

Mutton Gets a Boost for Busy Season

Early in the summer, Mutton Party and Tent Rental hired three consumers from Easterseals Arc.

Tony, Stephen and Drake each worked three six-hour shifts a week. Sometimes it was physically demanding work. They might transfer loads weighing several hundred pounds on rolling pallets, or unroll waterlogged drop cloths to dry in the sun in Mutton's parking lot, or wash more than a thousand folding chairs, or fold up heavy tarps that cover hundreds of square feet.

"It's been pretty good. I've been doing a lot of stuff," Stephen said.

"It's hard work, but it's fairly easy to accomplish," Tony said. "It can be hard on the feet, but it's very peaceful. Everyone here is friendly. It's the kind of work environment I like."

Leah Mutton said Tony and Stephen were hired first. Supervisors at the business were so pleased with their work that they came back to Easterseals Arc, seeking more help. Drake also took to the work well.

"I think it's really fun, and it's a lot of hard work," he said. "I washed a thousand chairs yesterday."

With that, Drake slid off his shoes and climbed through the flap door of an inflatable bounce house. Although the afternoon was heating up quickly, the bounce house's mesh



Drake, an Easterseals Arc consumer, uses a long hose attached to a shop vac to clean a bounce-house that was returned to Mutton Party and Tent Rental.

walls let every breeze flow through, and its roof shaded him as he vacuumed grass clippings tracked in by people using the house on its last rental.

Finding good workers was especially helpful for the company in the summer. Mutton Party and Tent Rental has about 50 employees, and the workload is greatest in the summer. Not only are there more weddings, parties, company picnics and graduation celebrations, but there are large special events, too.

Drake and Stephen helped clean and stow equipment used in

Sweetwater's Gearfest in June. In August, the company supplied many tents used at the Indiana State Fair. There was plenty of work to do, and the crew at Mutton was pleased to have help they found through Easterseals Arc.

"I think they've been good," said warehouse manager Craig Schroeder of the hires from Easterseals Arc.

The trio proved themselves to be great workers and can return to Mutton next spring and summer if they want to.

October Puts Employment Services in Spotlight

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and it's a great time to shine a light on this



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President & CEO

issue. You'll find two success stories in this newsletter – Mutton Party and Tent Rental on Page 1 and AMC Theatres on Page 3. We are fortunate that so many business leaders in our area value diversity and are contacting us to help them fill their many job openings. These leaders have all learned that hiring people with disabilities is good business!

We were excited to work with Indiana Tech and Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership

to host "Hiring Individuals with Disabilities: A Primer and Celebration of Success," which highlighted the

success of local business and shared ideas for developing an inclusive workplace. We are also happy to be collaborating with Lincoln Financial Group and Neurodiversity in the Workplace on a pilot program for hiring individuals with autism.

We are grateful to our business leaders, community, board members, and donors who all help us reach out to employers to help them explore risk-free options for hiring people with disabilities. If you have a business that is interested, please let me know at delbrecht@esarc.org.

We are busy again this school year working with students and FWCS, NACS, SACS and Whitley County Consolidated Schools to provide pre-employment transition services. This is an opportunity to help students identify career and post-secondary education opportunities before they complete school. Today's students are tomorrow's workforce!

Visits Help Community Leaders Understand Issues

Easterseals Arc often welcomes state, city and county officials to tour our facilities; meet our participants; and learn more about who we support, how we do it, and the role of public policy. Visitors this summer included (1) State Sen. Liz Brown; (2) State Rep. Dave Heine; (3) State Sen. Justin Busch; and (4) Fort Wayne City Councilman Geoff Paddock.



Theater Employees Grow with Responsibility

Three employees from Easterseals Arc help the shows go on at Jefferson Pointe.

Sylvia, Victor and Tyler all work at the AMC Classic Jefferson Pointe 18, a complex of 18 movie theaters in one building on the southwest side of Fort Wayne. They've worked there between a year and two years, typically scheduled for eight to 12 hours a week. They're called ushers, but their jobs entail many duties that combine to make the theater a getaway that keeps drawing customers.

Most important, they sweep through each theater after the movie's final credits fade out, cleaning trash and crumbs left behind by moviegoers. Between these cleanups, they also keep the hallways of the building swept and make sure that bathrooms are neat and fully stocked with soap and toilet paper.

As they've grown into their jobs, they've learned to do more and to respond to new situations on the fly.

The theater's general manager, Mike Nason, remembers the time that a customer started bleeding from a cut. Sylvia couldn't find a manager, he recalls, so she grabbed some adhesive bandages and wipes and helped the woman with her cut.

"They've all really grown," Nason said of the three employees.

In Victor's case, he brought incredible meticulousness to his job as a new hire.



Sylvia is an usher at AMC Classic Jefferson Pointe 18.

"Every single seat was cleaned. Every speck of popcorn was picked up," Nason said. It was beautiful to see him strive for that perfection, but Nason said it was too close to perfect for the theater to afford.

