



# ANNUAL REPORT

DONALD BERMAN YALDEI DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER



*Martin Schwartz*

Board Chairman & Chair of Another Chance Capital Campaign

For the past six years, I have been privileged to serve as the Chair of Yaldei's Another Chance Capital Campaign. After five years of planning and hard work, the Capital campaign carries on. While we have raised and exceeded our original goal, we still need help. Our work is always just beginning. We must continue to expand in proportion to the increasing number of children who need our help, and this mission has never been and will never be possible without the support of all our generous donors.

This year, we're proud to report a stunning new achievement: an all-new adaptive park; anyone who has passed by Yaldei in recent months has surely noticed this fully accessible playground, always full of fun and laughter.

It's been an immense privilege to witness the progress that Yaldei has made over the years, both as a physical school and as a collective of individual students, each one growing every day as they are provided with an ever-increasing set of tools to achieve their full potential.

I want you to know that every donation you have given us; every gift you have placed into our hands, has made the world of difference to the board, staff, students, and families that call Yaldei home. You have facilitated something that truly matters – building a home where love, compassion, respite, kindness, comfort, and care can be gifted to children and their families, today and for many generations to come. Today, I humbly ask that you consider keeping this gift alive, for the benefit of our entire community.

Thank you.

Martin Schwartz  
Board Chairman



# Menachem Leifer

Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Every year, I reflect on the word “growth.” To grow is to be alive. And, like flowers flourishing in a nutrient-rich soil, life grows only in proportion to the health of its environment.

I feel immensely privileged to be able to be a contributor in an environment that is so rich in resilience, mutual respect, selflessness, compassion—so rich, that is to say, in the qualities required for growth. Thanks to the persistent work and generosity of our staff and donors, Yaldei can continue to nourish the minds and bodies of our amazing students.

Just like the children we care for, Yaldei—both as an ecosystem of contributors and a physical building—is always transforming. Every year we add more therapists, teachers, rooms, students; this year, we even added a fully-accessible playground. And in recent years, of course, we have also had to adapt ourselves to a global pandemic. I am so proud that we have remained operational throughout these difficult COVID years and that our children have been able to expand—both in terms of physical capability and cognitive ability—despite the terrible muzzle of this disease.

“thanks to the persistent  
work and generosity of our  
staff and donors Yaldei  
can continue to nourish  
the minds and bodies of  
our amazing students”

All these many years later, and despite our exponential growth, Yaldei’s vision and essence remains proudly intact: we are committed to facilitating the process of revealing the untapped potential of each and every child, thereby permanently transforming the lives of the people who need us most.

I could not be more grateful for all the compassionate, generous people who make Yaldei possible every day: our extremely committed professional team, our devoted board members, and our many loyal donors whose selfless gifts, like water to a tree, provide crucial nourishment for our ecosystem. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Thank you. We look forward to continuing to grow with you in the future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Leifer'.

Menachem Leifer  
C.E.O.



# Gaid-Anne Gaillard

Coordinator of Clinical Services

It has been a year now since I joined the Donald Berman Yaldei Developmental Center as a clinical coordinator. Since my arrival, I've met with over 130 families, every single one of which is as complex, unique, and beautiful as a universe. Each new journey with a family begins with an intake meeting, where through careful, attentive dialogue, I determine the perfect combination of services required for their child. This process of discovery is facilitated by my clinical experience which, since 2003, has taught me the best practices in the field of mental and motor disabilities. The initial meeting, followed by the many follow-up conversations, allows me to measure the magnitude of the child's needs and adjust our services throughout the year to meet them. It is not uncommon for me to hear from parents, after these meetings, that they have never before been gifted such a complete, comprehensive proposal of services for their child.

Yaldei is in the privileged position to offer these services thanks to our highly experienced multidisciplinary team, whose diverse skill sets are capable of meeting the thousands of complex needs of each individual child and family; that is to say, each universe. These services, which are constantly shifting to meet these needs, include:

- Three psychometricians trained in motor, sensory, and bodily rehabilitation of children suffering from various disorders (sensory-motor deficiency, autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity, emotional management, clumsiness, writing difficulties, etc.). These professionals utilize the Snoezelen method by potentiating its use for various needs, i.e. sensory regulation, optimization of motor skills (thanks to the activation of the action-reaction system), emotional regulation, and parent-baby therapy.
- A communication team currently consisting of speech therapists, four speech therapist assistants, and a behavioral analyst (to support functional communication where behavioral problems are severe).
- A variety of ABA techniques, such as practical functional assessment—also known as the Hanley program—which addresses severe behavioral problems with the utmost respect and integrity for the student; we have also successfully implemented the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) for early stimulation groups as well as individual ABA therapy for young children (under four years of age) with autism spectrum disorders and developmental delays.

