

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Spring 2024

Where there's a will, there's a way...

Meet Child Ambassador Eleanor Daywalt!

In 2016 Adam and Elizabeth Daywalt were happily expecting their second child when an ultrasound revealed something unexpected. The baby's spinal cord hadn't developed properly. Their daughter Eleanor would be born with spina bifida. The expectant parents couldn't know how the condition would affect their child, but they knew one thing: "Adam and I made a pact that there would be no limits for our Eleanor," Elizabeth said. "If there was a will, then there would be a way." Soon after Eleanor was born, Easterseals became part of the family's 'no limits' journey.

An Easterseals therapist became a regular visitor to the Daywalt home, helping Eleanor reach developmental goals to crawl, stand, and take her first steps. At age 3, Eleanor started receiving her therapy at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. There's been no stopping her progress.

Now 7 years old, Eleanor loves the weekly sessions with her physical therapist Patty Balbach, who makes the hard work fun. "My favorite things are trampoline and kick the ball," Eleanor said. "And playing with Patty! She helps me with my legs but she plays with me while she does it. She's a helper!"

"Easterseals has been a great place to meet all of Eleanor's needs," Elizabeth said. "One of the most valuable tools Easterseals has been able to provide for our family is to support us in our 'no limits dream' for our Eleanor."

With the community's support, Easterseals empowers Eleanor and thousands of other Tri-State children and adults to achieve their own unique goals and dreams. "We find ourselves running Eleanor to all kinds of activities including tennis, therapeutic horseback riding, cheer and dance clinics, and swimming," Elizabeth said. "Not only is Eleanor gaining the stamina to do these activities in therapy, she is also gaining confidence to participate in these activities with joy." ●



Watch Eleanor on the Easterseals Telethon Fri., April 12, on ABC25/CW7!

SAVE THE DATE! THURSDAY, AUGUST 29!



EASTERSEALS GOLFING FORE KIDS AT CAMBRIDGE GOLF COURSE! Double shotgun! 8am OR 1pm! Reserve NOW! Sponsorships, teams & individual spots are available. Contact Sara McKeegan, 812-437-2609 or smckeegan@evansvillerehab.com

812.479.1411
eastersealsrehabcenter.com



Celebrating milestones and new beginnings.

As we closed out 2023, we celebrated two important milestones. Both have been instrumental in allowing Easterseals to provide access to critical therapy services for people with any insurance type and any income level.

Ritzzy's Fantasy of Lights was held for the 30th consecutive year. This event was the vision of Andy Guagenti and Dan Grunow, owners of GD Ritzzy's. Andy had seen a similar event in another city and brought the idea to Easterseals. He then worked with us on its implementation and **GD Ritzzy's** has been the title sponsor all 30 years. Dan (a former Easterseals board member) and his son, Chad Grunow (a current board member) are committed to carrying on the tradition. In addition to its sponsorship, each year GD Ritzzy's donates hundreds of meals for dedicated volunteers from **IBEW Local 16, NECA, Electrical JATC, Teamsters Local 215, IUPAT DC9, IUOE Local 181,** and others. In 2023 alone, 350 meals were provided during the multiple days setting up and taking down displays in Garvin Park!

The event has grown from raising \$109,000 with 26 displays in 1994 to raising over \$180,000 in 2023! Amazingly the holiday tradition was still expanding in its 30th year, as we added 18 new displays, bringing the total to a record 82! That included 7 displays replacing older ones due to wear and tear. One of those was GD Ritzzy's own display, which is now appropriately a Santa Claus scooping ice cream! Also new were 5 smaller displays near the show's exit, many chosen in memory of an individual. They were a great addition, brightening up what had been an empty area. In total, Ritzzy's Fantasy of Lights has enabled Easterseals to raise more than \$4.5 million over the course of 30 years!