Over time, he said, Victor has learned to better balance the demands of servicing 18 theaters with instinct to strive for absolute spotlessness.

Sylvia likes the work. "It's easy," she said, yet there's always something that needs to be done.

"Sometimes we feel rushed, if it's busier," Victor said.

The benefit on those very busy days is that both say they enjoy how quickly time passes when they are busy.

Nason said the national AMC Theatres organization encourages its theaters to seek out qualified job candidates with disabilities through its FOCUS (Furthering Opportunities, Cultivating Untapped Strengths) program. In the Jefferson Pointe theaters he manages, one of the biggest differences is how Nason interviews job candidates from Easterseals Arc, for example.

He meets the candidate himself, instead of letting an assistant manager do the interview. Then Nason leads the prospective worker on a "traveling interview," walking him or her through the theater. He aims to use the interview to give candidates an overview of all the work they might do, "making nachos, tearing tickets, finding your way in the dark theater, seeing where all the lighting is," and so on, he said.

He watches for people who seem comfortable with it and who are confident that they might be good at the work. In return, he has a good shot at finding reliable, dedicated employees who may stick around much longer than their co-workers.

Those advantages are even more evident when so many businesses can't fill open jobs. "I guess I'm feeling it now more because the economy is so good," he said.

And of course, creating a good atmosphere among the workers helps, too. The best thing about working at the AMC theater is its staff, "how polite and respectful people here are," Victor said.

Tours Give Fresh View of Our Purpose

If you noticed the photos of visits from elected officials on Page 2, you may wonder whether we offer



SHERI WARD
Director of
Development

tours to other people we who want to learn more about us. The answer is an enthusiastic “Yes!” Why? You may know what we do, but seeing our mission firsthand and meeting some of the individuals we support can provide a better understanding of how donors like you make a difference.

Easterseals Arc’s purpose is to change the way the world defines and views disability by making profound, positive differences in people’s lives every

day. Taking policymakers, government leaders and citizens of our community who are change-makers on short, intensive tours allows them to meet the people whose lives are being transformed through our programs.

We at Easterseals Arc believe that the best way

to understand the power and potential of your donation is to witness it with your own eyes. With that in mind, our Learning Tours are carefully mapped out to take visitors through our on-site programs while also sharing information about our services in the community, where development programs are empowering individuals to create lasting change.

We believe when you meet the individuals behind the statistics, you will be inspired and motivated to lead change.

Tour by tour, success story by success story, we go beyond statistics to share names and faces of real people whose lives are better because of your continued support. Easterseals Arc knows that when leaders witness what we have to offer, up close and in person, they go home inspired, motivated and challenged to make change happen.

To schedule your own individual or group tour, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 260.456.4534 ext. 267 or sward@esarc.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

Gratitude for Grants

Easterseals Arc is thankful to the following organizations for their generous grant awards:

- The Carson and Rosemary Noecker Family Foundation, \$20,000 for community integration activities
- Indiana Arts Commission, \$4,750 for art activities
- The Lincoln Financial Foundation, \$32,000 for employment services
- The Mary Cross Tippmann Foundation, \$6,250 for operating expenses
- The Waterfield Foundation, \$2,000 for social and recreational activities

Get Your Tickets Now!



We are honored to be the beneficiary again for Old National Bank’s Culinary Queens fundraiser, 6 p.m. Nov. 9 at Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. About 100 fun-loving women will make sample-size portions of their favorite dishes to serve to event guests and compete for donations as tips. Culinary Queens is a casual event, where guests enjoy free food samples and a cash bar followed by an Easterseals Arc choir performance and entertainment by dueling pianos. Visit fortwayne.culinaryqueens.com for tickets and information.

Carnival Provides Summer Highlights

Our annual summer carnival is always one of our consumers' favorite events. The event traditionally includes food, games, a dunk tank, DJ, fire truck, face-painting and more.

In recent years, our Adult Day Center and Transitions staff have done a great job of getting the consumers more involved in planning and presenting the event.

This year, a group of consumers really wanted to have a basketball tournament and took charge of planning the whole thing as a carnival sneak peek the day before the main event.



Shelby and Bryan were all smiles.



Angel took aim at dunking a volunteer in the tank.



(Above) Nala showed off her balloon animal.

(Left) Danielle Jones knelt in front of Ava to give her a better target for a whipped-cream pie.



(Above) Stephen, of the champion team the Heat, was named basketball tournament MVP.

(Right) Aaron jumped past a defender to take a shot in the tournament.



Alleah, Jessica and Trish showed off some dance moves.

Parents Night Out is Win for Whole Family

All parents need an occasional break. When the family includes one or more members with special needs, a simple dinner and a movie isn't so simple. For many families in the Fort Wayne area, Easterseals Arc's Parents Night Out has become the solution.

The evenings are a popular offshoot of the agency's respite services. Staff realized that some individuals with respite services as part of their Medicaid Waiver benefits also had siblings without the waiver. Sometimes, respite provides an opportunity for parents to spend time focusing on those other siblings. But other times, parents would have to make separate care arrangements for those siblings in order to have a date night or just take time for themselves.

