

# Independence

News from Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region ■ Winter 2008

Villa Park 830 S. Addison Ave. Villa Park, IL 60181 630.620.4433 phone 630.620.1148 fax 630.620.4436 tty	Naperville 1323 Bond St. Naperville, IL 60563 630.357.9699 phone 630.357.9908 fax	Elgin 799 S. McLean Blvd. Elgin, IL 60123 847.742.3264 phone 847.742.9436 fax
---	---	---

Published by: Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region  
Board of Directors Chairwoman: Margaret Resce Milkint  
President/CEO: Mary Alice D'Arcy

Visit our website!  
[www.eastersealsdvr.org](http://www.eastersealsdvr.org)



Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region \* Making Firsts Possible

## The Lily Garden

Exceptional Childcare!



Schedule a Tour Today!  
[www.eastersealslilygarden.org](http://www.eastersealslilygarden.org)  
630.261.6283

**50% off**

**Enrollment Fee** (Reg. \$100)  
Offer good on first time enrollment only.



### in this issue

Featured Children from  
The Book of Firsts

Wish Comes True for  
Cancer Survivor

Volunteer Serves Easter  
Seals for 50 years

Students Learn Meaning  
of Disability



give



challenge



celebrate

The mission of Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region is to enable infants, children and adults with disabilities to achieve maximum independence, and to provide support for the families who love and care for them.

# Independence

News from Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region ■ Winter 2008



live



empower



succeed

## A Family Shares Their Memories and Praise for The Lily Garden

August 15, 2008

To Our Easter Seals Family,

Over 13 years have passed since we started entrusting our children's care to you. Many of you have seen all three of our children grow. We'd have to say that choosing a childcare center is one of the most important decisions parents will make when both parents choose to work. Between Ray & me, we've collectively worked at six different employers (eight locations) and have moved three times since bringing Patrick here in June 1995. The one constant we always had during those changes was Easter Seals. There were times that we did look for a "more convenient" daycare—closer to home or longer hours, but in the end, they always came up short to what we've come to expect & require for our children.

I have fond memories of being able to come here at lunchtime to nurse all my children—Patrick, Shannon & Sean. When Shannon came along, I would feed her & then go into the Pre-K room & read a story to Patrick, while he held her, just before he went down for a nap. I tried that with Shannon when Sean came along, but because Shannon was only three years old, she wanted to leave with me if she saw me.

Patrick will be entering 8th grade this fall & is enrolled in all honors classes. I directly attribute this to the curriculum & structure of the Center. Shannon does well as she's set to enter the 3rd grade—reading being her favorite subject. She's even been in an after-school sign-language club—an interest that developed for her in Pre-K. Sean is more than ready to go to kindergarten. He informed me just this past Monday that he was too old for Easter Seals.

All of the kids have spent time as therapy helpers—enjoying it very much. I believe this time, along with the cultural diversity in the rooms over the years, has made them more accepting of people—seeing past anyone's special needs or physical limitations.

While we have too many good memories to recall (we'll miss the Christmas party in Oak Brook!), the best memory is the genuine interest & affection you've shown our family, most importantly our kids, over the past 13 years.

We will miss you all!

Sincerely,  
Ray & Jill Conniff



The Conniff Family with The Lily Garden teachers that have shaped their children's early childhood. From Left: Ray Conniff, Marcia Kobiella, Maureen Kestler, Silvia Sanchez, Kelly Lopresti, Sean Conniff, Jodi Cavelli, Jill Conniff and Tracey Stringini.

### The Lily Garden Childcare Facts

Serves infants through 6 years of age with and without disabilities.

Excellent curriculum that incorporates a play-based program philosophy.

Located in the Easter Seals Villa Park Center  
830 S. Addison Ave.  
Villa Park, IL 60181

Call 630.261.6283 or visit [www.eastersealslilygarden.org](http://www.eastersealslilygarden.org) for more information or to schedule a tour.



Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region \* Making Firsts Possible

from our book of firsts

"I said 'GO' - MY FIRST WORD!"  
Ivy Joy

"I went to my 1st prom. Jimmy asked me. Yea! My parents are so proud and happy! This surpassed anything they could have imagined for me!"  
Erin

"I said my 1st words in speech therapy since I lost all speech 2 1/2 years ago! Hip Hip Hooray!"  
Oliver

"I put on socks and braces by myself!"  
John

"I held a harmonica and blew it by myself in speech!"  
Joshua

"I rode my bike without training wheels!"  
Anna

"I tried new foods with Tara in session!"  
Liam

"I drove a power wheelchair for the first time!"  
Calvin

"I had my first conversation ever with mom on the way to speech today!"  
Brett



"I walked a mile with Laura Basi!"  
Shannon

**The 9th Annual Photography Exhibition**  
**The Book of Firsts**

Supported by the College of DuPage Photojournalism and Portraiture Students



Zachary

Born at 27 weeks and diagnosed with Down syndrome, Zachary spent almost the entire first year of his life in the NICU. He is a smart, happy, and loving 6 year old boy with a smile that can light up an entire room! Although he has multiple medical issues, because of his strength and determination, Zachary continues to overcome these challenges. He is in the hard of hearing/deaf program in school, where he has learned how to sign and make many new friends. With the help of his Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapists at Easter Seals, Zachary has made tremendous progress. This year, he jumped up from the ground for the first time! Our next goal? To jump off a small step! In his free time, Zachary loves to ride carousels, play his Baby Grand toy piano, and go to the park & the zoo. His parents feel truly blessed to have him in their lives.

