



The  
Joshua  
School

2021

**IMPACT**

BLENDING OUR KIND OF UNIQUE



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Thank you

## From the Director

**H**ow else can we say it? The 2020-21 school year was unique. Daily life at The Joshua School demanded that staff and students continue to adapt to ever-changing learning scenarios. This experience revealed to all of us a new level of flexibility and entrepreneurship that I am not sure we would have discovered otherwise. I am pleased and proud of how our staff and students responded and made the best of every challenge and change in plans.

Some of these changes were big ones that TJS had been looking forward to for some time. We all celebrated the expanded capacity of the Transition Program in Englewood. After two years of negotiations, we reached a long-term lease agreement with the Korean Emmanuel Methodist Church next door to TJS-Englewood for 4,000 square feet of additional space. We did extensive remodeling at the church to provide our Transition students with safe, well-equipped space to spread out. The new space includes six classrooms, a large central group space, a new kitchen and bathrooms, as well as a fully enclosed outdoor space adjoining the original TJS-Englewood outdoor area. Staff and students can walk safely back and forth between the two buildings.

Seventeen Transition students and accompanying program staff moved into the new space at the start of the 2021-22 academic year. This move freed up a large amount of space in the original Englewood facility. Additional space means additional capacity to serve more School-age students and families in the coming months and we are excited to begin making calls to several families on the waiting list.

Another welcome change took place last school year when we were able to start the year in person. Boulder and JECC began the year with full-time in-person learning and Englewood used a creative hybrid plan that divided

the student body into two groups. Each group alternated classes with two days in-person and three days of remote instruction. TJS returned to in-person learning well before many other schools in the area. This achievement was again made possible by our staff's tenacity, ingenuity and deep appreciation for the in-person student-teacher relationships that are the heart of TJS.

Amidst all of these changes, we made time for celebrations, too. In Boulder, two students graduated with diplomas in their hands. We also celebrated TJS's 15th anniversary last year by bringing back the school's six original founders at our virtual gala celebration. It was fun to hear the founders reminisce about the early days of TJS with three to six students enrolled! TJS now serves over 100 students and families annually, and we are all looking forward to the spring 2022 gala when we will have the chance to bring our school community together in-person for the first time in over two years.

Necessity is the mother of invention and the 2020-21 school year produced several valuable new ideas that TJS is carrying forward. When we began the current academic year with a staffing shortage, the knowledge of how to run a hybrid learning program paid off again. This time, each classroom at the TJS-Englewood facility spent one day a week in remote programming, freeing up additional staff daily to fill in for staff shortages. The Boulder facility continues to run in-person all the time, not requiring the hybrid methods used in Englewood. And JECC also continues to operate at a full weekly schedule of in person classes.

Our entire TJS community has learned so much during the past year about how to stay flexible, problem-solve on the fly, and tap into the strength we

all possess to support each other. Throughout the roller coaster ride of the past year, we have also stayed focused on TJS's core mission - to help each individual with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities attain the highest quality of life—valuing each unique mind, body and spirit. The ingenuity and resilience of our staff, students and families turned a very difficult year into one of many new and creative successes. I am certain that this positive and creative atmosphere will carry us well into the future.

