Early Intervention Sparks Children’s Development Brings New Hope to Parents

For over 40 years, Early Intervention (E.I.) at Saint Joseph’s Center has provided specialized services to young children, birth through three years of age. Children served through Early Intervention have various developmental delays that have been appropriately evaluated.

Involvement of the parents/family is key to the success of the intervention. This certainly is true for Annie and her family whom we are honored to feature. Annie, eighteen months, has Down Syndrome and is supported during her sessions by her family, especially parents, Deidre and Tony. Brothers, A.J. (age six) and Jack (age three), join in at times and have learned to help their sister in different ways. (pictured here).

Brenda Engle, Director of E.I. and Special Needs Instructor, has worked one-on-one with Annie and her family since January 15, 2021. Due to COVID restrictions, the sessions began using Zoom meetings. Home visits started in mid-March. Deidre and Tony shared that the E.I. program has provided so much opportunity for Annie to learn new things. “She was delayed in hitting her milestones but now, with the help of Brenda and Saint Joseph’s, she is progressing to live her best life,” shared her parents.

Deidre and Tony explained that Annie has grown in leaps and bounds in the last couple of months. Brenda’s help has enabled Annie’s true personality to be revealed, they noted. “When Brenda comes into our home, Annie’s face lights up and she gets so excited. What we don’t know and can’t do is being provided by Early Intervention,” they stated.

Brenda Engle has worked in Early Intervention at Saint Joseph’s Center for 38 years. She shared, “I feel very blessed to have a job that I love, and I look forward to going to work every day. Through coaching, routine based instruction and information sharing with families, I am able to see the results when their children grow and develop new skills. This is the most fulfilling part of my job.”

Tony shared that his family had always been aware of the wonderful work being done at Saint Joseph’s Center. He stated, “The work that is done there is heroic, and Saint Joe’s provides awesome services to the community. We are happy that Saint Joe’s is now a part of our life.”

Depending on the child’s needs, Early Intervention may include such services as: Special Needs Instruction, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy or Occupational Therapy. The staff travels throughout Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wayne Counties to work with children in their natural environments. When a child is eligible for E.I. Services, their family can request a referral to Saint Joseph’s Center.

Save the Dates
SAINT JOSEPH’S CENTER
SUMMER FEST
Go Joe Ride Along - Now Through July 24
Saturday, July 24
WNEP Telethon
Sunday, July 25
Chicken Dinner Drive-Thru
Innovative Programs on Zoom Enhance Friendships among CLA Residents

Prior to COVID, residents at the Community Living Arrangements (CLA’s) were very active participants at Adult Day Services who enjoyed attending community events or touring interesting local venues. Others were volunteering or strengthening pre-employment skills. This emphasis on community participation enables those with special needs to attend everyday experiences in the community and other special events.

All of this came to a halt when COVID regulations placed restrictions on access to most community settings and staying at home was the safest option. Adult Day Services staff realized that the CLA residents really missed seeing and interacting with their friends. Staff researched videos that would interest the participants and also allow them to visit with others through Zoom meetings. In addition, prepared craft materials were readied for each house.

“One participant made sure he knew the dates and times for the meetings, and he would get his tablet and wait. He really looked forward to them,” shared Paula Hubbs, Adult Day Services Program Assistant. CLA residents were asked about their experiences of watching videos and being able to visit their friends during Zoom meetings. Through the use of sign language, pointing, and speaking, some of their comments included the following: “I liked the Bingos (matching games), talking to friends and listening to music with my friends.” Another resident stated, “It was neat, meeting so many new friends and learning about different countries.”

Jeanne Hugenbruch, Community Outreach Coordinator, noted that “We always kept the participants ‘on screen’ so they could have quality time seeing and talking with each other. I believe that the most important aspect of these gatherings was not the video or project but providing the opportunity for residents to engage with their friends, maintain relationships with staff at Adult Day Services and make new friends in the process.” In the midst of the challenges of COVID, CLA residents at Saint Joseph’s Center benefitted from the Zoom gatherings which enriched relationships and created new ones.

