



NorthFloridaSchool
Of Special Education

Enhance. Empower. Enlighten.



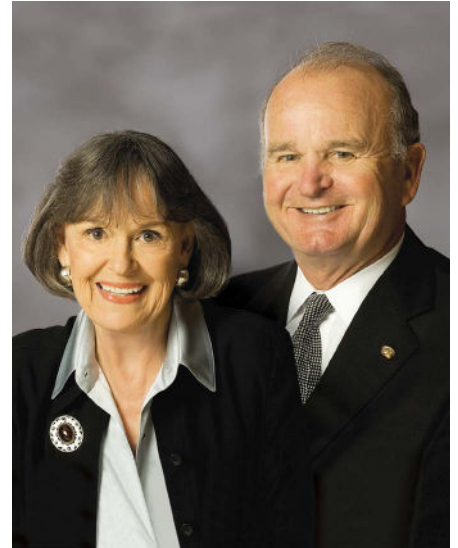
North Florida School of Special Education began with four families who dreamed of a full future for their children with intellectual and developmental differences (IDD). In 1992, when no suitable education opportunities existed, they created one—North Florida School of Special Education.

Since inception, North Florida School of Special Education has graduated hundreds of students and expanded to include an 8-acre campus in the heart of Arlington. The school has been recognized as the gold standard for supporting young people with IDD as they become the best version of themselves in an engaged community. Students are guided by individualized education plans, a multitude of onsite therapies as well as independent living and vocational training programs.

We invite you to join us in ensuring this incredible resource for our community and students—past, present, and future—regardless of their ability to pay. As you read the stories, we hope you will be inspired to become a part of the Giving Tree Legacy Circle. 🌳

We are pleased to announce that J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver have donated a \$2M lead gift to the North Florida School of Special Education Endowment Fund, a fund of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. The first \$1M of this gift provides a dollar-for-dollar match for any new contributions to the endowment.

—Board of Directors, North Florida School of Special Education



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Wayne and I have admired the work of North Florida School of Special Education for many years, and we’ve been so moved by how the school has grown in its ability to serve its students, their families and the community at large. We feel strongly that what’s been created and what’s envisioned for its future should be supported in perpetuity, and we are proud to provide the lead gift for North Florida School’s endowment at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

”

Delores Barr Weaver,
Community Philanthropist

Discover and foster each student's unique abilities

revealing their highest potential within an engaged community.



“

Caleb is happy. He has never been in a classroom where a teacher doesn't want him, and he has never been bullied. North Florida School of Special Education is a big part of Caleb's happiness.

”

Karen Prewitt, Caleb's mom and North Florida School of Special Education Board Member

“Gilly always had a problem sitting still. She gets too excited. Her teacher told me in our first meeting ‘I love how Gilly is so excited.’ That was the first time someone took something that could be negative and made it positive.”—Miriam, Gilly's mother

Miriam decided to transfer her 10-year-old daughter, Gilly, from their beloved public school to North Florida School of Special Education (NFSSE). She was looking for a setting that would enhance her abilities and care for her special needs. She wanted Gilly to work, to be challenged to her max—and here, she found what she was searching for.

Gilly's mom found an educational model centered *on discovering and fostering the unique abilities* of each student, not simply “accommodating disabilities” as is often typical in traditional school settings.

Teachers know exactly how to inspire students and nurture their curiosity in state-of-the-art classrooms. Students grow confidence through challenging academics that are guided by individual education plans supported by onsite physical, occupational, equine, and speech therapies. 🌳





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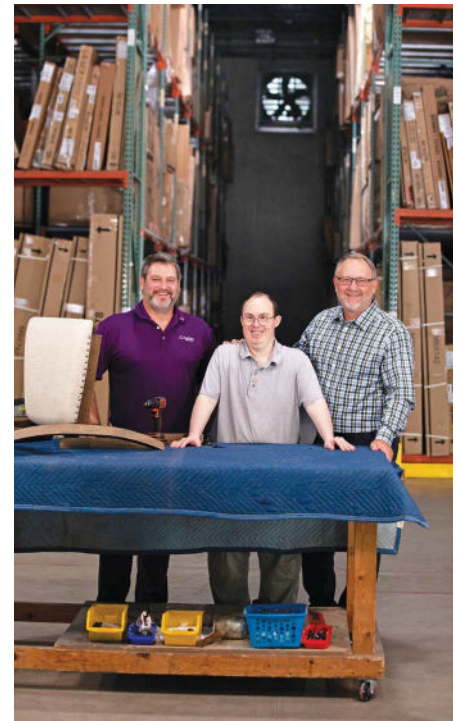
"When I walked into North Florida School of Special Education for the first time, I immediately felt so much warmth from the staff, students, and everything around me. It seemed like it was the perfect place for Kordell to be." —Rekita Brooks, Kordell's mother

Rekita made the brave decision to move from Daytona to Jacksonville so her son, Kordell, could enroll at North Florida School of Special Education at the age of 16. A few years later she can confirm—it was the best decision she made.

