

PERSPECTIVES

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

December 2015



40th Anniversary of The Terrible Towel®

The Terrible Towel® celebrated its 40th anniversary at the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Cincinnati Bengals game on November 1. Twenty representatives of NHS Allegheny Valley School (NHS/AVS) were on the field for pre-game festivities and thanked Steelers Nation using the late-great Myron Cope's famous "yoi." Many clients and accompanying staff members stayed to enjoy the game and to honor Myron and The Terrible Towel.

In 1996, Myron Cope gave the ownership of The Terrible Towel trademark to Allegheny Valley School. Since then, the royalties from the sale of all officially licensed "Terrible Stuff" (including towels, ties, earrings, lapel pins, cookies, bibs, temporary tattoos and more) have come to NHS/AVS. The funds that NHS/AVS receives from The Terrible Towel are used to cover costs such as equipment, program development and renovations to our facilities. Since 1996, NHS/AVS has received nearly \$5 million from The Terrible Towel.



We're Hiring!

Are you, or someone you know, interested in making a difference in the lives of individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD)? We have many opportunities available for nurses, direct care professionals and more! Full-time, part-time and casual shifts are available. NHS/AVS offers competitive wages and great benefits.

For more information visit: avs.nhsonline.org/careers. Proud to be an equal opportunity employer M/F/D/V.

Thank you to our Donors!

For a full list of NHS Allegheny Valley School and NHS Human Services Foundation donors from July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015, visit avs.nhsonline.org.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Through generous support from the community, NHS/AVS has been able to enhance its programming to better serve the individuals in its care. During the past four years, funding has been secured for NHS/AVS to develop innovative programs that are expanding consumer options and greatly benefitting the individuals that we serve. **Highlights from 2015 include:**

Communications Technology

The ground-breaking Communications Technology (CT) demonstration project is now in its second year at NHS/AVS. This innovative program has equipped five community group homes and two program centers with wireless networks and internet-ready desktops, laptops and tablets which are loaded with a suite of applications developed by AbleLink Technologies. Clients have been learning how to use the technology safely and effectively to communicate with their families and friends, gain new skills and pursue other interests.

In October, NHS/AVS clients Jennifer and Gregg, along with Edward J. Zapp Program Center (Zapp) Instructor Karen Miller and Program Aide Dawn Corrie, presented at the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association conference in Seven Springs. Their session entitled "Leading Their Own Way" focused on the success of the project and included a video created by individuals in the program that showcased knowledge and skills that are developing from the project. The video was also presented at the Western PA Fall AVS Parents Association meeting, and a family day was held at Zapp where individuals demonstrated the amazing things they can now do from a laptop, iPad and desktop computer.

Focus areas on the computers and iPad include email, Skype, step-by-step multimedia tasks with instructions for work assignments and web buttons accompanied by lesson plans designed at the program center.

The CT Core Group has collected final data on the project and is now conducting a survey of family members and participants. The CT Core Group continues to meet every 6-8 weeks to ensure the program continues to meet its intended purpose and is positioned for future development. NHS plans to expand this program to sites in Central PA, Eastern PA and Virginia.

Pictured right: Gregg shows his mother and sister how he navigates through the new technology during family day at Zapp.



Living in the Smart Home

An essay by Tony

My name is Tony and I'm living at a Smart House with three other men. We enjoy the house a lot. Now we can get something out of the refrigerator and we love the independence. We can help so much more! We can get things out for next morning like our clothes. All of us participate more with daily chores now. We are able to help cook now too. We have a new stove. It is really cool because the food gets hot and the surface does not. If you were to put your hand on it you wouldn't get burned. It also can go up and down; now that is really, really cool! Some of the counters can go up and down too! Let's talk about the fridge. It is really nice! The shelves remind me of a store. It has all of our food in it. The kitchen sink is at a lower level so we can all use the sink. We all enjoy and look forward to using our new bathtub. We have an I-Pad to control the lights, blinds, and TV. Next spring I would like to do some yard work. I'm already asking staff to help me. We really do love our new house!



