



# PARTNERS IN ACCESS

Easterseals Western & Central Pennsylvania newsletter



Summer is in full swing as we celebrate July, Disability Pride Month. July 26th is the anniversary of the passing of the Americans for Disabilities Act in 1990. 34 years ago, and many years leading up to this important piece of legislation Easterseals was and remains a key partner lobbying for the equality for individuals with disabilities. The legislation is built on 4 pillars:



Full Participation  
Equality of Opportunity

Independent Living  
Economic Self Sufficiency

Read more about Easterseals and the ADA here: <https://www.easterseals.com/about-us/history/americans-with-disabilities-act.html>

## Hoss's Restaurants Celebrate with Easterseals!



Join us at participating Hoss's Restaurants on Friday July 26th to support Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania. Find the location that supports the programs in your community and Easterseals will receive a portion of the sales.

This promotion is available all day on Friday July 26th!

Click [here](#) for an invitation to print and present at your restaurant. We are group #130551



**Bedford | Carlisle | Cranberry | Greensburg | Hanover | Johnstown  
Mechanicsburg | Murrysville | State College | York (2 locations)**

## SHARE EASTERSEALS



@EastersealsWCPA



@eswcpa



@Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania



@Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania

This month is all about finding joy and pride in our disabled identities. At Easterseals, we have pride knowing that together we can create a more welcoming, inclusive, and accessible world for all – a world that understands disability not as something negative, but a powerful, integral part of a person.

Show your pride by spreading the word about Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania! You will create an impact that ripples across the region. Sharing the programs and services with families and individuals that may participate, sharing job opportunities with potential candidates, sharing and attending events in your community and sharing the importance of the organization with your network supports the work we do in your community and across the state.

Did you know we offer lunch & learn presentations for your office? Reach out and we are happy to come in for a 30 minute presentation on Easterseals programs and volunteer opportunities in your community.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Scan the QR code or go to <https://www.eastersealswcpa.org/DriveItGolf> for more information and to register.



Scan the QR code or go to [www.walkwithme.org/york](http://www.walkwithme.org/york) for more information.

To participate, sponsor or donate to one of the above events please contact:

Sue DuMars, [sdumars@eastersealswcpenna.org](mailto:sdumars@eastersealswcpenna.org) or

Colleen Felentzer [cfelentzer@eastersealswcpenna.org](mailto:cfelentzer@eastersealswcpenna.org)

## Spring Appeal Thank You!



Thanks to everyone who supported our Spring Appeal!

Because of your donation you play an instrumental role in providing consistent and sustainable support of your local Easterseals to continue to provide the tools and resources to individuals with disabilities and enable them to live as independently as possible.

Right here in your community Easterseals Western and Central PA provides resources through our many services including:

- Approved Private Schools for children with disabilities
- Residential Services for adults and seniors with disabilities
- Speech and Hearing Services for children and adults with disabilities, autism and developmental delays
- Child Development Center for children of all abilities
- Camp and Recreation Programs for children and adults with disabilities and military families
- Interpreting Services
- Job Training and Employment Opportunities for adults with disabilities.



On behalf of the thousands of children and adults with disabilities and their families touched by services at Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania each year, we thank you.



### What a beautiful day for golf!

ESWCPA Johnstown would like to thank our sponsors, golfers & volunteers for joining us June 19th for our 42nd annual Golf Tournament and Live Auction at the Windber Country Club. It a huge success with \$10,000 raised to help children and adults with disabilities!

ESWCPA's next golf outing will be held Friday, August 23 at Heritage Hills Golf Resort in York, PA. For more information visit [www.eastersealswcpenna.org](http://www.eastersealswcpenna.org).





## Preschool to High School Graduation with ESWCPA



Sam is a 2024 High School Graduate! ESWCPA's Johnstown office was thrilled to celebrate Sam's graduation!

Diagnosed with Down Syndrome at birth, Sam began speech therapy when he was just three years old.