On October 22nd, 2008, Easter Seals celebrated it's 9th Annual Photography Exhibition: The Book of Firsts in collaboration with the College of DuPage Photojournalism and Portraiture students.

Within each Easter Seals Center, a "Book of Firsts" sits in the lobby for children to write the important milestones they have accomplished at Easter Seals. This year, 24 children were selected out of "The Book of Firsts" to be featured in the photography exhibit. These milestones are both large and small for these children but all of them help the child towards their goal of independence. Some of the photographers were even lucky enough to catch these "firsts" on camera.

Terry Vitacco, College of DuPage Associate Professor of Photography and Coordinator of the Photography Exhibit, brought something new to this year's exhibit. She encouraged her students to create sound slides for their final class project. Her students took this oppor-

tunity to truly capture the essence of the child and family with whom they were partnered. The sound slides share numerous photographs of the children as well as inspiring music, parent testimonies, and a wonderful creative element that reveals the hope and love these families share.

Easter Seals is grateful for this partnership with the College of DuPage Photography Department. A special thank you is extended to the photographers for the time and talent they have generously given and to all of the participating families for providing the photographers such gracious access to their children.

Since 1942, Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region has been helping children walk, sit-up, ride a bike, and say "I love you" for their first time. You can help children in your own community have their very own "first" by donating, volunteering, and supporting the efforts of Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region.

2008 Photography Exhibition Featured Children and Photographers



**Anna & Graham**  
PHOTO BY NANCY O'SULLIVAN  
We were promoted to Pre-K in The Lily Garden!



**Ben, Graham, Cade, and Owen**  
PHOTO BY MICHELLE IRVING  
We have all achieved "firsts" at Easter Seals & in The Lily Garden.



**Billy & Mackenna**  
PHOTO BY JENNIFER SCHLESINGER  
At The Lily Garden we help our friends with special needs.



**Caitlin**  
PHOTO BY MEGAN DIBBLEE  
I can stand with assistance, communicate using sign language, and read some words!



**Caroline**  
PHOTO BY SANTOKH KOCHAR  
I learned sign language and how to say a few words!



**Christopher**  
PHOTO BY AMANDA GRABENHOFER  
I just received my driver's permit!



**Cody**  
PHOTO BY LAUREN VITIELLO  
I can sit on my own, eat "big boy" food, and drink from a straw!



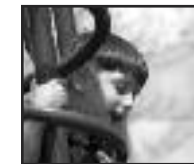
**Dylan**  
PHOTO BY MICHELLE IRVING  
I can stand up, walk independently, draw a square, and identify 43 butterfly species!



**Esteban Jesus**  
PHOTO BY MARITA BLANKEN  
I told my Mom, "I love you Mommy!"



**Gina**  
PHOTO BY CATHY LUCKHART  
I ate my first peanut butter and jelly sandwich!



**Giovanni**  
PHOTO BY CHRISTINA WEHBE  
I can now say my "k" and "g" sounds!



**Iris**  
PHOTO BY CYNTHIA LEHMAN  
I can climb up a suspended ladder, walk up and down stairs without rails, and dress myself!



**Ivy Joy**  
PHOTO BY MAUREEN BALL  
I walked for the first time!



**Logan**  
PHOTO BY ROB KRUEGER  
I can speak in 5-6 word sentences!



**Luca**  
PHOTO BY NANCY O'SULLIVAN  
I sat by myself for 16 seconds!



**Nicholas**  
PHOTO BY GARY GHERTNER  
I can ride my bike, play soccer and basketball, draw, paint and take care of my dog, Tasha!



**Nolan**  
PHOTO BY NATHAN BERARDI  
I can roll, crawl, and take independent steps!



**Quinn & Abigail**  
PHOTO BY LISA VAUGHN  
The Lily Garden grows our imagination and independence!



**Renee**  
PHOTO BY MICHELLE GEOGA  
I can drink from a cup and eat solid foods!



**Ryan**  
PHOTO BY PETER MASLOWSKI  
I walked by myself in my walker!



**Sam**  
PHOTO BY MICHELLE GEOGA  
I went on vacation with my family and rode on an airplane for the first time!



**Sullivan**  
PHOTO BY STEVEN VAN DYKE  
I ate a carrot, green pepper, and cucumber!



**Yazmine**  
PHOTO BY AMANDA GRABENHOFER  
I can stand straight in my walker and hold up my head to see my dog!



**Zachary**  
PHOTO BY ANN MEHRMAN  
I jumped up from the ground for the first time!

See the pictures in **full color**, read the **children's biographies** and view the **College of DuPage students' sound slides** at [www.eastersealsdfvr.org](http://www.eastersealsdfvr.org)



## Easter Seals Helps Make a Wish Come True for Cancer Survivor

Easter Seals helps make a wish come true for an eight year old cancer survivor. Katelyn Bayne, of Roselle, Illinois, had a wish to be able to walk. She wanted to play and dance - just like a typical child. To help make her wish come true, Katelyn participated in the Easter Seals SuitABILITY Therapy Program.

