

## Pathlight goes to Boston



Left: The Pathlight group in front of the State House. Below: Zoe Cummings smiles in front of her portrait.



**F**or a week in June, the fourth floor of the Massachusetts State House featured 20 stunning black and white portraits of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, all part of the award-winning *Portraits of Pathlight* project.

The exhibit was hosted by Senator Jo Comerford, and she and Representative Lindsay Sabadosa co-hosted a reception in honor of Pathlight and the portraits at the end of the week. A busload of people from Pathlight, including some of the photographers and portrait subjects, traveled to Boston to tour the State House, see the exhibit, and attend the reception.

The event garnered attention from prominent figures such as Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh and Department of Developmental Services Commissioner Jane Ryder. Both attended the show and reception, using their voices to acknowledge the vital work done by Pathlight and the individuals we serve.

“Too often we see that people with disabilities are pushed to the edge of the frame or are viewed through a sentimental filter that oversimplifies the fullness of the person,” said Valle Dwight, Pathlight’s director of Development and Communications. “At Pathlight we believe that the

people we serve are the directors of their own dreams and goals, and they are front and center as the stars in all we do.”

To see all of the portraits and read about the photographers, visit [pathlightgroup.org/news-and-events/portraits-of-pathlight](http://pathlightgroup.org/news-and-events/portraits-of-pathlight).



From left, Aidan O'Donoghue, Dan McHugh, Alice Hawley, Rosie Mahoney, Letitia Ward and Senator Jo Comerford check out the view from the State House balcony.

## Dollars for scholars

Each year in honor of Pathlight's former Executive Director Donald Fletcher, Pathlight awards a \$5,000 scholarship to one staff member to further their education at the undergraduate or graduate level. This scholarship is in addition to the tuition reimbursement included in the benefits package.

This year's winner is **Gina Vona**, a licensed practical nurse at Pathlight's High Meadow house. She graduated in May 2023 from Vermont University with an Associate's degree in nursing.

"Nursing has always been a natural career choice for me, driven by an innate desire to help others and make a meaningful difference in their lives," Gina wrote in her scholarship application. She plans to continue her education at Capella University, beginning in October 2023, to earn a BS in nursing.

Pathlight's Executive Director John Roberson and Director of Nursing Mariame Kounta presented Gina with

her award at the High Meadow house in Hadley surrounded by her coworkers.

"The scholarship provided by Pathlight is not just financial aid but a catalyst for my personal and professional growth as a Registered Nurse," Gina said. "By investing in my education, I will be better prepared to excel in my role at Pathlight and contribute positively to the ever-evolving field of nursing. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and look forward to making the most of it as I pursue my educational and career aspirations."

And we are grateful to you Gina for your wonderful work here at Pathlight. We wish you luck on your path to success!



## Funds for fun

Pathlight is privileged to be the home of two funds that ensure that people served in our Family Based Living programs don't miss out on the fun things in life. **The Darren FUNd, established by care providers Anne Marie Corrieri and John Perrin in 2007 in honor of Darren Harrington, has made countless dreams come true since its inception.**

Just in the past few months the FUNd paid for tickets for a trip to Niagara Falls, tickets to a concert, a new iPad to participate in an online peer group, gardening supplies, and a portion of the cost of a two-week camp for adults with disabilities.

**The Aronson FUNd, founded by the Aronson family in honor of Michael "Mikey" Aronson, also recently supported a summer camp adventure, as well as a camera purchase.**

Both funds are supported by our generous community. Please visit [pathlightgroup.org/give](http://pathlightgroup.org/give) to make a donation to either fund.

**Cathy, far left, visited Niagara Falls with help from the Darren FUNd, which helped with lodgings and a ticket to ride the Maid of the Mist and take the Under Falls Walk.**

## SUBARU SHARES THE LOVE

We had another high-spirited visit from our friends at Steve Lewis Subaru in May when they came to present Whole Children and Milestones with a check for \$25,000 from the Subaru 2023 "Share the Love" event.

Earlier this year, as Steve Lewis retired, the team presented Whole Children and Milestones with a generous check for \$38,828. We are so fortunate to again be the recipients of their "Share the Love" event next year as well and we are so appreciative of the Steve Lewis Subaru-Whole Children connection!



# Pathlight's Executive Director transition

Pathlight's Board of Directors announced in July that Executive Director John Roberson has left Pathlight to return to CHD, where he previously worked for 33 years, in pursuit of a better work/life balance that aligns with his family and career aspirations.

During his time with us, John played an indispensable role in Pathlight's achievements, including CARF accreditation, OQE licensing and certification, and securing an award to continue providing residential services through the Department of Developmental Services. These milestones ensure that Pathlight can continue delivering high-quality services to the individuals we serve.

The Board named Keith Kendall, a seasoned interim Executive Director, to steer us through this transitional

period. As the Board embarks on the search for a permanent Director, Keith will work closely with the leadership team and the Executive Committee of the Board. This collaboration ensures that day-to-day operations run seamlessly, and the organization remains stabilized, prepared to welcome our next permanent Executive Director.

That search will likely take six to nine months and the board has engaged a search firm to prepare for the upcoming search.



Keith Kendall



The Whole Children and Milestones theater troupe debuted their performances of *WonkAvengers* this June, with a performance by Joyful Chorus. In this mashup adventure, the children from Willy Wonka's factory tour have grown up and want revenge for his tricks so they team up with mischievous Loki. Unfortunately for them, Wonka is giving a tour to the Avengers at the same time. Full of comedy, song and kung-fu, both shows had the theater packed and audience enamored. Keep an eye on our social media for a video of the full show, coming soon.

## Putting down roots

Thanks to our generous community, we reached our goal of raising \$3,000 for Whole Children and Milestones' accessible gardening project! Thank you to all who donated to help us plant this seed of an idea and make it into a blooming reality. Visitors to the Inclusive Community Center in Northampton will spot the raised beds filled with colorful flowers and our brand-new tables and umbrellas where our community can gather. Our plot at the Community Garden in Northampton is also coming along nicely. We hope to share the fruit (and vegetables) of our labor soon!



Left: A plaque dedicated to our donors in the Community Garden. Above: Our gathering space at the Inclusive Community Center is really coming together!



**Team Cash  
4 Pathlight:  
dance instructor  
Matt Meers,  
Northampton  
Mayor Gina-  
Louise Sciarra and  
Pathlight dancer  
David Rondeau.**

## Let's Dance is back!

**L**et's Dance!, Pathlight's major fundraising event is back and better than ever!

With dancers from athletes to academics, pols to realtors we expect a lively mix of music and dance.

The 11 dance teams are already at work and it's all happening 11/11. We're no pros when it comes to numerology, but we think all those elevens portend good times ahead!

Tickets go on sale later this summer.

## We're social, follow us!



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