

FALL 2024

AP HAPPENINGS

Austin's Place Quarterly Newsletter

Fall Highlights

BY SARA HUBA

This fall, we had a great time at our Halloween party. Some of the fantastic costumes we saw were a UFO, a cupcake and a baker, fruit salad, a couple of skeletons, and even Miss Trunchbull from Matilda! We had fun passing out treats but had even more fun eating candy! When we were taking a break from eating our sweet treats, we played some Halloween games. We threw bean bags to knock over spooky cans, we played Halloween bingo and pin the scary sticker on the witch's hat. Once we got hungry again, we decorated Halloween cookies!

We also had our annual Don't Pea in the Pool challenge. If you're unfamiliar with this challenge, everyone builds a boat with things we can find around Austin's Place. Before we close the pool for the season, we test our boats to see how many cans of peas they can hold. This year, we had a 2-way tie for first, second, and third places! Taking first place, the boats were decorated like a pumpkin patch and a festive hayride.

Coming in second were two more awesome boats decorated like a bone yard and festive fall leaves! And last but not least, third place had boats decorated as a haunted horse arena and some more fall leaves. Check us out on Facebook to see pictures of the winning boats.

Luckily, we were able to spend some time outside with our friends at the Outdoor Therapeutic Center. We took leisurely walks on the trails and enjoyed watching the leaves falling in the woods. And of course, we got out as much as we could in the community!

We hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving!



All About Nick

BY MEGAN ADAMS

We love the Fall here at Austin's Place. It's a time to get spooky, cozy, and to reflect on everything we are thankful for. Some things that we are beyond grateful for is the opportunity to provide a needed service and for the staff and individuals who show up and work hard every day. One of those individuals is Nickolas.

Nick started with us in September of 2017 and has been thriving in his consistency ever since. Nick can be quite particular, but he is very consistent all the way from his attendance to his food. He loves routine throughout his day and doesn't like to be rushed.



Nick likes to help, and he's awesome at it. He assists with chores, copying paper, emptying the hole punch, cleaning up the floors, and he has proven to be a great volunteer when opportunities present themselves. Nick enjoys being out in the community, making choices for himself and meeting new people. He also enjoys leisure activities, such as walking, worksheets, sticker books, playing with slime, car rides, puzzles, and other sensory activities.

Nick is not one to shy away from telling you what he wants to do or how he's feeling. He mainly communicates with gestures; however, one of his goals here at Austin's Place is to work on utilizing his iPad for communication. He works hard on his goals, which also include engaging more with his peers and getting used to being in different places, both within the facility and in the community. Nick doesn't require too much assistance with many things, but he will accept some encouragement to keep going.

It has been great watching Nick branch out while also maintaining his level of desired consistency and routine. He is here every day with a warm smile on his face, a warm smile that will surely get us through the upcoming colder months. Stick through the winter with us and read about our next highlight...Jenny!





What's Happening?

BY SAMANTHA WILCZYNSKI

We would like to thank everyone for their generosity and participation at this year's Austin's Place Gala! Whether you were an event sponsor, donated to our auctions, sponsored a table, baked cookies, or simply helped us spread the word of the event, all of us at Austin's Place thank you! We also want to give a special thanks to our keynote speaker former Pittsburgh Steeler Charlie Batch, parent speaker Roy Cheran, auctioneer Lee Alan Hostetter and our board members and staff that helped make the evening possible. Keep an eye out for information about our 4th Annual Gala in 2025!



While we don't have many details yet, Austin's Place is excited to announce that we are once again participating in Pittsburgh's Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. Serving as one of our two biggest fundraisers of the year, the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community is fundraising walk that benefits local health and human service agencies. Highmark Inc. coordinates and underwrites the cost of the walk so that 100 percent of the money raised by walkers goes to the participating nonprofits. The primary goal of the Walk is to help participating organizations raise money for their individual missions, while also energizing and encouraging community members to have a greater hand in their health by becoming and staying physically active.



As our program continues to grow and expand, we continue to help raise awareness and funds to support the mission of Austin's Place. Our goal for the walk this year is to raise \$10,000 and with your help, we know we can reach that goal! The fundraising opens up on February 1, 2025 and will continue until the completion of the walk. No amount is too big or too small, the important thing is that we support the wonderful individuals at Austin's Place!

As always, thank you for your continued support and generosity! We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year! See you in 2025!



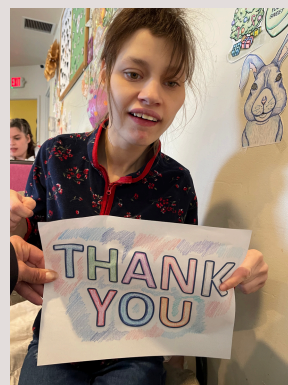
We Couldn't Do it without YOU.

BY BONNIE WILCZYNSKI

Shout-out to The Zelenople Rotary for letting us come to one of their meetings and share information about Austin's Place this fall (and thank you for attending the Gala too)!

THANK YOU to all our staff! We celebrated Employee Appreciation Month in October. Highlights included: Pittsburgh Penguin game(s), an Olive Garden catered lunch, a scavenger hunt for gift cards, and Austin's Place hoodies.

Lastly, thank you to ALL who made the 3rd Annual Austin's Place Gala a success - all the table sponsors, individuals, families and businesses that donated money, gift cards and items for the auctions; guests who attended, Charlie Batch for providing the keynote address, Laurie School for assembling the beautiful silent auction baskets; all our amazing cookie bakers; staff and board members who volunteered, and Dennis Deter from Deter Restaurant Enterprises LLC who catered the delicious food and coordinated everything with The Steamfitters Event Center.



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. Learn more about donation options: www.austinsplace.org/index.php/donate

Volunteer at Austin's Place

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. If interested, please email swilczynski@austinsplace.org.

Work at Austin's Place

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.

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.