

Community Impact NEWS

Driver Assessment and Adaptive Driver Training Program

Providing driver independence for over 20 years



An avid golfer, Fran Mooney began his day like any other. Excited to play a round at his favorite golf course, he grabbed his clubs, hopped in the cart and headed out to play 18 holes. While traveling to the next par 3, Fran's cart hit a curb and he fell out, landing on the back of his head.

Fran sustained a traumatic brain injury and was in a coma for three weeks. He needed to re-learn how to walk and do basic tasks. Fran was determined and pushed through rehab like he was Tiger Woods at the 2019 Masters tournament. But there was one thing Fran hadn't mastered yet. To gain full independence, he needed to be able to drive on his own. Fran was referred to Easterseals Driver Assessment program and worked closely with Raechaell Corbett, MS OTR/L CDRS. Raechaell began by conducting a clinical assessment on a driving simulator and assessed skills needed to drive safely. Fran required Occupational Therapy to address his functional skills like visual scanning, visual attention, and overall cognitive processing speed in order to be able to participate in the



behind the wheel assessment. Fran tried a second time to pass the driver assessment and he did! He was finally ready to drive safely. Upon completion of the program, Fran said, "This was the last piece that I needed to fit in my puzzle. I am grateful to Raechaell for her knowledge and patience with me. She helped me get my life back." Fran has returned to work and is now able to drive on his own.

The Driver Assessment program is one of the only programs of its kind in the state of Connecticut, offering a clinical, behind the wheel assessment of the skills required to drive and adaptive driver training. Individuals may require a driver assessment because of medical diagnosis or at the suggestion of a physician who has indicated one may be unfit to drive. Individuals with physical, neurological, visual, and/or cognitive disabilities often participate in the driver assessment program to determine if they can drive, and if so, what tools they may need to drive safely. An assessment begins with a clinical evaluation completed by a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist who evaluates a person's visual, physical and cognitive skills related to driving. If the appropriate skills are demonstrated, a behind the wheel assessment is conducted to evaluate one's ability to safely operate a vehicle on the road, utilizing adaptive equipment as needed.

Easterseals Driver Assessment and Adaptive Driver Training Program are located at 158 State Street, Meriden, Connecticut.

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

Watertown Foundation assists Easterseals Employment and Community Services

Easterseals Employment and Community Services (ECS) program recently received a \$2,000 grant from the Watertown Foundation to support the purchase of a new wheelchair accessible mini-bus for the Adult Day Program. The foundation's support supplemented funding Easterseals received from a federal grant to replace a bus that was deteriorating. The bus is used to transport program participants to community based recreational,

volunteer or daily living activities, such as to a park, post office or grocery store.

Last year, the Watertown Foundation granted Easterseals funding to support a new ramp for the side entrance to the ECS building located in Watertown. Easterseals program participants have greatly benefitted from the foundation's ongoing generosity.



The goal of Easterseals Adult Day Program is to help individuals build and maintain social and daily living skills through community integrated activities.



Connecticut Community Foundation support strengthens Easterseals



The Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills communities are incredibly fortunate to have a supportive foundation working hard to help improve the lives of residents in the area. **The Connecticut Community Foundation (CCF) awarded Easterseals two generous grants in Spring of 2021.**

\$11,731

Strengthening Nonprofits grant to support leadership development programming and diversity, equity and inclusion training for Easterseals leaders.

\$5,000

From CCF's Saunders Fund for the Sick and Infirm of Naugatuck for Easterseals Center for Better Hearing to support Naugatuck residents in need of accessible hearing care.

In April, Easterseals of Greater Waterbury participated in Give Local, hosted by The Connecticut Community Foundation, and we raised over \$11,400 for our programs! Thank you to our generous community and employees for supporting Easterseals during the 36 hour give-a-thon!

Easterseals Children's Academy and Children's Center preschoolers are ready for Kindergarten

127 children graduated from Easterseals school readiness preschool program this summer! We are going to miss our graduates moving on to kindergarten.

The Children's Academies and Children's Center are currently enrolling for infants, toddlers and school readiness programming for preschoolers. Visit Easterseals website for more information about how to enroll: www.easterseals.com/waterburyct/

Easterseals Children's Academy & Children's Center

West Campus: 22 Tompkins Street, Waterbury

East Campus: 128 Avenue of Industry, Waterbury

Grandview Campus: 172 Grandview Avenue, Waterbury

Meriden Campus: 125 Broad Street, Meriden



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

CC's Chocolates in Wolcott

CC's chocolates held a special Mother's Day weekend fundraiser and donated \$800 in proceeds to support Easterseals of Greater Waterbury's essential programs. Chris and her team support the Easterseals community in many ways each year and touch the lives of countless individuals.

Thank you, CC's Chocolates, for your continued partnership and generosity to help the individuals and families that we serve!



Pictured (left to right) Chris Culver, Owner of CC's Chocolates and Kristie Balisciano, Easterseals Marketing and Communications Specialist.



Leave a Lasting Legacy with Easterseals

Have you considered leaving a lasting legacy by including Easterseals of Greater Waterbury in your estate plans? Your planning now could provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities beyond your lifetime. We would love to speak with you if you're interested in supporting Easterseals with a planned gift. Please contact Elizabeth Szymanoski, Director of Development, by calling 203-754-5141 ext. 243 or email eszymanoski@eswct.com.

Qualified Charitable Distributions

If you are 70½ or older ask your financial advisor about making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to Easterseals of Greater Waterbury. QCD's allow you to make a tax-free gift of up to \$100,000 from your IRA.



Serving Greater Waterbury, Central and Northwest Connecticut

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If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us by emailing eszymanoski@eswct.com

For information about Easterseals, go to www.easterseals.com/waterburyct



For over 60 years, Easterseals has been a dedicated resource for people and families facing disability. We honor this legacy and embrace our future with a renewed commitment to enhance possibilities for people of all ages and abilities. We're fostering and advocating for environments where everyone is included and valued, making a real and positive impact on people's lives every day with our high-quality programs and services. Each year we assist thousands of individuals to reach their potential and to live, learn, work and play in their communities.