

## YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Summer 2023

### Together is better! Meet Gavin and his friends.

Visit Room 109 at the Easterseals Early Learning Center and you'll see a classroom full of friends who have been learning, growing, and thriving together since they were infants. You'll also see one of the world's brightest smiles from 3-year-old Gavin Winger, who's surrounded by his Milestones Early Care classmates.

Gavin was born with Williams Syndrome, a genetic condition that causes medical and developmental needs. Gavin is very social and has a passion for music. While he can't always say the words, Gavin loves to hum tunes as his teachers and classmates sing along. Other favorite activities are swinging on the playground, running fast, and participating in any kind of sensory activity – the messier, the better!

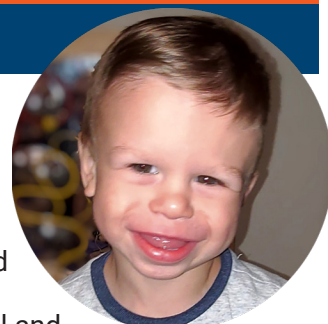
Gavin easily won the hearts of his classmates. They give him a hand when he needs it and include him in all play and classroom activities. They even give Gavin hugs when he arrives or leaves for the day.

The Easterseals Early Learning Center is Evansville's *only* fully inclusive early education program, welcoming all children, including those with disabilities, delays, and significant medical conditions. Generous community support helps to make the program possible, so Gavin and his classmates can learn, grow, and thrive *together*.

"This has been wonderful for Gavin," said his mom Jennifer. "The teachers have been great working with Gavin's multiple therapists. And he can learn so much by watching and playing with his classmates with many different abilities."

One of those classmates is Clara Frazer. Her mom Brooke said, "We feel it's an invaluable experience for Clara to be enrolled in a program where inclusion is at the forefront. It has been a joy to watch Clara's friendships bloom at ELC." Ask Clara about her friend Gavin, and she'll say "Yep, he's my buddy! I love him!"

In August, Gavin "graduates" to the ELCs Mitchell LEAD Academy. And yes, his friends will be there, too, because *together is better!*



*Gavin and his friend Clara have fun while learning together. More photos on page 6!*

### Former interns return to Evansville as Clinical Psychology Faculty Members.

When the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center started a new Clinical Psychology Internship Program in 2019, there were two main goals: (1) To increase the capacity of our own Department of Psychology & Wellness to serve local children and families; and (2) To grow the number of psychologists in our region. We're happy to report that two members of that inaugural 2019 internship class are returning to Evansville as doctors of clinical psychology! **Dr. Roselia Juan** is joining our Easterseals team as a member of our psychology department faculty, and she will also see various clients, including Spanish-speaking children and families. **Dr. Juliet Aura** will be an Assistant Professor for UE's new PsyD in Clinical Psychology program, training future psychologists. We are excited to welcome these mental health professionals back to our community!



*Roselia Juan, Ph.D.*

*Juliet Aura, Ph.D.*



I started at Easterseals one year after college and had no plan to make a career out of supporting and advocating for people with disabilities. I was the manager of a group home which opened one year earlier, to serve eight young children with significant developmental disabilities. At that time, *families could not get support to help care for their children in their own homes*. They were faced with two options. Continue to provide all physical and emotional care at home on their own or place their child in an institution. Group homes were the newest option that got children into their home communities, in public school, and out into the community.

Throughout the years, I've had the opportunity to see and learn about different therapies and services. I've never been bored. I've tried to make a difference for those we serve and for my co-workers, and I am thankful for the relationships that I have built with both of these groups. There are quite a few *Easterseals staff who have been around for 30 plus years*, several even longer than me. I saw a group home direct care staff member a few weeks ago and we were instantly reminiscing and laughing about experiences from the 90s.

The strength of our organization is dependent on staff (past and present), donors, board members and other volunteers, collaborative partners, and most of all, the people we serve. If you are reading this newsletter, you probably fall into one of those categories and *I am thankful for each of you.*

Kelly



**The Easterseals Rehabilitation Center's 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.**



## 46th annual Easterseals Telethon on ABC25/CW7 shares the mission, raises funds, highlights a year of generous support.

Thanks to **ABC25/CW7**, the 2023 *Easterseals Telethon* reached viewers across the Tri-State on Friday, April 14. It was the 46th consecutive year the stations donated 100% of production and air time for the show, allowing all proceeds to fund inclusive early education and essential therapy services. The “final tote” of \$936,339 reflected a full year of generous community support!

