



Pathlight Newsletter

COMPASSION | EXPERTISE | INCLUSION

Double dose of fun

The Darren FUNd, a radio contest, and a social worker who went the extra mile . . . the perfect trifecta for some mile-wide smiles!

This past spring, Ron Street, who lives in a Pathlight Shared Living home, attended the WWE Smackdown event (a live broadcast produced by World Wrestling Entertainment) at the DCU center in Worcester. He was thrilled with the lights, camera, and excitement of the night and even picked up a keepsake any wrestling fan would envy: a WWE belt! His trip and souvenir were paid for by the Darren FUNd.

The FUNd was founded in 2007 by long-time Shared Living providers, Anne Marie Corrieri and John Perrin. From the moment Darren Harrington joined their family, he brought joy and smiles to all around him. Fittingly, his favorite phrase was, "How 'bout be happy?!"

It was Darren's positive attitude that inspired the couple to create The Darren FUNd. They wanted to pay forward the happiness he brought to their lives by giving others the chance to create meaningful memories.

Over the years the Darren FUNd has supported many forms of happiness for people supported in Shared Living—from guitar lessons and vacations to action-packed nights on the town, as in Ron's case. "That's what Darren was all about—having fun," said Corrieri.

Unbeknownst to Ron, the fun was just beginning.

A few weeks after the DCU excursion, Dennis LaFleche, a Pathlight social worker who works with Ron, was driving to the office when he heard a contest on local radio station, WAQY Rock 102. The fourth caller would receive tickets to another WWE event being held in Springfield! LaFleche had never called into a radio contest in his life, but this time he did, and he won.

LeFleche revealed the surprise at Ron's scheduled ISP (Individualized Service Plan) meeting. He was thrilled (but don't take our word for it, check out this video of Ron learning the news: bit.ly/RonWinsTickets). Ron once again had a blast at another adrenaline-fueled evening around the ring!



Ron Street with his WWE belt.

Shared Living is a service model in which an individual with developmental disabilities moves in with a person, couple, or family in the community. The care provider receives a generous **tax-free** stipend and the knowledge they are making a positive difference in the lives of others, while the individuals live and grow in a home-based situation and experience the everyday activities of family and community life. **Adult Family Care** is an option for biological families. For more information, email info@pathlightgroup.org.

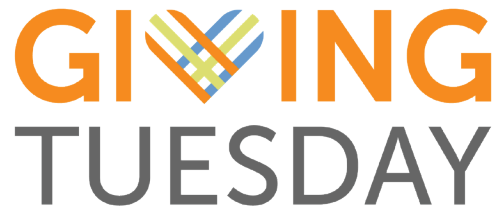


Scan here to donate now!

Together, we pave the way for the people we serve to thrive. Scan the QR code or visit www.pathlightgroup.org/give to make a donation today.

Giving Tuesday is coming November 29

Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past decade, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate and celebrate generosity.



This year, Giving Tuesday is November 29. We hope that you will consider Pathlight, Whole Children, and Autism Connections as you spread the love this month. We are so grateful for your support.

Autism conference back in person and online

32nd ANNUAL
AUTISM CONNECTIONS
AUTISM
CONFERENCE
SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 27, 2023

For the 32nd year, the Autism Connections Autism Conference returns this spring, and as always is packed with exhibitors, keynote speakers and breakout sessions focused on education, housing, employment and more.

The day-long educational conference brings together people with autism, families, caregivers, agency and education professionals, sponsors and exhibitors to build knowledge, inspire and make meaningful connections.

The action takes place on April 27, 2023, at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel in Springfield (and online through the Socio platform).

The schedule includes keynote speakers Jennifer O'Toole, the "autism expert" on Netflix's *Love on the*

Spectrum, and bestselling female author of any single book in the genre; and Andrew Arboe, founder of Driving with Autism, an online program designed to help autistic individuals obtain their driver's licenses.

Breakout sessions focus on a variety of topics, with tracks for school-age, transition age, and adulthood.

Register early for a reduced rate for in-person tickets—\$50 for families and individuals and \$100 for professionals. Tickets can be purchased at the discounted price through January 15. Check out all the news of the conference at autismconnectionsma.org/conference.

The conference is made possible with support from sponsors. If you or your company is interested in sponsoring the conference, please go to autismconnectionsma.org/sponsorships.