Annual Jog for Jude Held on Memorial Day Weekend

The 7th annual Jog for Jude was held virtually on Memorial Day Weekend. The area’s only 5 K to raise awareness and funds for S.I.D.S. (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) research at Boston Children’s Hospital also benefits Saint Joseph’s Center Baby and Children’s Pantry. This event is hosted by the Jude Zayac Foundation in memory of Jude who died at three months old from SIDS on July 23, 2014. Saint Joseph’s Center Baby & Children’s Pantry uses funds received from the Jog for Jude to support local children and families. Each year, the Jude Zayac Foundation hosts Pink and Blue Day to raise awareness about SIDS. This year, many local schools hosted collections of items distributed by the Baby and Children’s Pantry. Volunteers are shown distributing race shirts at the Saint Joseph’s Center DeNaples Building prior to the virtual 5K.
 Residents enjoy planting flowers in the Therapy Garden

One of the favorite annual activities for the residents has been planting flowers in the Therapy Garden located at the Main Center in Scranton. Pictured at left is Sarah, Dynamic Abilities Professional, and Mose planting a variety of beautiful flowers along the garden beds. Not only do the flowers create a pleasing space for relaxing in the shade, but the activity helps engage clients and residents with nature and aids in fine motor skills like digging holes, placing flowers, and watering them. The Dynamic Abilities Program focuses on sensory experiences. For example, Mose loves to feel the dirt between his fingers as he places the flowers in the planter. Fresh air and some sunlight are just what everyone could use after a long winter indoors!

Staff Recognition at Saint Joseph’s Center

Saint Joseph’s Center plans opportunities to express appreciation for staff throughout the year. Typically, an annual Employee Recognition Event is held to recognize those with 5, 10, or more years of service. This recognition has been given to those who exceeded 50 years! Such longevity is valued as an important sign of staff’s dedication to the ministry of Saint Joseph’s Center and the feeling of being respected and acknowledged as part of the Saint Joseph’s Center family. Emphasis is placed on staff being offered opportunities to expand skills and advance their careers. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who provide direct care do so with a desire to provide a meaningful life experience for people with disabilities, so they can live, learn, work and play in their communities. Through the Career Ladder and Credentialing Program, DSPs are offered opportunities for education and recognition which includes hourly wage increases and annual bonuses. There is opportunity for certification through the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. Each month an employee is chosen as the Employee of the Month. This individual receives a monetary gift, is highlighted in the monthly newsletter and their photo is displayed throughout the Center. The annual Health and Wellness Fair provides screening tests, health presentations, and brochures plus gifts for those who participate. Celebrations are held to honor particular job positions such as Nurses Week. In honor of the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker which is on May 1st, staff from Housekeeping, Maintenance, Laundry and Central Supply, Chartwells and Adaptive Equipment are saluted for their hard work in the daily ministry at Saint Joseph’s Center. National DSP Recognition week is held each September with special events every day. Saint Joseph’s Center values the gifts and experience of each staff member and seeks to match each person with the most meaningful role. If you or someone you know is looking for a career that makes a difference, check out the current job postings at stjosephscenter.org for more information and the many benefits offered by Saint Joseph’s Center. You can have a positive effect on someone’s life while enriching your own life by joining the Saint Joseph’s Center family.

Saint Joseph’s Center Surpasses its Vaccine Goal of 75%!

WNEP-TV’S ANNUAL 2021 TELETHON

Saturday, July 24
8pm - 10pm on
WNEP-TV Channel 16

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Dear Friends of Saint Joseph’s Center,

How lucky I feel to address this letter, as I always do, Dear Friend! We are fortunate to consider you and so many as a friend of Saint Joseph’s Center. Throughout this past year, it has been especially critical to know that we can count on your prayers, support and concern for the mission and people we have the privilege to serve. With your constant encouragement, we feel affirmed that the services we offer are needed and appreciated by the community. We are honored by your trust.

The challenges and changes posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have taught us so much. One important lesson is the blessing of our relationships, near and far. As you read Concern, you will hear the theme of valued relationships resonating throughout the stories. Just imagine, Annie daily discovering her great potential, friends from Adult Day laughing together via Zoom, the community showing their love for the Zayac family, and letting staff know they are appreciated and valued for their dedication. Hopefully as you read, you are recalling how your relationships with Saint Joseph’s Center have made a difference and united us around this mission.

As you can imagine, some practices begun in response to the pandemic especially those that promoted health and safety will continue while others will be modified. The responsiveness of the staff to work collaboratively to ensure compliance with the best guidance has been incredible. Staff are always mindful and prioritize the needs of the residents and clients. Because of this, we are optimistic and eager to move forward with more opportunity to re-engage with family, friends and the community.

Thank you for your continued interest and willingness to support the annual events hosted by the Saint Joseph’s Center Auxiliary. The 2021 Summer Fest will include familiar and successful activities. The WNEP-TV Telethon, Go Joe Bike Ride and Chicken Dinner Drive-thru will be held. In addition, there are a variety of raffles available. Added features this year, include more events for participation in the Go Joe Ride Along. You can opt to register and ride at your convenience or join in one of the planned events. Please visit the website, stjosephscenter.org, to learn more.

In this year dedicated to Saint Joseph, we pray that our patron may continue to bless you and all friends of Saint Joseph’s Center with his protective care and unconditional love.

With prayer and gratitude,

Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM
President/CEO