



Transforming lives since 1946

Empowering children and adults with disabilities and their families to pursue their own goals and dreams. Serving individuals from Southwestern Indiana, Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Spring 2025

Meet 2025 Youth Ambassador Ethan Hills.

Life changed for Ethan Hills on April 27, 2024. It was Ethan's first camping trip with his Scout troop, and he was having a great time. But in the early morning hours, a tree fell on the tent where Ethan was sleeping. Ethan experienced a life-threatening traumatic brain injury and was life-flighted to a Louisville children's hospital.

Ethan had a difficult fight ahead of him as he battled to regain consciousness, breathe on his own, and regain movement. He spent months in an acute rehab hospital before going home to Newburgh IN. It was just the beginning of Ethan's recovery. Now Easterseals is a part of his journey!

Ethan began receiving physical therapy at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center in December, and this determined 12-year-old is already making amazing progress. He has gone from using a rolling walker for most of his mobility to walking unassisted! He's working on balance and coordination, stepping over objects, standing and walking on uneven surfaces, jumping, and much more.

Through hard work and a positive attitude, Ethan accomplishes new things every week. This Castle North sixth-grader is unstoppable! His mom Ashley said, "The biggest change I have seen in Ethan since we started coming to Easterseals is an increase in his confidence in his own abilities and his willingness to challenge himself."

Ethan certainly doesn't shy away from challenges in therapy! He has always loved sports, so his therapist uses baseball and soccer to bring out Ethan's competitive side, make sessions fun, and keep him motivated. Ethan can now hit a ball off a tee and off of pitches, and he has an even bigger goal in mind: "To learn to run and kick so I can get back on the soccer field and be with the other boys on the team again!"

Ethan is well on his way to reaching his goals! With the community's support, Easterseals empowers Ethan and thousands of other Tri-State children and adults to achieve their dreams. ●



Watch Ethan on the Easterseals Telethon
Friday, April 11, on ABC25/CW7!

HOP-N-ING disability awareness program is fun for kids, free for teachers!

The Easterseals HOP-N-ING curriculum, presented by Tools 4 Teaching, helps preschool and elementary students understand what it means to have a disability, and how to be a friend to everyone. The online program features short videos about five animated characters, plus links to teaching aids and suggested books. As part of HOP-N-ING, classrooms have the option to hop and collect donations for Easterseals. HOP-N-ING is fun, flexible, and FREE for teachers! For details, contact Makenzi Redman, 812-474-2348 or mredman@evansvillerehab.com. ●



A future of growth, opportunity, and service.

It's hard to believe, but this year I will celebrate my 10th anniversary as President/CEO of this organization. I am blessed to have the privilege to serve in this role and 2025 is already off to a great start. We have much to be thankful for as our team continues to grow, there are new opportunities for us to serve the community, and we have a bright future of providing excellent service to our region in the years ahead. Here are just some of the highlights...

- I recently enjoyed spending the day in Indianapolis at the Statehouse where I met with area legislators along with my colleague, Rob Henson. We have joined a statewide partnership to thank members of the legislature for their previous support and to make sure they have plenty of information about the impact of our services on individuals and on this community. We are committed to being a resource to legislators and the Governor's office so they can better understand the needs of people with disabilities. This was the first of several visits we will make throughout the year.
- We are also investing in building relationships at the congressional level. In April, we will travel to Washington, D.C., to visit the Capitol. The Easterseals National Office and affiliates across the country will gather for a week of meetings to increase engagement and disability awareness at the federal level. We are ready to be a leading resource on programs and funding for our clients and community.
- We are thrilled to continue to provide the highest level of clinical services in Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Audiology, and Psychology testing and services. The demand for expanded services has created a unique problem - we need more space! We have converted every available space for offices or treatment rooms. As we consider how to serve more people in the region, we need to reimagine our space needs to have even more impact. Over the next few months we will be assessing all of our programs and their specific needs and strategically planning for further growth. It's going to be a lot of fun!
- One partial solution for our space challenge is partnering with other nonprofits. For the last two years we have partnered with Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare to create the Neurodevelopmental Center (NDC). Comprehensive testing and coordinated evaluations are completed for Indiana children who have a developmental disability and mental health challenges. Before this partnership we each treated part of the child's needs independently. At the NDC we come together, coordinating the child's care. This program has been a huge success and we continue to look for other opportunities for collaboration.

As you can see, 2025 is going to be an exciting year of service and growth for us! That is only possible because of your enduring and generous support. Donors and friends like you fuel our mission, bring us new ideas, and challenge us to be creative with our resources. Thank you for joining us in our mission to help people be as independent as possible! ●



A stylized handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Schneider".

Kelly Schneider, President/CEO

OUR MISSION is to make profound, positive differences in the lives of local people with disabilities every day, and to change the way our community defines and views disability.

OUR VISION is a community in which all individuals and families are accepted, valued and included, and have equal opportunity to achieve their goals, dreams and aspirations.

Thanks to our volunteer Board of Directors for guiding, governing, and supporting the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center.

