

## We're flinging open the doors to the new ICC!

**W**ith music, games, classes, tours and more, we're opening our doors wide on September 10 for the community to see all the action happening at the new Inclusive Community Center in Northampton.

The Inclusive Community Center is home to Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Family Empowerment and Autism Connections. It has two (fully accessible) stories of classrooms, a dedicated music room, meeting space, parent resource library, and lots of hangout space for program participants. **On Sept 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., we'll be showing it all off and everyone is invited!**

Outside, we'll have music, food and lots of games for kids to play. Inside, Whole Children and Milestones will be hosting class demonstrations to give families a sense of what the classes are like. Kids can get in on the action, too!

Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, and Whole Selves staff will be on hand to talk about their services. We will also hold regular tours of the whole building throughout the day.

Please mark your calendar and join us on September 10!



John Roberson, Aidan O'Donoghue, Letitia Ward, Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra cut the ribbon on the new ICC

## New Executive Director hits the ground running

**J**ohn Roberson took the helm as executive director at Pathlight at the beginning of May and things have been a whirlwind ever since. He has visited Pathlight offices in Hadley, Greenfield and Pittsfield, and helped open our new Inclusive Community Center in Northampton. *(See story above)*

He has visited our residential homes, awarded the Donald Fletcher Scholarship, danced with Milestones day program



John Roberson dancing

participants, met with top donors and our state funders, and oversaw our reaccreditation through CARF.

In addition, he participated in a DEI training with the board of directors, and has been actively participating in Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP) meetings including attending the annual LEAD conference in Westborough.

"I have been impressed to see how the organization embodies its values of creativity, resilience and integrity in working with individuals, caregivers and families," Roberson said. "I love seeing how committed our staff is to our mission of empowering the individuals we serve in creating opportunities and helping them to build relationships in their lives. It has been amazing to see this in action."

And he's not stopping there—Roberson hopes to lead Pathlight to an even brighter future for people with disabilities.

"It is my vision to continue to expand our services and create innovative models of care to meet the evolving needs within the ID/DD and autism community," he said. **"The goal is to move our organization forward through strategic growth, all while continuing to provide high quality services."**

# Steve Lewis Subaru brings the love home to Whole Children



Steve Lewis & the Whole Children community

**W**ith a giant check and a whole lot of love, Steve Lewis and others from Steve Lewis Subaru of Hadley and Subaru of New England recently paid a visit to the Inclusive Community Center to donate \$35,000 to Whole Children as part of Subaru's Share the Love promise.

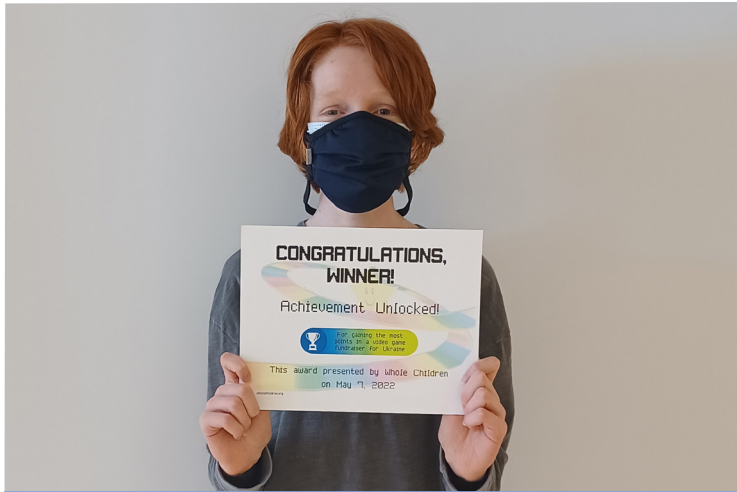
This important donation strengthens the vital services of Whole Children, which provides online and in-person enrichment classes, social programs and recreational activities to children and teens, especially those with an intellectual or developmental disability.

Whole Children's work has been a lifeline to many during the pandemic and this donation allows the program to start the hard work of rebuilding the connections and skills that many have lost from two years of relative isolation.

"We are extremely grateful to businesses like Steve Lewis Subaru that give so generously to support our programs," notes Carrie McGee, Whole Children director. "This is the second year we have received their financial support and during COVID their gift truly breathed new life into the work we do at Whole Children. But no one is more grateful than those individuals and families who benefit from our services."

Joe Clark, general manager of Steve Lewis Subaru added, "We want the children and families that Whole Children serves to have the best opportunities possible, right here in our home community no matter what's happening in the world. And giving back helps everyone move forward."

## Gaming for Ukraine



Max Pearson holding award certificate

**W**hole Children students gathered in May at the Inclusive Community Center in Hadley for a video game competition to raise money for Inclusion Europe, an organization helping people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine. Fourteen students competed while a small crowd watched and cheered as gamers played through a variety of games to see who would be top dog.