Memory Care

New this year for the Memory Care Home was the enhancement of the outdoor area, adding landscaping and a mural on the fence. The sunflower mural is not only beautiful but also helps to reduce glare from the sun shining into the home. Additional enhancements to the outdoor area will be coming in the spring! Inside the home we are looking to redefine some space in order to develop a small sensory area where the individuals can go for some time to themselves as needed. The individuals who live in the Memory Care Home continue to benefit from this specialized program.



Dental Sensory

NHS/AVS' Dental Sensory Program continues to thrive and be shared with others interested in the subject. A session entitled **Effect of Sensory Adaptations for Routine Dental Care in Individuals with IDD** has been presented by Sensory Consultant Cindy Potter at the following national conferences: July 2015 - Global Summit on Innovations in Health and IDD presented by the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD) in Los Angeles; and June 2014 - American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) annual meeting in Orlando. The study, which has demonstrated that including sensory in the dental suite helps to lower anxiety and improve dental care for a group that is prone to dental issues, is currently being prepared for submission to a medical journal.

Expansion at the SRPC

This November, the Slippery Rock Program Center opened the doors on a 2,600 square foot addition. The new wing includes staff offices, conference rooms, a training room and more. "For years the area administrators, and other key supportive services have been located at three different sites," comments Western Region Director Gary Hoffman. "We've been hoping to bring our administrative team into one location in order to have greater continuity and oversight of the programs in the area, and we are thrilled that this project has been completed."

Each weekday, nearly 100 individuals participate in activities at NHS/AVS' Slippery Rock Program Center. Most come to the Center from NHS/AVS community group homes in Butler and Mercer Counties, while the remaining individuals are clients from the community. Activities include vocational training, occupational and physical therapy, sensory programs and contract work opportunities.

NHS/AVS is grateful to AVS Foundation for its 2014 grant to the Capital Development Fund that has made possible this major improvement project.

Friends of NHS Allegheny Valley School Golf Open

Golfers gathered at Cranberry Highlands Golf Course on August 4 to raise funds for the Capital Development Fund and celebrate Guardian Protection Services as the 2015 AVS CHAMPion. Event Chairperson Skip Katich from HAR-KEL, Inc. Medical Specialties greeted the 99 golfers and introduced a performance by members of the NHS/AVS Pittsburgh Campus Choir before everyone headed-out for a golf scramble under clear blue skies.

During dinner, the 2015 AVS CHAMPion Award was accepted by Mary Lynn Moriarity, Communications Manager at Guardian Protection Services. The organization has been a supporter of our mission with contributions dating back more than 25 years. But beyond the financial support, the organization and its team members have, since 1997, come to NHS/AVS' Pittsburgh Campus each December to celebrate the holidays with the residents.

With support from sponsors, underwriters, golfers, donors and more, the event grossed \$120,000 for the Capital Development Fund.



Mary Lynn Moriarity (center) accepts the 2015 AVS CHAMPion Award on behalf of Guardian Protection Services.

Save the Date! The 25th Annual Friends of NHS/AVS Golf Open will be held on Monday, September 26, 2016 at Shannopin Country Club

Pittsburgh Campus Fountain in Honor of Senator Rocks

The Allegheny Valley School Parents Association dedicated the new Sensory Garden Fountain at Pittsburgh Campus to Senator M. Joseph Rocks. Stop by to enjoy the beautiful landscape and experience the relaxing atmosphere created by the bubbling fountain.



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Websites: avs.nhsonline.org & nhsonline.org

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MORE NHS/AVS HIGHLIGHTS

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Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix

The 33rd annual Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP), presented by the Greater Pittsburgh Automobile Dealers Foundation, ran from July 10-19 and included car shows, parades, a gala, concerts, vintage races and more.

Charity ambassadors Brandon (from NHS/AVS) and Anita (from the Autism Society) were joined by NHS/AVS clients Joe, Ed, Tony and Liz to represent the beneficiaries of the PVGP. At the Blacktie & Tailpipes Gala, Liz took to the airwaves with KDKA Radio to speak about NHS/AVS – she stole the show!