Families have told us that virtually as soon as they step foot in Yaldei, they feel guided and supported with unparalleled expertise, care, and professionalism. It is a colossal responsibility to have these children entrusted to us at such crucial stages of development, and we take this responsibility very, very seriously. Our parents have given us the gift of trust and collaboration, and we will return this gift with nothing less than the most attentive, thoughtful, and compassionate services we can muster. Together, the donors, staff, parents, and children of Yaldei are constantly co-creating a better world. Thank you for being a part of it.

Coordinator of Clinical Services



# Tania D'Alesio

Yaldei School Principal

I am extremely proud and honoured to be starting my fourth year at Yaldei and my second year, as the Yaldei School Principal. In the four years I have been at Yaldei, I have seen phenomenal changes to the facility, the services and of course, the growth in our student population. It is one of the highlights of my career to be working alongside some of the most skilled and passionate educators and therapists in Education. I unconditionally serve these amazing professionals because collectively and consistently, we all share the same mindset in wanting to improve the lives and transform the future of each and every child at Yaldei, by discovering every day, their true potential. I am further blessed to be doing this rewarding work in a state-of-the-art facility, where we are able to offer a gamut of integrated services that are unparalleled in any of the specialized schools in Quebec.

The Ministry of Education has authorized the continuation of our services from pre-K to Secondary level; up to and including Secondary III. In addition, the Ministry has authorized the creation of two satellite classes within neighbouring community schools. Yaldei School has grown tremendously since its humble, grassroots beginning, to now boast 143 students for the 2021-2022 school year amongst its three installations.

To better respond to the needs of our ever growing population, Yaldei School inaugurated five new classrooms on the ground level. This new improvement to the building was designed and created in keeping with a fully inclusive model and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These five new classrooms are each fully equipped with their own bathroom, multi-touch interactive whiteboard, lunch and snack prep station and ergonomically designed lockers just outside their respective classrooms. This new area also includes a calming room and fully inclusive bathrooms that include adaptable changing tables, wall to wall lifts and wheel chair accessible showers. The staff will also have direct access to a staff lounge, administration office, laundry room and a fully equipped resource room.

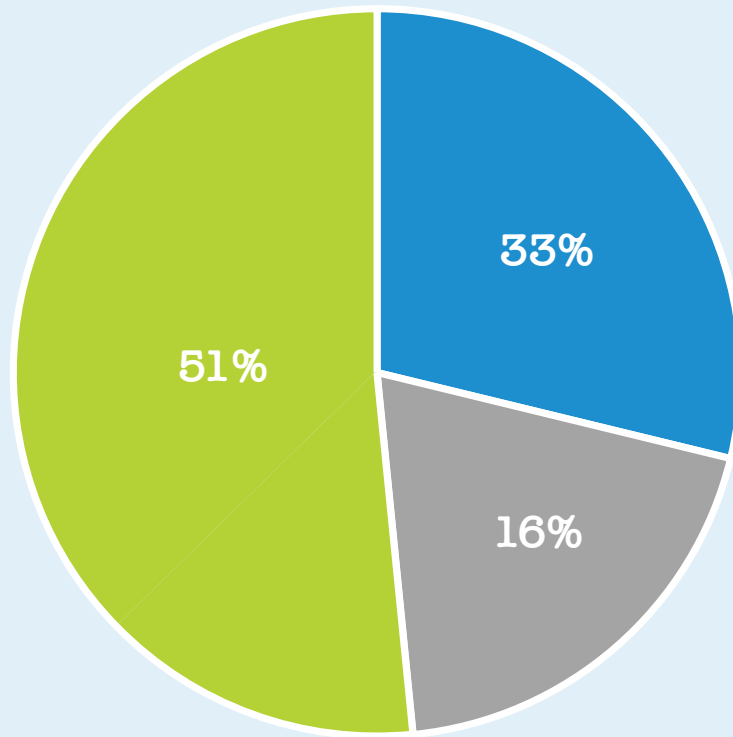
The pace of our growth continues to be fuelled by our expertise in Early Intervention, superior quality educational and professional services, integration of technology for each child, and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are always child-centered and family focused. In addition, with the pending approval of the Ministry, Yaldei School will add Secondary IV and V services for the 2022-2023 school year, allowing Yaldei to continue providing its excellent pedagogical and clinical services to students until the age of 21. In preparation for this, Yaldei School has begun to develop a pre-vocational and vocational program which would allow for a smooth transition of Secondary III students from their current programs to either the Challenges or Work Orientation Program (WOTP).