2025 Board Chair - Geoff Gentil (Field & Main Bank). **Executive Committee** - Julie Burczyk (Tools 4 Teaching), Shelby Collins (Ascension Medical Group), Erica Esche (National Vet Help), Michele Graham (Harding Shymanski & Co. PSC), Chad Grunow (G.D. Ritzy's), Brant Kennedy (Harding, Shymanski & Co. PSC), Bill Norman (Berry Global), Mary Peach (Easterseals Posey County Representative), John C. Schroeder, Director Emeritus (Wabash Plastics), Jeffrey Wedding (State of Indiana - Indiana State Psychiatric Hospital Network). **Board Members** - Abigail Catania (University of Evansville), Larry Barnhill (Heritage Federal Credit Union), Andrea Braun (Fifth Third Bank), Trent Engbers (University of Southern Indiana), Amanda Kruse Corlett (Mead Johnson), Darin Lander (Old National Bank), Kyle Markle (Donaldson Capital Management), Andy Martin (Liberty Federal Credit Union), Dana Myers (CenterPoint Energy), Oliver Paradis (Alcoa), Carrie Roelle (Kahn, Dees, Donovan & Kahn), Michelle Schmitt (Old National Bank), Anne Thrasher Boyd (Anne Thrasher Boyd State Farm), Brian Williams (Kahn Dees Donovan & Kahn). ●

Thanks to EVERYONE who made the 31st annual Ritzy's Fantasy of Lights a big success! Almost 13,000 cars and carriages visited the dazzling displays! More than 1,000 people attended the Bright Lights Run/Walk. Dozens of volunteers and sponsors made the 35-night event possible. The entire community played a part in raising nearly \$212,000 to provide Easterseals services! **THANK YOU** for empowering local children and adults to achieve their dreams!

Special thanks to Ritzy's, IBEW Local 16, NECA, Teamsters Local 215, Electrical JATC, IUPAT DC91, Evansville Police Department, ABC 25/CW 7, 99.5 WKDQ, 105.3 WJLT, KISS 106, 103GBF, WGBF-AM, WBKR, Lamar Advertising, and Evansville Living. We also appreciate the support of the Evansville Department of Parks & Recreation!

Mark your calendar for the 2025 Ritzy's Fantasy of Lights, open nightly Thanksgiving-New Year's Day, and for the Bright Lights Run/Walk scheduled for Dec. 3! ●



LemonAid Stand returns this summer!

A sweet tradition continues! The date of the 2025 LemonAid Stand for Easterseals will be announced soon. Follow us on Facebook for all the details! Interested in helping? Contact Carolyn Franklin, 812.437.2607 or cfranklin@evansvillerehab.com. ●



\$50 or 3/\$100

Deadline 3/12/25

Drawing 3/14/25

Max. 5,000 tickets available.

Rules at eastersealsrehabcenter.com

812-437-2600

Call or buy in person - 3701 Bellemeade Ave. Evansville, IN



Indiana Raffle License #002228

2025 Easterseals ALL CA\$H RAFFLE Order Form

Call 812-437-2600 or complete this form & mail with payment info; must be received by March 12 deadline.

Number of Tickets _____ @ \$50 each or 3/\$100 Total Amount Enclosed \$_____

☐ Check made payable to Easterseals Rehabilitation Center ☐ Money Order

☐ Debit Card (**no credit cards**) Account # _____ Exp: _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email my receipt to _____ Signature _____ NEWS2025

Mail to Easterseals Rehabilitation Center, 3701 Bellemeade Ave., Evansville, IN 47714



Register a participant, sign up to volunteer, or donate to “iCan Bike!”

Individuals with disabilities, age 8 and up, can learn to ride a regular two-wheeled bicycle at **iCan Bike, scheduled for Monday-Friday, June 9-13.**

Each “camper” attends “bike camp” for 75 minutes daily. They progress through a series of adapted roller bikes while receiving individual assistance. Most participants are successfully riding a regular bicycle with no adaptations by the end of the week! They also receive their own safety helmet and an iCan Bike t-shirt.

This is the 20th year for Evansville’s event, one of the nation’s longest-running iCan Bike workshops.

iCan Bike is held at Evansville’s National Guard Armory. Spots are limited! **REGISTER BY MAY 12!** Cost is \$200 per person. Scholarships are available through support from generous donors.

Volunteers are needed to assist participants and must be at least 15, able to walk/run beside a bike, and available daily during bike camp, 8:00am-12:30pm &/or 1:00-4:30pm.

To register or volunteer for iCan Bike—or to financially sponsor a participant—contact Patty Balbach, 812-479-1411, ext. 268, pbalbach@evansvillerehab.com. ●

Remembering Lisa Fisher

Colleagues, clients, and friends are mourning the loss of Lisa Fisher, a long-time member of our local Easterseals family.

Lisa spent her entire 34-year career at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. She started as a Speech-Language Pathologist, quickly became a leader in the organization, and retired a few months ago as Vice President of Clinical Services.

Lisa had a positive, lasting impact on thousands of people. She was committed to providing the best of care and was a shining example of compassion, dedication, and leadership.