The second milestone was the 20th anniversary of employment for Laura Terhune, Vice President of Philanthropic Partnerships. Laura began her career with Easterseals in January 2004 coordinating all event fundraising. As you probably know, this is a Herculean task since we have many fundraisers throughout the year. Laura's passion and commitment to the mission of Easterseals and to those we serve is obvious to anyone she meets, resulting in year after year of successful fundraising. In 2015 she moved into the Vice President of Development position. A few years ago, as she eased toward retirement, Laura orchestrated the transition of her role to others. In 2021, she turned over the reins of leading the fundraising department to Todd Rowe, Vice President of Development, while she focused on the *Ensuring the Future of Access to Psychology Services* campaign, with tremendous outcomes. (More to come on that topic soon!) Last month, Laura took another big step toward retirement and is now working limited part-time hours with the main goal of wrapping up the campaign. We are so appreciative of the work Laura has done here at Easterseals and I am personally proud to call her a friend. If you see her, please congratulate her on her "almost" complete retirement.

I mentioned **Todd Rowe**, who joined the Easterseals team in 2021 to oversee fundraising and communications. Todd worked for many years as the Creative Services Director at ABC25/CW7 and brings a unique set of skills in management as well as marketing and communications. Ironically, in his role at ABC25/CW7, Todd was the lead staff for production of the annual Easterseals Telethon and has worked with us on the last 18 (15 with the station and 3 with Easterseals). In addition to leading the fundraising department, Todd has been instrumental in making advancements in marketing and communication of our services and events.

As Laura reduced her hours we found ourselves with another gap – developing and further stewarding major gift donors. To fill that gap, we have hired **Rob Henson** as Vice President of Major Gifts. Rob most recently held the position of Director of the Ascension Saint Vincent Hospital Foundation. Prior to that, he was Vice President of Old National Wealth Management, where he served a consulting role with Easterseals as we developed a plan for the *Ensuring the Future of Access to Psychology Services* campaign. Rob is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and has extensive experience in fundraising and strategic planning.

We are very fortunate to have both Todd and Rob on the Easterseals team as they bring great energy and leadership that will allow us to further build on the work that Laura did for 20 years. Although we miss having Laura in the office every day, we are really excited to launch this new chapter for Easterseals. ●



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.

Meet Adult Ambassador Sage Hawkins.

Sage embarks on a new adventure!

Sage Hawkins doesn't shy away from a challenge. She constantly sets new goals for herself, and you can bet she'll find a way to achieve them, through hard work, persistence, a positive outlook – and a hand from Easterseals.

Sage has cerebral palsy and Easterseals has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. As a child, she wanted to join in all the activities her friends enjoyed. In high school, she was determined to be independent in the classroom and around the community. Easterseals was there every step of the way. A wide range of therapies and other services empowered Sage to reach her goals. It was just the beginning!

Sage's next big challenge was attending IVY Tech Community College. Her custom wheelchair and computer adaptations from Easterseals helped to make it possible. Sage successfully earned associate degrees in social work and psychology while achieving another big dream – living in her own apartment.

Sage recently embarked on another adventure. She started classes at USI with the goal of earning her bachelor's degree (and maybe even a master's) in social work! She hopes to eventually become a social worker in a health care setting, possibly with a focus on helping individuals with disabilities.

Sage faces new challenges at USI, a much larger campus than she's used to. But she is ready to take it on! Easterseals is here to empower Sage with what she needs to succeed.

In therapy, she's increasing her strength and stamina for navigating the campus, and improving her grip for picking up items and utilizing her devices. Easterseals experts fine-tune Sage's custom power wheelchair, provide adapted equipment to enhance her independence at meal time and study time. and offer creative solutions to daily challenges. Easterseals even created a one-of-a-kind 3D-printed cup holder for Sage to accommodate her morning coffee! ●



Easterseals presents Speech-Language Pathology Scholarship Awards.

The Easterseals Rehabilitation Center recently presented our first annual Speech-Language Pathology Scholarship Awards to seven graduate students from ASHA-accredited SLP programs. Congratulations to these future SLPs!

Above right (L. to R.): VP of Clinical Services Lisa Fisher, Raelyn Brosmer (BSU), President/CEO Kelly Schneider, Allison Deeg (IU), Speech-Language Pathologist Susan Turley, and Director of Speech & Audiology Christi Watkins.

Below right: Kelly Schneider, Riley Sanders (SIU), Hailee Holberton (IU), Christi Watkins, and Lisa Fisher.

Award recipients not pictured: Bailey Barron (IU), Elise Woods (BSU), and Bella Zoglio (BSU).

We hope the award spreads the word about ESRC's speech services and encourages future SLPs to join our team! Follow us on social media to learn when the 2024 application opens! To learn about SLP staff positions, email info@evansvillerehab.com. ●



VRA system helps to accurately test children's hearing.