In addition to all the ingenuity added to the building, I am honoured to announce that Yaldei created three new positions on the school Team and filled them all with internal candidates. For the 2021-2022 school year, Yaldei School is extremely proud to announce the appointment of Lucas Spadafino to adapted Physical Education Teacher, Emma Bryans to Lead Teacher and Lydia Lajeunesse to Behaviour Technician.

This is all such exciting news for me to share and it is my esteemed honour to be leading the way for such an exceptional team of professionals and parents who continuously work together to foster the same vision for our current and future Yaldei students to reach and exceed their full potential with unconditional inclusion and respect.

Tania D'Alesio  
Yaldei School Principal

# Distribution of children across programs



<div></div>	School	124
<div></div>	Early Intervention	59
<div></div>	Individual Therapies	188
Total		371

# Disabilities

we treated this year:

## Speech Disorders

- Nonfunctional communication
- Developmental speech apraxia
- speech articulation disorder

## Behavioral and emotional Difficulties:

- Behavioral Disorders
- Oppositional Defiance Disorder
- Mood Disorders: anxiety and stress
- Depression
- Bullying

## Genetics syndrome:

- Rett Syndrome
- Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)
- Angelman Syndrome
- Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
- William Syndrome
- Neurofibromatosis
- Bourneville Tuberous Sclerosis
- Familial Dysautonomia
- Sotos Syndrome

## Neurodevelopmental issues:

- Global Developmental Delay
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Intellectual disability: mild, moderate, severe and profound
- Neurological Impairments
- Tourette Syndrome

## Brain Disorder:

- Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy
- Seizure Disorders
- Lissencephaly
- Hemispherectomy
- Hydrocephalus

## Learning Disabilities

- Attention Deficit /ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia (difficulty for writing)
- Central auditory processing disorder

## Physical Disability:

- Sensory processing disorder
- Delay in the psychomotor stages
- Cerebral Palsy
- Vestibular disorders
- Ataxia
- Apraxia

## Oral motor Disorder:

- Drooling
- Swallowing
- Feeding Disorder

# Child Spotlight

## Meet Maya McKergow

From the moment that Maya was born, she brought immense joy to our family – she was always happy, never cried and quickly developed the most contagious laugh that would have everyone laughing along with her. We could not have wished for a sweeter little girl. As time went on and she approached her first birthday, we started to notice some quirky behaviours. Before we knew it, these quirky behaviours began to multiply, she was not developing at the expected rate, milestones were being missed, and she experienced a regression which primarily affected her speech. It was evident that what we originally viewed as quirky behaviours were actually red flags. By

Having a child with special needs was something that we never expected. In all honesty, it had never even crossed our minds as being a possibility

23 months, Maya was non-verbal and officially diagnosed with Autism (level 3), Global Developmental Delay, and Language Disorder.

Having a child with special needs was something that we never expected. In all honesty, it had never even crossed our minds as being a possibility. Having the diagnosis officially confirmed was quickly followed by the realization that the life we had always envisioned was not going to be our reality. Not only that, but we were overcome by an overwhelming sense of urgency to figure out the best plan of action in terms of early

intervention and therapy. This is where Yaldei came into the picture.

