Andrus

We Are Andrus

Summer 2023

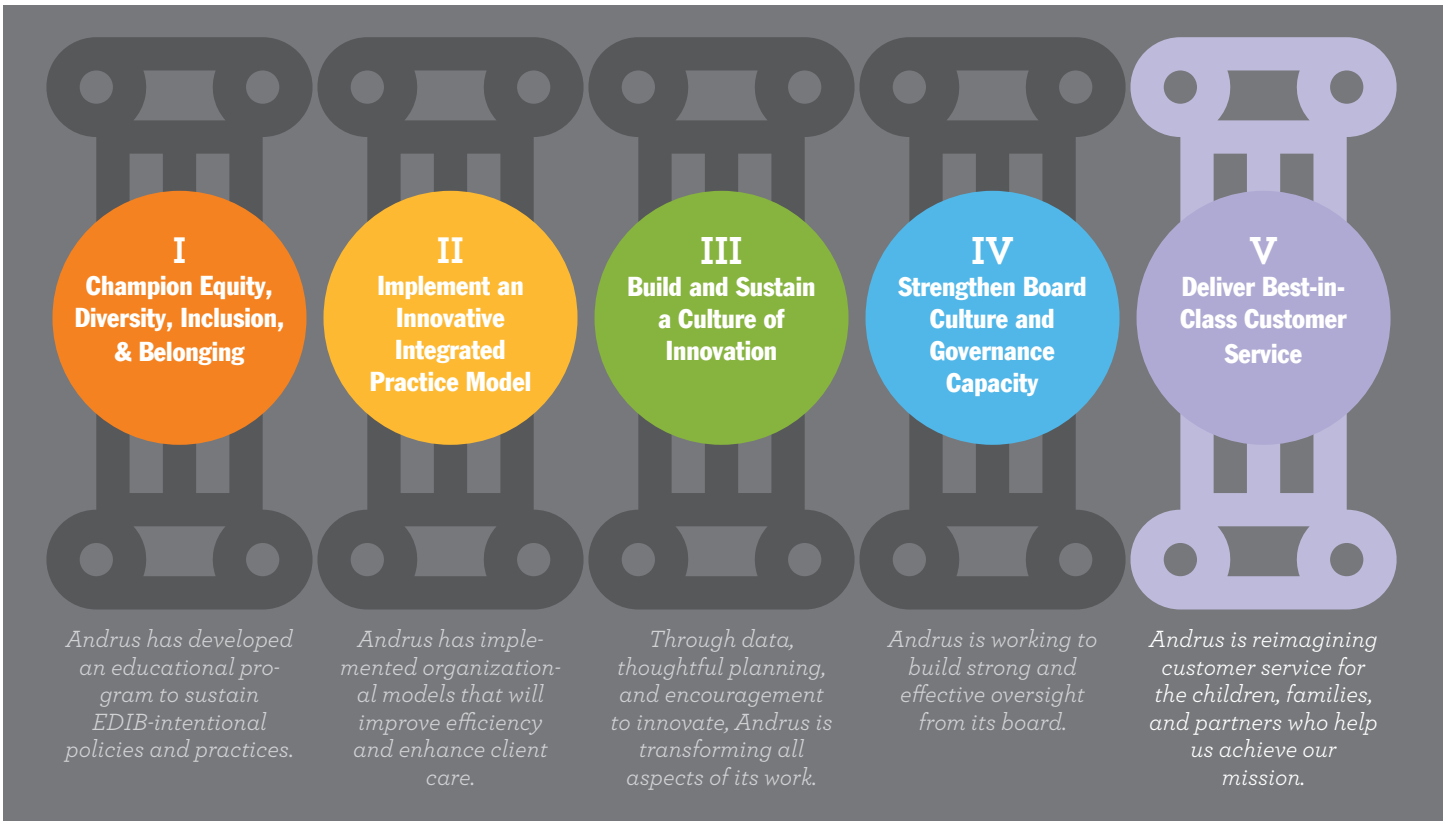
OUR MISSION Andrus is dedicated to transforming lives through innovative, coordinated social and emotional support for all.

OUR VISION Our vision for the community we serve is for children and families to discover a place of safety and healing.

Pillar V: Deliver Best-in-Class Customer Service

A Message From Our President & CEO Heath Bloch

The fifth pillar of our strategic plan represents the commitment to providing the best possible customer service to the people we serve: children and families, payers, oversight authorities, staff, and our board of directors. Andrus is reimagining mental healthcare that is responsive to the needs of our clients—being more thoughtful about intake, providing clear treatment recommendations and options, and sustaining support throughout the process—regardless of the ability to pay, ensuring access to the right care, at the right time, and at the right price. Andrus has also reimagined how we serve our valued employees, ensuring respect and responsiveness. Listening and learning are key aspects of supporting our community of customers as we welcome input from all of our stakeholders.



Congratulations to the Orchard School Class of 2023

Twenty-seven graduates enjoyed a heartfelt celebration of their academic achievement and personal growth. There were five honorable mentions for Academic Achievement, two English Language Arts awards, and four Women in Stem awards.