Members of the Pittsburgh Campus Choir performed The National Anthem at Pitt Race. Brandon, Joe, and Anita also attended Pitt Race and received a ride in the pace car. During the Race Weekend Opening Ceremonies Parade, ambassadors rode in convertibles through the park, waving to the 100,000+ car enthusiasts along the way.

Race weekend drew many spectators to Schenley Park to see spectacular cars of all ages, makes and models – including hundreds of Italian cars, the 2015 Marque of the Year. NHS/AVS hosted a tent at several venues throughout the week to share with the public who we are and what we do, and to invite people to explore employment opportunities with us.

Results from the 2015 PVGP will be announced at the Red CARpet Premiere on February 11, 2016. For more information and to buy tickets visit www.pvgp.org.

Thank you to the many employees, family members and friends who volunteered throughout race weekend!



Charity Ambassadors and staff members are joined by Mrs. Pennsylvania at Blacktie & Tailpipes Gala.

NHS/AVS Night at the Pirates Game

On August 3, 100 family members, friends, clients and staff members gathered at PNC Park in World Series Suites 1971 and 1979 to cheer on the Pittsburgh Pirates as they took on the Chicago Cubs. While this first ever event ended in a postponement, friends old and new shared a wonderful evening together. Despite the storm, there was much merriment in the suites, including door prizes, and dancing in the stands by the ladies of Ewings Mill II. The ladies and their accompanying staff members were some of the last to leave the suites that evening.

The game was re-scheduled to the afternoon of September 15, where the Pirates were victorious over the Cubs. The suites were once again filled with friends and clients from NHS/AVS, while the game was played under sunny skies.

Thanks to the underwriters and ticket buyers for supporting this first time event.

Pictured right: The Grubbs Guys and others at the September 15 game.



Projects of the Nicoden Fund

Through a grant received from the Walter F. and Ellen H. Nicoden Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, funding is available to support recreational activities and programs for NHS/AVS consumers and their accompanying staff members. During 2015, numerous opportunities have been funded through this bequest including:

Sailing the Three Rivers

More than 400 individuals from NHS/AVS took to Pittsburgh's Three Rivers on October 21. NHS/AVS clients and accompanying staff members celebrated the city and its beautiful waterways on the Gateway Clipper Fleet's Empress and Duchess. The two vessels traveled side by side, connected by a walkway.

Guests were greeted by the boat captains as they boarded the vessels and settled-in for an exciting journey. The cruise included lunch, delicious cookies made by the clients at the Zapp Center and a DJ whose music kept everyone dancing. The warm, sunny weather added to the excitement and brought many to the top deck of the boats to dance and enjoy the city views. The boats cruised past Station Square, the Carnegie Science Center, PNC Park, Heinz Field and many other well known spots that the clients love to visit.



Ladies from Ewings Mill II



Group from Pine Hollow I

Before boarding, Jen from Ewings Mill I shared with us that she had never been on a boat cruise. After the event she commented "I loved being with my friends on the boat."

Other Projects of the Nicoden Fund



Deb and Diane enjoy the Vecta Mobile Sensory Cart at Slippery Rock Program Center. The portable unit can be used throughout the building giving individuals more opportunities to experience sensory activities.



The ladies at Ohioview Group Home received a retractable awning for their back porch area. They are now able to be outside to play games and eat dinner on the porch under the awning that protects them from the sun.



In July, more than 200 clients and staff members celebrated the summer during the Philadelphia Program Center's Fun in the Sun Day. Activities included refreshments, live entertainment, a sand table, face painting, bubble car wash and misting tents.

George proudly displays a plate he made at Muddy Rose Pottery. Individuals from Brodhead II, Clearview, Malcolm and Fox Group Homes took part in pottery classes in 2015.



Six ladies and their accompanying staff members from Malcolm Group Home traveled to Virginia for a fun-filled vacation. They visited Busch Gardens amusement park, Water Country USA, Virginia Beach, Captain Jack's Pirate Adventure and Colonial Williamsburg.



Hummelstown Campus acquired new items for their sensory room including a bubble wall tower, oil diffuser and oils.