I began my professional career in banking on Wall Street and later moved to insurance. How then, did I end up in human services? Often, we see things coming, usually those things we’ve intended, planned for, and worked toward. But sometimes life catches us off guard.

And so it was that one day, my toddler son’s day care teacher asked me to come in for a talk. She told me she was worried that he wasn’t communicating, that he was talking and interacting very little, if at all, with teachers and children. I thought she must have the wrong kid. My kid was the one that other parents were jealous of. My kid was the one who happily reconstructed a half-hour TV show while we sat down to a relaxing dinner. He spoke—in both English and Spanish! He was a boy; they talk later. Clearly the teacher was wrong.

Then I went and observed him in the classroom and thought to myself, "Who is that kid? That's not my son." After meeting with experts and a host of examinations and tests, I was told that my son had autism.

When there’s no framework for comprehension, we are left with shock and disbelief. My picture of autism was rocking and hand flapping; that’s all I knew. The only questions I knew to ask were: What does this mean? What will my son’s life look like?

I turned to the Internet for answers and the news wasn’t good. Overwhelmingly, the information that came up spoke to how devastating this diagnosis was. All the research said, in a phrase, "This is hard." Nowhere was there helpful information about what it really meant or how to proceed.

That’s when I called Autism Connections, which is a Pathlight program. A woman named Jeanne answered the phone and I told her what little I knew. She listened to me and heard my concerns about my son’s new diagnosis. She listened, then she gave advice, offered resources, and suggested next steps. This was the first time that I connected with someone who knew what I was going through.

In other words, Jeanne gave me hope. That ray of hope—that connection and community—has carried me and my family through as we’ve walked this unexpected path.

My son is now 20 years old. With hard work and support, he has been able to accomplish many of the goals he set for himself: being on a sports team, getting his driver’s license, graduating from high school and attending college in Boston. And 13 years ago, I stepped onto a different professional path and joined Pathlight as its Director of Administration.

Then, and now in my new role as Pathlight’s Executive Director, I recall the first time I called Autism Connections and how it made me feel. I remember and I know that’s what we are doing here at Pathlight every day. We give people hope. We make a difference in the lives of many.

I’m grateful to have this unexpected opportunity, through this journey with my son, to deeply understand the truth that everyone’s life has dignity and joy. If you find yourself on a similar path, we at Pathlight look forward to meeting you where you are and walking with you for as long as you need us.
Thank you to our all supporters!

We are grateful for every gift and have made every effort to accurately record the names of donors of gifts over $100. If we have made an error please accept our apologies and contact us to make a correction. Gifts indicated in italics were counted as of June 30, 2015.

For full details of this list, please visit pathlightgroup.org.
Community Living options at Pathlight are designed to not just meet individual's needs, but to support them in experiencing the fullness of their unique lives: **Residential Supports** operates more than 20 community homes for people with complex medical and/or behavioral needs. With skilled and loving staff, we provide each person the maximum level of independence while offering them a safe and supportive home. **Shared Living /Adult Family Care** creates opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live in private homes and develop meaningful relationships while learning to be as independent and integrated with their community as possible. AFC is an option for biological families.

**Autism Connections** provides support, information, and practical help for individuals with autism and their families. The goal is to help individuals and families build on their strengths, work together to create a positive vision for the future, and help children learn, grow, and be fully-included members of our communities.

**Whole Children** offers afterschool programs and classes for children with a range of abilities, from toddler through teens. Classes feature arts, movement-based activities, and a robust performing arts program that incorporates social skills training and practice. Whole Children celebrates individual strengths, having fun, and making and sustaining friendships.

**Valley Tees** is a Pioneer Valley leader in custom screen printing. We are proud of our attention to detail, quality, and reliability. Our products are made with the capable hands of people with disabilities.

**Pathlight Revenue**

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<th>FY2014</th>
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<td>$25,535,923</td>
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**Pathlight Expenses**

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<td>$27,824,458</td>
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**Questions? Comments? Looking for help?**

Please call one of our offices:

- **Springfield**: 413-732-0531, 800-652-2201
- **Greenfield**: 413-774-3495
- **Pittsfield**: 413-443-4780
- **Hadley**: 413-585-8010
- **Easthampton**: 413-529-2428

**Thinking about becoming a caregiver?**

Please call our Family Based Living Services line at 800-652-2201 x153 or email info@pathlightgroup.org

**Need an autism specialist?**

Call Autism Connections at 413-529-2428 or visit autismconnectionsma.org

**Interested in volunteering?**

We’d love your help. Call 413-732-0531 or email info@pathlightgroup.org

**Interested in Enrichment and Recreation opportunities?**

Call 413-585-8010 or visit wholechildren.org and milestones-program.org

**Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts**

was started by parents and provides information about family support, resources, parent training, and social opportunities.

