

Jordyn's Strong Start to First Grade

Intensive Therapy Programs at Easterseals

Six-year-old Jordyn started back to school with fresh school supplies, some new clothes, and greater independence.

In kindergarten, Jordyn received therapies at school for her visual impairment and partial paralysis (hemiplegia). When summer break started, her school therapist recommended an intensive program at Easterseals to help get Jordyn ready for first grade. Jordyn's family used the time off school for five weeks of specialized sessions at Easterseals.

Jordyn's intensive team included two Physical Therapists and an Occupational Therapist. Through repetition and caregiver collaboration, the team found the best visual cues and guidance to help Jordyn excel at school and at home. Together, they set goals focused on mobility, feeding, and self-care. Jordyn spent the summer learning to brush her teeth, hold utensils, and use a wearable cane that helps guide her as she walks.



Jordyn's mom, Lauren, shares, "Our experience at Easterseals has been wonderful. They are a great resource for children with physical and visual impairments. The Easterseals team came up with such creative and novel ways to advance Jordyn's development and use of non-standard mobility devices like her Belt Cane. This has translated to more independence and confidence for her at school and at home. We can't thank the team enough."

An Intensive Overview

from Assistant Director of Physical Therapy, Joanne Pygon, PT, DPT, PCS

Children in intensive therapy programs concentrate time and energy toward achieving a specific goal. Intensive therapy is a five-week commitment to develop a skill through frequency and repetition at Easterseals and at home. We want to ensure that every child is set up for success. Each 1:1 session is personalized and factors in:

- **Age:** Intensive programs can start as early as age two.
- **Development:** If a child is at a tipping point, increasing the frequency of therapy can maximize their ability to reach their next goal.
- **Family Engagement:** The outcomes are greatest when the work continues at home. We collaborate to find the best time to take on this new challenge and keep communication open.
- **Teamwork:** This program involves multiple therapists across disciplines to share ideas and expertise.
- **Good Vibes:** We make sure our environment is conducive to positivity and find creative ways to keep therapy fun and motivating.



To learn more, visit eastersealsdvr.org/intensives.

Plan for 2025

Save the date and join us at these upcoming events.

MARCH 8

Benefit Gala
Four Seasons Hotel Chicago

MAY 8

Tee it Up for Easterseals
Top Golf, Naperville

LATE AUGUST

Bike for the Kids
Fox Valley Area

SEPTEMBER 13

Photography Exhibition
College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn

OCTOBER 4

Run for the Kids: Superhero Hustle
Villa Park, IL

Learn more at:
eastersealsdvr.org/events

Say Cheese!

Our immense gratitude to the photographers and families involved in our annual Photography Exhibition. With event supporters, Constellation and College of DuPage, we held an unveiling of new photos and recognized 25 years of this collaboration with photography students, alumni and volunteers.



Photo by Becca Filsinger

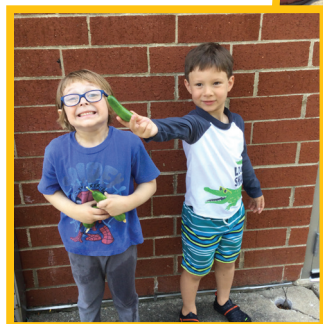
A Summer to Nurture

Over 30+ focused therapy programs gave children a place to work towards therapy goals while playing sports, gardening, dancing (see back cover), and cooking, all while making new friends along the way.

Our preschool nature club flourished with help from our friends at The Morton Arboretum. By donating curriculum, materials, and supplies, such as a toddler-size garden bed, children grew plants and explored new sensory experiences. They also painted garden stones, and these "Kindness Rocks" will find a permanent home in the Arboretum's Children's Garden.

Children sampled the garden's bounty including green peppers, cucumbers, carrots, and baby tomatoes. Participants continue to visit the garden to watch it change with the seasons.

We are grateful to the children, families, therapists, and community partners for their collaborative and creative approach to therapeutic groups.



Nature Explorers try cucumbers and explore plants.

Making A Splash

Our speech-language pathology services have entered the pool! Director of Speech and Language Services, Savannah Sunvold, M.S. CCC-SLP, CLC, shares that many children benefit from the sensory supports provided by the aquatic environment,

"Being in the water can enhance therapeutic outcomes, particularly for children who struggle with regulation, shared attention, and engagement."

Water is a perfect environment to aid goals with airflow and breathing control for speech production, assists with motor planning, and eases positioning for clients with different abilities.

Language happens everywhere! Experiential learning in a supportive environment that is meaningful to a child helps aid in overall speech and language skills throughout their day-to-day life.



