

AP Happenings

Austin's Place Quarterly Newsletter



Summer Highlights

By: Sara Pittinaro

Austin's Place reopened on June 8, 2020 after over three months off. The first couple of weeks back were spent catching up with everyone and getting everyone back on their routines. Staff were happy to get back into the swing of things and the individuals seemed to enjoy seeing everyone again.

Shortly after reopening, we opened the pool. We made smaller groups of 3 individuals for each swim time, which shortened the amount of time we could swim, but ensured that everyone was able to social distance and remain safe. We turned on the waterfall and fountain, got out some pool toys, and had a blast splashing around the pool all summer long.

When we weren't hanging out in the pool, we spent as much time as possible outside. The Outdoor Therapeutic Center was rarely empty. We celebrated all of our summer birthdays with cupcakes. Jema Rejniak brought in her alpaca named FriendLee for a visit! We picked a state each week and learned about fun things to do there. We also enjoyed taking walks, playing basketball, and doing chalk art on the driveway.

In August, we had our 4th annual boat contest, this year's theme was "Don't Spill the Beans." Our clients and their staff had two weeks to design and build a boat to look like their favorite animal. The ultimate goal: to build a boat that could hold the most weight. We used cans of green beans (hence, don't spill the beans). After the first round we had a four-way tie for first place! Each of the boats held all of the cans with ease, so we knew we needed more weight. We gave our four finalists a chance to fix any damage to their boats and two weeks later we had our second round. Our four finalists all did great, but ultimately, we got down to one winner, Kirsten!

We are grateful that we were able to reopen and continue to provide support to our amazing individuals!

Our newsletter is a great place to check out photos and learn more about what's happening at Austin's Place! You can also 'like' our Facebook page to stay up-to-date with information, events, photos, and more.

www.facebook.com/AustinsPlacePA

Out & About

By: Jaime Pallack

Since our re-open in June from the COVID-19 shutdown, we are trying to get out and about as much as we can.

We have been going to local parks, such as Deer Lakes Park to stroll around the lake and look at the ducks. If the weather stays nice enough, we take our lunch and have a picnic under a pavilion.

Another place we like to go is McConnell's Mills State Park to walk the trail and see the water fall or over to Moraine to stroll the bike trail and then hang out by the lake in the shade and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

In addition to those parks, we will also take a drive to North Park and swing. Getting out in nature is great, and it's easy to do while still maintaining important safety requirements during this ongoing pandemic.

When in doubt, we walk the trails we have right here at Austin's Place! Getting outside on campus here is the next best thing to getting out in the community.

Continued on Page 2



Out & About Continued

If we are getting a bit stir crazy from being cooped up, and the weather doesn't allow for us to go to the park, we'll go to Pittsburgh Mills to do some shopping. Of course, we continue to practice our social distancing and all who are able to wear their masks do so. We still occasionally like to go to lunch at the Butler Eat N Park too!

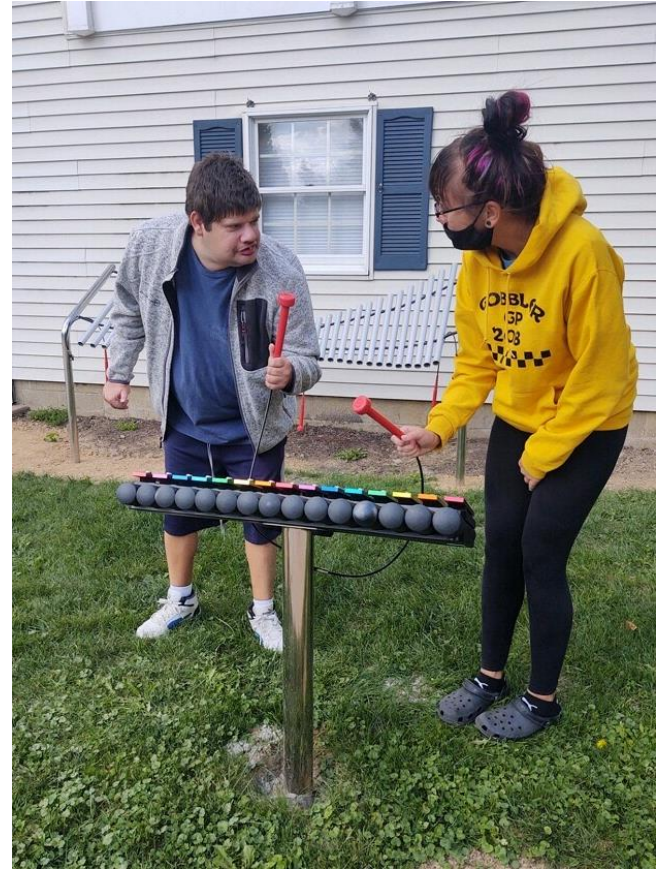
COVID-19 may have slowed us down, but it definitely hasn't and can't stop us fully!

Around AP

By: Megan Adams

As you can imagine, it has not been a typical summer here (or anywhere for that matter!) Staff and clients continue to go through their established routines while being more conscientious of how they are doing so. It has been a collective effort of everyone in the facility to practice the recommended safety protocols that have been established. Activities are limited to three participants at a time, but we are making the best of the situation and socialization continues at a minimum of 6 feet apart.