The Telethon aired live from the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center and included reports on newscasts throughout the day. Hosts were **Eyewitness News** team members Brad Byrd, Shelley Kirk, Brandon Bartlett, Wayne Hart, Gretchen Ross, Joe Bird, Ron Rhodes, and Stacey May.

**Townsquare Media** radio stations 99.5 WKDQ, My 105.3 WJLT, KISS 106, WBKR, and 103GBF also provided extensive live coverage, significantly increasing the impact of *Telethon Friday*.

**Viewers met Child Ambassador Waylon Jackson and Adult Ambassador Michelle Schmitt**, whose stories were told through compelling videos donated by **Direction by Newman, ABC25 and CW7**. Volunteers answered phones, groups “competed” in the Dialin’ & Duelin’ call center, corporations and event sponsors presented checks, and Pacesetters reported on donations raised before the show.

Donors gave in person at the Kaiser Aluminum “fishbowl” and E’ville Iron hosted their annual cruise-in of street rods. Top Telethon supporters received Mayor’s Awards, and Mayor Lloyd Winnecke proclaimed Easterseals Day in Evansville.

We thank everyone who was a part of *Easterseals Telethon Friday*! **Event photos are available for free viewing and downloading, thanks to Roebling Photographics**, at [www.myphotographyevent.com/Events/Easterseals/Easterseals-Telethon-2023](http://www.myphotographyevent.com/Events/Easterseals/Easterseals-Telethon-2023). ●

*Some highlights from the Easterseals Telethon held Friday, April 14 (top to bottom):*

*Shelley Kirk interviews 2023 Child Ambassador Waylon Jackson, his parents Jeff and Amanda, and his sister Aubrey.*

*Brandon Bartlett gets an update from the Joyner family: Libby, Charlie (2022 Child Ambassador), Randy, and Trey.*

*Brad Byrd and 2023 Adult Ambassador Michelle Schmitt talk about the impact of Easterseals.*

*Wayne Hart welcomes former Adult Ambassador and dedicated PaceSetter volunteer Maurice Berendes.*

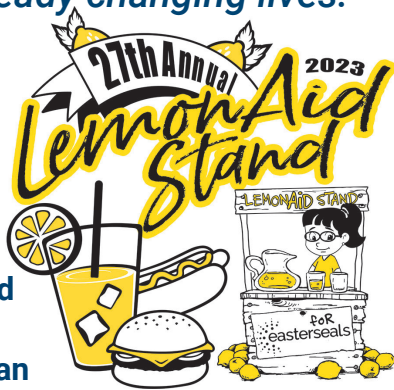
*All photos courtesy of Roebling Photographics.*



## LemonAid Stand's 27-year total exceeds \$100,000!

*Funds raised at the June 1st event are already changing lives!*

Thanks Abby, Amy, Mark, PJ, and Noah Wells and friends for an amazing 27th annual LemonAid Stand for Easterseals, raising more than \$6,000 this year!



## Holiday World welcomes over 3,000 guests to Play Day and generously donates proceeds.

Thank you, Holiday World, for welcoming more than 3,000 children with disabilities, their teachers and assistants, to the 31st annual "Play Day!" on May 17. The park generously donated the day's admission fees of \$33,500 to Easterseals!

Play Day is a highlight of the year for many area kids with disabilities. School groups receive discounted tickets, Holiday World team members give extra attention, and children enjoy the park at their own pace.

Since 1993, Holiday World has hosted an estimated 72,600 Play Day guests and donated a cumulative total of approximately \$612,000 to the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center! ●

## Mark your calendar for coming events!

*Find more details at [www.EastersealsRehabCenter.com](http://www.EastersealsRehabCenter.com), have fun, and make a difference!*

**FRI.-SUN., AUG. 25-27: E'VILLE IRON STREET ROD CLUB "FROG FOLLIES."** Vanderburgh Co. 4-H Center. Fri.-Sat. 8am.-4:30pm, Sun. 8am-2pm. \$5 per person (kids under 12 free). Thousands of pre-1948 street rods, a craft show, swap meet and concession stands. E'ville Iron generously donates a portion of Frog Follies admission proceeds to Easterseals! Also enter the half-pot raffle at the Easterseals tent for just \$5 per chance! **Volunteer with Easterseals at the half-pot tent!** Contact Sara McKeehan, 812-437-2609 or [smckeehan@evansvillerehab.com](mailto:smckeehan@evansvillerehab.com).