Ed Nichols  
*Executive Director*



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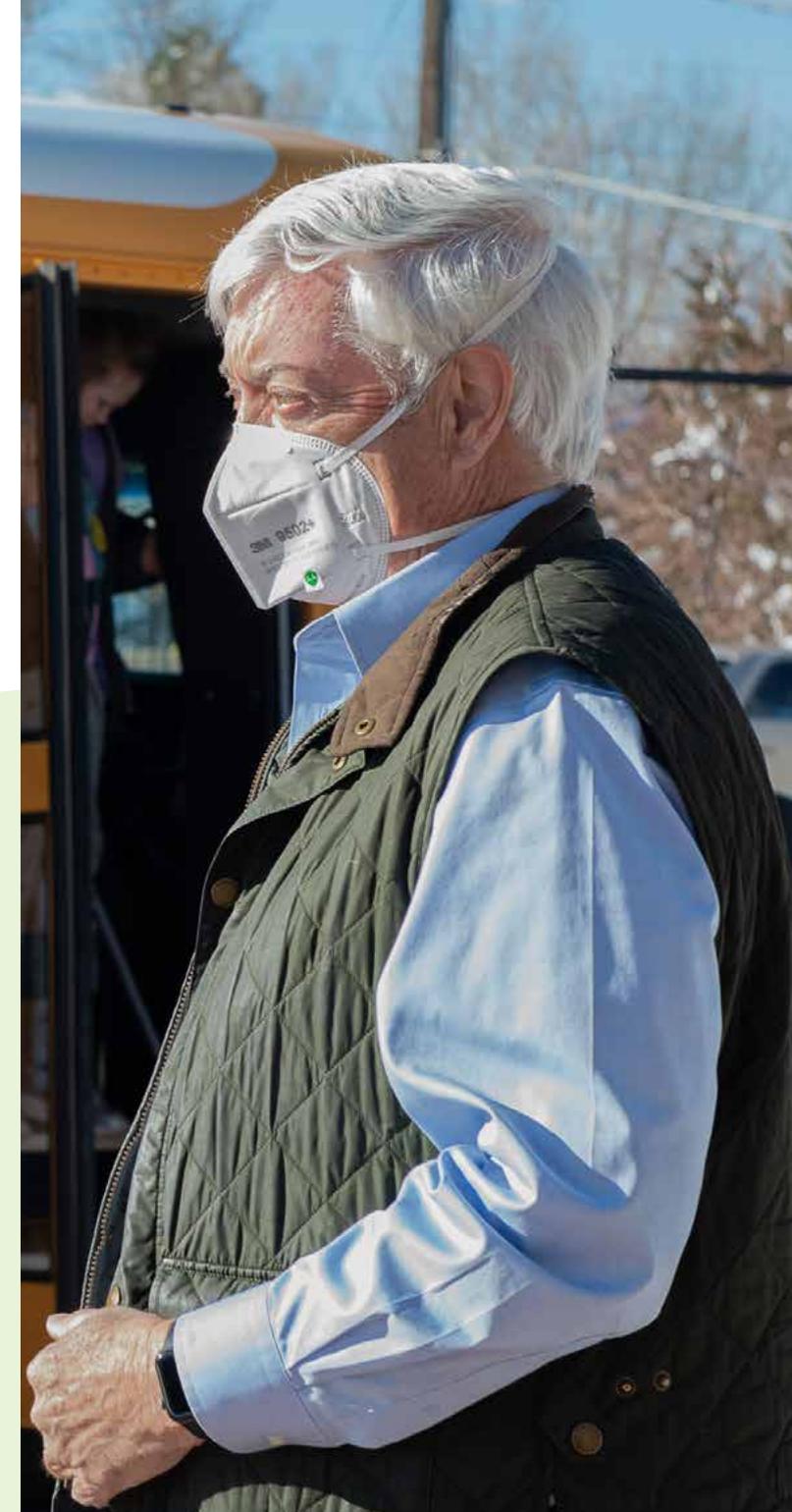
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# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER COLORADO

*in*

Findings from the Colorado Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (CO-ADDM) Project help us to understand more about the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the characteristics of those children, and the age at which they are first evaluated and diagnosed.

## OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED WITH ASD...

**48%**

received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by age 3

**67%**

received an ASD medical diagnosis by age 4 1/2

**1 in 76**

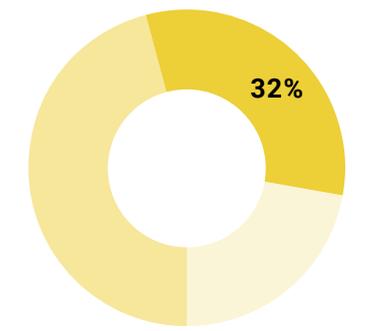
or 1.3% of 8-year old children were identified with ASD by the CO-ADDM Project in 2016

**4.5x**

**BOYS MORE LIKELY** to be identified with ASD **than GIRLS**

### INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN COLORADO

Colorado had intelligence quotient (IQ) data available for 76% of children identified with ASD. **Of those children, 32% had intellectual disability.**



Intellectual disability is defined as an IQ score of 70 or lower.

Source: ADDM Network Community Report of Autism 2020. A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colorado. 2021.



## 1 TRANSITION PROGRAM

### Englewood & Boulder

The Transition Program serves students age 18-21. TJS has built successful partnerships with over 40 local businesses to offer students job opportunities, job coaching and career exploration. Community-based instruction is an aspect of our Transition Program, and students frequent locations including grocery stores, community recreation centers, libraries and museums where important social communication and navigational skills are targeted throughout community environments.

The goal is to provide students with training while attending school, and build skills and confidence that will allow them to obtain paid positions when they graduate. Of equal importance is helping our students to contribute to and participate in the community, and to become self-sufficient adults.



IMPACT '21 THE JOSHUA SCHOOL

## 2

## SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM

### Englewood & Boulder

The School-Age program serves students age 7 to 18 through a highly individualized classroom model that includes special education teachers, instructional assistants, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs).

This model allows us to address the specific needs of each student, taking into account the wide range of functionality and uneven patterns of development typical of children with autism.

At age 14, we work with families to identify goals that will help students transition to adulthood, and our teaching focuses on the areas of vocational skills in the community, and college and career planning.

THE JOSHUA SCHOOL



## 3 JOSHUA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

### Centennial

Established in early 2016, the Joshua Early Childhood Center was created from our renowned Early Intervention model to become an all-inclusive setting that serves children between the ages of 2 and 6 years old. Our non-profit center houses two separate programs that, together, form a community emphasizing acceptance, understanding and character.

The Early Childhood Center is an expansion on JEI's original Peer Mentorship Program, established in 2013 to serve typically developing preschoolers using the same educational mission and philosophies. In 2014, JEI was awarded a grant by Autism Speaks Family Service Committee.

# BY THE NUMBERS

2020 - 2021

## TJS HODGEPODGE

3,000 sq ft

ADDED SPACE FOR TRANSITION PROGRAM



121

CARING & RESPONSIBLE STAFF MEMBERS



### TJS CAMPUS COMBINED ENROLLMENT (139 STUDENTS)



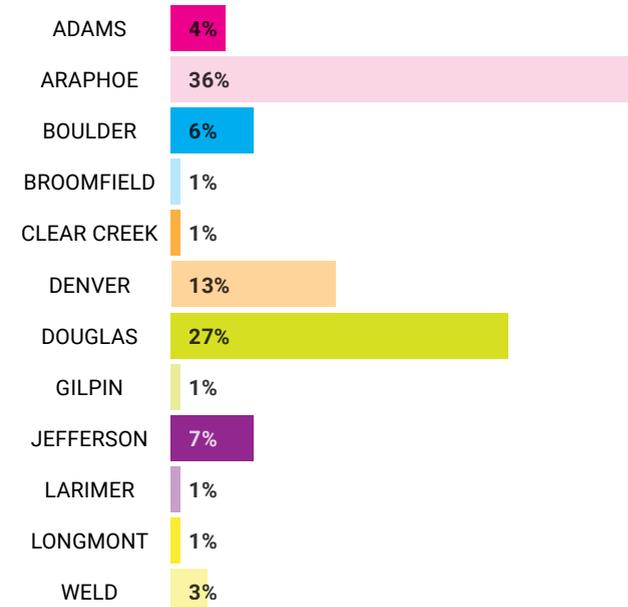
- JECC (63)
- BOULDER (20)
- ENGLEWOOD (56)

