Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana has partnered with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield to provide support to area Anthem members with autism spectrum disorder and their families.

The Autism Family Supports Program serves Anthem members enrolled in Hoosier Healthwise, Healthy Indiana, and Hoosier Care Connect plans. The program is designed to provide enhanced care coordination for children and school-age youths with autism. The program already has 17 families enrolled, with many more expected as more Anthem members learn about it.

Eligible Anthem members will be referred to an Easterseals Arc care coordinator who will:

- Connect the family to autism resources, care and support
- Work with the care team
- Develop a plan to share and communicate the family’s needs with the care team including schools
- Help the individual and family understand medications
- Identify additional helpful services and supports

“Families really need help navigating the services that the community has to offer,” explained Michelle Meinika, director of behavior solutions and Autism Family Supports at Easterseals Arc.

One of the most well-received connections is Easterseals Arc’s Parents Taking Action (PTA) program, a peer mentorship program for families that have a child with autism or another developmental disability. Talking with another parent who has been through similar situations provides reassurance that the family is not alone.

“One of the first families who came to this program felt completely lost and had no idea what the autism diagnosis meant for their family and the future of their child,” Meinika said. “We were able to connect them to several community resources and the PTA group. This family is now utilizing community supports and feels much better about what the future holds for their child.”

The care coordinator works with the child’s entire care team including school systems. Program staff worked with an area school system to help a family enroll an 8-year-old with autism in school for the first time.

“With the supports of the program, the community services, and the school, the child is excelling in school for the first time,” Meinika said.

The program is also available in central Indiana through Easterseals Crossroads.
Collaborations Help Us Create Opportunities

Fall has arrived! We had a busy and fun summer. I hope you enjoy reading and seeing some of our summer highlights! Our Dream Teens and Mini Dreamers had a great time with us throughout the summer.

With everyone returning to school we are excited that our Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) will be at Homestead High School this year. The Pre-ETS program is one of many examples of how we pave the way to a fuller life and more inclusive world. We also are providing skills training through our Journey to Independence program, such as the financial class featured on Page 8. We empower those we serve to reach for and realize their full potential.

We are appreciative of the businesses and other community partners that collaborate with us at Easterseals Arc to achieve extraordinary results. This can be businesses providing hands-on mentorships, training and jobs for people with disabilities. It can be Wayne and Homestead high schools working with us to better prepare young adults with disabilities for their future. It can be Ivy Tech Community College working with us to develop new classes and opportunities such as the upcoming greenhouse project. It can be volunteers helping us with projects and events. It can be donors that provide support to ensure we are able to provide so many opportunities that are not covered by government funding.

We’re stronger together, and I want to thank you for doing your part and encourage you to tell others about the impact you help us make!

Two VPs Increase Focus on Services

There’s an old adage that says “two heads are better than one.” In the case of Easterseals Arc, the new philosophy is “two vice presidents are better than one.”

The agency updated its organizational structure in July to create two executive positions overseeing programs and services, rather than just one. The strategic move will help provide resources to grow our employment and community-based services, integrate health outcomes with our services, and ensure that Easterseals Arc will continue as the leader in quality and innovation.

- Danielle Tips is now president of health and residential supports. She will oversee:
  - Behavior solutions

- Thomas Summerville is now vice president of employment and community supports. He will oversee:
  - Transitions
  - Adult Day Center
  - Employment services
  - Community integration

Tips and Summerville will work closely together to ensure that Easterseals Arc consumers have the supports they need to excel as they live, learn, work, and play in the community.
Meal Deliveries Build Community Connections

When Barb Woods, assistant director of Projects Drive Group, heard the local Meals on Wheels was in need of need drivers and deliverers, she immediately thought it would be a great opportunity for Easterseals Arc participants. Woods presented the opportunity to a group at PDG, and two individuals, Glen and Reggie, showed interest. Woods turned everything over to Direct Support Professional Tammie Manning to handle, and Manning took it from there. She contacted Meals on Wheels and began the process, from having Glen and Reggie fill out applications, to taking a one day training, to choosing a specific route, and much more.