We are *almost* ready to officially open our new outdoor music garden for clients! New instruments installed include: Paillo Bells, Babel Large Drum, Harmony, Grand Floor Piano, and Cavatine Xylophone. We started with a few instruments at our Outdoor Therapeutic Recreation Center, and once we saw how popular they were, we knew we needed to add more. Music is very popular with all our clients, and calming. We look forward to enjoying this new feature soon. *Stay tuned for photos in our Fall Magazine.*



Asking Ally

By: Ally Ambrizana

All About Animals

Meet Ally! One of our awesome clients at Austin's Place. Each issue she'll be sharing information with us, whether it's something going on at Austin's Place, or a topic special to her. This issue, we're learning about Ally's Favorite Animals.

This Summer, Ally got to get up-close and personal with an Alpaca at Austin's Place! Her visit with FriendLee was her favorite animal visitor to Austin's Place so far because of how soft he was. And, she loved being able to pet him! If any animal could visit Austin's Place, she'd most want a pig to come because she thinks they are interesting and cute. We'll see what we can do Ally...

Her absolute favorite animals are elephants. She loves how big they are and how they can pick stuff up with their trunk. (We probably won't get one of those to Austin's Place, but maybe we can take a trip to the zoo to visit them!)

If Ally could be any animal for one day, she would choose a dog because they have good hearing and a good sense of smell.

Thanks Ally! We love our animal visitors at Austin's Place.

Have something you want to **Ask Ally**? Email us at info@austinsplace.org and your question might be included in an upcoming newsletter!



Donate to Austin's Place! Your contribution is truly appreciated. 100% of donations received will go toward providing quality programming and items to the young adults at Austin's Place.

- Our United Way contribution code/book number for donations is 12820486
- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Austin's Place when you shop at: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-1066002>.

The official registration and financial information of Austin's Place may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Gifts to Austin's Place are deductible as charitable contributions to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Giving Back

By: Samantha Wilczynski

Austin's Place, along with the rest of the world, is somewhat limited in what we can do and where we can go during this pandemic. So, individuals here have been spending their time working to create a healthy environment, which in turn keeps the community healthier. On any given day, you can find Patch wiping down his area while Ally is having conversations with staff and individuals, always making sure to wear her colorful mask and keeping a safe social distance. At the Therapeutic Recreation Center, Nick got right back into the routine of hanging out with staff and individuals but is always excited to help sanitize his area before leaving.

We were excited we could participate (virtually) in this year's Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. This is normally our biggest fundraiser of the year. While it may not have been the in-person community event we planned for, we created our own course on campus, complete with a photo booth and finish line! Thank you to our friends, family, and supporters for walking virtually with us this year, and donating to our fundraising campaign. We hope to see everyone in-person for the 2021 walk!

Here at Austin's Place, we've been doing our part to stay healthy and help our community stay healthy. It may not be the community service that we're used to here, but it will have to do for now. We eagerly await the day where we will be allowed to reenter the community and get back to giving back to the people and places around our second home, Austin's Place.

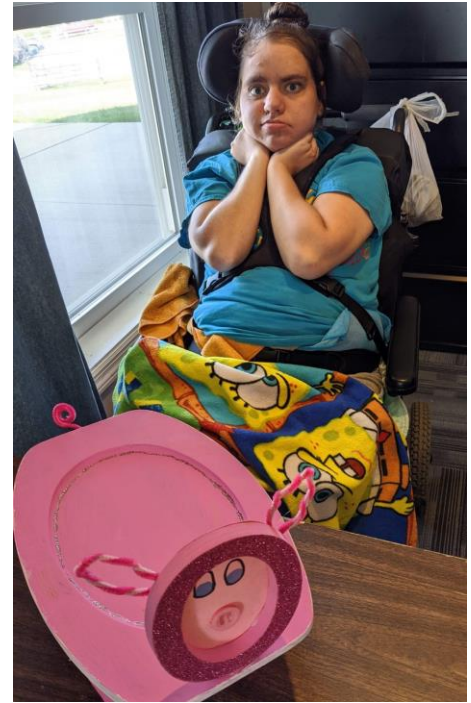


Events & Announcements

- Austin's Place is regularly accepting applications for experienced Direct Support Professionals and Nurses. Interested in working here? Email us your resume jobs@austinsplace.org.
- While we've held our annual Rummage Sale in the spring or summer in years past, this year has been unlike any other. We still plan to host this event sometime this fall. Thank you to those who have already reached out about the event and offered support and donations. We don't have specific(s) yet...stay tuned!
- Have a cool project, a musical talent, or something interesting and unique our clients might enjoy? We're always welcoming community members to share something with us, **keeping COVID-safety requirements** in mind. For example, in the past, we've had visits from turtles and an alpaca named "FriendLee," a local Fire Department (everyone loved seeing the big fire truck), a talented baton twirler, a fitness instructor, and a Pittsburgh business visit to do a science experiment with our staff. If interested, please email swilczynski@austinsplace.org.



A Summer Like No Other...



Austin's Place

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From the President...

Sorry we missed you this Spring! It hasn't been the year any of us could have seen coming... That being said, I am excited to share with you our Summer Issue of the quarterly newsletter, "AP Happenings."

Read through, check out the photos, and let us know what you think! Also, a big thank you to our staff, and our awesome client Ally for contributing to our second issue.

Thank you for your ongoing support. And don't forget – 'like' us on Facebook!

Bonnie Wilczynski, President



If you have any comments or questions regarding the AP Happenings Newsletter, or you'd like to be added to our electronic distribution list to receive newsletters and information about upcoming events, please contact the Public Relations Director at: AKurtz@austinsplace.org.