Board member, James Black, shared words of wisdom and encouragement during the graduation ceremony, reminding the graduates that their voices and unique talents matter.

A Story of Triumph Over Adversity

Napolitano shared his journey of growing up in challenging circumstances, discovering the power of mindfulness to transform his life.

A highlight of the graduation ceremony was the keynote speech by motivational speaker, **Demetrius Napolitano**, who shared his personal story of triumph over adversity. Although Napolitano grew up in challenging circumstances, he discovered the power of mindfulness to transform his life. His words of resilience and self-confidence resonated deeply with the graduates, reminding them that they too have the strength and ability to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

Demetrius Napolitano with Andrus President & CEO, Heath Bloch.

Welcome new Orchard School Principal Roland Lewis

A hearty welcome to Mr. Roland Lewis, the new principal at the Orchard School. Mr. Lewis joins us from the Biondi Education Center at Rising Ground. He is an experienced educator who is particularly skilled at working with neurodivergent children, and who ran a special education school serving more than 850 students. His experience has made him confident that every child can be successful in school.

Thank you to the Mahopac Girl Scout Troop

In June Troop 1097 from Mahopac came to drop off comfort packages for our residents. They solicited donations from their community and made individual packets with hygiene and feel-good projects for the children who live on campus. They reported that this project taught them about budgeting. And the best part of the project was the opportunity to do it together.

New Friends

Andrus welcomes a new family member to the Hope Space farm

This summer we welcomed a delightful new member to our campus —a beautiful, little black and white lamb.

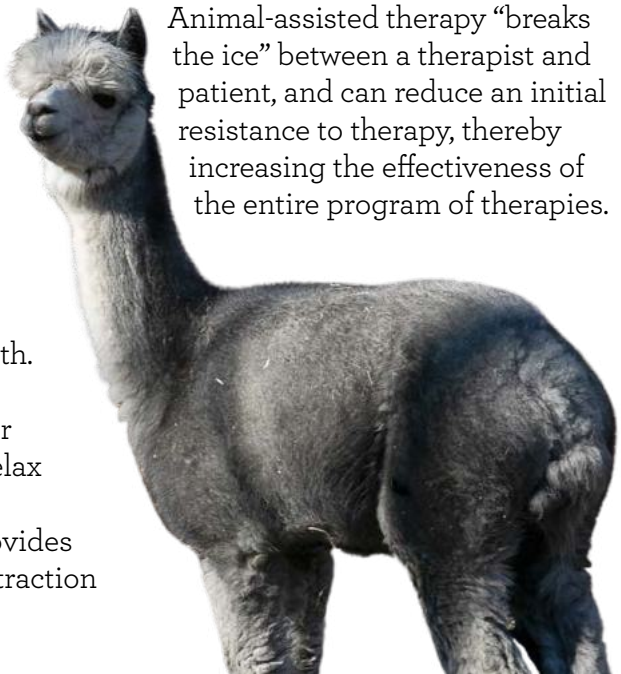
The children were honored with the task of voting for a name, and the winner by 22 votes: *Oreo!*

Animal-Assisted Therapy

Animal-assisted therapy is an important element of the therapy program at Andrus. It provides significant mental health benefits to the residential and day school students in our care. Interacting with an animal prompts the body to release serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin, hormones that have been shown to lower stress and depression, helping to support good mental health.

The release of these hormones also helps lower anxiety, so children will relax during their therapy. The presence of an animal provides comfort and a needed distraction from an otherwise challenging time.

Some children have mental health blocks that make therapy and treatment more difficult. Animal-assisted therapy "breaks the ice" between a therapist and patient, and can reduce an initial resistance to therapy, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the entire program of therapies.



Summer Camp Fun

Our new Therapeutic Recreation Director, Michelle Yadon, and her team organized a fun-filled, action- packed summer, providing a nice break for Andrus residential students. Activities included cookouts, a scavenger hunt at Untermeyer Gardens, the ropes course, visits to Dave & Buster's and Applebee's, field games, and arts and crafts.

The staff and our CEO, Heath Bloch, joined the children in a rousing game of Andrus "fun ball," a more relaxed version of dodge ball. The two teams gave it their all, but one team dominated, winning three out of three games.

At our second annual pride celebration in June, Michelle Yadon encouraged all of our children to embrace their individuality and take pride in who they are.

Healthy Families of Westchester Hosts Community Baby Shower

Healthy Families of Westchester hosted programs on family nutrition at the Yonkers Public Library and at the Beulah Seventh Day Adventist Church in Mount Vernon. The latter took the form of a community shower supplying expectant families with vital resources on pre-eclampsia, pre- and postpartum depression, lactation support, and home visit newborn care.

Happening at Andrus

September 6
Orchard School Fall Session Begins

September 12
Staff Appreciation Party

September 23
Care Management, Healthy Families, and Andrus CHAMP at Yonkers Riverfest

September 27
Back to School Night

@andruschildren