Maya started attending Yaldei the same month that she received her diagnosis and she has been there ever since. The level of care, attention and love that Maya receives from her therapists and teachers is unparalleled. Every individual who works with Maya at Yaldei brings their own unique strengths and together, they make up a multifaceted team who in turn can provide the best possible interventions for Maya. In addition, they continuously go above and beyond to implement any individualized modifications or accommodations that we request to ensure that Maya's day at school goes as smoothly as possible. Yaldei is all about positive, constructive collaboration between the school and parents, which is unfortunately a rarity among many schools. As parents of a special needs child who is also non-verbal, there are no words to express the level of relief and gratitude that we have knowing that our daughter is in the best hands possible at the most exceptional school.

One aspect that makes Yaldei so remarkable is that they are constantly adapting, learning, and modifying their approach to be in line with the needs of their students - they are not simply doing the bare minimum of keeping our children safe or entertained. Rather, they are looking at each one of our children, focusing on their strengths, and providing creative adaptations so that they can reach their full potential. This sets Yaldei apart from the rest as often times, it is the children with special needs who fall through the cracks. This year, Maya started using a communication device which speaks out loud for her so that she can communicate her wants and needs. Her team of teachers and therapists went to great lengths to educate themselves about this complicated tool and how to support Maya through this new change in her life. Due to their efforts, Maya now has

a voice at school, experiences less frustration, and can be understood by her teachers. This would not have been possible if it were not for the dedicated staff who is always willing to face new challenges.

"One aspect that makes Yaldei so remarkable is that they are constantly adapting, learning, and modifying their approach to be in line with the needs of their students"

At this point, Yaldei has become a second family, a place of familiarity, comfort, and joy for Maya. Every morning when we arrive at school, her face lights up and she cannot wait to get inside and see her teachers. Once inside, she signals for us to leave so that her fun day at school can begin. Even though she cannot verbally express

her excitement, it is clear that she absolutely loves going to school. Coming from a child who is so attached to her parents, this behaviour is a direct reflection of the outstanding care she undoubtedly receives at Yaldei.

Ultimately, each and every donor is at the root of the phenomenal experience that we have had at Yaldei. Without their continued support, none of the hopes and dreams that we had about finding the perfect school for Maya would have ever come to fruition. These donations have funded projects like the state-of-the-art gym and Snoezelen room, both of which have played vital roles in Maya's progression. These specialized environments have served as essential components to her therapy – they allow her to get the sensory input that she needs in order to be able to participate and fully benefit from her therapy sessions. In the end, it is a combination of the incredibly hard-working staff and generous donors who have formed Yaldei into the exceptional school that it is. Life as a special needs parent leaves you with plenty of uncertainty, but one thing that we know for sure is that Maya and every other child at Yaldei is in the best environment to blossom and become everything that they can be.



# Yaldei

## Highlights

Yaldei, just like our students, is always growing. Although it's important to keep looking forward, it's equally important to pause, breathe out, and take stock of all that we've accomplished together. Here's a round-up of the latest advancements, renovations, and news at Yaldei, so you can stay up-to-date on the incredible changes happening at our school. As always, thank you for supporting us: we wouldn't be sending out this dispatch without the collective strength of your volunteering, donations, and community involvement.

### Adventure Day Camp

The Yaldei Adventure day camp in Montreal helps children to experience community integration and develop their social skills in a fun and exciting setting. The camp is open for children with special needs and their siblings and friends. Our Camp Coordinator, Chloe Soggia, who has a bachelor in psychomotor therapy as well as a DESS from UQAM in behavioral intervention with ASD populations, was immensely successful in leading the summer camp this year.

### Services

The number of children in Yaldei has increased by 17% in the past year and 371 children are now receiving services at Yaldei.

- 183 students attended Yaldei school, in the Center's toddler group, respite and camp services.
- 188 children have received therapy at Yaldei.
- Expansion of Therapy programs. Psychomotor Therapy and ESDM are now offered at our state-of-the-art Therapy Center.

### Mayer and Bertha Sand Adaptive Recreation Park

Construction of our fully inclusive Adaptive Playground is complete. This playground was designed according to the Universal Design principles, and specifically ensures that children of varying abilities can play together. The equipment is accessible for all children and stimulates them in both physical and cognitive functions. It has a good mix of active and quiet play areas, as well as rest spots with shade, seating, or undercover areas to encourage children to relax and work on social skills. Our children are already enjoying hours in this beautiful & accessible 7500 ft<sup>2</sup> playground.



