

SEPTEMBER 2023  
ISSUE 10

Community Newsletter



# Partners in AUTISM

FAMILY OWNED • FAMILY FOCUSED



## A Word from the Owners

As we enjoy the last of these long summer days and reflect on our growth, we are filled with anticipation. We have seen an influx of new clients, new staff, new positions created in the company, and the opportunity to offer a new service with our Supported Pathways Learning Center. It has been a very fruitful summer, and we hope you take a moment to catch up on the efforts of our team that make growth possible. Just look at what they've accomplished...

- **Tommy Guest and Camile Voglewede**

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# SUPPORTED PATHWAYS LEARNING CENTER

Neurodiverse-affirming education



Every child deserves the freedom to reach their full potential through education. To ensure that more children can have that freedom, we launched our Supported Pathways Learning Center in time for this academic year.

Our Learning Center provides quality educational supports to students in a neurodiverse-affirming environment. When a student feels comfortable, they have courage to engage with unfamiliar experiences, stamina to rise to challenges, and curiosity to discover new things. Our Learning Center achieves this by providing greater flexibility than typical schools can. Students work individually and in small groups with specially trained instructors and staff. We provide accommodations such as individualized curriculum support, sensory and movement breaks, specialized furniture, etc.



By respecting students as unique individuals, validating their needs, and equipping them to learn in flexible ways, we are working to uplift the value of neurodiversity and the potential of our students.

## Sibling Saturdays - a New Tradition

Our first Sibling Saturday last December was a hit, so we decided to do another one during the summer!

On Sibling Saturdays, ABA clients can bring their brothers and sisters to see the cool place they get to hang out each day. Our staff volunteer to lead activities, games, and crafts for all the kids to participate in together.

It's always a blast for everyone! Our clients get to share a part of their world. Siblings get to have fun and grow closer. Parents get a couple hours to catch up on chores or have a lunch date. Our staff get to hang out with kids they care about deeply.

We look forward to continuing this new tradition!



# AUTISM ACCEPTANCE WALK

Join us this month at the Autism Acceptance Walk! This annual event is a great opportunity to gather resources for ALL AGES, meet other families, and have a ton of fun.

Come check out the food trucks, pony rides, music activities, sensory play, crafts, games, the vendor fair, and more!

The event is FREE to attend.

The event runs September 10th, 12:00-3:30pm at the Allen County Fairgrounds. The Autism Unity Walk starts at 3pm. The fairgrounds are located at 2726 Carroll Rd. Fort Wayne, IN.



We are proud to sponsor such an important event and can't wait to see you there! Stop by our booth for a hands-on activity and for information about our ABA, PAC, Behavior Consultation, and Employment Services.



## My Autism Ally

Thanks to My Autism Ally for organizing the Autism Acceptance Walk each year for our community. They are a highly valued community partner and provide so much support to so many families and individuals in our community. To see more of what they do and the resources they have to offer, or to make a donation, check out their website at [www.myautismally.org](http://www.myautismally.org)

# MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

## Phase 3: Securing



Even after a client accepts a job offer, our job isn't over - we stick with them as both peers and advocates to ensure their whole experience is successful.

In phase 3 of our employment services: Securing Meaningful Employment, our employment specialists come alongside their clients as their clients settle into their new job.

They do this by attending orientation with their client to facilitate questions, provide support in focusing, and help complete paperwork. They go through training with the client as a peer so that they can be familiar with the job requirements and can note where and how modifications may need to be made.

Our employment specialists then help the employer complete accommodation forms. They help determine what accommodations are needed and make recommendations of how these can be implemented. These can be as simple as having extra break time or being allowed to listen to one earbud while working, but having these in place and documented in an official form is critical to successful, secure employment.

## Meaningful Impact

Our partnership with local charity Martha's Closet continues to expand in exciting ways!

When employment clients are interested in careers that involve inspecting, sorting, or folding clothing, we work with Martha's Closet to make sure the training opportunities we provide our clients have real world meaning.

In terms of *world* impact, Martha's also sends new school supplies overseas to Liberia. This allows our employment clients interested who are interested in packaging things other than clothing to also know that their efforts are having a broader, meaningful impact.



## BEHAVIOR + SUPPORT + TEAM

Behavior Support Teams bring together individuals with a wide variety of strengths and insights. Each member of these teams deserves to be supported with quality resources. Megan Perry, Director of Waiver Services, and Linzie Tuck, Director of Quality Behavior Assurance, have been working to make sure every member - from our behavior consultants to our clients and families - is equipped for success.