**THUR., AUG. 31: EASTERSEALS GOLFING FORE KIDS!** Join us for this fun scramble at Cambridge Golf Course. DOUBLE SHOTGUN! 8AM OR 1PM! Reserve NOW while sponsorships, teams & individual spots are still available. Contact Sara McKeehan, 812-437-2609 or [smckeehan@evansvillerehab.com](mailto:smckeehan@evansvillerehab.com).



## THANKSGIVING THROUGH NEW YEAR'S DAY: 30TH ANNUAL RITZY'S FANTASY OF LIGHTS, 5-9PM NIGHTLY, GARVIN PARK!

Celebrate three decades of this dazzling drive-through display! Exciting new exhibits and special promotions are planned. Watch for announcements and details at [www.RitzysFantasyOfLights.com](http://www.RitzysFantasyOfLights.com).

**WED., DEC. 6, 5-9PM: BRIGHT LIGHTS FOR EASTERSEALS 5K RUN/1-MILE WALK:** Enjoy Ritzy's Fantasy of Lights in a special way! On this night only,

the "magical mile of holiday lights" is closed to vehicles and open for a festive run/walk experience. Find details and register at [www.runsignup.com/brightlights](http://www.runsignup.com/brightlights).



## Congratulations to Mayor Winnecke, 2023 Tribute honoree!

Congratulations to Lloyd Winnecke, Mayor of the City of Evansville, for receiving the Community Impact Award at Easterseals Tribute on June 14!

The Mayor has been an unwavering supporter of Easterseals for decades, first as a news professional at ABC25/CW7 and then as a business leader, when he served on the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center board of directors. As Mayor, Lloyd has advocated for the Easterseals mission and programs, emceed and supported numerous Easterseals events, and represented the city on the Easterseals Telethon each year.

Throughout his time in office, Lloyd has encouraged government, businesses, and nonprofits to work together to improve Evansville's accessibility and to empower individuals of all abilities to thrive in our community.

One of the Mayor's ongoing priorities is improving access to quality mental health services for local children and families. Lloyd's advocacy is helping organizations—including Easterseals—grow, innovate, and collaborate to meet those essential needs. The positive impact is already being felt in our city today, and in the future, the entire region's mental health landscape will be changed for the better.

Thank you, Mayor Winnecke, for your personal commitment to the principle that "e is for everyone." Your leadership will continue to make a difference for years to come! ●



Mayor Lloyd Winnecke




- **CALL 812.437.2600, M-F, 8am-5pm** to pay with debit or checking information.
- **MAIL check** with completed form.
- **IN PERSON** at Easterseals Rehab Center using cash, check or debit card.

**ENTRY DEADLINE JULY 19, 2023\***  
**DRAWING July 21, 2023\***  
 NO credit cards accepted.



## Win a 2023 Nissan Versa S CVT or \$20,000!

2nd prize \$5,000 • 3rd prize \$1,000

## WildWheels Offer ends July 14!

**Enter by JULY 14 for a chance to WIN 7 EXTRA TICKETS!**

\$50 per ticket or 3 for \$100! Only 3,000 tickets available. Proceeds fund early education and therapy at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center.

INDIANA LICENSE #002228

\*Deadline and drawing MAY be extended if tickets still available. For a full list of rules, visit [eastersealsrehabcenter.com](http://eastersealsrehabcenter.com)

**TO ENTER BY MAIL:** Send completed form with check, money order, or debit card info to Easterseals, 3701 Bellemeade Ave., Evansville, IN 47714 BY **JULY 14** & **YOU COULD WIN 7 EXTRA TICKETS!** Must be at least 18 and U.S. resident.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Debit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

How many tickets? (\$50 each or 3 for \$100) \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS23



Easterseals Rehabilitation Center  
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Evansville, Indiana 47714-0136  
P 812.479.1411 • F 812.437.2634  
eastersealsrehabcenter.com

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Win a 2023 Nissan Versa S CVT  
or \$20,000!

2nd Prize \$5,000 • 3rd Prize \$1,000

Enter by 5pm July 19! Details & order form inside!

**812.437.2600**

**WildWheels Offer!**

Enter by July 14 for a chance to win 7 extra tickets!



IN Raffle #002228

- *Together is better! Meet Gavin & friends from the*
- *Easterseals Early Learning Center. See page 1.*