### COMBINED STUDENT POPULATION (BY PROGRAM)



- JOSHUA ACADEMY (41)
- JOSHUA EARLY INTERVENTION (22)
- SCHOOL-AGE (49)
- TRANSITION (27)

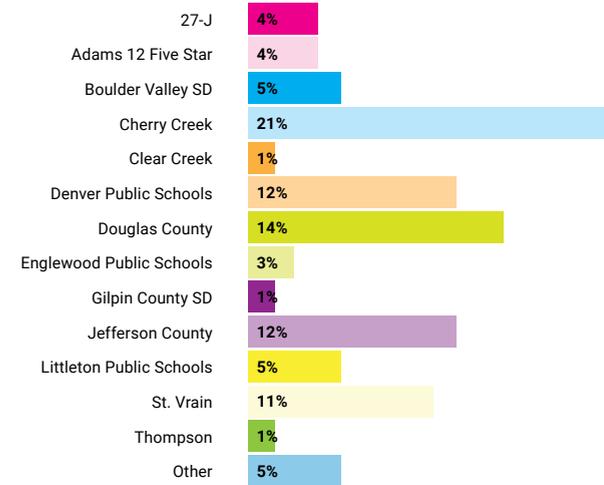
### COMBINED TJS STUDENT POPULATION (BY COUNTY LIVED IN)



IMPACT '21 THE JOSHUA SCHOOL

### COMBINED SCHOOL-AGE & TRANSITION PROGRAMS (76 STUDENTS) SCHOOL-AGE (6-18 YEARS) | TRANSITION (18-21 YEARS)

#### SCHOOL-AGE & TRANSITION (BY SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERRALS)



### JECC PROGRAM (63 STUDENTS) AGE (2.5-6 YEARS)

#### JECC STUDENT POPULATION (BY PROGRAM) TOTAL STUDENTS: 63



- JOSHUA ACADEMY (41)
- JOSHUA EARLY INTERVENTION (22)

### JEI STUDENT POPULATION (TRANSITION TO LESS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT) TOTAL STUDENTS: 13



THE JOSHUA SCHOOL IMPACT '21

### SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM (BY CAMPUS) TOTAL STUDENTS: 49



- BOULDER (17)
- ENGLEWOOD (32)

### TRANSITION PROGRAM (BY CAMPUS) TOTAL STUDENTS: 27



- BOULDER (3)
- ENGLEWOOD (24)



# what's BRAND NEW?

3,000 SQ FT OF ADDITIONAL SPACE  
FOR THE TRANSITION PROGRAM





# kennedy kirkpatrick

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

**K**ennedy was about 18 months old when her parents noticed she was not meeting typical developmental milestones. After working with a speech pathologist, Kennedy's parents were informed that she should be tested for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Kennedy did not talk; she acted out, and was highly sensitive to her surroundings. Things such as lighting, loud sounds, and crowds would cause her to melt down, cry uncontrollably, kick, and bite. She was officially diagnosed with ASD at 2 ½ years old. Her family immediately started researching what resources were available to start early intervention. She received an Individual Education Plan (IEP) through Littleton Public Schools and attended a pre-school in Castle Rock until there was an opening at The Joshua School's (TJS) Joshua Early Childhood Center (JECC).

Kennedy started in the Joshua Early Intervention (JEI) program at age 3 and her family began to see a huge improvement. The staff knew how to communicate with her and, more importantly, gave her the tools she needed to communicate with others. She was happier and the tantrums became rare. She started socializing with teachers and students and became more comfortable communicating her needs. Overall, she was happier and excited about learning.

