

# PATHS TO INDEPENDENCE

## Newsletter

### New Year, New Newsletter Design

2013. . . I guess the 13 should have warned me of impending doom. I started the year with a crashed computer and many lost files. Luckily, I could sense the crash coming from the increased finickiness of my computer and saved most of my important documents. However, the newsletters were not among them.

So, new start for me and the PTI newsletters. I will change the format some, but the content should stay relatively similar. Maybe I will make this an annual tradition. Out with the old, in with the new. . .

Other than the great crash of 2013, the year is off to a

good start. I am especially excited by the growing group of adults who participate in our Thursday night social group. Even after a long day at the school, I always have such a good time with them. It's as much fun for me as I hope it is for them.

We are adding two new employees this month. Macy Wright is a student at Oklahoma Wesleyan University and is friends with Jessica and Katelyn. She will be working with me on Monday mornings and on days when she has school breaks. Kelly Robbins is a paraprofessional at Central Middle School. She and I worked together while I taught for Bartlesville



schools. Kelly is working Wednesday afternoons and will fill in when needed on other days or during school breaks. In addition, Audra Bridendolth is back to substitute for us when she isn't working for Parkside in Tulsa.

New board members were elected in January. Look inside for an update on these changes.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

- Clair Bartley

Volume 1, Issue 5  
February 5, 2013

#### Upcoming Events:

- *PTI Fun Nights– Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 (high school/adults)*
- *Parent Support Group meeting– February 26th @ 7:00*
- *Artism in April– fundraiser featuring artwork from individuals with autism spectrum disorders and those who support them*
- *Spring Break Camp– March 18-22 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.,*

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### Project Lifesaver

At the December parent support group, PTI sponsored a presentation about Project Lifesaver. Representatives from the Green Country Pilot Club, Washington County Sheriff's Department, and The Salvation Army spoke to parents about this community service. Project Lifesaver is a way to track and quick-

ly find people who might wander off due to conditions such as Alzheimer's, Autism, or Dementia. A participant wears a transmitter on a wristband that produces a unique frequency which can be tracked by the sheriff's department. The initial cost is \$300 and there is a monthly fee of \$25. A participant's care-

giver checks the battery daily while a volunteer from the Green Country Pilot Club will come to change the battery each month. Call The Salvation Army at 918-336-6454 for more information.



## PTI Elects New Board Members

In January, PTI elected four new board members. They are Ruth Thompson, Kim Thompson, Carmen Casner, and Kyle Persaud. Ruth Thompson is Spencer's grandmother. She has been instrumental in accessing Phillips 66 matching grants for PTI. Kim Thompson is Spencer's mother. She and her husband, John, hosted the soup/salad course during our progressive dinner in November. Carmen Casner is Eric's mother. She and her husband, Steve, hosted the

dessert course for the November progressive dinner. Kyle Persaud is a local attorney. He has been instrumental in helping us understand the requirements of the Lindsey Nicole Henry scholarships.



Welcome new board members!

### PTI Board 2013

- Clair Bartley, President
- Jean Jensen, Secretary/Treasurer
- Kathi Kemp
- Debbie Loafman
- Ruth Thompson
- Kim Thompson
- Carmen Casner
- Kyle Persaud

## Parent Support Group Meeting

This month's parent support meeting featured a panel of parents who have experience in guardianship, trusts, and other adult issues. On January 22, Kathi Kemp, Darin and Teresa Messerli, and Cheryl Ford shared their experiences with parents who have younger children.

Advice ranged from "Write a will, now!" to recommendations for lawyers, information about SSI and Waivered Services.

In addition, parents talked about post graduation options including college, other postsecondary training, and job placements. Please contact PTI if you have questions or would like contact information from an experienced parent.

The autism parent support group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00. Our next meeting will be on February 26th.

*We never know the love of a parent till we become parents ourselves.*

*-Henry Ward Beecher*



## All About. . . Jody Gibson

Jody started out as a dedicated volunteer for PTI this summer. She liked it so much, she asked to become a staff member

in the fall. We were lucky to add an employee who already had experience with autism and who knew the students so well.

Jody and her husband, Wil, are the parents of a son, Jordan (12), who has autism. They also have a daughter, Emily (15), who has been a great help volunteering at PTI alongside her mother. Wil, a local photographer, helps out by taking pictures of the students for our website and our newsletter whenever he is free from his job at the hospital.