Every Monday morning, Manning takes Glen and Reggie from PDG to the Meals on Wheels food distribution center where they load the lunches and begin their deliveries to seniors on their route. They are starting with a small route so that Glen and Reggie can get to know the senior citizens and build relationships before moving on to a larger route. If all goes well, there could be more routes for more Easterseals Arc participants, building more connections of people helping people and showing that we are stronger together.

Ivy Tech Foundation Honors Elbrecht

Each year, the Ivy Tech Foundation honors individuals who change the lives of students and their communities. Easterseals Arc CEO/President Donna Elbrecht was recently honored as the Benefactor of the Year for Ivy Tech’s northeast region.

Elbrecht has been very involved with Ivy Tech Community College Northeast for several years and has helped the college and the Ivy Tech Foundation build connections with other community members and organizations.

Easterseals Arc and Ivy Tech have collaborated on several programs including reading classes for Easterseals Arc consumers, safe food-handling classes in the Employment Readiness Academy, and pre-employment transition services for high school students with disabilities.

Most recently, Elbrecht helped connect the Foundation with donors to support construction of a greenhouse on the Ivy Tech campus. The donation also provided scholarships for Easterseals Arc consumers to enroll in agriculture and culinary training programs.
Wish List Provides Donation Ideas

Many people really enjoy the intangible rewards of giving. Giving to charity is a way many satisfy their deeply held need to find meaning in life.

Like most non-profit organizations, Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana has several ways you can donate. Monetary donations, of course, come to mind first and include cash, checks, recurring credit card donations, gifts through investments, and bequests in a will. Some individuals prefer to give their time, and we have a great volunteer program that welcomes volunteers ranging from one day projects to recurring schedules.

Our wish list offers yet another way to give. As the name suggests, our wish list contains items that our staff and consumers wish for but can’t fit into their budgets. Giving items from the list below is an easy way for donors to make a quick, direct impact. If you would like to provide something from the wish list, please contact me directly at 260.456.4534 ext 267.

All contributions make such a positive impact on a daily basis to those who use services provided by Easterseals Arc. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our future.

Wish List
- Bingo set
- Coat rack with nine wall hooks
- Nutri Ninja 2-in-1 blender/food processor
- Night stands
- Alarm clocks
- Wii U games
- Wii U controller
- 4-in-1 games
- Kickball
- Hillbilly (ladder) golf set
- 50" TV
- DVDs (PG movies)
- Tricycle bikes, adult size
- Seating, such as bean bags or saucer chairs
- Puzzles, 100 to 300 pieces
- Simple adult board games and card games (for example, Monopoly, Skip-Bo, Uno)
- Microwave
- Hot plate
- Mini fridge
- Tickets to any event or attraction (TinCaps, Komets, Mad Ants, IPFW sports events, Paige’s Crossing, Putt Putt, Laser Tag, Botanical Conservatory, Science Central, Indiana state parks, area zoos, Shedd Aquarium, Art Institute of Chicago, etc.)

Visit www.bidpal.net/vino for tickets.

Presented by:

PARKVIEW HEALTH
Sweetwater Music Instruments & Pro Audio
Carnival is All About Smiles

The Adult Day Center’s annual summer carnival featured indoor and outdoor fun for consumers, staff, and families.

Left: The dunk tank is always a carnival favorite, especially when it’s Ryan Keefe getting soaked.

Destinee and the rest of the Transitions choir provided some of the carnival entertainment.

Kelly and Kathy know sno cones are the best treat for a hot day.

Volunteers from Target helped the event go smoothly by helping out with cotton candy, the bounce house, and more.

Rachel enjoyed having her face painted.

Angela and Tremont had smiles for everyone.
Group Home Residents Explore Fun and Sun

Group home residents have been taking advantage of the fair weather months to get out and about. The department aims to have each resident go on at least one outing outside of Allen County this year. Activities such as festivals, theme parks, dinner theater, sports events, and concerts have taken them to destinations such as Indianapolis, Cleveland, and Chicago.

(Above) Trish and Shelby had a great time on the rides at Indiana Beach this summer.

(Left) Richard, Aaron and AJ included a boat ride in their trip to Chicago.