Kordell is a good friend to all, has increased his verbal communication skills, and excels at community job sites through the vocational training programs offered to secondary students. Rekita can be found volunteering in the Berry Good Farms Cafe, supporting students, and giving back to the school that has given Kordell such a hopeful future!

North Florida School of Special Education provides daily pre-employment training for students as young as 14 years old until they graduate. Teens and young adults gain hard and soft job skills rotating through micro-enterprises—Art With Soul, Berry Good Farms, Pet Bakery, Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Berry Good Cafe, and Culinary. They work alongside educators, employment specialists, and community volunteers to *reach their highest potential*.

Research shows that early and repetitive vocational training sets up individuals with intellectual and developmental differences for long-term employment success and a life of independence. At North Florida School of Special Education, young adults with IDD are equipped to live full and productive lives. 🌱



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As I was working with Andrew in the Pet Bakery, I realized he was very process driven... with great accuracy and efficiency. I thought to myself, 'what do we do at Ashley HomeStore that requires this type of process?' I was able to offer Andrew a job assembling chairs and he was recently recognized as Rookie of the Year.

”

Greg King, VP Sales, Ashley HomeStore

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revealing their highest potential **within an**
engaged community



“

I love my teachers, friends,
and working in the kitchen. My
teachers helped find me a place
to live. School makes me happy.

”

Nick Wickenstein, postgraduate

Nick arrived at North Florida School of Special Education in 2006 as a quiet 7 year-old. His communication skills grew through academics, therapies, and relationships with his classmates and teachers during his educational journey.

While participating in the culinary program at age 18, Nick learned how to prepare healthy meals—improving his overall health and well-being. At the same time, Nick gained an extra measure of confidence in new experiences. Nick interned at off-campus job sites, grew comfortable communicating with all people, and learned independent living skills.

Nick's story of growth is like so many of our students, but at age 19, Nick's life took an unthinkable turn when his mother passed away. North Florida School of Special Education staff supported Nick during this difficult time by helping him secure a safe home and learn additional life skills.

Today, the same little student who wouldn't speak above a whisper is an independent young man who calls JTA to schedule his own transportation to school and work. Nick continues to find love and community through our postgraduate programs on his days off work.

Many were part of Nick's journey. Volunteers and donors are the **engaged community** of North Florida School of Special Education—a vital partnership of love and support. 🌳





Elise and Greg were searching for community where Erin could thrive as a young adult. At North Florida School of Special Education, they discovered beautiful outdoor experiences and a diversity of innovative programs that are unmatched in Northeast Florida.

Since enrolling in the postgraduate program, Erin's vocabulary and confidence have grown significantly. She enjoys opportunities to try new activities, find what she loves to do, and develop her abilities. The school staff always focuses on her strengths instead of her limitations. Erin's week involves many unique work experiences offered to postgraduates—from interning at the zoo to prepping herbs in the culinary program. Erin especially likes working on the urban farm—whether the Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center or Berry Good Farms. Although she is legally blind, Erin became so meticulous and passionate about weeding the gardens, she was offered a job!

Most importantly, Greg and Elise are touched by the enthusiastic, compassionate staff and hear their positivity echoed in Erin's words and actions. 🌳



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When choosing to include NFSSE in our will, we thought... How do we want to be remembered? How do we want Erin to be remembered? What do we want our legacy to be? It's not about having our name on a building. It's about making sure the school can continue to thrive into the future and provide to students, like Erin, all the amazing opportunities that she has experienced. We feel blessed and fortunate to be a part of this legacy.”

”

Elise and Greg Nowakowski,
parents to a postgraduate and
Giving Tree Legacy Circle
members

Partner with us



“

We chose to include North Florida School of Special Education in our will, so that even after we're no longer able to physically be a part of the magic... we can still give to a cause that we have been blessed to be a part of.”

