

WINTER 2024

AP HAPPENINGS

Austin's Place Quarterly Newsletter



Winter Highlights

BY SARA HUBA

This winter, we had a blast celebrating Christmas. We must have been good, because Santa came and brought us a lot of gifts. We received fuzzy blankets and socks, fun board games, new CDs to jam out to, and some new puzzles, just to name a few of our wonderful gifts! We also had a ton of fun baking and decorating cookies and making gingerbread houses!

For our Valentine's Day party, we all made fun boxes to hold our treats. We have one that looks like a cat, Cinderella's castle, and a can of hairspray. One of them is Mailbox from Blue's Clues and another is a monster. We even have our snacks covered with one box with popcorn all over it and another with gummy bears! Make sure to check out Facebook for pictures of all of our Valentine's Day boxes!

And of course we had to update our bulletin boards for each holiday! We had fun getting in the Christmas spirit and decorating our boards with a lot of Christmas cheer and fun holiday lights. We had the Grinch stealing a Christmas tree board, a cozy fireplace, and one with Charlie Brown and his pal Snoopy. Then we switched gears for Valentine's Day. Lots of pink and red hearts were seen all over the facility. Next up: green for St. Patrick's Day!

We also continued to spend time out in the community. We went to local parks, such as Moraine, Deer Lakes Park, and Spring Valley Park when the weather was nice (and the Pittsburgh Zoo!). We got a ton of shopping done with stops to Walmart, Gabe's, and Target. We had a blast at Zone 28, Family Bowlaway, Kraynacks, and the movies. The Carnegie Science Center and the library were great places to learn! And of course, we had some great treats from Tropical Smoothie and Oakmont Bakery!

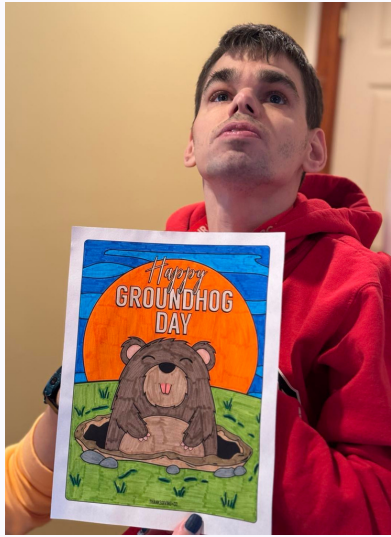
We can't wait to get back outside and enjoy the sunshine this spring!



All About...Bryan

BY MEGAN ADAMS

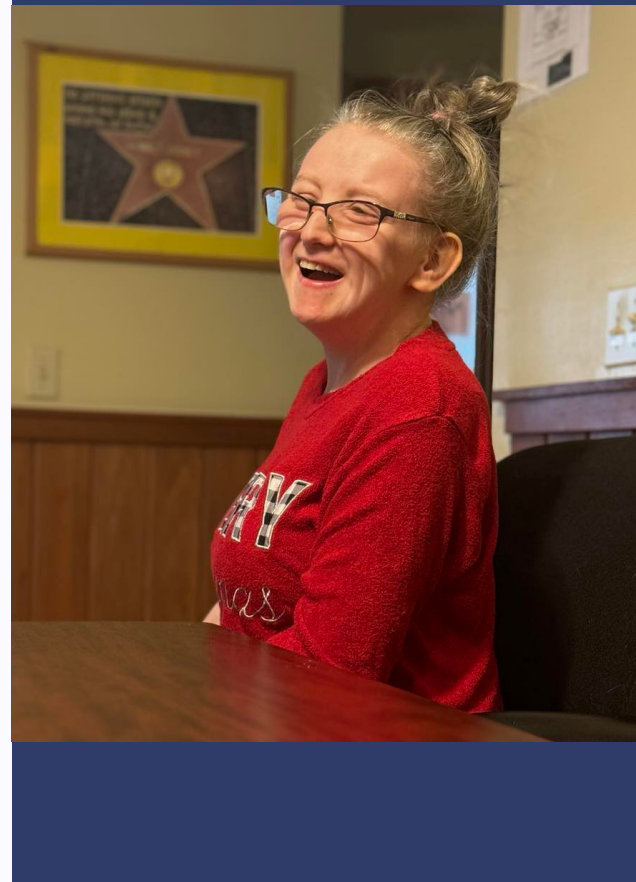
As we move our way through the winter months, we take the time to highlight our next individual...Bryan. Bryan joined us here at Austin's Place in December of 2016. He was the 5th individual to join our AP family and continues to make his presence known daily through his often busy and carefree demeanor and his fashionable sense of style. Bryan always looks his best while giving his best.



While here at Austin's Place, Bryan works on strengthening pro-social skills and peer to peer interactions, fine and gross motor skills through recreational activities, and independently feeding himself. Bryan also enjoys going out into the community with his peers. He particularly likes to hit up Five Below for new sensory objects and Moraine State Park for some well-deserved rest and relaxation in the sun.

Additionally, he enjoys getting out on the trails here at AP and, when his favorite time of year arrives, swimming. When he's not out in the community or wandering the facility grounds, he can be found relaxing in his favorite beanbag chair, recouping for the next adventure he may be on.

It has been wonderful to see Bryan grow over the last 7 years as he builds individual skills, positive relationships, and community inclusion. We look forward to seeing him continue to thrive. And, much like Bryan, we are all looking forward to the warmer months to come...as well as our next highlight... Phillip.





What's Happening?

BY SAMANTHA WILCZYNSKI

Have you heard about Highmark's Walk for a Healthy Community? The Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community is an annual fundraising walk that benefits local health and human service agencies. Highmark Inc. coordinates and underwrites the cost of the walk so that 100% 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. The secondary goal of the Walk is to energize community members to have a greater hand in their health by becoming or staying physically active.

Austin's Place is excited to announce that we are once again participating in Pittsburgh's Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. This year the walk will be held on Saturday June 22nd at Stage AE on Pittsburgh's North Shore. The walk begins with check-in and registration at 7:45am followed by a 5K walk at 9:00am and a 1-mile walk kicking off at 9:15am.

Austin's Place strives to provide the highest quality programming for the individuals we serve. One way we aim to achieve this is by offering as many opportunities as we can, both in house and out in the community. With your help from previous fundraising efforts, we were able to raise enough money to pave walking trails around our campus and purchase new vehicles to make getting active and healthy even easier.

This year we are asking for your help again! 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 \$5,000 and with your help, we know we can reach that goal!

Register to Walk or Donate Today:

http://hcf.convio.net/AustinsPlace_ButlerPA

** When you register to walk, you can sign up as an individual, create your own team, or sign up with the Austin's Place Team**

Thank you for supporting Austin's Place!



We Couldn't Do it without YOU.

BY BONNIE WILCZYNSKI

Austin's Place is THANKFUL for the families, friends, community members, and special guests who donate finances, items, and time (and talents) to our program. A special thank you to all the families and friends who donated holiday treats this season! We enjoyed many candies, cookies, chocolates, and more over Christmas.

This winter, we would also like to say a special THANK YOU (again) to Charlie Vrabel and Joe Voloch at No Off-season Sports (Russellton). Our clients love being able to use the indoor space during the colder months. Austin was even able to enjoy his Christmas present inside at the facility this winter!

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. 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.

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@AUSTINSPPLACE.ORG.