COVID was a huge adjustment for Kennedy. She went from getting one-on-one help 6 hours a day at JECC, to being at home with her grandparents. Virtual calls were tough. She had a hard time

transitioning from being at home playing with her grandmother to getting on a call where she was asked to concentrate on new concepts through a screen. While Kennedy loved being able to see her teachers on the screen and talk to them, she resisted when asked to do things on command. Halfway through the second week of remote learning in spring 2020, JECC staff found a free online platform designed for students with special needs. This platform allowed for better communication and interaction between Kennedy and her teachers and it made a world of difference. She was much more engaged during this time and always so eager to earn her prize. Despite the challenges of remote learning at the beginning, Kennedy thrived and continued to make great progress.

In July 2021, Kennedy transitioned from the JEI program to the Joshua Academy (JA), JECC's preschool program for typically developing students. Kennedy then transitioned into a less restrictive environment for kindergarten at a local elementary school for the 2021-22 school year. Kennedy's parents said, "The JECC staff is fantastic. We would have frequent meetings with Kennedy's teachers to discuss any challenges or successes we were seeing at home and at school. It was a collaborative effort to make sure Kennedy was getting the support she needed. Their small class sizes, passionate teachers, and in-depth knowledge about ASD made the process easier and gave us a little more hope."

# august marcum

## GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

**A**ugust's journey started prior to TJS. As children, he and his sister were adopted by Chris and Sherry Marcum. They later separated and Chris married Kimberly in 2013. At that time, August struggled with intelligence disability, PPD-NOS, mood disorder, and anxiety. He also struggled with functional communication, which made it extremely difficult for him to communicate when he was angry. After struggling to get an official diagnosis that would allow him to receive the appropriate therapies and medications he needed, August received an official diagnosis of Bipolar 1 with hallucinations when he was 18 years old. Chris and Kimberly then brought him to TJS. From day one, he made a big impression on his teachers. One of them recalls, "One time he was singing a gospel hymn in the car in his best singing voice. When he was finished he asked our opinion on his performance by asking 'Was it so good it made you want to cry?' The answer was yes."

August has worked on a lot of things during his time at TJS, but most of all, he's made great strides in accepting things he cannot change (like when something is not available) and will choose an alternative or coping activity. His teacher exclaimed with pride, "He has worked hard to overcome his challenges in areas such as accepting



changes in routine, maintaining safe behavior while out in the community, and working cooperatively with his teachers and classmates. Now, August is such a cooperative, helpful, and motivated young man - his future is looking bright and we can't wait to see all that he goes on to do!"

August's parents are in awe of how far their son has come since first entering TJS 2.5 years ago. They commented, "TJS has helped August find his voice, to communicate his needs...If anyone would have told [us] in 2013 that August would have come this far, [we] would not have believed them."

Many students come in and out of TJS and we remember each one for their unique personalities. His teacher says she will miss "the great conversations, his curiosity about others, and the genuine happiness to see your face! Also, his golden pipes!"

Thanks to TJS, August's family is excited about the possibilities the future holds for him. His parents stated with gratitude, "[TJS] has been a source of support for our family and August. TJS has truly helped August become who he is and helped him grow in his faith. [We] cannot thank his staff enough for all they have done to help August and every other student at the school."

**A**fter years of searching for a welcoming school, The Joshua School (TJS) opened up a world of acceptance, encouragement, and possibility to Richard and Linda's son, Max. Richard and Linda first noticed differences in Max's development when he was an infant, including speech, attention, and behavior challenges. He was given a medical diagnosis of autism at around age 3. Prior to enrolling at TJS, and with the help from a very intuitive developmental neuropsychologist, they made their way to an ABA program, where his development began to blossom. During their time in the public school system, they were fortunate to have private access to after-school ABA support and tutoring from a dedicated friend and teacher. As Max neared high-



