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MISSION

Pathlight partners with people with disabilities to create opportunities and build relationships throughout their lives.



Pathlight ANNUAL REPORT 2020

WE ARE HERE...

To ensure that our region's children, teens, and adults with disabilities are empowered to create the life of their choosing.

Pathlight is making a difference in the lives of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families.



WHEN YOU GIVE A GIFT, YOU

- Allow us to offer financial assistance to individuals in Pathlight's Shared Living program so they can enjoy life-enhancing activities like horseback riding, a trip to a Red Sox game, and performing arts classes
- Give aspiring performers a chance to shine on stage in our theater, chorus, and rock band programs
- Help us to be the premiere provider of exceptional services to people with disabilities and their families in Western Massachusetts
- Allow us to offer a robust recreation and enrichment program that runs six days a week
- Provide accessible community homes with compassionate, trained staff and caregiver support
- Put smiles on faces, help develop social skills, help people discover new strengths and find joy
- Provide innovative support to people with autism and their families, to enhance their learning and inclusion in the community



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear Pathlight families and friends,
The coronavirus has tested all of us. But in times like these, when our mettle is tested, we are reminded that community is key.
Every day I am humbled and inspired when I see the compassionate staff and friends who consistently support the lives of children, teens and adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities and autism and their families.

When COVID-19 hit in the spring, Pathlight had to quickly reinvent ways to deliver its services and provide educational and recreational activities to people living in our 30 residential homes, and families across the four counties of Western Massachusetts, while keeping them safe and healthy. Fortunately, Pathlight's resilient and creative staff moved quickly to provide online support and kept families connected virtually.

We reached out to you for support when we were hit with unexpected expenses, and you came through in a big way. Your gifts were invaluable, as they brought relief to the organization when it was needed the most.

The short stories in this annual report reveal only a portion of the importance of private support to our work and the people we serve. As a donor, I hope they fill you with pride. By working together, we will navigate the winding road ahead and remain true to our mission of creating opportunities and building relationships for people with disabilities throughout their lives.

Again, I am grateful and impressed with the Pathlight community, internally and externally. Your kindness and thoughtful support make such a difference. Thank you for all you do. We are truly stronger and better together.

Sincerely,
Michael T. Moriarty
Michael T. Moriarty
President, Board of Directors

DANCING QUEEN

Ashley Kohl does everything with her whole heart. Her relationship with Pathlight is no exception. As a loyal volunteer, she has boundlessly given her time, talent and unstoppable energy and optimism to Let's Dance! from its very inception as a vague idea for a fundraiser.



In 2016, Ashley left her job as host of the WWLP daytime show *Mass Appeal* to follow her life-long dream of opening an all-inclusive dance studio. Her guiding philosophy for Ohana School of Performing Arts is that everyone can and should dance, and all abilities should perform together in the spotlight.

So it was a match made in heaven when we approached Ashley with our vision for Let's Dance! – an event that pairs a person with a disability with a community member to work on a short routine under the guidance of a dance instructor. Ashley not only jumped onboard herself, she brought on her Ohana instructors, and recruited other dance instructors ... and Let's Dance! was born.

"I was so touched by what Let's Dance! did for everyone in the room – the audience, the Pathlight dancers and the community leaders," said Ashley, speaking of that first Let's Dance! in 2017. "It shone such a bright light. Everyone there said, 'This has to get bigger and I am coming next year and bringing more people.'"

With Ashley's help, Let's Dance! has become Pathlight's signature fundraising event, raising close to \$120,000 last year. She says that she can't imagine not being involved in Let's Dance!, and Pathlight certainly can't imagine Let's Dance! without Ashley Kohl.

Sadly because of COVID-19 we had to cancel Let's Dance! in 2020, but we will see you on the dance floor in 2021!

LEGACY SOCIETY

We are proud to recognize the individuals who have chosen to put Pathlight in their will or charitable estate plans. Their legacy gifts will sustain Pathlight for generations to come. Consider joining today, and by doing so, ensure that Pathlight will continue to provide its vital programs and services for many years to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Pathlight's Development Office is happy to work with you and/or your professional advisors to plan your charitable legacy. Please contact Valle Dwight, Director of Development at (413) 585-8010 or development@pathlightgroup.org.

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* = deceased |
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Because of you, and with you, we were able to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities. Thank you! The following list of names recognizes donors and sponsors who contributed \$100 or more between July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020.

