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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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ACDS Westchester is thrilled to announce that it is a recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester and Tuckahoe. The grant will support our efforts to maintain a school environment that prioritizes the health and safety of our vulnerable students and staff. Funding will cover un-reimbursable costs related to opening and operating our special needs pre-school on a hybrid schedule that blends in-person and virtual special education and clinical instruction. The grant will cover covid related expenses in nursing, maintenance and in providing our students and staff with adequate PPE.

This is a time of enormous financial strain for agencies providing essential services to the special needs community. While expenses to address the pandemic and to provide a safe school environment that complies with state and federal regulations mount, our revenue has plummeted. Funding from the Community Fund's Covid-19 Relief Fund is critical to our ability to fulfill our mission and to safely provide essential services to a highly vulnerable population.

ACDS Executive Director Michael M. Smith remarks that "ACDS is committed to providing the educational and clinical instruction that Westchester children with developmental disabilities need to thrive during this crisis. Funding from The Community Fund will allow us to invest in the safety measures necessary to ensure that our students and staff can be confident that their health is our highest priority. We are grateful to the Community Fund and look forward to collaborating with them in the future."

ACDS provides special education and related services, including speech, physical, and occupational therapy, and counseling for 120 children, aged three through five, with autism, Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities who reside in southern Westchester County, including Bronxville, Eastchester, Tuckahoe, Mount Vernon, Yonkers and the surrounding communities. ACDS Westchester was founded in 2016 to address the acute lack of clinical and educational services available to young children with developmental disabilities in Westchester, particularly children from historically under-served backgrounds. It has the capacity to serve 180 children. ACDS Westchester meets a great need in the County for high quality, evidenced based, early childhood education and clinical services. It also provides evaluations, Applied Behavioral Analysis, parent training and support groups for families in order to serve our students holistically and beyond the school day.

### **ABOUT ACDS**

ACDS, with headquarters in Plainview, NY, is dedicated to providing lifetime resources to individuals with Down syndrome, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Since 1966, the agency has been helping those living with developmental disabilities develop to their fullest potential. On Long Island, ACDS works with people from birth through adulthood and offers programs for entire families. ACDS currently serves more than 1,000 people through home based and clinical Early Intervention; preschool special education; respite and recreation programs for children, teens, and adults; Brokerage/Self Direction and Fiscal Intermediary Services; day habilitation; and eight supervised group homes. Mirroring the successful outcomes of its special education preschool on Long Island, ACDS opened a preschool for children with developmental disabilities ages three through five in Westchester, NY, in 2016. For more information, visit [www.acds.org](http://www.acds.org) or call 516-933-4700.