

# Pathlight Newsletter

COMPASSION | EXPERTISE | INCLUSION

## HOME SWEET HOME



Pathlight is always working hard to ensure that our community residences are maintained and modernized. The most recent example is the construction of three modern homes to replace two older ones in Springfield. In late June, five residents moved into beautiful new digs on Plumtree Road and have enjoyed unpacking and settling in.

It took a bit of time for the residents to adjust to new surroundings but they are all smiles now, and are especially enjoying the three-season porch, according to house manager Antonia Stewart.

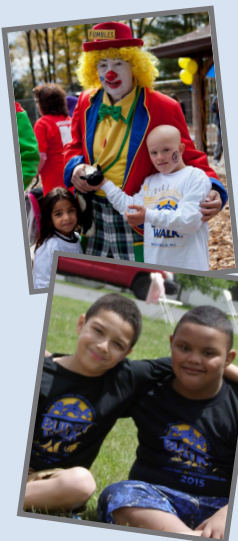
**“Everyone is loving the nice house,” she added. “It’s beautiful and fits each individual’s needs perfectly.”**

The new home has accessible bathrooms, two living rooms, an enclosed sun porch, kitchen counters at two heights (to ensure that everyone gets to get in on the cooking fun), and lovely wide hallways.

Take a video tour of the new home just before move-in day!



## BUDDY WALK IS BACK!



After taking a year off, we’re hitting the trail again at **Stanley Park on October 2** for our favorite fundraiser and family gathering – The Buddy Walk!

The Buddy Walk was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

The one-mile Buddy Walk at Stanley Park in Westfield is an inclusive and educational event that celebrates the many abilities and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome. Whether you have Down syndrome, know someone who does, or just want to show your support, come join our Buddy Walk!

Our walkers’ safety is our most important concern, so we will be putting COVID protocols into place as we get closer to the event. **For more information and to sign up, please visit [www.downsyndromewm.org](http://www.downsyndromewm.org)**

# FOOD TRUCK FUNDRAISER

Summer and food trucks – a magical combination that came together this year to benefit the Milestones day program.

Knowing the difficult impact COVID-19 has had on non-profits, Christine Blakesley had an idea to make a difference in a very specific way.

Blakesley, a former Milestones teacher who operates the Bistro Bus food truck, hosted a combination food truck fundraiser and raffle to support the great work of the day program. Throughout July, a portion of the sales from the Bistro Bus' food orders went to bridge the gap between the program's budget and the financial strain created by the pandemic.

It was not only a lot of fun but Christine raised \$735.00 to donate to Milestones so that the program could continue its important work of serving young adults (18+) with developmental disabilities. **"I hope to do it again next year," said Blakesley. "I know first-hand how important financial resources are to support the amazing work Milestones does."**



Bistro Bus Food Truck

# FAMILY EMPOWERMENT COMES TO FRANKLIN COUNTY

Family Empowerment is now the family support center for Franklin County. We are renovating the space at our 101 Munson St. office in Greenfield and are hoping to set up shop there later this fall.

Serving all of Franklin County, we have hired additional family support specialists who have been working since January with the 160 or so families connected with the center.

**"Whether people are caring for a preschooler, school-age child, teen or adult, we help find state and local resources to develop a unique plan of action and a community supportive of individuals' needs,"** said Michelle Mendes, coordinator for Family Empowerment – Franklin County. "We provide information, referrals, service navigation, family networking, family training, connections."

Any families in the area can connect with Family Empowerment by emailing Mendes at [Michelle.Mendes@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Michelle.Mendes@pathlightgroup.org).

# GIVING BACK FOR MY 40TH

BY ELIZABETH BARSALOU

I've worked at Autism Connections for the past 14 years. I have held the positions of therapist and senior therapist over the years. When people say that you have to truly love what you do everyday, I can unequivocally say that I do, with all my heart.

I consider myself extremely blessed to be working with such wonderful people. I learn something everyday from the children I work with — they and their families have impacted my life beyond measure.

When my 40th birthday rolled around, which I was not too happy about, I decided to give back via a Facebook fundraiser. The first place I considered was the place that has given me so much over the years. Autism Connections was an easy choice for me.

I am super proud to say that with the support of my friends and family I was able to raise more than \$400 for Autism Connections.



*Thank you to all who have done Facebook fundraisers this summer for Pathlight, Whole Children, and Autism Connections: Nola Bloomer, Ariella Chase, Veronica Taylor, Angelina Stafford, Elizabeth Barsalou*



# VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ON YOUR OWN TIME

**31st ANNUAL  
AUTISM CONNECTIONS  
AUTISM  
CONFERENCE  
SAVE THE DATE  
APRIL 28, 2022**

Did you miss out on the Autism Conference in April? Autism Connections is offering an exceptional opportunity to view all 18 breakout sessions on your own schedule for only \$30. Additionally included are the keynote speeches from educator, writer, and global advocate Morénike Giwa Onaiwu; Stacey Gordon, American puppeteer best known for portraying Julia, a four-year-old Muppet with autism on *Sesame Street*.

All sessions will be available to view until December 1. Register at [autismconnectionsma.org](http://autismconnectionsma.org) and you will receive a link to instructions on how to access the conference content. (Click on the top banner of the Autism Connections website to jump straight to the registration page.)

Save the date to join Autism Connections and our community of professionals, families, individuals with autism, and exhibitors at the next **Annual Autism Conference on Thursday, April 28, 2022**. The conference will again be held on the virtual platform SOCIO. Attend to view keynotes and breakouts, and participate in many of the new options for online conferences that make it engaging, fun and informative.

*“Thank you for providing this conference which was full of information and resources I wasn’t aware of.”*

**-Parent**

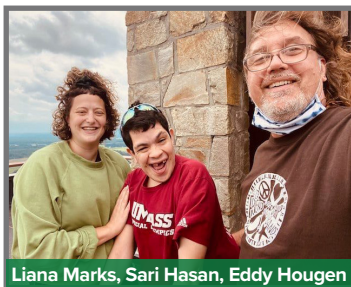
*“I feel hopeful for the first time in a long time.”*

**-Teacher/Parent**

*“As a parent, it’s a chance to learn something new...and that’s so valuable.”*

**-Parent**

## SUMMER AT WHOLE CHILDREN AND MILESTONES



Liana Marks, Sari Hasan, Eddy Hougen



Chris Seifert



Sari Hasan, Letitia Ward



Jeremy Tetreault, Nick Vogt

This summer saw the return of some limited in-person classes and events at Whole Children as well as a return to the full schedule of our Milestones day program.

The excitement of seeing friends again after so long was palpable as the summer kicked off, and it hasn't waned in the least. The performing arts (theater, Friendship Band and Joyful Chorus) in particular have been raising the energy level at the Inclusive Community Center, as has the return of the beloved Kung Fu class on Fridays.

Whole Children is also running a full roster of online classes for people who cannot attend in person. Altogether, over 70 students are connecting and learning this summer at Whole Children.

Meanwhile, the Milestones Day crew quickly got back into their routines, including summer outings to Mount Sugarloaf, Look Park, and the bowling alley. The group of young adults is also taking classes including Music Mash, Self Advocacy, Men's Group, and Money Skills.



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