ESWCPA's Speech Therapist, Annette Shearman had the privilege of watching him grow from a little boy into an exceptional young man.

Sam's mom, Georgann commented, *"Sam's speech and communication skills have come a long way and continue to develop with weekly sessions at Easterseals."*

Sam's family are dedicated supporters of Easterseals. Barry Thomas, Sam's father, serves on Johnstown's Advisory Council.

Sam participated in a variety of high school sports and engaged with many students and teachers throughout his school years.

Speech Therapy continues to help Sam learn functional skills to say words clearer, talk in sentences, and follow directions to prepare for his future.

Congratulations Sam!

## Passing the Baton in Contract Services



After many years as ESWCPA's Photo Center Coordinator, we wish Jeri Brown a fond farewell as she jumps into retirement with her usual gusto.

Jeri will be missed!

And... welcome to Ed Brown, who is taking over Jeri's position and more as ESWCPA's new Employment Program Specialist.

## Approved Private Schools Celebrated Graduations



Thirteen children celebrated graduation from Easterseals Approved Private Schools in Export (East campus), West Mifflin (South campus), and Cranberry (North campus).

Pittsburgh's Pirate Parrot was a special guest at the East Campus graduation.

Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania Linda Lanham Zeszutek School Program provides individualized special education for children ages 3-10 with disabilities and special needs.

The school is changing the way the world defines and views disability by making profound, positive differences in children's lives every day.

**Congratulations Graduates!**

## Fishing Fun with Friends in Franklin



ESWCPA Franklin residents enjoyed a day at Venango County Coon and Fox Club's annual fishing event.

**Look at the fish Jim caught!**

ESWCPA has three fully staffed residential community homes in Venango County for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



## Senator Casey's Office Visits ESWCPA Employees at Iron Mountain in Boyers, PA



Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania (ESWCPA) recently hosted a visit with a representative from Senator Bob Casey's office and representatives from Source America to meet with ESWCPA employees and tour Iron Mountain in Boyers, PA. Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania holds contracts through SourceAmerica to employ adults with disabilities at facilities throughout Western and Central PA, including Iron Mountain.

The group toured the facility, met ESWCPA employees, and had a front row view of their work. Both employees and representatives enjoyed a question-and-answer session, giving employees an opportunity to explain their work and the equipment used to complete their jobs.

Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania employ adults with disabilities through the federal AbilityOne Program, which is administered statewide through SourceAmerica. The visit to Iron Mountain was a great opportunity to showcase ESWCPA's ability to successfully provide dedicated and quality service through the AbilityOne Program.

## From Camper to Counselor



**Project Beacon Camper Ivy**



**Camp Counselor Ivy**

The impact of our camps is felt by our staff members too! Ivy Patterson has been a counselor for the Club Lily and Project Beacon camps for a year and a half and has chosen to pursue a career working with individuals with disabilities.

Ivy had her first experience with Easterseals Western and Central PA as a camper at one of the Project Beacon weekends in 2013. Both of Lily's parents were active in the military and her mother is still active in the National Guard.

**What did the Project Beacon camps provide for you? Why did you enjoy them?**

"Project Beacon camps provided me with a time to be around people who were in similar situations as me, such as parents being away for long periods of time. Camp also provided me with some lifelong friends that I cherish so much. I enjoyed camp the most for it bringing together random strangers that immediately got along and created lifelong bonds."

**When did you first attend as a counselor? How did it feel to be on that side of the program?**

"I started as a counselor in March of 2023. I was pretty comfortable, I felt confident I could use my knowledge on how my counselors were to help me be the best I could."

**What do you find interesting and/or meaningful about working with the participants at Club Lily?**

"The work I get to do at Club Lily is just really fulfilling, every interaction I get with a camper feels meaningful and it means a lot to be able to do this for them and to become closer while getting to know them. I find their stories to be the most interesting, these individuals are some of the strongest sweetest souls I have ever met and hanging out with them truly never feels like work."

