We Are Andrus

Summer 2026

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.

A Message from Our President and CEO, Corine E. Lurry-Mabin, PhD

As we closed another school year, we are reminded that progress often reveals itself in moments both large and small. It was there in our clinicians' thoughtful leadership of Autism Awareness Day, in the joy of our students performing in the Spring Concert, and in the pride of our graduating class of 22 students.

At commencement, newly elected Board Chair Daniel Fossner and alumnus Maurisse Johnson offered wisdom, encouragement, and a powerful reminder that a young person's beginning does not determine the limits of their future.

During Mental Health Awareness Month, we also welcomed community leaders and partners to our Mental Health Awareness Breakfast.

Our guests saw firsthand the extraordinary commitment of our staff and the many One Health supports that strengthen clinical care and make recovery more possible. They left inspired by Andrus' approach, recognizing that healing is not confined to a therapy room. It can grow through movement, nourishment, nature, animals, creativity, trusted relationships, and a true sense of belonging.

That same spirit has carried us into summer. Morgan Stanley volunteers brought their time and energy to our greenhouse and farm. The Afya Foundation provided valuable donations for our health center and community programs. Our Recreation Therapy team led two successful camp sessions, culminating in a talent show where our young people were seen, celebrated, and encouraged to shine.

Our reach is growing as well. Since welcoming Mary Grace Pagaduan as Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement, we have expanded relationships with businesses, nonprofits, elected leaders, volunteers, and community organizations.

We invite you to join us. Partner with us, volunteer, support our programs, or introduce us to others who share our belief in children and families. Together, we are creating healthier communities and helping possibilities take root. As always, we couldn't do this without you. Thank you.

Corine E. Lurry-Mabin, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer

Events at Andrus

Sept 3	Back to School Parade
Oct 1	Andrus Cocktail Soirée
Oct 28	Andrus Haunted Hike & Halloween Parade
Nov 4	Andrus Benefits Health & Wellness Fair

Meet Our New Orchard School Principal: Joseph Spatola

Leading Through Visibility and Collaboration

Since joining The Orchard School at Andrus in May, our new principal, Joseph Spatola, has been focused on one thing above all else: being present for students and staff.

With a career spanning teaching, school leadership, and district administration, he brings decades of experience in special education and student support.

Most recently, he served as Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services in the Lakeland Central School District. Prior to that, he held leadership roles as a Director of Special Education, Special Education Supervisor, Assistant Principal, and teacher throughout Westchester County.

Why Andrus?

After more than 15 years in central office leadership, he was ready to return to what first inspired his career: working directly with students.

"This opportunity brought me back to working closely with children, families, and staff every day, which is the best part of the job. I wanted to be part of a school where I could have a direct impact on students and help create meaningful opportunities for them."

Having begun his career in alternative education, he was drawn to The Orchard School's mission of serving students who have not always had access to the same opportunities as their peers.

"Our students deserve high expectations, strong support, and every opportunity to succeed."

His leadership philosophy is simple: be present. That means greeting students each morning, spending time in classrooms, attending school events, collaborating with teachers, partnering with residential and clinical teams, and building strong relationships with families.

"Students need to know the adults around them genuinely care about them and believe in them. They need to know their voices matter and that even when challenges arise, we're still going to be here to support them. They need to know that everyone has hiccups and they can get over them."

Looking Beyond the Classroom

One of his goals is to expand opportunities for students through partnerships with colleges, universities, and the broader community.

The Orchard School is already strengthening relationships with institutions including Manhattanville University, Mercy University, and Manhattan University to create student-teaching placements and fieldwork opportunities. These partnerships not only enrich learning experiences but also help introduce future educators to the rewarding field of special education.

"We want people entering the profession to see the incredible work happening here and understand the many meaningful careers available in special education."

Looking Ahead

When asked what success would look like a year from now, his answer focused on students.

"I hope we have even more students thriving in our program, successfully transitioning back to less restrictive educational settings, and benefiting from innovative programming we've developed together."

New Principal cont'd

He also hopes to continue supporting staff by creating systems that make their work easier and more effective.