**max wallace**

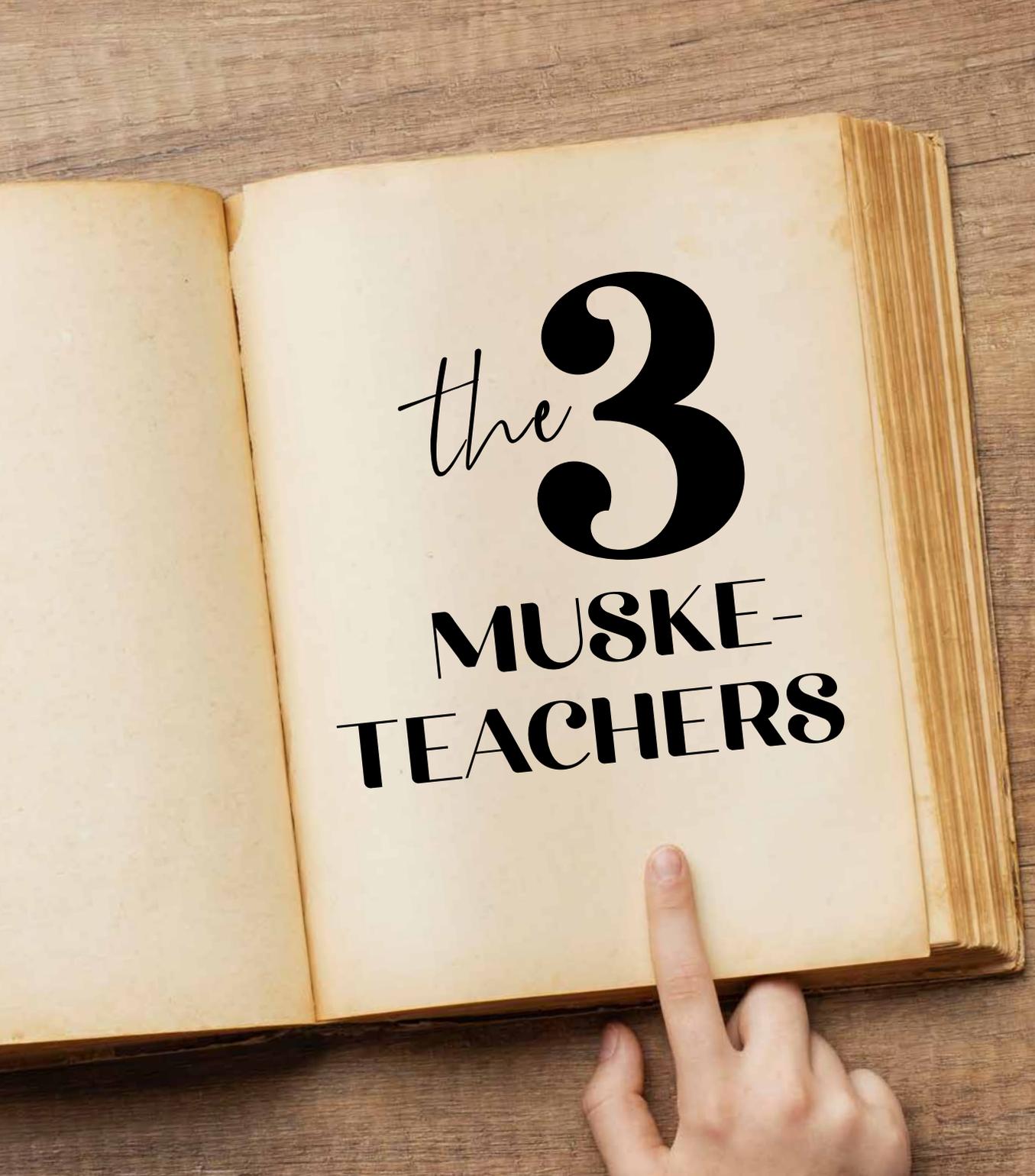
**GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT**

school age, his parents began to explore an array of options and made the difficult decision to move to a Denver suburb so that he could attend a well-regarded special needs program in a local high school. Unfortunately, they encountered more of the same "lack of fit." Max was not thriving, was losing interest, and the school staff was not able to meet his needs. At that point, they found TJS through the school district and Max was placed at TJS in his second year of high school, at seventeen years old.