Transformational Partnerships in DuPage County

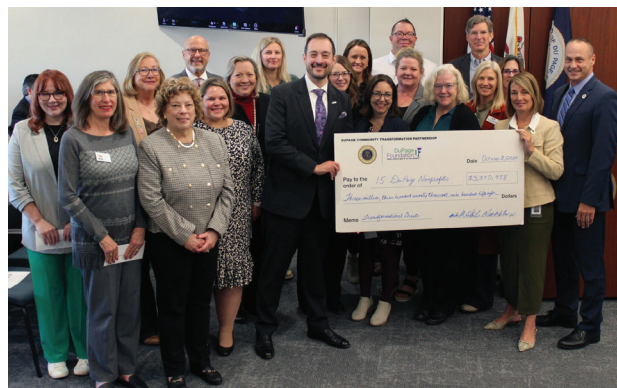
In 2022 the DuPage Community Transformation Partnership (DCTP) was formed between DuPage County and DuPage Foundation to support social service non-profit organizations helping DuPage County residents. The last transformational grants were awarded in October 2024 to help 15 organizations serving DuPage residents in the areas of food insecurity, housing instability, mental health, and substance use disorder.

"DuPage County and DuPage Foundation developed the partnership in response to the pandemic, providing both for our residents' immediate needs, and to contribute to long term solutions, creating a positive impact even after the pandemic," said DuPage County Board Chair Deborah Conroy. "The goal is to provide more service and better outcomes for people struggling with mental health and substance use problems, housing, and food insecurity. What we've found is that a whole community approach is crucial if we hope to tackle some of the most persistent and challenging issues we face in DuPage County."

Easterseals received \$322,200 for a two-year collaboration with home visiting personnel to provide mental health consultation, direct support, and professional development training, for children and families who receive home based services. Our clinicians will partner to provide screenings, care coordination, and behavioral support to help empower DuPage families and home visiting personnel.

The DCTP Transformational grants are intended to support evidence-based programs focused on long-term solutions to build capacity, improve efficiency, and ensure efficacy of programs. With the work of our fellow grantee organizations and future collaborators, more children and their families will thrive.

For more information, please visit dupagefoundation.org/DCTP.



Easterseals is one of fifteen social service not-for profit organizations to receive a DCTP Transformational Grant to help DuPage residents.



DuPage County Board Members with Easterseals President & CEO Theresa Forthofer

GIVING TUESDAY

**GET READY
GET SET
GO!** MARK YOUR CALENDAR
FOR **DECEMBER 3**
TELL YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS
DONATIONS WILL BE DOUBLED!
SPREAD THE WORD TO HELP US
REACH OUR **\$225,000 GOAL** ON GIVING TUESDAY

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Katten is proud to support
Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley.

Thank you for all you do to
improve the lives of those
with disabilities and the
families who love and
care for them.



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Katten partner, Derek Ladgenski (above) began his term as Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley Board Chair in September. Derek, Katten, and all of our Board Members have pledged to support Giving Tuesday on December 3. Join them on this global day of giving!

Superhero Ambassadors

Tiffany Wood reflected on her family's Easterseals experience at the Run for the Kids: Superhero Hustle in October.

"We thank Easterseals for their team of skilled therapists who work tirelessly to enhance the lives of the children they serve, offering personalized care that addresses each child's unique needs. But their commitment goes beyond just providing therapy. Easterseals is constantly seeking innovative solutions and exploring new methods to improve the outcomes for the children in their care.

Over the past year, (our son) Robbie has made strides that we once thought were impossible. Whether it was through aquatic therapy, his Walk Aid device practice, or his weekly sessions through the dedicated efforts of the therapists at Easterseals, Robbie has not only found his voice, but also his strength. Each session brought new challenges and new victories, and with each step, Robbie grew stronger and had more confidence.

I watched with joy as Robbie ran across the finish line surrounded by all the other children who, like him, have been given the opportunity to be their best selves. It was a moment that will forever be etched in my heart.

Their team, Wood Warriors, was among the 550+ participants who walked, ran, and rolled at this Superhero themed 5K Run/2 Mile Walk. Our community of participants, volunteers, and sponsors helped raise more than \$60,000 net in support of pediatric therapies.

View the complete
photo gallery at
[eastersealsdofvr.org](http://eastersealsdofvr.org/runforthekids)
[/runforthekids](http://runforthekids).





We were honored to celebrate Endeavor Health's Community Investment Fund as Philanthropic of the Year. They were recognized at the 2024 West Suburban Philanthropic Network awards.

Outstanding pediatric therapies
to help every child thrive.

Call 630.282.2022
for evaluations or to
schedule an appointment.

Donate

Call 630.261.6240 or visit
eastersealsdfvr.org/donate



Volunteering

Call 630.282.2029 for individual,
corporate and group opportunities.

Villa Park | Naperville | Elgin
630.620.4433 | 630.357.9699 | 847.742.3264



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Just Dance

Dance Dynamics participants pose at their summer recital with Occupational Therapist, Carly Kleiman, Physical Therapist, Claire Gornick, and Therapy Aid, Paulina. Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Oak Brook opened their doors to this new Easterseals therapy program that helps children develop their strength, coordination and socialization through group dance.

Learn more about our quarterly focused therapy programs at focusedtherapy@eastersealsdfvr.org or 847.742.3264.