



Jerrilis Takes Flight

When Jerrilis Capo heard that her care provider wanted to skydive, she decided she'd like to as well. A big fan of amusement park rides, she thought skydiving would be the ultimate ride. When her physician suggested she find an alternative, a plane tour over the Pioneer Valley was the next best thing.

So on a sparkling fall day Jerrilis spent 45 minutes high above her hometown, getting a whole new perspective on local wonders like the blue glass of the Quabbin Reservoir and the miniature city of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

She spent the flight calmly gazing out at the valley, but when she stepped from the plane with a big smile on her face, she exclaimed, "Not bad!"

Jerrilis' adventure was made possible by The Darren FUNd. The purpose of the fund, started to honor the

happy spirit of Darren Harrington, is to afford those served by Pathlight's Shared Living program opportunities that are fun and bring them joy.

Over the years, the FUNd has fulfilled this intention in a variety of ways, including vacation trips to Disney World, Arizona, and New Hampshire, therapeutic horseback riding lessons, classes at the Jewish Community Center, membership at the local YMCA, a week at Camp Horizon, music lessons, and the purchase of iPads.

Since Darren's death in 2014, the FUNd has taken on new meaning: it is now a tribute to his life and a way to honor his spirit.

Donations to The Darren FUNd bring happiness by helping people with disabilities pursue their passions, even if that takes them 2,000 feet up.

First Pathlight Scholarship Award

Erika Gleason, a behavior specialist, will be continuing her education, thanks in part to Donald Fletcher Scholarship. Established by Pathlight's Board of Directors in honor of former Executive Director, Donald Fletcher, the scholarship offers financial assistance to dedicated Pathlight employees who are furthering their education. This year was the first award for this annual \$5000 scholarship to assist an employee in obtaining an undergraduate degree.

Erika started at Pathlight in 2013 as a direct support professional in an intensive behavioral house. Pathlight was the first organization in which she experienced challenging behavior from the individuals she supported.



Erika Gleason and Ruth Banta, Executive Director

However, it was easy for Erika to “see past the negative.” With her positive attitude and dedication, she quickly moved her way up the Pathlight career ladder, eventually becoming a behavior specialist. Now, she is responsible

for checking in with all of Pathlight's residential homes, as well as conducting safety training sessions that teach people how to support individuals with special needs.

Erika says that what she loves best about her work is that “it's all about ensuring that the individuals we serve are living a quality life, and are given the chance to be active members in their communities.”

Erika is currently working toward an associates degree in psychology at Holyoke Community College. Her goal is to transfer to Westfield State University, where she will enroll in their psychology program.

Whole Selves is Growing Up

This winter, NPR ran a series of reports that sent shock waves through the disability community. *Abused and Betrayed: The Sexual Assault Epidemic No One Talks About* details a nationwide pattern of abuse perpetrated against people with disabilities. NPR's investigation revealed that people with intellectual disabilities are sexually abused at a rate seven times higher than those without disabilities.

At Pathlight, the report was sobering, but it was not news. Since 1952, Pathlight has been the premier organization in western Massachusetts supporting and advocating for people with intellectual disabilities. We have been dedicated to ensuring that the people we serve have the skills they need to never become statistics.

Pathlight has always been a leader in innovative thinking. Now is no different. We know the best way to prevent abuse is through in-depth and accessible education.

That is why we created Whole Selves.

WHOLE SELVES

For the past eight years, Whole Children and Milestones (Pathlight programs) have been offering an in-depth curriculum on relationships and sex education created specifically for people with intellectual disabilities. The curriculum, Whole Selves, is now being developed for sale nationwide.

Using plain language, Whole Selves teaches how to engage in healthy and safe relationships. It is flexible, individualized, uses explicit instruction, and has proven to be successful in classrooms in Massachusetts, where it has been taught for the past eight years.

Because everyone deserves access to an inclusive program that empowers them to be healthy, safe, and active participants in their whole lives, Pathlight is determined to make Whole Selves available nationally so that more students benefit from this groundbreaking curriculum.

Our first step was to align the curriculum to meet National Sexual Health Education Standards. Then in 2017, a team of Pathlight teachers, communications professionals and directors collaborated to develop an articulated business model that brings Whole Selves to a wider audience, for even greater impact. This spring, Holyoke School systems piloted the Whole Selves curriculum, providing us with valuable feedback for further development. Stay tuned!

Special thanks to Beveridge Family Foundation, Fred J. Brotherton Charitable Foundation, Westfield Bank Future Fund, Farmington Bank Community Foundation, and Chicopee Savings Bank Charitable Foundation for their generous support.

Pathlight's Annual Awards

Each year, Pathlight's Annual Dinner is a celebration of the people that Pathlight is privileged to serve. Here are some of the accomplishments, in the face of challenges and transitions, recognized this year.



Christine Parazychna

Last summer, **Christine Parazychna's** medical condition drastically changed. However, she remains positive and makes it through each day with a smile and the help of the staff and her house mates. Christine enriches her home with her positive attitude.

Kelly Staub switched day programs. She now attends the Greenfield Center and her care providers report she is doing well adjusting to this major transition.

Over the past few years, **Rory Quinn** has faced complicated health problems. When he needed to get a g-tube, it was understandably hard for him and his family. Still, in the face of this challenge, Rory remained strong and determined, maintaining his passion for wrestling and the Red Sox. Much to his delight, he attended a Red Sox game at Fenway Park last year, where he met his family and stayed for the whole game. He didn't stop smiling or talking the whole day.

For **Francis Martineau**, nearly everything changed when Pathlight assumed administration of his home of many years. All in one day, there was new staff and routines, and a different set of expectations. Francis handled all this change with good cheer.



Francis Martineau



Brian LaClair

Brian LaClair is studying culinary arts and entomology at the University of Massachusetts in the Inclusive Concurrent Education program. He has also been working out at the UMass fitness center, where he was offered an internship. By his example, Brian paved

the way for others with development disabilities to intern at the facility.

As Brian said the night he received his award, "Hip, hip hooray" to all of this year's recipients

Meet Jason Montgomery



“Pathlight is a vital resource for people living with developmental, intellectual, and physical difference across western Massachusetts. I am proud to use my skills as a professional fundraiser and community organizer to support and advocate for the people and families that we serve. As our impact grows, so does our need.

If you would like to support our work, please contact me at 413-732-0531 or jason.montgomery@pathlightgroup.org. I would love to discuss how you can light the path for those we serve.”

Jason Montgomery, Development Manager

Mark Your Calendars!



Let's Dance!

Saturday, November 17

**Sheraton Springfield
Monarch Place Hotel**

Mark your calendars for this night of dancing and celebration in support of enrichment programs for people with disabilities.

Ten performances that will make your feet tap and your spirits soar.



220 Brookdale Drive, Springfield, MA 01104