

## Press Release

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# Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Awards Top-State Non-Profit Grant for Be Well!! and Thrive™ Program



**The Easterseals New Jersey Health and Wellness Program Recognized for Two Consecutive Years**

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BRUNSWICK, N.J. -- Easterseals New Jersey, a leading resource for people and families living with disabilities, has again been awarded a grant by The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey for its **Be Well!! and Thrive™ Health and Wellness**

program. The \$25,604 grant will provide

tools and resources for participants, their caregivers, and staff to assist in prioritizing healthy lifestyle choices throughout the day. The health-oriented program, now in its fifth year, was previously awarded an initial grant of \$42,813 by the Foundation in 2014.

Though the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey continually elevates the quality of community healthcare for all state residents, individuals with disabilities are statistically at a higher risk for chronic medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. These conditions drastically affect quality of life, employability and integration into communities, therefore creating a need for specialized programs to better assist these individuals. Easterseals' **Be Well!! and Thrive™ Health and Wellness** initiative is designed to improve the physical and mental well-being of people with disabilities, aiding the Foundation in reducing disparities in access and promoting equality throughout the healthcare system in New Jersey.

**Be Well!! and Thrive™** was first implemented in 2011, aiming to achieve and maintain optimal physical, mental and emotional health for all participants. The program involves a 12-week series of ability-appropriate workshops on nutrition, health, fitness and hygiene. The exercise components of the program are also the first of their kind to be accredited by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). Since its creation five years ago, the program has reduced illness, stress and fatigue in many who have participated.

Laura O'Reilly, RN, Assistant Vice President of Health and Wellness at Easterseals New Jersey and co-founder of the program, claims the success of **Be Well!! and Thrive™** is a team effort. "The program has yielded tangible and measurable results. The nurses and all of the managers are an integral part of the development of this health and

wellness initiative. We are looking forward to an exciting year that will bring everyone together to help those we serve pursue their personal health goals."

What sets **Be Well!! & Thrive™** apart from other exercise programs is its adaptive approach to addressing the special needs of people with disabilities. The structured fitness class is based on a foundation of proper body mechanics in order to enhance participants' abilities to perform activities of daily living, improve strength and endurance, and enhance overall well-being.

To learn more about Easterseals New Jersey's Be Well!! & Thrive Health and Wellness Program, visit [www.eastersealsnj.org/health](http://www.eastersealsnj.org/health).

#### **About The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey**

The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey is an independent, endowed grant-making organization dedicated to reducing disparities in the delivery of healthcare and improving access to quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in the greater Newark, NJ area and the Jewish community of Metro West, NJ. For more information, visit [www.hfnj.org](http://www.hfnj.org).

#### **About Easterseals New Jersey**

Easterseals New Jersey is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that has helped individuals and families with disabilities or special needs by providing opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities since 1948. Annually, nearly 9,000 people and families in New Jersey affected by physical disabilities, developmental disabilities including autism, mental illness, and other special needs receive services. Our programs are designed to help them achieve independence and full community integration. For more information on Easterseals New Jersey and its statewide disability services, please contact 732-257-6662 or visit [www.eastersealsnj.org](http://www.eastersealsnj.org) or [www.facebook.com/eastersealsnj](http://www.facebook.com/eastersealsnj).

**NOTE: Additional photos are available upon request.**

Source: Easterseals New Jersey

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