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## Pawsitive Self-Care

For more than 100 years, dogs have played a powerful role in the disability community as guide dogs for the blind. In the 1970's, dogs began to officially aid people with other disabilities. Over the years, our affiliate has had the opportunity to experience the power of therapy dogs with special visits to our classrooms. It is always a big hit with both students and staff.

It was very exciting when an Easterseals therapist created a program designed around the support of a therapy dog. This fall, at the Early Intervention Center, Occupational Therapist Molly Noon developed the program Pawsitive Self-Care. The program is part of a capstone for her Occupational Therapy Doctorate. For children with autism, simple hygiene can be a challenge. It requires motor planning, can be difficult with sensory issues and may have been introduced in a way that was too challenging. With the help of a three-year-old Cocker Spaniel named Pandora, Molly demonstrates self-care to students with autism. The program focuses on brushing teeth, washing hands, buttons and zippers.



Molly works with a student and Pandora.

Research has shown that it is easier for kids with autism to connect with dogs. One of the reasons for that connection is that the social cues from a dog are much less nuanced. Additionally, dogs actually reduce stress. The program is play-based which further engages the kids.

*Continued inside*

### Easterseals Locations

#### Philadelphia Division & Headquarters

**Yaffe Center**  
3975 Conshohocken Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19131  
215.879.1000 - 215.879.8424 FAX

#### Early Intervention Center

2276 Georges Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19131  
215.879.5010 - 215.879.5051 FAX

#### Bucks County Division

**Brooks Center**  
2901 Edgely Road  
Levittown, PA 19057  
215.945.7200 - 215.945.4073 FAX

#### Delaware & Chester Counties

**Old Forge School**  
468 N. Middletown Road  
Media, PA 19063  
610.565.2353 - 610.565.5256 FAX

#### Montgomery County Division

**Gresh Center**  
1161 Forty Foot Road  
P.O. Box 333  
Kulpsville, PA 19443  
215.368.7000 - 215.368.1199 FAX

### Board of Directors

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Visit us on-line at [www.Easterseals-SEPA.org](http://www.Easterseals-SEPA.org)



### From the CEO...



The new year brings a lot of excitement to Easterseals. We are busy renovating the classrooms at the Yaffe Center in Philadelphia as well as a new center on Allegheny Avenue. Despite the challenges that come with such an undertaking, the team has met it with continued dexterity and creativity in providing exceptional programming. We are excited to see the projects complete, including the sensory rooms made possible through our Uncorked and Crafted event featured in the newsletter.

With appreciation,  
Carl



## Pawsitive Self-Care

Every Thursday, Pandora visits the Bear Cubs classroom and everyone gets to work. She wears a vest that has a pocket to hold her treats. Opening the zipper to get the treats is a great way to work on fine motor skills. The kids also help wash her paws, using things like shaving cream or colored soap to create a clear visual. Watching Pandora get her teeth brushed also helps the kids understand it's OK to put a toothbrush in their mouth. Since the program began, the students have really become engaged in the activities and are developing their skills. We are excited to have Pandora return to the classroom in January.



Pandora the therapy dog, who is brought by the owner of Suds and Swagger, visits with the students.

## Corporate News



A big thank-you to all who voted for Easterseals in McHales Cares' November Charity Poll. Thanks to your votes, **McHales Cares** awarded Easterseals \$1,000 to support our programs in Bucks County.

**Independence Blue Cross** recently made a \$1,000 Giving Tuesday gift to Easterseals in honor of the ABLE Associate Resource Group to support Easterseals mission.



**Zenith Energy** sponsored an Easterseals family, providing them with the holiday gifts and lots of cheer.



## Leave Your Legacy Today

Support Easterseals through a Donor Advised Fund, Life Insurance or in your Will.

Your support has helped us get to where we are today. Legacy society gifts ensure that Easterseals' services will be here for those we support for generations to come.

Contact Liz Meckes to learn more 484.234.8007 or lmeckes@easterseals-sepa.org

**UNCORKED & crafted** Easterseals of Southeastern Pennsylvania hosted Uncorked and Crafted for the first time on November 5, 2022 at the Saturday Club in Wayne.

The event raised \$8,500 with the help of corporate partners, major gift donors, board members and local philanthropists. With the funds raised, Easterseals will create new sensory experiences in Philadelphia as we undergo two building renovations. Sensory play has powerful impact in a child's development and is an important resource for our teachers and therapists in helping students to learn, grow and increase independence.

Special thanks to our sponsors at Graham Company, IT Data, Kreischer Miller, Zarwin Baum, Unum, Nationwide and to our event partners Brody's Craft Cocktails, Tito's Vodka, SweetLex, Robert Ryan Catering, Yards and Victory Brewing.



## Grant News

**The Detwiler Family Foundation** is funding a new burglar alarm and security camera system at the Gresh Center in Montgomery County. We are grateful for their support in making our building a safe place to learn, grow, and play!



**The Lenfest Institute**, as part of their "Every Voice, Every Vote" initiative, is supporting Easterseals with a grant to amplify disability voices in the 2023 Philadelphia Mayoral Election. This project will ensure that people with

disabilities are recognized as a major voting block and highlight issues and voting resources that are important to disability communities.