

Summer 2021

Strength & Resiliency

eastersealsdfvr.org



Four-year-old Grace with family

Empowering Caregivers

Five of our clinicians including Occupational Therapist, Kelly Nesbitt, have completed their DIRFloortime (DIR) certifications to better serve our clients with Autism Spectrum Disorder or children with other sensory needs.

When Kelly started tele-therapy sessions with four-year-old Grace, she was able to share this DIR coaching model which offers skilled observations of the family's playtime. She would coach Grace's mom, Lisa, on ways to expand play schemes and grow interactions based on Grace's toy selections.

Kelly has found that tele-therapy helps her gain insight into a child's routines and behaviors at home. She then tailors therapy sessions to fit their daily life.

Lisa shares that the start of tele-therapy was a tough time for their family.

"Kelly met me at my most vulnerable time as a mom and took me under her wing. I suspected my daughter had Autism, but it was still very scary to hear those words."

We now officially knew we had a journey ahead of us. It took some time, but I now see this diagnosis was the key to opening every door Grace needed to grow and succeed. Kelly's professionalism and great perspective have been so helpful to me."

By the end of their virtual sessions together, Grace was able to play or walk away off screen and come back still engaged in the activity. She also enjoyed play time with her older sister and interacting with her whole family. This was huge progress that helped Grace enter Kindergarten ready to learn and make new friendships.

The tele-therapy sessions became the highlight of the family's week.

"The DIR model really worked for us. It met Grace where she is in development, helped her grow and our whole family blossom. It was unexpectedly wonderful."

Our Autism services and Diagnostic Clinic will expand this fall to help more children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Learn more about our autism program at eastersealsdfvr.org/autism

Increasing Health Equity

Our main goal is to ensure that all people, no matter what background or ability, are 100% included and 100% empowered. To do this, Easterseals established the **Pediatric Health Equity Initiative** with generous support from Abbott, to help end racial disparities in healthcare, childcare, and education faced by Black children.

We offer free access to our online screening tool, intensive early intervention, caregiver outreach, and a streamlined diagnostic approach for a quicker introduction to therapy.

Learn more at 630.282.2022.



Photo by: Lauren Sims

Outdoor Collaboration

Thank you to Rev. Finley and the congregation of Community Presbyterian Church in Lombard for sharing outdoor space with Easterseals this summer. We are excited to have large tents around the Villa Park center to safely pair clients for services and reinstate some of the social and physical programs that were discontinued last year due to the pandemic.

Helping Children Thrive

Grateful families recognize our nutrition team for their expert care, patience and advocacy.

"With three elementary-aged children who have had GI dysfunction since birth, the impact of tube feeding and nutrition is very evident. Without tube feedings and consistent optimal nutrition, their physical and cognitive

development, academic learning, mood, attention and immune function have been negatively impacted.

The last nine years have been difficult, with many challenges, but the support we have received from Easterseals has been significant and ongoing, and this



has made my children so much more healthy and successful in their lives."

- Joanne

"Thank you so much for making me feel like I am doing my best, especially when my daughter is in pain and doesn't feel good! I really can't put into words how wonderful I felt after speaking to you. Thank you for everything!"

- Melinda

Upcoming events to support our mission! Learn more at: eastersealsdfvr.org/events



Photos by: Rich Howe Photography and Jon Huard

Elgin Community Update

Our Jayne Shover Center in Elgin is relocating just one mile south to 1135 Bowes Road. Construction is underway in the space and therapy services will begin there in September.

Our new center will be in an Association for Individual Development's (AID) building, and we are equally looking forward to working together to serve our communities. Lore Baker, President & CEO at AID shares,

"We look forward to growing together and leading the way for inclusion and empowerment for all individuals with developmental delays and disabilities in the greater Elgin community. With our mutual respect and values, we are excited to offer services for the unique needs of individuals throughout every stage of their lives. Welcome Easterseals families!"

Our shared spaces will allow for larger after school programming and outdoor social groups.



Cycling On

Our adapted bike program continues to help more children! Now in its fifth year, the Jonathan Goers Bike Club, has given out more than 60 bikes, trikes and trailers. As previous recipients grow to use other bikes or trikes, their donated bikes are returned and matched to another child. This cycle allows more children to experience the joy of riding a bike.

Wesley and Danny (pictured below from left to right) recently received these recycled adapted bikes. They are enjoying building strength, their new independence and time outdoors with friends and family.

Learn more about the program and our Bike for the Kids on August 29 at eastersealsdfvr.org/bikeforthekids.



Wesley & Danny (Left to Right) try out their new bikes at the Villa Park and Naperville centers with their respective Physical Therapists.

Gala Reimagined Virtually

While we missed celebrating our annual benefit gala in-person on May 1, we were touched by how many joined us from across the country. This year we virtually recognized many who have made a significant impact at Easterseals.

This includes Shirley Welsh Ryan and Corbett Michael Welsh Ryan, as our 2021 Crystal Heart Award recipients, and Physical Therapist, Jim Alviti, as the inaugural Alviti Changemaker. These honorees' dedication to helping children with disabilities is remarkable and they have transformed the lives of thousands of families.

Watch the full virtual program at eastersealsdfvr.org/gala.

Save the date to join us at our next benefit gala at the Four Seasons Chicago on April 9, 2022.



Physical Therapist, Jim Alviti accepting the Changemaker with President & CEO Theresa Forthofer

Offering individualized services for families, including in-person and tele-therapies

Call 630.282.2022 for evaluations

Donate

Call 630.261.6240 or visit eastersealsdfvr.org/donate

Outdoor Volunteering

Call 630.282.2030 for individual and group opportunities

Villa Park | Naperville | Elgin
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