## First Floor Construction

We did renovations in the first floor, including

- Re-painting of all classrooms and hallways
- 5 new classrooms
- 1 staff room
- 2 children accessible bathrooms
- Parent lounge
- Reception Area
- De-escalating room
- Stroller Parking
- Motion Activate Perimeter Gate
- Widening doors
- Ramps at all staircases (indoor and outdoor)

## Staff

Our services and team are growing, ensuring that we can continue to provide the best service to the children and families who need it most.

New members that we have warmly welcomed include:

- David Cubides - BCBA
- Chloé Soggia - Psychomotor Therapist
- Malory skinner - SLP

**Our story of continuous improvement and the success of our developmental center and school go hand in hand with a myriad of stories of little miracles that happen every day at Yaldei.**





## **TD Bank**

Yaldei would not be possible if it were not because of the generosity of our loyal donors. We entirely rely on benevolent contributions from the community and corporations, as well as a limited number of grants that we obtain from the government. Therefore, we would like to pay special homage to those organizations that remarkably and deeply support our efforts, and with which we are perfectly aligned in favor of the countless disabled children that we help to discover their untapped potential, and thrive.

This year we would like to pay special recognition to TD. They have been a generous supporter of Yaldei for many years. This year, we were the recipient of a new grant, in support of a new program that we initialized, called The Early Start Denver Model (ESDM).

The ESDM was created by psychologists Dr. Sally Rogers and Dr. Geraldine Dawson in 2009 (Rogers & Dawson, 2010) and is a behavioral approach, evidence-based, most recommended to early intervention for young children under 4 years of age with Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental delays.

This approach is supported by research and several scientific articles have been published since the program was first implemented. The studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the model on child development and significant improvements have been observed in different areas of development such as play skills, social skills, communication skills or cognitive skills.

In order to implement this approach and respect the requirements, the professionals are either ESDM certified or have benefited from an advanced training. In addition, the team follows fidelity procedures and check list that come with the ESDM principles to ensure that best practices are used.

There are several different settings to early intervention implemented at Yaldei such as in group settings, on one-on-one sessions as well as through the parent coaching model developed by the ESDM. The professionals, along with the parents, get to choose what suits best the family's needs. The variety in the different methods used, allows children to develop their full potential and parents to closely accompany their child in these important stages of development.

In fact, a lot of families have already seen a tremendous change in their child's developmental skills and parents themselves have adapted their methods following the ESDM principles.

With TD's support, we look forward to advance and pursue this program, which is in such a great demand.