**I understand you plan to study for a career to work with individuals with a disability, what area?**

"I would like to pursue a career in recreational therapy, it will be very similar to what I do as a counselor. I will create plans for recreation based medical treatment to maintain or improve an individual's physical, social, and emotional well being. My work at Club Lily directly impacted this decision, I had a counselor mention how naturally working with the campers seemed to come to me and it gave me the thought of making it my career. I was so nervous going into it but it was and still is the best job in the world."



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# Cumberland Day Campers Enjoy Weekly Themes

Our Day Campers have been enjoying games, crafts and activities with a new theme each week. Director Jordan Kriel has designed a full summer of fun with trained staff to assure a 1 to 3 ratio with our campers.



Camps are weekly Monday through Thursday  
9:00-3:00 and half days are available.  
Registration closes the Friday prior to each week.



Upcoming camp weeks are;  
7/22-7/25, 8/5-8/8

To view more information or register for an  
upcoming week go to:

<https://eastersealswcpa.recdesk.com/Community/Program>





# Bowling Program Buddies



Travis, Paul and Jacob have been participating in the York area bowling program for over 10 years. Every Wednesday evening, they look forward to joining their friends and knocking down pins. These young men are seriously good bowlers! Recreational opportunities provide a chance for individuals with disabilities to socialize, enjoy physical activity and work off stress and anxiety. These times also give their parents/care givers a network connection and many families have been attending together for a long time.

The consistency of the program provides all the bowling participants a chance to improve their social skills and blow off steam. Paul's mother Penney says Paul looks forward to this Wednesday evening activity and has been participating since 2012.

“Paul has come so far with bowling, a lot of anxiety in past, especially in the beginning, lack of patience, noise etc. Today he is pretty laid back and pretty flexible with things. Example: Last night computers were not working so we were keeping score with paper, never would they have done that years ago. All of them handled waiting and computers came up after 3 frames, all was good.”

*If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.*  
~Paul Bellamy

# Choosing the Child Development Center

The decision to send a child to the Child Development Center in State College is unique to every family. The mission to provide high-quality early-learning in an inclusive environment for children of all abilities appeals to families whose children have needs and those children who are typically developing.

“We chose Easterseals because they provide a safe environment, good curriculum, and exposure to children that face some different challenges than our daughter does. We feel that by exposing her to this at a young age that she will normalize differences and continue to live a life guided by kindness as she gets older. - Curtis, father”

## James's Story



James is a happy 4-year-old boy with some speech and language delays. He was born at the beginning of the pandemic to parents Ashley and William, who had recently moved to State College. The isolation of being in a new town combined with the shutdown AND a newborn made for a rough start. When pandemic restrictions eased, James's parents looked for day care for him, but neither place where they eventually enrolled him ended up being a great fit for James. He was labeled disruptive and delayed, and the last facility wanted to hold him back.

In January 2024, James enrolled in the Easterseals Child Development Center in the younger pre-school class. The difference was noticeable in a matter of weeks. James's behavior and vocabulary had improved tremendously. He looks forward to going to school and has made friends with his classmates. His mom emotionally shared how several of his friends showed up for James's birthday party and how excited he was to see them. As a parent, knowing your child has friends, is included and accepted makes all the difference.



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## Fun in the Sun at Day Camp!



The Summer Day Camp at the CDC is in full swing! Thanks to a new theme and water days each week, the kids are enjoying a lot of fun in the sun!

## Easterseals Night at the Spikes!

Join the staff and families of the Child Development Center on Friday, August 2nd as the State College Spikes take on the Mahoning Valley Scrappers. Game time is 6:35. All proceeds from the 50/50 game night raffle will be donated to the CDC!

To purchase discounted tickets, contact Natalie Long; [nlong@eastersealswcpenna.org](mailto:nlong@eastersealswcpenna.org)



**Tickets are just \$7.50!**