Jody is a blessing to PTI

because not only does she work to improve the lives of our students, so does her family.



Jody and Eric



# Student of the Month: Spencer Thompson

A devoted fan of music, Spencer Thompson is our January student of



Spencer loves the independence of riding a bicycle..

the month. Spencer is a seventh grader at Madison Middle School. He attends PTI after school to participate in our recreational programs. Besides listening to music, Spencer enjoys riding his bicycle, climbing on the playground, swimming, and horse-back riding. Spencer has a good sense of humor and LOVES the water fountain. He is fun to be around and always keeps us on our toes.



Spencer enjoys reading The Night Before Christmas.

## Grants

'Tis the season for grant writing! The board is busy writing and submitting grants through various agencies and businesses. We hope to fully fund our summer program and our adult program in addition to giving the school a financial cushion. Jean and I have submitted grants to several banks and are working on grants for the Lyon Foundation, the United Way, and the Oklahoma Arts Council. In addition, Ruth Thompson and Mark Keesling have been instrumental in

securing matching grants and volunteer grants for us through Phillips 66. Clair's husband, Jay, has also been able to secure a volunteer grant through his work, Verizon. We are hoping to apply for a Verizon community grant as soon as they open their grant submission window in February.

Please let us know if you are aware of any other sources of funding for any of our programs. Grants allow us to reduce costs to all parents and offer scholarships to those in need.

*I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.*

*-Maya Angelou*

## PTI Fun Nights Continue. . .



PTI Fun Night is a social group for high school students and adults with autism spectrum disorders who want to get out of the house and have some fun with friends.

Since the beginning of December, we have eaten at Joe Momma's and Luigi's. We've made pizzas, soup

and grilled cheese, and snacks. We've had game nights, bowling, craft nights, movie nights, karaoke, and even attended a TU basketball game. In all, 8 adults have participated. Plans for February and March include traveling to Owasso for dinner and a trip to Target, Valentine's and St. Patrick's Day parties, egg dyeing, and a trip to Philbrook museum.

Fun nights are every Thursday from

6:30-8:30. Call (918-914-9920) or email (paths@newsguy.com) Clair for more information. The cost is \$30 per week, all activities included.



# Paths to Independence

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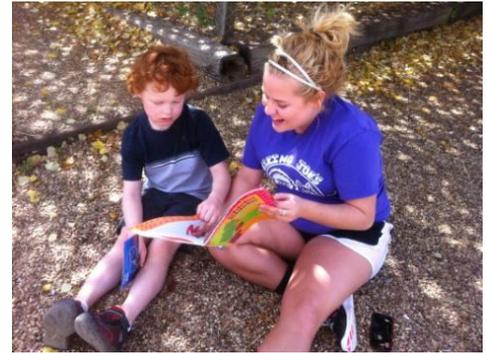


*Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I . . . I took the one less traveled  
by and that has made all the  
difference. —Robert Frost*



We're on the web!  
[www.pathstoIndependence.org](http://www.pathstoIndependence.org)

*Paths to Independence is a nonprofit agency dedicated to serving the needs of families affected by autism. PTI was incorporated in November 2011 and opened its doors for an eight week summer program in June 2012. PTI currently offers a full day school program, a part day school program, structured after school care, and adult classes. In addition, PTI serves as a meeting place for the Bartlesville Autism Parent Support Group. For more information, contact Clair Bartley at 918-914-9920 or Jean Jensen at 918-914-3125.*



## Wish List

The following are items needed by PTI:

- HP 901 officejet ink– black/color
- Laminating sheets
- Craft supplies (glue, construction paper, glitter, paint)
- Stamps
- Envelopes
- Bottled water
- 100% juice packets/boxes
- Copy/print paper
- AA batteries
- Bike locks
- Bike rack



## Donations

Thank you to the following donors for December and January.

- Donna Thompson
- Bill Bartley (digital camera)
- Jill and Joe Strunk (bicycles, helmets, chairs)
- Anne Swearingen and Bartlesville Community Foundation (help with 501(c)3 umbrella)
- Holly and Mark Kane
- Rebecca Renfro
- Ruth Thompson
- Nancy Persaud and family
- United Methodist Church of Dewey– Sarah Circle

Donations help PTI provide salaries for staff, activities for the students, and scholarships. Please consider donating to PTI, 4041 Sheridan Road, Bartlesville, OK 74006. PTI is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization.