

Community News

A Newsletter for Friends of Residential Resources, Inc.

April 2016

Meet a Local Artist, Josh Besaw

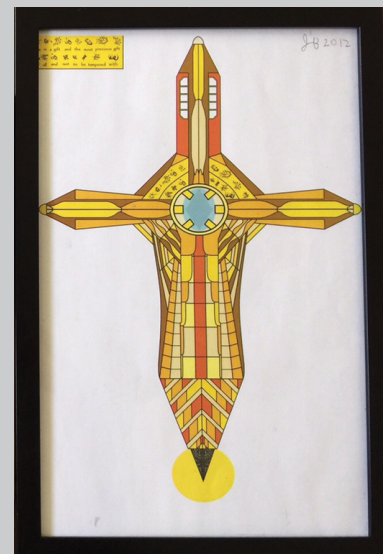
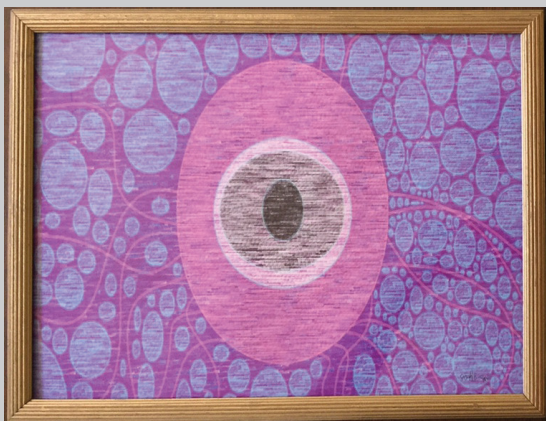
Heather Cothran, Associate Director
Plattsburgh, NY

On February 5, 2016, I had the honor and pleasure to view Josh's artwork and showcase at The Champlain Wine Company in Plattsburgh, NY. Upon arrival, I was greeted by a very handsome and proud young man. He quickly embraced me in a hug and with great enthusiasm, proudly walked me around the gallery and talked about his artwork. Some of Josh's artwork takes him hours if not days to complete. Josh explained that inspiration to draw these pieces come from just about anything. And every piece must be perfect!

On my tour, Josh described himself as a graphic design artist. Josh was introduced to art at a young age. Most of Josh's art is digitally created using a program called Paint Program on his computer. He also had photos displayed. His pictures focused on subjects such as animals from his farm. Josh's talent and love and support from his family has guided him to where he is today. Josh is fortunate to self-direct his services and he has a great team of natural supports and staff.

As my tour came to an end, Josh was immediately whisked away by other observers who wanted to know more about him and his art. As I watched in awe and glanced at the beauty that surrounded me, it was apparent that Josh was surrounded by many loved ones and beaming family members. The turnout was successful.

I'm happy to brag that WKS and Plattsburgh RRI are owners of two pieces beautifully created by Josh Besaw.



April is Autism Awareness Month!

Lisa Janicke, RN
Ballston Lake, NY

I decided this time to again talk about something near and dear to my heart, autism. As many of you already know, my son Raymond is 8 years old and was diagnosed with autism at 18 months of age. Since his diagnosis, I have tried to learn as much as I can about the disorder and to help other families who need support. I am a support parent with Parent to Parent of NYS, which is a wonderful source of information and I run the ACT group (Advocating for Children Together) in our school district which provides information, help, and support to families of children with a disability in our area.

Autism has a very broad spectrum of characteristics, challenges, behaviors, and conditions. My son also has a few co-morbid conditions with his autism, including anxiety, ADHD, and a mood disorder. I always liked the phrase, "If you have met one person with autism, you have met one".

I decided to share some information as distributed by the National Autism Association as a resource. They can be found at www.nationalautismassociation.org.

Autism Fact Sheet - What is Autism?

- Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3.
- Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.
- Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous co-morbid medical conditions which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more.
- Autism is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls. Its prevalence is not affected by race, region, or socio-economic status. Since autism was first diagnosed in the U.S. the incidence has climbed to an alarming one in 68 children in the U.S.
- Autism itself does not affect life expectancy, however research has shown that the mortality risk among individuals with autism is twice as high as the general population, in large part due to drowning and other accidents.
- Currently there is no cure for autism, though with early intervention and treatment, the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved and in some cases completely overcome.

Autism Facts & Stats

- About 40% of children with autism do not speak. About 25%–30% of children with autism have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood.
- Autism greatly varies from person to person. No two people with autism are alike.
- The rate of autism has steadily grown over the last twenty years.
- Co-morbid conditions often associated with autism include Fragile X, allergies, asthma, epilepsy, bowel disease, gastrointestinal/digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, PANDAS, feeding disorders, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, OCD, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, immune disorders, autoimmune disorders, and neuroinflammation.
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder, yet most underfunded.
- A 2008 Danish Study found that the mortality risk among those with autism was nearly twice that of the general population.
- Children with autism do progress – early intervention is key.
- Autism is treatable, not a hopeless condition.

Please be sure to spread autism awareness and acceptance this month!!

Please Remember I Am A Human Being

Mary Ellin, mother,
& Jessica, daughter

Please remember I am a human being and like to be treated as such. I have different likes and desires from day to day. You are here for my convenience, not for yours. I like to get up in the morning, do things during the day, and go to bed at night. The times I do these things can differ tremendously, as can the times I do things during the day.

Some of the times I do things are due to schedules of school, work, appointments. Some are due to my own likes and dislikes. I do not go to bed at 7 p.m. because that is a convenient time for you and sometimes I like to sleep very late in the morning.

Sometimes I like to eat a lot, sometimes a little. Sometimes I can be flexible about my scheduling, but please, please, please remember you are here for my convenience. Thank you very much, I do appreciate it.

My Birthday

Chelly Leger, Participant
Emerald St., Keene, NH

A bunch of my friends from RRI surprised me for my birthday. We had lunch out at Keene Buffet. Mary from WKS brought me balloons and a card. Lori, Tiffany, Sharon, and Lee got me a gift card so I could get fried clams with my home provider. Her birthday is March 9th. Leona and Dave also came. Dave and I are good friends.

When I got home there was a big pile of presents for me. My home provider bought me new pants, a pretty yellow shirt with butterflies, and Minion sheets to match my Minion comforter. I love Minions.

Milestone Anniversaries in Mid-Coast Maine

Kristen Petersen, Associate Director
Scarborough, ME

Milestone Anniversaries are something to celebrate! At our program in Pemaquid, Maine we have even more reason to celebrate because we have three employees that are celebrating 10 years with Residential Resources. I would like to personally thank Claude Elliott, Debbie Johnson, and Jackie Pomelow for their continued service and dedication! Claude and Debbie joined Residential Resources on January 1, 2006. Jackie joined the team on October 16, 2006.

Residential Resources could not provide the quality services that we do without the hard work, and dedication of caring individuals like Claude, Debbie, and Jackie!

SIS Stopping Before it Started

Ellis P. Baum, Regional Director
Scarborough, ME

Whether you knew it as Support Intensity Scale or Supporting Individual Success, it has come to a close in Maine just a few months before it was slated to begin. The official reason why the SIS was stopped is that the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) would not allow the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to use the SIS tool if sessions were going to be recorded. DHHS felt strongly that these sessions needed to be recorded and shared to all relevant parties, so the proposed rule that contained the SIS initiative was withdrawn.

You may be saying, "Well that is certainly very interesting, but what exactly is the SIS?" That is a very good question, so allow me to explain. The SIS is an evidence based, independent assessment that is conducted with every individual receiving Section 21 waiver level funding. This assessment would produce a score, which in turn would be used to calculate a level. The level would be indicative of the amount of support an individual would require. Ultimately, the amount of support an individual required would equate to a specific amount of funding that individual would receive.

Now you may be saying, "That is also very interesting, but what would that have meant for the individuals in Maine supported by RRI?" Another very good question. All of the people receiving group home and shared living supports from RRI went through at least one SIS assessment and were assigned a level that determined what they would receive for funding their support. Some people were scheduled to receive very similar funding amounts, some people were to receive more funding than they were previously receiving, and others were set to receive drastically less funding. Going a step further, this would have meant that some individuals would have received the same, a little more, or drastically less staffing support

than what they currently receive. For those receiving far less staffing, this would have resulted in a reduction in services where meeting basic needs would have been the only thing staff would be able to provide. Skill building, community integration, social interaction, and many other similar supports would not have been possible.

I'm willing to bet you're now saying, "Wait, that doesn't sound fair!" While that is a notable point, fairness really was the driving point behind the SIS initiative. For several years, there has been a sizeable waiting list of people needing support services in Maine. The issue there was insufficient funding to provide the staffing support required by these individuals. The SIS was designed to be a more equitable way to distribute the overall funding amount being used so that more people could receive the support they deserved. What made the SIS controversial is that the redistribution of funding that would allow more people receive supports meant others would lose a great deal of support as a result. A great number of people worked on proposing changes to the SIS that would reduce its impact to those individuals already receiving supports. In fact, before the SIS initiative was stopped, John Nascimento, who lives in Old Orchard Beach, was prepared to speak at Augusta to law makers about the importance of a lesser impact.

Lastly, you may be asking, "What's going to happen now?" You are full of great questions! Right now the future is uncertain here in Maine, but DHHS has indicated they are committed to using an evidence based assessment process for individuals receiving services. For now, RRI will wait and continue to provide the best support services we possibly can.

Thank You For All You Do!

Bethany Dow, Program Manager
Manchester, NH

Having a great team makes all the difference, which luckily RRI has! Things have been crazy lately and that can make it hard to take a moment to really appreciate the work that is being done. With this being said, it's time to stop and thank each and every person for the work that they do! From all the double and even triple shifts that are being worked, coming in last minute to cover a shift, to the coming in just to do medication coverage is not going unnoticed or unappreciated. I am very proud to know that I am part of such a hard-working and dedicated team, thanks again!

"Before getting into this field I worked at a drug store making \$12 an hour and I needed to call a manager just to do a return. I then became a DSP, where I made \$10 an hour and was a teacher, counselor, nurse, physical therapist, behavioralist, personal care specialist, chauffeur, advocate, and role model. The work was really hard and often unappreciated, but the real reward was watching individuals reach goals they never dreamed of, as well as learning things about myself that I couldn't have without them." ~ Haley Wright, Program Manager

Thank you to everyone who contributes articles and pictures to the newsletter.

Articles are due by the second Friday of each month for the following month's newsletter. The newsletter will be posted at www.resresources.com on the first business day of each month.

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of the newsletter mailed to you, please contact your local Residential Resources office to make arrangements.

Community News

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William K. Schofield, Ph.D

Founder and Owner

Our Guiding Principles

Creativity We foster creativity by exploring and learning, embracing change, and pursuing best practice. We always ask ourselves, 'Is there a better way?'

Truth / Honesty We foster an environment where open and honest feedback and sharing are expected, encouraged, and supported. We honor commitments; and we share feelings, opinions, experiences, ideas, and information in order to optimize each individual's personal and professional growth and development.

Empowerment We empower people through a process which includes giving them the opportunities, the authority, the information, and the examples necessary to become successful decision makers.

Diversity We welcome and value different perspectives, contributions, and capabilities. We promote growth, opportunity, and experience.

Quality We continually improve our services by: Promoting positive change; Increasing knowledge and skills; Encouraging personal growth; Valuing individual differences; Learning from our experiences.

Respect We believe that respect is a right, and we conduct ourselves accordingly. Our standards include the exercise of human dignity; the honoring and valuing of self and others; and communication that is clear, direct, and honest.

Trust We create trust by being consistent, stable, honest, and reliable. Trust also requires sincerity, knowledge, and capability.



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