# Revenue

for the year ended June 30, 2021



**47%**

**School  
Income**

**\$3,387,598.00**

**School-Board  
Fees**

\$3,387,598.00



**6%**

**Rehab  
Income**

**\$473,049.00**

**Therapy  
fees**

\$473,049.00



**47%**

**Fundraising  
Campaigns**

**\$3,399,395.00**

**Community  
Foundations**

\$579,537.00

**Donations from  
Individuals &  
Business**

\$240,495.24

**Fundraising  
Events**

\$953,771.00

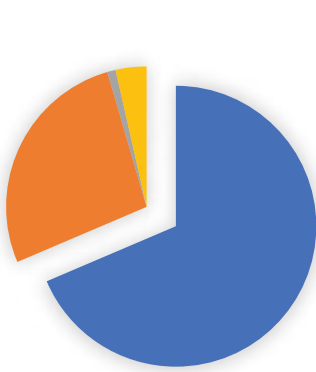
**Government  
subsidies**

\$1,625,592.00

**Total Revenue \$7,260,042**

# Expenses

for the year ended June 30, 2021



**69%**

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES &  
CHILDRENS PROGRAMS

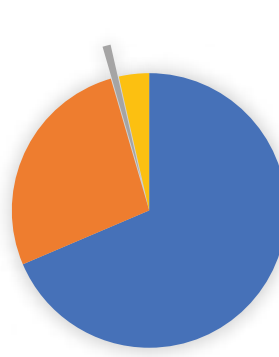
**\$4,899,321.67**



**26%**

THERAPY SERVICES TO  
CHILDREN / FAMILIES

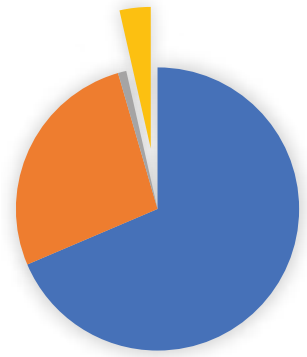
**\$1,922,055.33**



**1%**

FUNDRAISING  
EXPENSES

**\$68,425.00**



**4%**

ADMINISTRATION

**\$253,537.00**

**Salaries**  
\$3,551,960.00

**Occupancy &  
amortization**  
\$1,085,420.67

**Respite, After-  
School, Camp  
and Day-camp,  
Toddler group,  
Sensitization. Etc.**  
\$261,941.00

**Salaries TRP**  
\$1,034,102.00

**Consulting  
professionals**  
\$179,665.00

**Overheads &  
materials**  
\$165,578.00

**Occupancy &  
amortization**  
\$542,710.33

**Fundraising  
Expenses**  
\$68,425.00

**Salaries Admin**  
\$172,374.00

**Office & admin**  
\$17,699.00

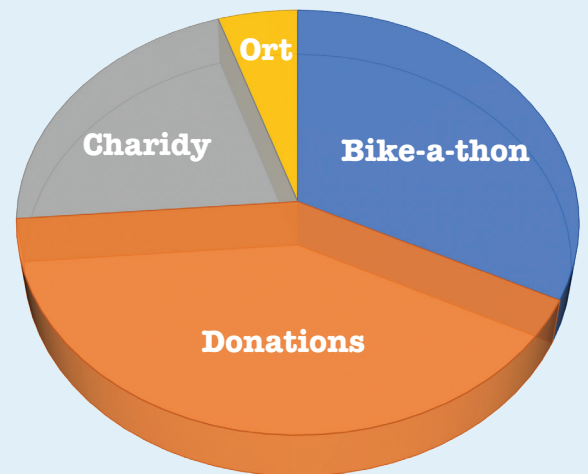
**Financial  
expenses**  
\$63,464.00

**Total Revenue \$7,143,339**

# Events Summary

The year 2020-21 was a difficult one for fundraising. When government regulations prevented us from hosting our annual dinner, the labour of gathering funds was elevated to a whole new level. Despite the incredible hurdle of a global pandemic, we still managed—through persistence and thanks to the generosity of our community—to raise close to \$300,000 from our annual dinner donors.

Then, in the summer of 2021 when restrictions were eased, Yaldei was delighted to bring back its annual bike-a-thon event, Let's Roll For Kids. Held in Yaldei's front yard, the bike-a-thon was an incredible success—raising over \$500,000—but the greatest aspect by far was watching our participants and their families enjoying the barbeque and entertainment.



**Total \$953,770.76**



# History at a glance

1998



Menachem & Devorah Leifer, the new parents of two profoundly developmentally delayed children, found the Donald Berman Yaldei Developmental Center at in a small private home in Boisbriand. The center begins with just three children and three staff members, and thanks to intensive early intervention treatment, the children begin to make miraculous progress at this humble facility.

2001

Yaldei quickly expands and moves to The Queen Elizabeth Health Complex. As the center grows, so does its range of therapeutic, educational, and recreational services—in addition to the intensive Early Intervention program, the center now includes over fifteen therapeutic treatments and retreats, including a summer camp and a weekend respite program for children and their families. Day by day, more children overcame their obstacles, and Yaldei begins to be recognized as a beacon of hope for families in need.



2006

Yaldei obtains a permit to open a school under the same roof as the therapy center, as well as establishing satellite programs in two Montreal elementary schools.



# History at a glance

2012



Yaldei reaches a new milestone:  
170 children are receiving  
treatment each year!



2016

The number of children receiving support at Yaldei continues to expand, and the centre quickly outgrows the space of a single floor at a hospital. The vision for an entire space fully dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of children with special needs is born. In 2016, through belief, community, and persistence, Yaldei moves to a 40,000 square foot state of the art facility.



2021



Today, we work with over 25 schools across the greater Montreal area, and help over 360 children with one or several of over 35 cognitive and physical disabilities. Despite our exponential growth over 20 years, Yaldei's vision and essence remains proudly intact: we are committed to facilitating the process of revealing the untapped potential of each and every child, thereby permanently transforming the lives of the people who need us most.



📍📍 Sometimes real  
superheroes live in the  
hearts of small children  
fighting big battles 📍📍