Walking for inclusion



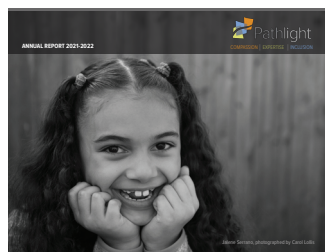
The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Mass (DSRG) and a crowd of supporters were out in force on October 2, at Stanley Park celebrating the 18th annual Buddy Walk.

Hundreds of walkers from all around the area gathered to celebrate and embrace people with Down syndrome.

The Buddy Walk was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. Today, the Buddy Walk program is supported

nationally by NDSS and organized at the local level by parent support groups, schools and other organizations and individuals.

There is always an overwhelming amount of love that pours out of this event, as new families are welcomed and returning families catch up with old friends. This year, the DSRG funded backpacks filled with the basics each child needs to get started for the school year, while additionally providing tables of children's books that range in reading levels to ensure there was something for everyone. For more information about the DSRG, check out their website: downsyndromewm.org.



Pathlight Annual Report is online

The 2021–2022 Annual Report, featuring stories, data and program highlights from the past year, is available to read online at <https://adobe.ly/3VP2N0c> or by scanning this QR code.

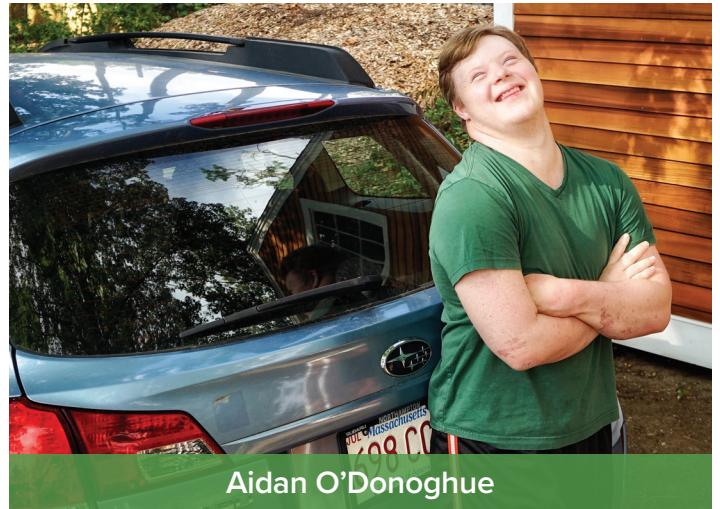


Subaru partners with Whole Children

Two years ago, Steve Lewis Subaru of Hadley selected Whole Children as its “Hometown Charity.” **Since then, it has proudly invested more than \$65,000 to support Whole Children’s mission** of giving all children, with a primary focus on children with intellectual or developmental disabilities, access to programs that allow them to live engaged, connected and adventurous lives.

Subaru’s employees wished to align themselves with Whole Children because they had family members or friends who cared for a loved one with a disability or with autism. This first-hand experience has helped build a meaningful partnership between the two.

If you are thinking of buying or leasing a new Subaru this year, consider doing it between Thursday, November 17, 2022, through January 3, 2023, when the “Subaru Share the Love Event” is happening once again. Through this campaign, Steve Lewis Subaru, along with nationwide relators, will donate \$300 to the purchaser’s charity of choice—one of four national charities or its hometown charity, Whole Children.



Aidan O'Donoghue

Through its partnership with Steve Lewis Subaru, Whole Children will continue changing the world for children, teens, and young adults with disabilities, along with their families.



Anthony Abbott and staff member John Knight

Boyle Street Adventures

The men from Pathlight's Boyle St. residence enjoyed a couple of late summer outings: one to Hampton Beach, NH and the Big E, Springfield, MA.



Anthony Abbott (left) and Robert Bergeron get up close with the beach.

NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Transition Resource Fair

Wondering about life after high school? Family Empowerment is hosting a resource fair featuring dozens of local organizations to help connect students and their families to resources that help them build successful lives after school.

The Transition Resource Fair, on November 16 from 5–7:30 p.m., will be held at the brand-new Mountain View School in Easthampton. The evening starts with a presentation on the basics of working with the Department of Developmental Services. There will be representatives from more than 30 community programs, including day programs, recreation, financial planning, vocational supports, and post-secondary education.

For more information or to register, email Michelle.Mendes@pathlightgroup.org.

A Pathlight Halloween

Halloween was spooky fun throughout Pathlight, including a sensory friendly screening of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, a trick or treating Fright Night and a Halloween costume party at our day program. [Check our social media for photos of the frightful fun!](#)



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