As a team, Megan and Linzie have created fresh templates for Behavior Consultation documents that emphasize quantitative data and reliable measurements. These provide increased support to our behavior consultants as they measure progress toward goals. A focus on data is essential for effectively targeting behaviors.

While updating these templates, Megan and Linzie have also worked to clarify language for families so they are empowered to fully participate in the process. They've streamlined the language in the templates and included a glossary of terms.

They've also created a timeline of the Behavior Consultation process so that families and clients have a better sense of what to expect as they pursue their best futures. This timeline includes a week by week outline of stages, explanations of pacing, and expected outcomes.

These improved templates and other resources not only support the function of the team, but also communicate to each member that they are a valued part of an even larger team dedicated to their success.



## Be Paid for Care You Already Give

A "Preferred Caregiver" is a Direct Support Professional who provides PAC services to someone they already know and love. Parents can be preferred caregivers of children over 18. Other relatives, in-laws, or family friends can be preferred caregivers for any age!

Want to learn more about being paid for the support you currently give to a loved one? Contact [Megan.P@PartnersinAutism.com](mailto:Megan.P@PartnersinAutism.com) for more information!

New Staff  
ABA, PAC, and ES



**Behavior Technicians:** Mackenzie, Emma, Alex, Lexy, Elli, Karli, Danielle, Haley

**Employment Specialist:** Rebecca

**DSPs:** Anjolina, Alaina, Jillian



# ALWAYS GROWING

Considering a career  
as a BCBA?

We offer after-hour tours  
so you can get to know us  
at your own pace and on  
your own schedule.

Contact [Courtnie@PartnersinAutism.com](mailto:Courtnie@PartnersinAutism.com)



Want to earn a BCBA certification on the job? Learn about our Program Coordinator position and the supportive benefits we offer such as paid, concentrated supervision hours to fast-track your certification.



## COMMUNITY

# CONNECTING & SHARING

## Reaching Out and Welcoming In

Communities grow stronger by connecting. The drive to form connections is easy to see in a small, close-knit company like ours. Whether through resources, experiences, or simply acts of care, we naturally find ways to reach out to our community. Connections can be full of action like our Trunk-or-Treat (Oct 22, 1-3pm) where we'll be able to serve families from throughout the community with prizes and games. Connections can happen behind the scenes, like our Employment Services which continually finds ways to partner with the local charity Martha's Closet - from collecting clothes for individuals in our city to packaging school supplies for individuals in other countries. Sometimes reaching out means welcoming in - last month we held our second Sibling Saturday in which siblings of our ABA clients could come share experiences in the place that is so meaningful to their brother or sister. And sometimes connections multiply themselves, like when we provide educational presentations to various groups to help them better understand the diversity or resources around them - this equips them to make connections of their own. We are excited for all the ways we get to connect with each one of you! Have a way you want to connect? Reach out to [Courtnie@PartnersinAutism.com](mailto:Courtnie@PartnersinAutism.com)

# PURSUING EXCELLENCE

Director Spotlight



Managing Director:  
**Courtnie Dunker**

Courtnie possesses a dauntless passion for helping individuals reach their full potential. She started with us as a behavior technician, advanced to Clinical Director, then Director of ABA Services, and now we are proud to have her as our new Managing Director. As such, she coordinates and advances each of our services to constantly increase the positive impact these services have on the lives of our clients and their families.

Courtnie is a continual innovator. With a background in education and a determination to meet the needs of every learner, Courtnie has worked to carry quality education into settings beyond typical classrooms. Our Transitional Classroom and our Supported Pathways Learning Center are two unique educational settings where she uses her insight as a licensed classroom educator to help clients develop their skills.

We are excited for all the ideas, projects, and programs that she will be able to develop in her new role as she expands her efforts to all ages and stages of the autism journey.

## Upcoming Events

**Goodies w/ Grandparents for ABA clients - Sept 8**

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**Autism Acceptance Walk, Allen County Fairgrounds Sept 10, 12-3:30pm**

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**Presentation on Medicaid Waiver by My Autism Ally Oct 19, 5pm**

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**Partners Trunk-or-Treat Oct 22, 1-3pm**

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**PAC Family Bowling - Final Tuesday monthly Registration required in advance to Mariah@PartnersinAutism.com**

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**Adult Aspergers Support Group 2nd Monday monthly 6:30-8:00pm at Partners in Autism**

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**Allen County Autism Caregiver Support Group 2nd Thursday monthly 6:30-8:00pm at Partners in Autism and via zoom. For zoom link, email info@myautismally.org**

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**Spectrum Sisters 2nd & 4th Tues. monthly 6:30-8:00pm via zoom. For zoom link, email info@myautismally.org**