The Easterseals Rehabilitation Center is our community's primary resource for specialized hearing testing for infants and children. When assessing a young child's hearing, Easterseals audiologists use a special technique called Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA). The child quickly learns to look toward a mechanical animated toy when they hear a sound; their reaction is reinforced by the toy lighting up, moving, and playing music. For the child, it's a fun interaction. For the audiologist, it's crucial for accurately measuring the child's hearing ability. Easterseals' 25-year-old mechanical toy VRA system recently stopped working, which could have impacted testing for up to 20 children each week! We are grateful that the **Sean Roy Hilt Foundation** generously funded a new system! Many thanks to these exceptional friends of Easterseals! ●



During a hearing assessment, 11-month-old Lucas Matsel had fun while sitting on his mom's lap and listening for different frequencies and volumes. Lucas quickly learned to look for an animated toy to light up, move, and play music each time he heard a sound. His reaction allowed audiologists Jayne Fields (L.) and Christine Bruce (R.) to accurately measure Lucas's hearing. Lucas passed his evaluation with flying colors!

Register your child, sponsor a camper, or volunteer for "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 3-7**.

Each "camper" attends "bike camp" for 75 minutes daily. They progress through a series of adapted bikes while receiving individual assistance. Most participants are successfully riding a 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 19th 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 5!** 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 June 3-7, 8am-12:30pm &/or 1-4:30pm.

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



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, students hop to collect pledges for Easterseals. HOP-N-ING is fun, flexible, and FREE for teachers! For details call Easterseals at 812-474-2348 or email mirish@evansvillerehab.com. ●

Easterseals honors state leaders.

Four leaders were recently honored by Easterseals for their support and advocacy on behalf of Indiana residents with disabilities. Easterseals Rehabilitation Center President/CEO Kelly Schneider joined Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana and Easterseals Crossroads to present the Excellence in State Leadership award to Sen. Ryan Mishler, R-Mishawaka and to celebrate three individuals as Outstanding Advocates for People with Disabilities: Rep. Robb Greene, R-Shelbyville; State Rep. Victoria Garcia Wilburn, D-Fishers; and Cathy Robinson, Deputy Director of Indiana's Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services. The awards were presented at Easterseals' third annual Legislator Appreciation Reception in Indianapolis on Jan. 30. The event was also attended by state senators and representatives, legislative aides, and guests from The Arc of Indiana and INARF. ●

Pictured at the Indiana Statehouse are (l. to r.) Kelly Schneider, Easterseals Rehabilitation Center President/CEO; Rep. Ryan Mishler, R-Mishawaka; David Dreith, Easterseals Crossroads CEO; and Jason Meyer, Easterseals ARC of Northeast Indiana Chief Government Affairs Officer.



SAVE THE DATE! THUR., MAY 30, 11AM-1PM

Join Abby Wells and her family at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center on May 30 for goodies like burgers, BBQ, hot dogs, ice cream, baked goods, lemonade and lemonade slushies! There's even a silent auction. The Wells family donates all proceeds to Easterseals!



Five CASH prizes!
812-437-2600

\$25,000 • \$15,000 • \$5,000 • \$1,000 • \$1,000



Entry deadline Mar. 13, 2024 • Drawing Mar. 15, 2024

Rules at EastersealsRehabCenter.com or 812.437.2600
Max. 5,000 tickets available. IN License #002228



2024 Easterseals All Ca\$h Raffle Order Form

Call 812-437-2600 to purchase by phone or complete this form and mail.

Must be received by entry deadline - March 13, 2024.

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 _____ Signature _____ NEWS24

Mail to the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center, 3701 Bellemeade Ave., Evansville, IN 47714 | 812.437.2600



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easterseals Rehabilitation Center | Telethon Friday! April 12, 2024

For the 47th consecutive year, ABC25/CW7 will present the local Easterseals Telethon! **THE BROADCAST WILL AIR LIVE ON FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 5AM-7PM.** Tune in as Eyewitness News anchors host ***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 Easterseals Ambassadors Eleanor Daywalt (above) and Sage Hawkins (right).

ALL donations stay LOCAL!

Special coverage on Eyewitness News throughout the day!

Sponsors match ALL pledges made during the show!