**Pathlight Programs and Services**

- **Milestones** supports adults to develop the skills they need to transition to a meaningful and engaged life in the community and to keep them active and learning after they’ve left school. We offer an individualized community-based day program focused on choice and self-advocacy. We also have a full roster of enrichment and recreation classes.

- **The Down Syndrome Resource Group** of Western Massachusetts was started by parents and provides information about family support, resources, parent training, and social opportunities.

- **Thinking about becoming a caregiver?**

Please call our Family Based Living Services line at 800-652-2201 x153 or email info@pathlightgroup.org

- **Want to learn more about giving?**

Valle Dwight, our director of Communications and Development, would love to answer your questions. Email her at valle.dwight@pathlightgroup.org or call 413-585-8010

- **Want a rewarding career and make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, each and every day?**

To learn more about Pathlight employment opportunities and to view a list of available jobs, visit pathlightgroup.org

- **Interested in Enrichment and Recreation opportunities?**

Call 413-585-8010 or visit wholechildren.org and milestones-program.org

- **Looking for more information on our programs?**

Check out our websites:

- Pathlight pathlightgroup.org
- Autism Connections autismconnectionsma.org
- Whole Children wholechildren.org
- Milestones milestones-program.org
- Family Empowerment family-empowerment.org
- Down Syndrome Resource Group dssupport.org

- **Need custom screen printing and embroidery, made with the capable hands of adults with developmental disabilities?**

Call Valley Tees at 413-772-8626 or visit our website at valleytees.org

- **Autism Connections** provides support, information, and practical help for individuals with autism and their families. The goal is to help individuals and families build on their strengths, work together to create a positive vision for the future, and help children learn, grow, and be fully-included members of our communities.

- **Pathlight Revenue and Expenses**

FY14, FY15, FY16

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- **Are you exploring living options for your family member?**

If you’d like to find out more about either Adult Family Care or Shared Living, please call our Family Based Living Services line at 800-652-2201 x153 or email info@pathlightgroup.org

- **Interested in volunteering?**

We’d love your help. Call 413-732-0531 or email info@pathlightgroup.org

- **Need an autism specialist?**

Call Autism Connections at 413-529-2428 or visit autismconnectionsma.org

- **Questions? Comments? Looking for help?**

Please call one of our offices:

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Call 413-585-8010 or visit wholechildren.org and milestones-program.org

- **Looking for more information on our programs?**

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- **Autism Connections** provides support, information, and practical help for individuals with autism and their families. The goal is to help individuals and families build on their strengths, work together to create a positive vision for the future, and help children learn, grow, and be fully-included members of our communities.
These days, we’ve all heard the term autism. Most of us know someone with an autism diagnosis: a family member, friend, colleague, or neighbor. Unlike a generation ago, the fact of autism isn’t a new concept.

But for many of us, a gap remains between this awareness and an understanding and acceptance of what it means to live with autism as a unique way of experiencing and being in the world, full of challenges and gifts. Awareness is fairly easy. Acceptance requires us to do some work, to make a conscious effort to overcome our automatic judgments about behavior we may not understand and to reflect on the beauty of human diversity.

Autism is a natural part of the human experience, not a disease.

Autism Connections provides support, information, and practical help for individuals with autism and their families.

Autism diagnosis rates are on the rise; 1 in 68 people.

Autism Awareness and Acceptance

Stepping Out for Autism

a 1960’s themed fundraising gala benefiting Autism Connections

January 28, 6 - 11 p.m.
The Log Cabin, Holyoke
Register at autismconnectionsma.org

January 2017

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New Year’s Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Step Up! The Log Cabin
autismconnectionsma.org
If historians were studying our culture based on popular books, television, and movies, they might reasonably assume that there are no people with intellectual disabilities in the world.

The absence of people with disabilities in the media further excludes them from the community and perpetuates the perception that they are somehow alien.

Lauren Potter, a young woman with Down syndrome, was a cast member on the popular television show *Glee* for many years and was asked what it meant to have a character with a disability on TV.

"I think it was a brilliant idea," she said. "It tells Americans that it’s really good to have a daughter or son who has Down syndrome."

Hats off to the books, television shows and movies that include people with intellectual disabilities!

The Sprout Film Festival’s mission is “to inspire audiences, promote inclusion and support transformative filmmaking as an integral part of social change.”

The festival features movies about people with a variety of disabilities and introduces audiences to their rich, varied, and complicated lives. Pathlight is bringing films from the festival to two locations in February and March.