Lisa passed away Dec. 5, 2024, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She is deeply missed at Easterseals. Lisa will always be remembered by her co-workers, client families, and countless others she touched in our community. ●



Speech-Language Pathology grad students receive Easterseals scholarships.

Eight graduate students from ASHA-accredited SLP programs received Speech-Language Pathology Scholarship Awards from the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. Congratulations to these future SLPs!

Above right (L. to R.): ESRC Assistant Director of Speech Kim Woody, Director of Speech & Audiology Christi Watkins, Lexus Knepp (ISU), Jasmyn Anzola (ISU), and ESRC President/CEO Kelly Schneider.

Below right: Kim Woody, Christi Watkins, Soundarya Adepu (ISU), Victoria Hey (ISU), and Kelly Schneider.

Award recipients not pictured: Olivia Tolleson, Mackenzie Beal, Anna Voskoboynik, and Kali Manojlovich (all from IU).

We hope the scholarship program spreads awareness about our local Easterseals speech services and encourages future SLPs to join our team! Follow us on social media to learn about other application opportunities. For information on SLP staff positions, email info@evansvillerehab.com. ●



Meet Adult Ambassador Greg Butler.

Greg Butler has been a part of the local Easterseals family for decades. Greg's wife Toni spent years as an Easterseals speech therapist, helping kids and adults learn to communicate. Toni and Greg couldn't have imagined that they would become Easterseals clients themselves! But that's what happened after Greg was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's is a progressive disorder that affects each person differently. The first sign of Greg's condition was rigidity in his hands 38 years ago. Since then, other movement-related symptoms have impacted his life. Through it all, services at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center have helped Greg achieve his primary goal—to stay mobile and continue living at home with Toni.

The most important thing Easterseals does? "They provide tools I need to remain productive and mobile, from a team of professional staff members," Greg said. Every piece of mobility equipment Greg has utilized has come from Easterseals. From a cane and walkers to a custom wheelchair, the devices have enabled Greg to keep moving.

Staff members are also valuable resources for Toni as Greg's condition changes. They offer creative solutions that enable Toni to safely assist Greg with daily activities at home, such as accessing the shower, transferring in and out of his wheelchair, or getting in and out of bed.

Greg's hard work in Easterseals physical therapy maximizes his strength, balance, and coordination. During each weekly session he makes multiple "laps" around the first floor using a rolling walker. He also enjoys a workout with boxing gloves! Greg is always willing to try new equipment and techniques, like walking across the gym using a harness with a ceiling-mounted power lift system.

Recently Greg was thrilled to discover that he can walk independently in Easterseals' fully-accessible, warm-water therapeutic pool! The buoyancy of the water allows him to walk with no assistance for the first time in years. That accomplishment provides beneficial exercise and is a great morale booster! Greg plans to become a "regular" at the pool and to keep achieving his goals! ●



See Greg's story on the Easterseals Telethon Fri., April 11, on ABC25/CW7!

Award-winning collaboration by Easterseals and Southwestern benefits area children and families.



Evansville's Neurodevelopmental Center—NDC—is a unique partnership between the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center and Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare. NDC offers assessments and treatment for children who are dually diagnosed with a developmental disability and a mental health disorder. This innovative collaboration was recently named **Behavioral Health Team of the Year** by Mental Health America of Indiana! We thank NDC staff for their groundbreaking efforts to provide compassionate, integrated, accessible care for children and families. Pictured at the MHA award presentation are (l. to r.): Theresa Scheller, NDC Nutritionist; Emily Reidford, Easterseals VP of Community Education & Outreach; Lynnette Neu, Easterseals NDC Lead Psychologist; Kayce Smith, NDC Clinical Manager; and Mike Halstead, MHA of Indiana Board Chair. ●

SAVE THE DATE! AUGUST 28!

Plan to join us at EASTERSEALS GOLFING FORE KIDS AT CAMBRIDGE Thursday, August 28! Double shotgun! 8am OR 1pm! Reserve your place in this popular scramble now, while sponsorships, teams and individual spots are available. Contact Sara McKeehan, 812.437.2609 or smckeehan@evansvillerehab.com ●





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Telethon Friday! April 11, 2025

ABC25/CW7 will present the local Easterseals Telethon for the 48th consecutive year **FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 5AM-7PM**. Tune in for live segments throughout the day as the Eyewitness News team hosts **Easterseals Telethon Friday!**

The show will feature special coverage during newscasts, interviews, appearances by friends of Easterseals, and compelling video stories donated by **ABC25/CW7** and **Direction By Newman**.

Again this year, ABC25/CW7 will donate 100% of production and air time! The station's commitment allows **all** proceeds to fund inclusive early education and essential therapies, empowering local kids and adults with disabilities to **pursue** their goals and achieve their dreams.

Generous area businesses will match ALL donations made during the show! Plan to call special numbers on the screen, watch for "text to give" options, or donate at eastersealsrehabcenter.com. Follow EastersealsRehabCtr on Facebook for *Telethon Friday* updates! ●



Meet local Ambassadors Ethan Hills (above) and Greg Butler and watch their stories during the Telethon.

ALL donations stay LOCAL!

Sponsors match ALL donations made during the show!