The game room was filled with cheers, laughter and applause as students played a variety of games including Mario Kart, Tetris-99 (a revamp on the classic 1980s' game

where you can battle against friends in real time), Pokémon, and DragonBall Fighter Z. Gamers also got to play a round of Mario Maker, a game in which Whole Children program manager Amanda Kent made a custom Mario level for them to beat.

The crowd also got to its feet for a rousing round of Just Dance.

The two finalists with the most points accumulated throughout the day faced off in a round of Pikman, which neither had played before. **After a round of practice, they fought it out and we had a winner: Max Pearson! Max won a bundle of gaming codes, as well as a certificate and a Magic: The Gathering card deck.**

"I just wanted to help people who needed it," Max told a reporter who later did a story on the event.

Second-place winner August Santos was also interviewed by the local paper. "It was a fun event mixed with an issue that was very topical," he said.

The fundraiser also included a raffle, with prizes such as trading cards, a game code bundle, and handcrafted items of home décor and origami made by members of Pathlight's communications team. Through donations and raffle tickets, the students raised over \$400, all of which has been donated to support people with disabilities in Ukraine.

## On the path to success

Each year, Pathlight offers a \$5000 scholarship to one staff member to further their education at the undergraduate or graduate level.

The scholarship program, named for former executive director Donald Fletcher, was established five years ago to support staff in their education goals. Pathlight also offers tuition reimbursement in its benefits package.

This year's lucky recipient was Kelsie Bacon, a direct support professional who works in one of our homes in West Springfield. Kelsie plans to continue her education in the nursing program at Holyoke Community College to learn how to better care for the residents at the Pathlight homes. **Congratulations Kelsie, we are excited to watch you on your path to success here at Pathlight!**



Kelsie Bacon

## Celebrating 20 years of life-changing work

This past spring, program director Sidy Dione celebrated a milestone anniversary with Pathlight—two decades of supporting people with disabilities and their families, and changing lives.



Sidy Dione

**“Having people from different walks of life, from different backgrounds . . . working with them everyday, sharing experiences in good times, bad times . . . it just makes me want to come in every single day,”** says Dione, who works in Pathlight’s Residential division. Dione also loves that he is always learning on the job, especially from the individuals in the homes.

With the help of Pathlight’s benefits and staff support, Dione was able to attend Clark University and earn a certificate in human service management. The tools and skills he gained from this program help him in his day-to-day work, he says.

“I just cherish every single moment I share with the individuals. Going to the programs, I think that’s just the highlight of my days . . . seeing that smile.”

**Learn more about working for Pathlight and our open positions at [pathlightgroup.org](http://pathlightgroup.org). We offer hiring bonuses of up to \$5500 as well as a \$1000 referral bonus for current staff.**

## At home with: Michelle McGrath

Meet Michelle! She is a resident at the Plumtree home and was so welcoming during my visit. Michelle enjoys doing arts and crafts, particularly drawing and pottery while sometimes doing these crafts with the residents in the home. She was very excited to show me the telescope that she got as a gift recently. Though she hasn't used it yet, Michelle hopes to gaze at the stars with her telescope soon! *—Alissa Serra*



Michelle McGrath



**Scan here to donate now!**

**Consider making a donation today! Together, we pave the way for the people we serve to thrive. Scan the QR code or visit [www.pathlightgroup.org/give](http://www.pathlightgroup.org/give) to make a donation today.**

# Giving back on her birthday



Regina Norling and her son Daniel McHugh

When Regina Norling’s birthday came around this year, she knew she wanted to give back to Whole Children and Milestones, programs that have supported her son Daniel for many years. She set up a birthday fundraiser on Facebook to benefit those programs. **“Whole Children is my family’s community. We love them. It is my son Daniel’s second home,” she said. Regina originally set her goal at \$200 but surpassed it by \$52!**

With the Inclusive Community Center’s recent move to Northampton, Regina said the fundraiser was meant as a sort of housewarming gift. “Moving to the beautiful new place, I

thought of something the wonderful staff might use.” Regina referred to the staff as warm and helpful and that they “have made Daniel’s world bigger, better, brighter.” She also cited Pathlight’s award-winning video projects, which she said shine a light often overlooked on the talent, gifts and spirit of the community,

Facebook was Regina’s platform of choice because she felt it was the best way to reach out to friends and family. Overall, nine people donated. “I think my Facebook friends have seen the enrichment of Daniel’s life by Whole Children and Milestones in particular... I’m always posting pictures of activities he’s enjoying,” she explained. To Regina’s surprise, a brother she had never even met was the first to donate. “I’m adopted and my family of origin is far away,” she clarified. “I felt then that something had shifted, and that a spirit of generosity and support of the good things that help others was triggered.”

Regina says she and her family “were so grateful and excited to be able to do something.” If you are interested in running a birthday fundraiser, we hope you’ll consider choosing one of Pathlight’s programs as your nonprofit of choice! An explanation of why you chose us is optional but encouraged. Finally, select a goal amount and end date. Facebook covers all donation processing fees so Pathlight will get the full amount you raise!

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