(Right) Marsha enjoyed the Monarch Butterfly Festival in Marion, Ind.

Did You Know?

Easterseals Arc Offers Payee Service For Residential Clients

Easterseals Arc offers its participants several advantages that you don’t see in a list of programs — “extra” services that round out our efforts to support individuals as they live, learn, work, and play. One of these services is acting as an organizational representative payee.

Similar to an individual representative payee, which is usually a close friend or family member, an organizational payee is responsible for managing the day-to-day finances of beneficiaries and provides assistance to improve overall living arrangements. Easterseals Arc offers representative payee services for those individuals to whom Easterseals also provides residential services.

As representative payee, Easterseals Arc is responsible for:

- Managing monthly bills and other financial responsibilities successfully
- Tracking and recording all expenditures and providing timely and accurate monthly financial statements
- Establishing interest-bearing accounts on behalf of participating beneficiaries and making funds available for future needs
- Managing all reporting requirements as required by the benefits program

For more information, contact Brittany Prickett at 260.456.4534 ext. 233 or bprickett@esarc.org.
Upcoming Events: October Through January

OCTOBER
10/4 & 18  Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
10/9  Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
10/19  Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive
10/20  A Hope & Healing Workshop, 6:30-9 p.m., Easterseals Arc, 4919 Coldwater Road
10/21  A Hope & Healing Workshop, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Easterseals Arc 4919 Coldwater Road
10/21  Sibshops, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for grade school (ages 7-12); noon-3 p.m. junior high/middle school; 2-4 p.m. high school at Mad Anthony’s Children’s Hope House on Lutheran Hospital Campus

NOVEMBER
11/1 & 15  Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
11/2  Vino, Java & Jazz, 5:30 p.m., Mirro Center, visit www.bidpal.net/vino for information and tickets
11/7  Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., Ivy Tech Community College, 3800 N. Anthony Blvd.
11/13  Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
11/16  Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive

How to Financially Provide for Your Loved Ones in the Future
An Arc Trust representative from The Arc of Indiana will discuss special needs trusts and ABLE Accounts. Contact Ashley Gettys at 260.456.4534 ext. 279 to register by Oct. 20.
10/24  Providing for the Future, 6 p.m., Easterseals Arc, 4919 Coldwater Road

10/25  Adult Sib Series: The Waiver ... What is That?, 6:30 p.m., Easterseals Arc, 4919 Coldwater Road

DECEMBER
12/5  Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., Ivy Tech Community College, 3800 N. Anthony Blvd.
12/6 & 20  Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
12/11  Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
12/21  Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive

Holiday
12/22 & 25  Christmas Holiday, Easterseals Arc offices and day programs closed

JANUARY

Holiday
1/1  New Year's holiday, Easterseals Arc offices and day programs closed

1/2  Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., Ivy Tech Community College, 3800 N. Anthony Blvd.
1/3 & 17  Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
1/8  Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
1/18  Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive
Life Skills Classes Start with Money Management

Earlier this year, Easterseals Arc restructured some programs to create the Community Living and Family Supports department. One new offering within that department is the Journey to Independence program, which includes life skills classes.

Danielle Jones has taken the lead on developing those classes, and she chose to start with a class on money management because several clients were interested in the topic and have goals related to it. The program is off to a strong start. “Many of the participants have exceeded my expectations,” Jones said.

Several participants really enjoyed the class but maybe none more than Robert. He signed up for the class because he wants to be able to handle his own money, and he really enjoys math.

“I think this class could one day allow me to handle more responsibilities at work,” Robert said. He has worked at Lee’s Famous Recipe for 24 years, preparing meals and washing dishes.

Jones is keeping the class size small, about five students per class, in order to focus on the clients’ needs. The goal is to offer classes on any topic that would help individuals live more independently. The next classes will be on kitchen safety, Jones said, and will cover items in the kitchen, cooking, and health and hygiene.

Robert said he wants to sign up for the cooking class, so he can learn to cook new meals at home.

In the future, Jones would like to have classes that include community safety and transportation; job skills; parenting and relationship skills; social skills; sewing; and typing and computer safety.