His parents immediately recognized the difference! Overnight, Max was smiling and looking forward to going to school in the morning. His unique interests and abilities were recognized and incorporated into the structure of his programming and as his parents believe, "he trusted that he was safe and valued." Because of his love of restaurants and serving, Max's team encouraged him to take pancake and "pizzadilla" orders from schoolmates, work in the TJS kitchen to prepare the treats, and then deliver them to friends. This expanded into weekly opportunities to make his own lunch in the TJS kitchen, honing an important life skill and giving him a great sense of accomplishment. He

was now preparing shopping lists, going to the grocery store to get ingredients, and returning to school to prepare the food. The team also recognized that Max loved to make things for others. They gave him time, space, and materials to create bracelets for the school community, building his sense of connection with others and his ability to reach out to make friends. Most importantly, the team recognized how much Max enjoyed making a contribution in the world. They arranged work experiences that would develop his sense of belonging in the greater community.

A few months prior to graduating from TJS, Max moved into a new home with wonderful full-time caregivers who his parents hope will continue to inspire him to expand his life skills and try new things. They have found an adult day program that they feel will be a worthy successor to TJS in continuing to bring learning, friendship, and community to Max's life. Max's parents hope to encourage the incredibly special people at TJS, who have helped shape Max's growth in recent years, to continue to have a role in Max's life, as friends and mentors. The TJS team is uniquely well-equipped to cheer Max on in his future life! They are so very grateful for this extraordinary village.



the **3**  
**MUSKE-  
TEACHERS**



SCHOOL-AGE  
ENGLEWOOD

# Jacki Wojcik

**J**acki Wojcik is a Lead Teacher at The Joshua School's Englewood campus. She graduated from Colorado State University in 2012, with a bachelor's degree in health and exercise science. In her last semester of college, she completed an internship at a special recreation association in Illinois, working to help children and adults with varying needs and disabilities participate in social events, clubs, community outings, and Special Olympics events. "This is when I fell in love with special education," says Jacki. She continued to work with special needs children and adults while she attended DePaul University to obtain her master's degree in special education. Jacki then moved back to Colorado and began teaching

in the public school system in a mild/moderate special education classroom. But she felt drawn to working with students who were more significantly impacted so she took a job in a center-based autism program. "I soon realized that these students weren't receiving the services or level of support they needed in order to be successful," says Jacki. "I was really interested in working with this population, but I wanted to learn more about autism so that I could make a difference in these amazing kids' lives." In 2017, Jacki discovered TJS through a friend and accepted a position as an Instructional Assistant. In 2018, she was promoted to Lead Teacher.

Jacki cites "many aspects" of TJS that keep her coming back to work each day. "The celebrations of even small victories are incredible," she says. To be part of a loving, caring community is also something special. "This job is hard," she says, "and to be able to lean on your co-workers during the toughest days makes you realize that you aren't in it alone. I have never worked at a place where I felt so supported."

Kristen Kaiser, Executive Program Director has been impressed with Jacki's

generosity as a team player. "She takes on challenges and problem solves in ways that create opportunity for others," says Kristen. "Every day is a new day for Jacki, no matter how hard the day before was." Jacki collaborates with everyone around her - instructional assistants, specialists, and administrators. "She is not afraid of not having an answer," says Kristen. "She listens to others and is never afraid to try new things." In fact, Jacki recently took on the Lead Teacher role for two classrooms. As a seasoned TJS teacher, she also showed her students and colleagues what was possible during the difficult circumstances of the pandemic. "What I discovered about Jacki during COVID," says Kristen "was her strength of character to persist when things felt impossible, to be creative about solutions for students, and to have compassion for students and their families when the unexpected occurred."

