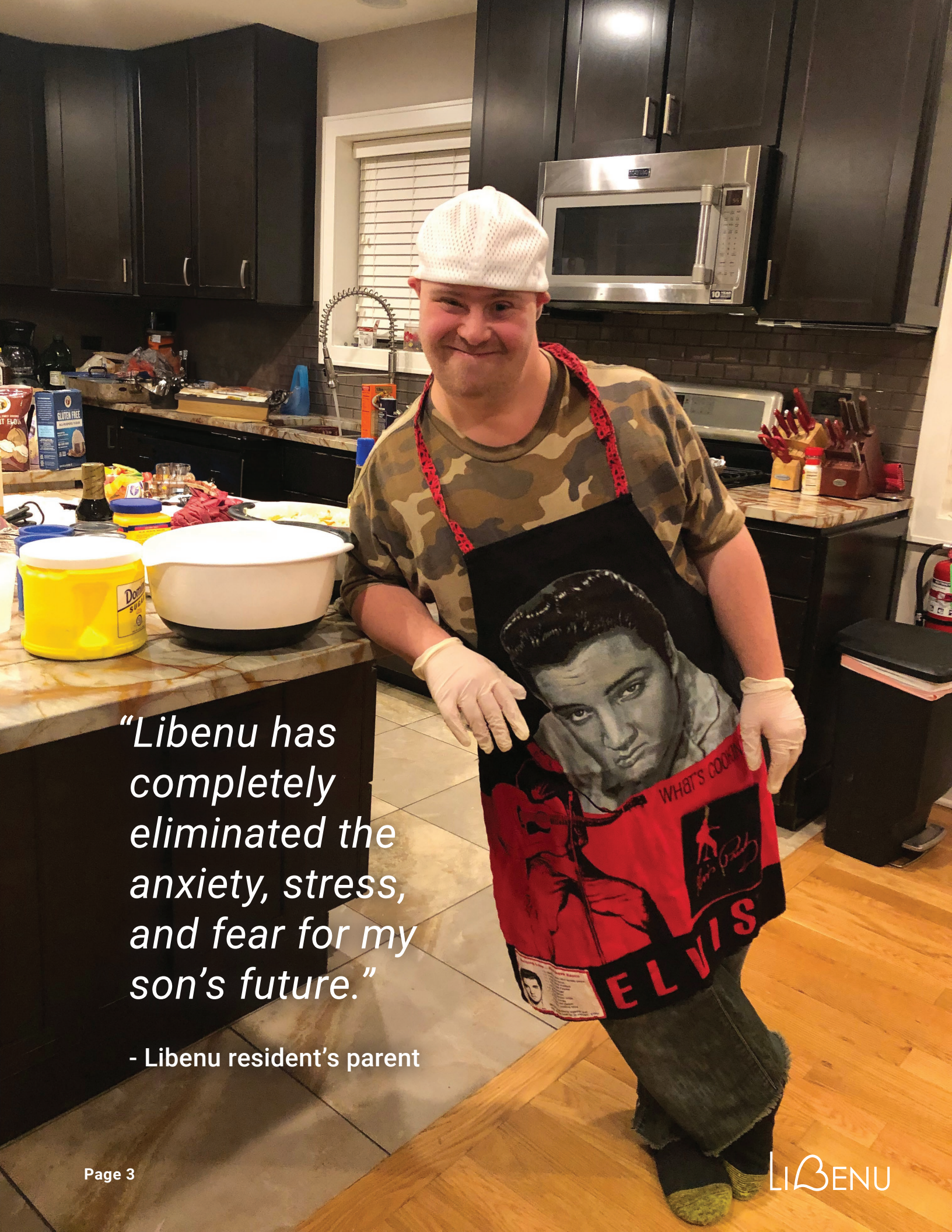
PROSPECTUS



Libenu is nationally recognized for its expertise and transformative impact on individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. With kosher, person-centered homes; after-school, overnight, and summer respite programs; social and recreational opportunities; as well as consultation and advocacy, Libenu has an outsized impact on every life we touch.