"Anything I can do to improve our day-to-day operations helps our teachers focus on what matters most—our students."

Although he has only recently joined The Orchard School, it's already the everyday moments that stand out.

"There are so many small interactions with students that remind you why you're here. Those genuine connections are what we'll continue to build on together."

As he begins this new chapter, we are excited for the leadership, compassion, and collaborative spirit he brings to our school community. We look forward to all that lies ahead for our students, families, and staff. Please join us in welcoming Principal Spatola.

Mental Health Awareness:
One Health, One Community

In May, Andrus welcomed friends, partners, and community leaders to the President's House for Mental Health Awareness: One Health, One Community, part of the Andrus Insight Breakfast Series hosted by Dr. Corine E. Lurry-Mabin, President and CEO of Andrus.

Moderated by Mary Grace Pagaduan, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Andrus, the morning explored how healing is strengthened through the connection between mind and body, people and community, and the environments that shape well-being.

David Early, Andrus Board Member and Licensed Mental Health Provider, discussed mental health as whole-body health, while Stacey Roberts, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Mental Health of New York, examined what the body remembers following trauma. Jessica Amato, Recreational Therapist at Andrus, shared how movement can support regulation, confidence, and joy.

The conversation also featured Chef Ariela St. Vil, Private Chef, on food as medicine and care; Dr. Debra Argentina, Ecology Teacher at Andrus, on nature and growing well-being; and Meg Cardi, LMSW, of Andrus, and Natalia Valdes, Animal Caretaker at Andrus, on the role of animals, empathy, and healing relationships. Nate Hill, Executive Director of the Metropolitan New York Library Council, explored the importance of creating spaces that hold and support us.

Together, our presenters demonstrated that clinical recovery is not supported by therapy alone. It is strengthened through nourishment, movement, relationships, animals, nature, and environments that help children feel safe, connected, and capable.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each of our speakers, as well as the partners, community leaders, and friends who joined us and helped advance this important conversation.

Learning, Creativity, and Celebration at The Orchard School

The end of the school year brought an exciting season of learning and celebration to The Orchard School.

Students shared their curiosity and creativity through hands-on projects at the annual Science Fair, performed for families and staff during the Spring Concert, and enjoyed an energetic Field Day filled with teamwork, movement, and fun.

These experiences extend learning beyond traditional classroom instruction. They give students opportunities to discover their interests, build confidence, express themselves, and experience the pride that comes from sharing their accomplishments with others.

From scientific exploration and musical performances to friendly competition and outdoor recreation, each activity reflected the commitment of our teachers, clinicians, recreation professionals, and support staff. We are grateful to our staff who helped make the closing weeks of school so memorable for our students.

Dr. Corine E. Lurry-Mabin Honored

Congratulations to our President and CEO, Dr. Corine E. Lurry-Mabin, on being named a 2026 Westfair C-Suite Honoree.

Your visionary leadership, compassion, and unwavering belief in people continue to inspire the entire Andrus community.

Community Partners in Action

We were honored to have Andrus recognized on the floor of the United States House of Representatives by Representative George Latimer. His remarks celebrated our commitment to strengthening the mental health and well-being of children, families, and communities. Visit our website or social media channels to watch his full presentation.

A heartfelt thank you to the Morgan Stanley team for volunteering at the Andrus farm. From planting and protecting our gardens to pressure washing, bottling honey, and completing projects throughout the property, their hard work made a meaningful difference.

We are also grateful to Volunteer New York! for organizing this wonderful day of service. Together, these dedicated volunteers helped our farm continue to grow as a place of healing, learning, and opportunity for the children and families we serve.

Through its generous donation of medical supplies and essential goods, the Afya Foundation helps Andrus stretch every dollar further for the children and families we serve. We are proud to partner with an organization whose commitment to sustainability and compassionate care creates meaningful impact at home and around the world.

Thank you to the Morgan Stanley team for volunteering at the Andrus farm.

A Night to Imagine What's Possible

On Thursday, October 1, Andrus will welcome supporters, partners, and friends to the historic President's House for A Night to Imagine What's Possible, a special cocktail soirée celebrating the brighter futures we can create together.