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"I have Asperger's and used to be really, really shy. But I gained a lot of new skills by coming to Autism Connections and getting involved in the programs. Things like cooking, how to build and maintain good, healthy and safe relationships with other people and how to live in and interact with the community."
— Kara C.

SUPPORT IN THE TIME OF COVID



Will is a 6-year-old boy with dark brown eyes and wavy brown hair. He has autism and has significant difficulty communicating his basic needs. Will is on a toilet training journey and must be assisted throughout the day to have success. When he does not have supports in the bathroom, he becomes physically distressed and sometimes self-harms.

Additionally, Will needs to be in his parents' sight 24/7, because he will leave the house and wander away quickly. Things got more frightening when he figured out the home's locking system. And, should he bolt out of his backyard, he doesn't have the safety skills to avoid common dangers such as the road, or strangers. He could quickly get lost.

To keep Will safe, his parents or a caregiver must be near him at all times. But COVID-19 added additional financial strain to their household and they weren't able to access their usual resources to support Will and maintain stability within the family.

Learning of this family's struggle, Pathlight stepped in to help. Thanks to an award from the **Herve & Therese Fafard Memorial Fund** (a restricted fund, established with private donations to assist individuals and families with emergency needs), the family was able to find a daytime respite provider who supported the family, while giving Will the one-on-one support he needed in the bathroom and at home to be safe. Quality of life is important for everyone, most especially for families with a child who has autism. This is where the Fafard Fund makes a difference.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Your support allows us to offer programs that enrich the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Last year, with your support, we raised

\$441,749



FISCAL YEAR 2020 (ESTIMATES)

Support & Revenue	\$33,726,000
Expenses	\$33,576,000
Assets	\$22,882,530
Liabilities	\$8,110,350

"Once again, we thank you for the wonderful support you provide our daughter and family. We are always grateful."
— Stuart and Evelyn Egerton

SIBLINGS AND BONDING

By: Isaiah Meade

"What Tressa loves is spending time with her friends at Milestones Day Program. It is the highlight of her day and it keeps her on her schedule."

My sister Tressa loves to be kept on a schedule. Unknown or unexpected situations can sometimes be overwhelming or overstimulating for her to handle. Tressa has Bipolar Disorder and a developmental disability, and anything that strays from what was planned is usually met with her annoyance and sometimes frustration.



The Meade Siblings

In Tressa's five years at Milestones, I have watched her social skills and ability to read and respond to emotions greatly advance. She has learned to respect other's personal space and body autonomy, for example asking before giving hugs. Tressa now has a better understanding of social cues, which has helped her be more assertive with her own preferences and needs.

As her brother, I see how Milestones makes Tressa happier, as it helps her socially and mentally. The skills she has gained at Milestones have also helped me understand her and bond with her. Our relationship has been made stronger because of the social skills she has picked up since being a part of Milestones program.

"The classes at Whole Children make my son so happy." — Andrea Callahan

THE BERKSHIRES TURN OUT FOR AUTISM



BAI volunteers gather for the Red Hot Dinner Dance, February 2020

Shea introduced his mom to the world of autism when he was 18 months. He is now 19 years old and a senior at Wahconah Regional High School. Over the years, Shea's mother, Robin MacPherson, pictured fourth from the right, embraced the challenges of raising a son with autism and calls him "an angel and a blessing."

But there were definitely ups and downs as she navigated daily life with Shea. Robin learned that support for families was limited in her community, so she joined the Berkshire Autism Initiative (BAI) to partner with Autism Connections (a Pathlight program). Together they raise awareness and provide activities and educational opportunities and financial assistance to families in Berkshire county.

Robin estimates that over the 15 years of her involvement, she and other BAI volunteers have raised more than \$20,000 annually by securing business sponsorships and hosting various events including themed dinner dances, wine tastings, and numerous auctions.

In total, BAI has raised more than \$300,000 for Autism Connections to help families bridge the financial gap between what the state provides and what families need; underwrite sensory activity days; provide access to adaptive equipment; fund scholarships; and provide emergency assistance.

Robin and her team of 12 volunteers and everyone at Autism Connections know there is no one-size-fits-all treatment or support services for people with autism. Yet each volunteer, whether they have a personal connection to autism or not, is passionately committed to making a positive difference in families' lives and, in their community, all while having fun.

Volunteers make a one-year commitment to BAI. Robin intends to continue to volunteer to help others with autism while learning from her son's experiences. As for Shea, he attends some BAI fundraising events and benefits from some of the programs, all while being his authentic self – a kind, caring, empathetic, loving, young man.