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**February 2017**

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*From the 2016 Sprout Film Festival film Nightmare Turned Beautiful*

*Sprout Film Festival Eric Carle Museum, Amherst pathlightgroup.org*
Performing arts has become an integral part of programming at Pathlight, with the Whole Children and Milestones programs showcasing young talent on stage and screen. In classes such as Joyful Chorus, Friendship Band, and Theater Studio, performers of all ages and abilities are getting a chance in the spotlight. At one of their first public performances, the Joyful Chorus enchanted a crowd of several hundred in Northampton. “The results were electric for both the singers and their captivated audience,” wrote an audience member in a congratulatory letter to the local newspaper.

Shake it Off!
An Interstellar Adventure
Smith College, Northampton
March, 17, 18, 19
Buy tickets at: wholechildren.org

Shake it Off!

March 2017
Pathlight’s program, Family Empowerment helps you and your family find state and local resources to develop a unique plan of action and a community supportive of your needs.

Josie, Jeannette, Jen and Jotham Stavely of Northampton. The family first came to Family Empowerment shortly after Jeannette was born and found support and community. Jen is now on the board of the Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts.

**April 2017**

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Autism Connections Conference
The Log Cabin on April 11
Register at: [autismconnectionsma.org](http://autismconnectionsma.org)

April is Autism Awareness Month. Visit [autismconnectionsma.org](http://autismconnectionsma.org) for more information and a list of events.

Author Ron Suskind will be this year’s guest speaker. His latest work is Life, Animated, A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes and Autism.
Although chasing geese seems like a crazy effort, bringing the community together to celebrate our different abilities is easy when supporting Whole Children, a program of Pathlight. The Wild Goose Chase, held at Look Park in Northampton, has something for everyone and serves as a reminder that there are no boundaries or challenges that can’t be overcome with the right support system in place. When our community comes together to walk, roll, or run with the community, it truly illustrates the power of inclusion!
Every year the Pathlight community comes together to honor the achievements of individuals we serve. Those achievements come in all sizes: one man came back from a serious illness; others have taken on a new job, gone on a long-dreamed-of vacation, or learned a new skill. We also take a moment to cheer on the community of support at Pathlight that has allowed each person to create a meaningful and achievement-filled life.

Please join us on Tuesday, June 13 for Pathlight’s Annual Dinner to celebrate the people we serve, their caregivers, families, volunteers, staff and the whole community of people who work together to ensure that people with disabilities are living an enviable life.

### June 2017

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It's the People

Behind every great organization lies a hardworking team. Pathlight changes and strengthens lives every day, and it’s the passion and energy of our staff that makes that happen. The staff is the cornerstone to our success as an organization. Their expertise, dedication, and day-to-day roles enable the people we serve to continuously reach new levels of achievement. It is both their professional and personal investment in the capabilities, happiness and overall wellbeing of those we support that drives their actions.

Dennis LaFleche, a Placement Coordinator in Pathlight’s Family Based Living division, has been with Pathlight since 2003. “I like the connection you have with folks here—individuals and co-workers,” said Dennis. “You have that camaraderie and family feel. It’s a very supportive environment and you can basically go to anyone top-down with a question and they’ll help you the best they can.”

Dennis finds joy in his work for the simple fact that he’s able to help the care providers and the individuals we serve. “Sometimes it’s the simplest little things…you don’t even realize that you’re affecting them as much as you are.”

That positive effect goes both ways - two of the people who are on Dennis’ caseload threw him a party for his 60th birthday. “I had no clue they were going to do that, but apparently that’s all they talked about for a month before and that’s all they’ve talked about since. It was really nice of them; really cool.”

David Marhefka and Joanne Gregiore talked to their care provider about planning the party for Dennis. They made a cake and each of them picked out a shirt for him as a present. “They were so excited, and I was touched,” said Dennis.

“It’s days like this that make me think I have the best job in the world.”

July 2017

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It wasn’t long ago that Sherie Frederick worried about her son every single day. Did he attack someone? Did he try to hurt himself? Over the previous few years, her son Donald had been put on a host of medications to regulate his behavior. He quickly blew up to 400 pounds, became erratic, and sometimes violent. He needed 2 or 3 staff people to accompany him whenever he went outside. Which meant he was pretty much confined to his Pathlight house in Greenfield.

Pathlight’s Clinical Director Heather Martin recommended that Donald be admitted to the hospital to wean him off all the drugs, get a correct diagnosis, and start treatment with appropriate medication.

A year later, Donald is down to 190 pounds and happily back at his home, where he loves to do puzzles, go bowling, and attend a day program. He also volunteers in the community—an activity that was completely beyond his reach before. It was the thoughtful and skilled program set up by Heather Martin and implemented by Pathlight’s dedicated staff that returned her son to an engaged and active life, Sherie says.

“He is so much calmer,” says his mother. “I don’t have to constantly worry any more.”

She and her other son, Dan, visit Donald every Sunday, bringing him his weekly gift of jellybeans, a vanilla shake and a Three Musketeers bar. “We all have a much happier life,” says Sherie.