”


Karen and Chris Western,
volunteers and Giving Tree Legacy
Circle members

Partner with us as we discover and foster each student's unique abilities revealing their highest potential within an engaged community.

As a member of the Giving Tree Legacy Circle, you will make an important contribution to our mission—often with no cost to you during your lifetime. In addition to receiving potential tax savings as a result of your legacy gift, you'll receive special updates and invitations to engage with young people with intellectual differences as they become the best versions of themselves. Most importantly, your legacy gift will provide the resources needed to sustain our programs and campus, and ensure these programs are available to everyone regardless of their ability to pay.

Make a gift to the North Florida School of Special Education Endowment. The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida invests this permanent fund, with the value of the principal to last indefinitely. Distributions are used to fund mission-based priorities determined by the Board of Directors. Gifts to the endowment fund are irrevocable.

Benefits of the Giving Tree Legacy Circle

- Recognition in the Annual Report
- VIP Parking at all special events
- An invitation to an exclusive reception hosted by the Head of School and Board of Directors
- A family photograph taken on the school campus, location of choice (upon request) 



Ways to give

We have partnered with The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to steward and help grow our endowment. Your gift will result in permanent assets to support the school now and into the future. The following are ways to give.



1. OUTRIGHT GIFTS

You may make a gift to the North Florida School of Special Education Endowment, a fund of The

Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, at any time during your lifetime or you may choose to endow your annual gift.

You can endow an annual gift to the school by making an outright gift to the endowment. The 4% distribution would then count toward your annual gift.

For example:

- o A \$50,000 gift to the endowment yields a \$2,000 annual gift year after year.*
- o A \$100,000 gift to the endowment yields a \$4,000 annual gift year after year.*

Checks may be payable to The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. Please designate the North Florida School of Special Education Endowment in your check memo.



2. GIFTS THROUGH YOUR WILL

Many donors choose to make a large gift through their will. These gifts can be:

- **Outright bequest:** Specify an outright gift of cash, securities, real estate, or tangible personal property, or a percentage of your estate.
- **Testamentary Trust:** This trust can provide income for another person(s) for life, with the principal ultimately passing to North Florida School of Special Education.
- **Codicil:** Without rewriting your entire will, an attorney can add a codicil naming North Florida School of Special Education as a beneficiary.

If your estate is subject to the federal estate tax, a charitable bequest can save significant tax dollars. Consult with your advisor to determine the best way to give.



3. GIFTS THROUGH YOUR RETIREMENT PLAN

- **Beneficiary Designation:** You may choose to donate a percentage of your assets from your IRA, 401(k), 403(b), pension or other-tax deferred plan to The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida for the endowment (or directly to North Florida School of Special Education). Simply complete a benefit designation form provided by your retirement plan custodian. Your IRA assets will not be taxed at your death so as the beneficiary, North Florida School of Special Education, will benefit from the full value of your gift.

- **Qualified Charitable Distribution:** If you are over age 70 ½ you can elect to have your IRA make distributions directly to The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida for the endowment (or directly to North Florida School of Special Education) tax-free. A distribution from your IRA of up to \$100,000 per year that is paid directly to the NFSSE is not taxable as income to you.



4. GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE

You may also contribute paid-up policies by transferring ownership to The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida for the endowment (or directly to North Florida School of Special Education) and receive a tax deduction for the present value of the policy or transfer ownership of an active policy and continue to make the premium payments which are deemed charitable gifts.



5. CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

You can make a contribution, receive a partial tax deduction, receive fixed income for life and leave a lasting gift for North Florida School of Special

Education. Gifts of cash or stock or other liquid assets are accepted to create the Charitable Gift Annuity. The minimum contribution is \$25,000 and there is no fee to set up the fund. We are happy to offer this option through our partnership with The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

Please check with your accountant, attorney, or tax advisor for additional information about how general rules apply to your particular situation. Thank you for your interest in supporting North Florida School of Special Education. 🌳

Please contact the Director of Planned Giving with any questions at 904-724-8323 or plannedgiving@northfloridaschool.org.



We became involved with North Florida School of Special Education over 14 years ago when our granddaughter was a student. Linda volunteered and I joined the Board of Directors. We believe this school should be available for all children with special needs now and in the future. Since we don't know our future financial requirements, we chose to designate in our will a percentage of our net assets to be left to the school to be used for needs-based scholarships.



Linda and Ray Van Landingham,
Board of Directors and Giving
Tree Legacy Circle Members



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