The evening will shine a spotlight on Andrus' One Health Initiative, our integrated approach to helping children and families thrive through clinical therapies, nutrition, structured physical activity, nature-based learning, animal-assisted experiences, and supportive relationships.

We are also proud to honor Susan Guma with the Andrus Excellence in Leadership and Service Award in recognition of her outstanding commitment to Andrus and her unwavering dedication to improving the lives of children and families. Susan's leadership, generosity, and steadfast advocacy have helped strengthen our mission and inspire our community.

We look forward to an evening of celebration, connection, and imagining what's possible—together. Check our website to see if tickets are still available for this special event. We are excited to welcome our supporters to this special evening.

Celebrating The Orchard School Class of 2026

The Orchard School community gathered in June to celebrate the Class of 2026 and recognize the determination, growth, and accomplishments of our 22 eighth-grade graduates.

New Principal Joseph Spatola welcomed graduates, families, foster parents, teachers, clinicians, staff, and friends, reminding students that they are surrounded by people committed to helping them take their next steps. His words reflected what makes Orchard special: a community where progress is supported through strong relationships and a shared belief in every student's potential.

Commencement speaker Maurisse Johnson

Commencement speaker and Andrus alumnus Maurisse Johnson returned to campus with a deeply personal message. Speaking not only to the graduates but also to any child who may be struggling or wondering whether life can change, he shared that he had once been that child. His homecoming offered powerful proof that a difficult beginning does not determine the limits of a young person's future.

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Board Chair Daniel Fossner congratulated the graduates, while Andrus President and CEO Dr. Corine E. Lurry-Mabin encouraged them to move forward with confidence and remain true to themselves. Class Valedictorian Damien spoke, reminding his classmates that success is not about perfection but about showing up, working hard, learning from mistakes, and continuing forward.

Graduation celebrates academic achievement, but it also honors creativity, leadership, friendship, positive choices, and personal growth. As our students turned their tassels, they were reminded that this milestone is not an ending but the beginning of all that remains possible.

Celebrating the Class of 2026 cont'd

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Congratulations to our 22 eighth-grade graduates!

A Summer Camp Filled with Student Talent

Students across Andrus celebrated the season through music, art, recreation, and special performances. One particularly moving moment came during the residential talent show, when a student who had once been hesitant to step forward confidently performed for the room. Moments like these reflect the confidence, belonging, and personal growth that supportive relationships can make possible.

Supporting Recreation and Wellness at Andrus

Andrus was selected to receive up to $520,448 through New York State's NY SWIMS initiative to support improvements to the McGee Hall Aquatic Center.

The investment will help strengthen access to swimming, recreation, and wellness opportunities for the children and young people served on our campus. Aquatic programming provides much more than physical exercise. It can help children build confidence, develop new skills, regulate emotions, and experience healthy accomplishment in a supportive environment.

The award also reflects the growing recognition that recreation and structured physical activity are essential components of whole-person care. These opportunities are an important part of the One Health approach at Andrus, connecting physical health, emotional well-being, positive relationships, and joyful experiences.

We are grateful for this meaningful investment in our campus and in the futures of the children we serve.

We are also grateful to the following organizations for their support of Andrus through recent awards and grants: Carvel, NYSERDA, FlexTech, and M&T Bank.

Building the Next Generation of Educators

The Orchard School is currently developing relationships with colleges and universities such as Manhattanville University to create student-teaching and fieldwork opportunities on the Andrus campus. These partnerships will introduce future educators and professionals to the many rewarding career paths available in special education while helping Andrus build a stronger pipeline of talented, mission-driven teachers. Stay tuned.

Celebrating Our Staff

Andrus employees stepped back into the 1980s for this year's staff celebration. Music, costumes, lyric competitions, dancing, and plenty of laughter gave colleagues an opportunity to relax and enjoy one another's company. The celebration was also a heartfelt expression of appreciation for the compassion, dedication, and hard work our employees bring to Andrus every day.