Easterseals Arc partners with two area churches, Emmanuel Community Church and County Line Church of God, to offer Parents Night Out events at which all siblings in a family – those with and without disabilities – enjoy a safe, fun evening together while the parents have a few hours on their own.

"Emmanuel already had a special needs program, so we piggy-backed on that," said Easterseals Arc's Ashley Bouthot. "Then we also wanted to do one on the north side. I grew up going to County Line, and they do the Night to Shine (a special needs prom), so we approached them."

The events are scheduled several times a year, with about 30 to 50



Parents Night Out offers plenty of games and activities for all ages.

people attending each event.

"Families are loving it," Bouthot said. "I haven't heard anything negative, except they wish there were more."

"They feel comfortable knowing that Easterseals Arc has the training, and the church is a safe place," Bouthot continued. "Everyone has background checks, and we're not going out anywhere."

Nicole Hooker's family has

attended Parents Night Out twice.

"We rarely ever get a date night, and the kids enjoyed it," she said. "And it's nice the people there understand how to work with special needs. It is also nice that they will watch the siblings."

Bouthot said they have several families that come back each time, and many tell their friends and neighbors. All special needs families in the community are welcome; attendees do not have to be Easterseals Arc clients. Parents Night Out is free and includes dinner, games, crafts and activities for all of the siblings.

"It's very intermingled, with everyone playing and having fun together," Bouthot said. "A lot of the siblings are like little mother hens, sort of taking care of others. It's very sweet to see."

For parents who are wondering about the value of taking some time for themselves, Hooker has two simple words of advice: "Do it!"

Parents Night Out

What: An evening of respite care for individuals with special needs and their siblings while parents and caregivers enjoy a night out

When: Stay informed of upcoming Parents Night Out dates by following Easterseals Arc on Facebook at www.facebook.com/eastersealsarcnein. Fall dates are:

- Friday, Oct. 25 at County Line Church of God
- Friday, Nov. 8 at Emmanuel Community Church

Cost: Free

Registration: Advance registration is strongly encouraged. Visit our Facebook page for registration links.

More information: Contact Ashley Bouthot at aboutshot@esarc.org or 260.456.4534 ext. 294

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

- 11/5 Boundaries Crossed: Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., contact Tommy Guest at tommy@partnersinautism.com for location and additional information
- 11/6 & 20 Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
- 11/8 Parents Night Out, 6 to 8 p.m., Emmanuel Community Church, 12222 US Highway 24 West, contact Ashley Bouthot, 260.456.4534 ext. 294 or aboutshot@esarc.org, for more information

Culinary Queens

Presented by Old National Bank, Culinary Queens offers guests the opportunity to sample dishes from 100 notable women engaged in friendly competition to raise money for Easterseals Arc.

- 11/9 6 p.m., Memorial Coliseum Conference Center, visit fortwayne.culinaryqueens.com for information and tickets

- 11/11 Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
- 11/15 Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive
- 11/16 Sibshops, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., ages 7 through high school senior, at Mad Anthony's Children's Hope House on Lutheran Hospital Campus; give thanks with Thanksgiving feast

Holiday

- 11/28 & 29 Thanksgiving, Easterseals Arc offices and day programs closed

DECEMBER

- 12/3 Boundaries Crossed: Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., contact Tommy Guest at tommy@partnersinautism.com for location and additional information
- 12/4 & 18 Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
- 12/9 Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
- 12/20 Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive

Holiday

- 12/24 & 25 Christmas, Easterseals Arc offices and day programs closed

JANUARY

Holiday

- 1/1 New Year's Day, Easterseals Arc offices and day programs closed

- 1/7 Boundaries Crossed: Asperger's Youth Group, 6:15-7:15 p.m., contact Tommy Guest at tommy@partnersinautism.com for location and additional information
- 1/13 Social Group for Adults Who Have Asperger's, 6-7:30 p.m., Lutheran Hospital, Room #4 in cafeteria
- 1/15 Aktion Club Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Turnstone, 3320 N. Clinton St.
- 1/17 Self Advocates Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Projects Drive

DSPs Enjoy Week of 'Thank You' Treats, Gifts

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the foundation of everything we do, and they deserve gratitude every day of the year. But each September we show them some extra appreciation during national DSP Recognition Week.

Each program showed gratitude for their DSPs in different ways each day, with additional agency-wide recognition. For example, staff in Projects Drive Group were treated to a cook-out; staff in the Adult Day Center and Transitions had camp-themed activities and treats; and Supported Living had a gift basket raffle. All DSPs received T-shirts with the slogan "Keep Calm and Let the Direct Support Professional Handle It."



DSPs enjoyed Whip & Chill ice cream as a "thank you" from agency leadership during DSP Recognition Week.



All DSPs were invited to a hot breakfast served by the management team.

Join Our Team

We need more great Direct Support Professionals! Visit our website to view our current openings and apply: bit.ly/EastersealsArcJobs

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