Jacki recently had a parent share with her that her children weren't making progress for so long and she is now starting to see them do things at TJS that she never thought they would accomplish. "To be part of that is incredibly special," says Jacki. "It makes me feel as if we truly are making a difference in people's lives."

# Lily Dicker

JECC



Lily Dicker is the Early Childhood Coordinator at The Joshua School's Joshua Early Childhood Center (JECC). After learning about Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) at her previous job, Lily decided to pursue a master's degree in early childhood education. While getting her master's, she continued to work for her previous employer as a lead teacher, managing a kindergarten readiness classroom. One of the highlights of this position was having the opportunity to create a sibling summer inclusion program. In addition, Lily learned about JECC's model for integrating Joshua Early Intervention students with typically developing students in the Joshua Academy program. "I contacted Brooke and Jamie, the directors at the time, to learn more about how they developed their program," says Lily. "That's when I fell in love with TJS!"

From that day forward, Lily searched incessantly for an open position at JECC and finally landed a job in March 2021. "I jumped at the opportunity to work with such a supportive and knowledgeable team," she says. "The culture is unmatched

in my opinion. Not only do the staff have compassion and empathy for their students, but they also relay that to each other. It's a supportive environment that is uplifting, which can be very hard to come by in this pandemic world..." In Lily's short tenure at JECC, she has helped to elevate JECC programming in significant ways. "She has taken our program to grand new heights in a short period of time," says Lily's supervisor, Brooke Lestikow, JECC Program Director. Lily has helped to make tracking student outcomes more efficient. Previously, student progress was tracked manually and Lily has helped to automate the process. This has freed staff from the administrative duties and provided them with more time to address students' programming needs.

Brooke Lestikow, JECC Program Director says the TJS philosophy that Lily embodies most is "find meaning in everything you do." "Lily does not waste one minute of her days at JECC," says Brooke. "She has shared so many ideas that are helping us think outside the box and move in a new direction that will increase our program

quality, all while keeping our mission and values at the forefront."

Lily has also played a large role in continuing to build the integration program at JECC. She makes sure every child in the building is participating in an integration experience that is appropriate and meaningful for them. That could mean doing reverse integration, or fully transitioning a child from Joshua Early Intervention to Joshua Academy when they no longer need 1:1 support. She deeply believes in the power of Applied Behavior Analysis, yet goes about it in such a "naturalistic, real life, applicable way," Brooke points out. She truly wants every child to succeed and be their best self, as well as giving parents the tools and confidence for home.

# Sherry Chapman

SCHOOL-AGE  
BOULDER

Sherry Chapman is an Instructional Assistant at The Joshua School's Boulder campus. Prior to her arrival at TJS, she worked with children with autism spectrum disorder in the public school system for 13 years. Her decision to change jobs was fueled by her desire to work in an environment where students were loved, valued, and appreciated for who they are. "As soon as I walked through the door, I knew right away TJS was the place for me," Sherry says. "Not only are our students loved, they are treated with dignity and respect. We take pride in valuing each individual and their families – I have not experienced this in any other work environment before."

During the pandemic, Sherry used her endless imagination and creativity to re-connect students with lesson plans based on their individual interests. Her ability to engage and involve students in their learning is captivating. She makes

the learning environment fun for all of her students.

"I genuinely love my job," Sherry says. After five years at TJS, she has developed a deep appreciation for her fellow staff members, whom she describes as "overflowing with love, support, generosity and compassion. We truly are a team," Sherry says, "and we show up every day to improve the quality of life for our students and their families." On campus, Sherry is the personification of TJS values. She treats every student with dignity and acknowledges his or her unique hopes and dreams. She finds meaning in everything she does and meets students where they are—by starting small and moving slowly – and celebrating progress at every chance she gets along the way.



**04 SAVE**  
**07 THE**  
**22 DATE**

**PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE  
THE JOSHUA SCHOOL'S ANNUAL GALA**

**STANDING STRONG  
TRANSFORMING LIVES**

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## Our Locations

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