Residential Supports offers adults with complex medical and/or behavior needs a home in the community where around-the-clock staff gives them individual attention and helps them realize their full potential.
Since joining her Shared Living family just months ago, Marie Guillmette is living the dream—doing all the things she’s been yearning to, and more. She got her ears pierced, takes regular shoe shopping trips with her new family, has girl’s movie nights at home, goes camping, and is looking forward to putting a couple of colorful streaks into her hair. “Marie has blossomed,” said Pathlight placement coordinator Dennis LeFleche. Marie lives in Belchertown with Amy Sullivan, Amy’s 11 year old daughter, Madi, and two dogs—Nelly and Rupert. “We are an active family,” said Amy. “Marie makes every day more fun. I only wish I knew about Shared Living sooner. I may have made different career and life choices earlier in my life.” “I have fun with my sisters!” Marie said, when asked how she feels about living with her new family.

Amy and Marie celebrate friendship with their wish lantern.

Shared Living
creates opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live in private homes and develop meaningful relationships while learning to be as independent and integrated into their community as possible.
While we celebrate those we love with Down syndrome every day, October is the official month to shine a light on the abilities and accomplishments of those who live with the most commonly occurring chromosome condition.

Here are the stories of just a few people who are proving that, when given the chance, people with Down syndrome can accomplish pretty much anything:

- A young woman in Spain was elected to her local city council.
- Young adults all over the country are attending, and graduating, from college.
- A musician plays seven instruments and appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show.
- Other people with Down syndrome are superstars in quieter ways—they are graduating from high school, getting jobs, making friends, becoming an important part of their community.

One in every 691 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome—about 6,000 each year.

There are approximately 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States.

All people with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses.

The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Mass provides information about family support, resources, parent training, and social opportunities.

Down Syndrome Awareness

October 2017

- Columbus Day
- Halloween

Look for information on the Buddy Walk at pathlightgroup.org
Everybody has something to give—time, talent, or treasure. In November we honor all philanthropists who make our mission possible. From volunteering on a Board, chairing a committee or staffing an auction table, to sponsoring our annual dinner, providing a grant to pilot a new program or making a donation on Valley Gives Day. There are so many wonderful ways to be philanthropic! When you support Pathlight you transform lives.

“When we decide to make a donation to an organization the most important factor for us is the impact that organization makes in the lives of the people it serves. The impact of Whole Children and Pathlight is transformational – for our daughter, Sabrina, for countless other children and adults with developmental disabilities and for our entire community as a whole. Doing our small part to support Whole Children and Pathlight is our privilege and a real joy.”

Eric & Sarah Aasheim (with their children Jesse & Sabrina) support several Pathlight programs.

November 2017

Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11
12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18
19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25
26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30

Veteran’s Day (observed)

National Philanthropy Day
Please consider giving at pathlightgroup.org

Thanksgiving Day
At Pathlight we believe that all people should live with respect and dignity as valued, contributing members of their communities. We encourage a volunteering spirit, work ethic, and personal interests in those we serve so that they can have the experience of giving back. Pathlight offers a variety of outlets for individuals to accomplish this, one of which is our R.E.A.C.H. program (Relationships, Empowerment, Advocacy, Community, Home.)

The group was formed almost ten years ago to create more social, learning, and volunteering opportunities for its members. Some of REACH’s activities have included walking in the Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk, going pumpkin picking and on hay rides, collecting bottle tabs for Shriners Hospital, taking art classes, and hosting trainings including Human Rights, Fire Safety, Action & Awareness, and First Aid.

The group has also held several fundraising drives in an effort to give back to the community. In 2015 alone, REACH collected 50 coats and many winter accessories for the Survival Center, as well as for a local family whose house burned down. In their seasonal toy drive last year the group delivered 641 toys, a new record, to Shriners Hospital.

Check wholechildren.org for the holiday performance dates for Whole Children’s Joyful Chorus.
Pathlight
Mark A. Germain, President
Paul E. Bureau
Jeremy Casey
Lisa Clewes
Michael J. Cooley
Dino D’Angelo
Henry Drapalski, Jr.
James Demary
André J. Fafard
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David Gilrein
R. Susan Hurt
Paul G. Kelliher
Mary F. Knight
Stephen J. Levine
William H. Loomis
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Bill Loomis
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Lindsay Doak
Sara Ewell
Bridget Haley
Chris Lynch
Susan Hurt
Cammie McGovern
Peggy Winsman
Trevor Smith

Down Syndrome Resource Group
Launa Kazerooid, President
Tim Ferber
Jennifer Johnson
Jay Kazerooid
Linda Lapointe
Maria Santiago
Jennifer Stavely

Thanks to our talented and generous board members!