Entering our next phase, with the development of the Lev Avigayil Libenu Center, new residential homes, and the growth of respite services, **we seek your investment as we raise \$5.94 million to provide a lifetime of care for the most vulnerable individuals in the heart of our Chicago Jewish community.**





“Libenu has completely eliminated the anxiety, stress, and fear for my son’s future.”

- Libenu resident’s parent

Meeting the Need

Individuals with developmental disabilities have the same hopes, dreams, and desires as their typical peers: to live productive lives with maximum independence, embraced by their community, connected to their religious traditions, and valued for their unique strengths. In the Jewish community, this means celebrating Shabbat and holidays, being walking distance from a synagogue, and observing kosher dietary rules.

For too long, individuals with developmental disabilities have been marginalized and lacked these opportunities. Many are not able to self-advocate; they feel unheard and unappreciated. Parents and family members face the daunting challenge of balancing the care for their loved ones with disabilities with that for their families and themselves, which can adversely impact their physical and mental health.

Parents of children with developmental disabilities desperately need a break from the constant demands of caregiving, which come at the expense of their own well-being.

Sixty percent of parents spend more than 40 hours a week providing care; 40 percent provide care for more than 80 hours per week, while 90 percent experience fatigue, stress, and guilt. Parents are overburdened and worry incessantly about who will care for their child when they are gone.

For adults with developmental disabilities, finding housing is a significant challenge, with long wait times for services and limited availability of state funding. More than 16,000 individuals are currently on the state PUNS (Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services) list, which tracks those seeking state-funded services. Only 10 percent are selected for funding each year. This shortage of accessible housing and lack of funding create a formidable barrier.



Libenu was founded to address these challenges, with a focus on meeting long-term needs. Predicated on a philosophy of inclusion and belonging, Libenu provides critically-needed services for individuals with disabilities and their families, including: life-changing, robust respite services infused with Jewish values; warm, welcoming person-centered kosher homes for adults; inclusive social and recreational opportunities; partnerships for day programming and vocational training; leadership and advocacy.



Founder's Story

Prior to the founding of Libenu in 2010, there was a paucity of residential and respite services for Jewish adults with developmental disabilities in Chicago. Culturally sensitive, community-based housing was virtually nonexistent. Illinois ranked among the worst states for funding for individuals with disabilities. Employment, social, and recreational opportunities were limited and difficult to access. Minimal respite services were available for parents and caregivers, greatly impacting mental health, family cohesion, and the ability of parents to work or take care of their family.



Libenu was founded to address these critical needs, led by Dr. Shana Erenberg, a professor of education and private practitioner specializing in the diagnosis and support of children and adults with disabilities, with more than 40 years of experience. Dr. Erenberg brought her extensive expertise to the forefront of this initiative, joined by Debra Silverstein, Alderman of the 50th Ward of Chicago, former State Senator Ira Silverstein, and Baruch and Joyce Schur, who were considering moving out of state to secure housing services for their son.



The founders created Libenu to provide a lifetime of care for individuals with developmental disabilities and to support their families through advocacy, robust respite services to give families a much-needed reprieve from the demands of caregiving, and loving homes where adults with disabilities can live with dignity and respect as fully included members of their community.

Respite Services - A Reprieve for Families

Parents often find themselves overwhelmed with the constant demands of caring for a child with developmental disabilities while trying to balance the equally pressing needs of their entire family. Simple things that most families take for granted—sharing dinnertime, helping the other children with homework, or even a quick trip to the grocery store—can become seemingly impossible tasks. When an unforeseen circumstance or emergency arises, the stresses related to caregiving increase exponentially, often resulting in exhaustion, isolation, and depression. The constant vigilance needed takes a toll on the entire family, impacting the marriage, finances, and employment. Respite services are a lifeline for parents, providing both an immediate mental health intervention and long-term support, as well as socialization, fun, and enriching activities for their children with developmental disabilities.



Libenu offers comprehensive respite care:

Lev Respite After-School

Libenu’s Lev Respite provides professional services in a safe, nurturing environment, Monday through Thursday afternoons, including legal holidays. Participants enjoy a variety of activities based on best practices and centered around goal-oriented learning of social, emotional, communication, and life skills. A delicious, healthy, kosher dinner is served nightly. Dedicated staff and volunteers make sure that everyone’s needs are properly addressed.

Lev Respite alleviates the burden of care for families who have children with developmental disabilities by giving them a much-needed break in their day. Parents can spend time with their other family members or have time for themselves, with full confidence that their child is in a warm, nurturing environment. Family relationships are strengthened. Parents describe Lev Respite as their “lifeline to sanity.”

Lev Lilah Overnight Respite

Children with developmental disabilities have a significantly increased incidence of sleep disorders, which adversely impacts the entire family. Many parents have not had a restful night's sleep since their child was born. In response to this need, Libenu created the Lev Lilah Overnight Respite program—the only one of its kind in the Midwest—to provide short-term overnight respite services from Friday afternoon through Saturday night. While parents and families enjoy a peaceful reprieve, participants experience a fun-filled Shabbat with delicious food, games, rituals, and friends. Attending synagogue promotes inclusion and awareness, while reducing stigma and creating a sense of belonging.



Camp Lev

Camp Lev, an extended overnight respite program, responds to the additional and pressing needs of families during the difficult period between the end of summer camps and the beginning of school, significantly easing the demands of caregiving during this stressful time. Participants have fun, socialize with other children, and enjoy typical summer camp activities. Parents can have peace of mind that their children with developmental disabilities are in a safe, engaging, and nurturing setting.



Meet Oron

Oron, the third of four lively boys, attends all of Libenu's Lev Respite programs. His mother's heart "fills with emotion and gratitude," when she drops him off, "because Oron is with his people in his second home." **Libenu's respite programs are the family's lifeline, a treasured gift, where Oron is supported and celebrated for every milestone.** Oron is nonverbal and needs help with feeding and dressing, requiring around-the-clock vigilance and can become aggressive when he has tantrums.



Before Lev Respite, the home was "a constant crisis zone," and Oron's exhausted parents dreaded the chaos that filled every evening. Lev Respite changed that, giving the parents a reprieve and Oron a place to thrive. He took his first steps at Lev Respite to the cheers of the staff and volunteers spent his first night without his parents at Lev Lilah. Camp Lev was another breakthrough, where Oron swam, played with friends, and zoomed down a zipline like any other happy camper.

Residential Services - Home, Heart, Soul



As individuals with developmental disabilities age into adulthood, residential options remain scarce, with a shortage of both state funding and affordable, accessible, community-based housing. Nearly 16,000 individuals in Illinois linger on the state waitlist for services, leaving them at risk of institutionalization. Additionally, there are significant costs to run a kosher household—for food, equipment, and ongoing staff training.



Libenu's homes are tailored to meet each resident's unique needs and play a crucial role in fostering independence, dignity, and overall well-being. Residents develop daily living skills, such as shopping or taking public transportation, hygiene, dressing, and self-care. They engage in social and recreational activities and attend meaningful day programs. Residents also work, volunteer, and give back to their community. They maximize personal choice and self-determination in an environment where they can express their spirituality and practice their holidays and traditions—all within the heart of their community.



The goal of Libenu's programs is to provide a lifetime of care, providing excellence in services now while also proactively planning for the future. Libenu is dedicated to addressing age-related changes in the physical, mental, and behavioral health of our residents, ensuring they can continue living in their homes and communities. Recognizing that individuals with disabilities often “age faster” we provide tailored care and support to mitigate health risks and address memory needs. Each resident receives comprehensive care, maintaining their quality of life as they age.



Meet Jacob

Jacob is a cherished member of the Libenu family. He is an artist who, despite being color-blind, paints beautiful, vivid abstract pieces. He has lived in his Libenu home since its inception, creating a warm and vibrant environment alongside his many friends. Jacob has Down syndrome and embraces life with passion and creativity. His work is a testament to his unique vision and the joy he finds in expressing himself through his art.

Jacob is a natural leader and ambassador for Libenu in the broader Jewish community. Whether he's sharing his love for music, experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen, attending religious services, or simply enjoying time with his friends, Jacob likes to be connected to everyone around him. As Jacob always says, "Libenu made me more independent, more popular, and more creative. It's the best, best, ever!"

A few years after Jacob moved in, his mother had a serious health crisis that required extended hospitalization and rehabilitation. While his parents faced a world of immediate concerns, they knew that Jacob's well-being was assured. Jacob's parents were able to focus fully on her recovery because they knew that Jacob was cared for, happy, and flourishing in his Libenu home.

Leadership and Advocacy - A Voice for the Most Vulnerable

Libenu provides leadership and advocacy at both the state and national levels to champion the rights and needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. By working closely with policymakers and participating in advocacy initiatives, Libenu ensures that the voices of those we serve are heard. Our efforts focus on promoting legislation that enhances accessibility, improves healthcare services, maintains adequate funding, and supports the overall well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities.



Impact and Success



Libenu began in 2010 with a single home, providing services for six adult men with developmental disabilities. The organization grew quickly and exponentially. In 2013, it added a home for women (the first of its kind in the community), followed shortly by another home for men. Libenu's Lev Respite program was initiated in 2016, serving six children and their families, and expanded swiftly to meet the needs of our community.



Libenu's programs currently impact more than 600 family members and 8,500 community members, but these numbers do not adequately capture the intensity and scope of the services we provide. Libenu's Lev Respite After-School program offers more than 800 hours of respite care annually, including legal holidays. Lev Lilah overnight respite is offered two to three weekends per month, for more than 30 hours per session. Camp Lev provides five days of overnight respite services, addressing a particularly challenging time for families. All of Libenu's respite programs are staffed by a team of dedicated professionals and community volunteers, including high school students who often go on to pursue careers in education, therapy, and disability-related fields.



Our residential services are even more time intensive. They are offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year—for life. Libenu residents receive more than 8,000 hours of loving care each year, with support around the clock.





Countless hours go into planning a new home, including: the purchase; renovations to meet the unique needs of its residents; meeting with families and

clients; creating individualized

service plans to maximize each resident's potential; and continuous monitoring and follow-up. **Libenu residents report that they are overwhelmingly happy with their living arrangements and feel a sense of belonging in their community.** Parents of Libenu residents express a high degree of satisfaction with these services and peace of mind about their loved ones' futures.

The untold hours and unwavering dedication of the Libenu team means our residential and respite programs are places where **people with developmental disabilities thrive** and reach milestones their parents had never imagined. Take Rachel, who before moving into her Libenu home was unable to prepare her own meals; she now helps with the cooking and bakes challah with her housemates every week. Or Max, who discovered a love of cartoons and puzzles at the Lev After-School Respite program and now uses those activities as a way of self-soothing.

"Libenu is my home and my community. I feel like I belong here."

- Libenu resident

"Libenu provided my daughter with a full life, a group of friends, and a measure of independence. Most importantly, she's happy."

- Libenu resident's parent

"Libenu's Lev respite programs are a gift for our whole family! We can spend time together without stress or worry knowing that our son is in a warm and nurturing environment with staff and volunteers that truly care"

- Respite Parent

"I love Lev Respite! It's so much fun!"

- Respite Participant

Data from our quarterly parent surveys clearly reflect the success of Libenu’s residential and respite programs:

- 98 percent of caregivers report a significant reduction in personal and family stress and anxiety levels
- 94 percent of respondents report improved family relationships
- 90 percent report a reduction in their physical symptoms of depression and anxiety



In addition, 95 percent of Libenu residents and 100 percent of respite program participants met or exceeded their individualized goals.

Beyond these direct services, Libenu offers leadership and advocacy to educate the public about disabilities and foster inclusive community environments. Our work with state legislators resulted in hourly wage increases for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and more equitable reimbursement calculations for residential supports.

Since launching our residential and respite programs, Libenu has progressively expanded each year to address community needs, never accepting “that’s impossible” for an answer. **Investors in our mission can be confident in Libenu’s ability to achieve results because of our proven track record, comprehensive range of services, and unwavering dedication to our mission.** We are transparent about finances, with oversight from independent auditors and a diverse, experienced board ensuring that we spend our money prudently.

Libenu has been recognized nationally for excellence and innovation in the field of disabilities.

Libenu was chosen by Upstart Accelerator as one of the six most innovative Jewish not-for-profit organizations in the world; by Slingshot Fund as one of Chicago’s most inspirational non-profits; and was featured in Righteous Crowd - National Jewish Giving Circle. Dr. Erenberg was selected by Jewish Federations of North America as a Jewish Community Hero and by AARP as a 2024 Purpose Prize Fellow. Libenu is proud of the ongoing recognition of its diligent spending and stewardship of resources, with the highest four-star rating from Charity Navigator and the highest Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid/Guidestar.

Vision & Investment Opportunities

Libenu envisions an inclusive, welcoming community where individuals with disabilities have a home and extended family. Here they can thrive, have a voice, experience a true sense of belonging, and are valued for their unique strengths and contributions. Families have a reprieve from the demands of caregiving, a reduction of stress and improved mental wellness, and the peace of mind of knowing that their loved ones' futures are secure. **Your investment ensures that Libenu has the financial resources to provide a lifetime of care and meet the growing needs of the community for years to come.**

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1

Lev Avigayil – Building a Permanent Home for Libenu's Respite Programs

Investment: \$2,300,000

With a lead gift, we purchased a building for the new Lev Avigayil Libenu Center, at 2827-2839 W. Touhy, which will be a permanent home for our Lev Respite program. This will allow for a considerable increase in capacity to address our waiting list and the expansion of services for children and adults with developmental disabilities. We are seeking an additional \$2.3 million to support this effort, which includes significant renovations to the existing structure, land, and parking lot. New construction includes an accessible, covered playground, multi-purpose room, sensory room, kitchen, and classrooms with moveable walls, as well as security installations.



2

Purchase and Renovate Two New Residences

Investment: \$1.9 million – \$900,000 per home and \$100,000 for ongoing adaptations

Adults with developmental disabilities deserve productive lives with maximum independence, while remaining close to their community. Libenu needs to purchase two new homes for men and women on our waiting list. The homes need to be renovated to meet the current and future needs of the residents and to accommodate individuals with significant needs that other organizations might not serve. Accessibility modifications include adding outdoor ramps and widening hallways for wheelchairs, remodeling bathrooms and showers, and installing adaptive fixtures that promote ease of use.

3

Sustain, Strengthen, and Grow Libenu's Respite Programs

Investment: \$1,740,000 – \$580,000 per year for three years

No one is turned away from Libenu's respite programs for financial need, with more than 80 percent of families receiving scholarships. To meet the growing needs of the community we are increasing the capacity of our Lev Respite After-School program to serve families on our waiting list; building a pipeline of well-trained staff and volunteers through collaboration with local high schools; offering additional monthly Lev Lilah overnight weekends; and planning an additional week of Camp Lev. An investment of \$580,000 per year will enable us to address these needs and have an even greater impact.

Join Us

With your support, together we can transform the future for people with developmental disabilities, and make sure that every child and adult has a safe and meaningful place in their community where they belong—whether for an afternoon of respite, or a lifetime in their own residence. We are building new facilities, acquiring new homes, and partnering with families to create a better life for their loved ones, where they can be with friends, observe and celebrate their religious traditions, and get the support they need. **Please join us in making an immediate and significant impact on the lives of people with developmental disabilities, their families, and the communities in which they live.**

Financial Projections

	2025	2026	2027	Total
Current operations	\$1,689,219	\$1,773,680	\$1,862,364	\$5,325,263
Investment Priority 1: Lev Avigayil - Building A Permanent Home For Libenu's Respite Programs	\$1,500,000	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$2,300,000
Investment Priority 2: Meeting The Need - Purchase and Renovate Two New Residences	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$100,000	\$1,900,000
Investment Priority 3: Sustain, Strengthen And Grow Libenu's Respite Programs	\$580,000	\$580,000	\$580,000	\$1,740,000
TOTAL	\$4,669,219	\$3,753,680	\$2,842,364	\$11,265,263

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