When Katelyn was 10 months old, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor called Medulloblastoma. She immediately had surgery to remove the tumor and went through chemotherapy and radiation for 18 months. Although she has been tumor-free for seven years, she still faces limiting physical effects due to the cancer.

To help make the wish of walking come true for Katelyn, her Easter Seals physical therapist, Leslie Cuevas, referred her to the SuitABILITY Therapy Program.

SuitABILITY is an intensive therapy program that treats children with neuromuscular disabilities. Easter Seals' preliminary test scores indicate that in this three-week program, many children make the same amount of progress that they typically make with one year of regular therapy.

This June, Katelyn began the SuitABILITY Therapy Program. She was fitted for a TheraSuit (originally designed by Russian scientists for cosmonauts to minimize the physical effects of weightlessness in outer space). The TheraSuit provides joint compression, which triggers muscle activity and diminishes muscle weakening and loss of bone density.

In therapy, Katelyn performed various strengthening and functional activities while wearing her TheraSuit. After she had therapy in the suit, functional activities were practiced without the suit



Katelyn Bayne with her Physical Therapist Leslie Cuevas

in order to ensure carryover into her daily life. "In just one week of therapy, she has made so much progress," said Lori Bayne, Katelyn's mother. "Before the program, the most she would walk on her own was 20 steps and now she is able to walk 150 steps! She has always been an extremely happy child who has never let her disability get her down. It has been so great to see how proud she is of herself when she sets goals and is able to meet them."

### SAVE THE DATE!

- Family Resource Expo**  
March 14, 2009
  - Gala Benefit**  
March 21, 2009
  - Run for the Kids**  
May 9, 2009
  - Golf Outing**  
June 15, 2009
  - Conquer the Carillon**  
June 20, 2009
  - Fashion Show**  
September 26, 2009
  - 10th Annual Photography Exhibit**  
October 21, 2009
  - Chair Hockey for Chair-ity**  
November 12, 2009
- Visit the Events page on [www.eastersealsdvr.org](http://www.eastersealsdvr.org) for more information.

### 6th Annual Run for the Kids

Spring might seem months away but it will be here before you know it! Get those sneakers out for the upcoming Run for the Kids on May 9, 2009. Whether walking, running, or volunteering, all abilities and skill levels are encouraged. Smiles are broad and spirits are high - and it's all to benefit children whose families haven't the means to pay for needed therapy.

Save a bit and pre-register by May 1, 2009 online at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com).

Day of Race registration fee is \$25.

Call 630.282.2029 or email [kliss@eastersealsdvr.org](mailto:kliss@eastersealsdvr.org)



The Matusik Family at the 5th Annual Run for the Kids

### Thank You to The Run 2008 Corporate Sponsors

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Buca di Beppo                   | Jamba Juice                       |
| UPS                             | J.J. Kelley's                     |
| M&M Orthopedics                 | Kellogg Company                   |
| Jewel-Osco                      | REI                               |
| Downers Grove North High School | The Tender Trapp                  |
| Direct Action Club              | Travelin' Tunes Mobile DJ Service |

### continuing education courses

**Baby Treatment Series: Part I**  
Assessing & Treating the 0-6 Mos. Old  
Diane Fritts Ryan, OTR/L  
January 31, 2009

**Using the Concepts from the TEACCH Program to Help Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders**  
Roger Cox and Susan Boswell from the University of North Carolina  
February 5 - 6, 2009

**Baby Treatment Series: Part II**  
Assessing & Treating the 6-12 Mos. Old  
Diane Fritts Ryan, OTR/L  
February 21, 2009

**Understanding Sensory Integration: Implications for the Clinic and Home Settings**  
Kim Bryze, OTR/L  
February 27 - 28, 2009

**Pediatric Gait Course: Multiple Intervention Strategies**  
Patricia Martin, P.T.  
March 6 - 7, 2009

**Baby Treatment Series: Part III**  
Assessing & Treating the 12-18 Mos. Old  
Diane Fritts Ryan, OTR/L  
March 21, 2009

**Ball Techniques in the Treatment of the Pediatric Patient**  
Barbara Hypes, P.T.  
March 27 - 28, 2009

**Biomedical Approaches and Nutrition: Interventions to Improve Behavior, Cognition and Development**  
Kelly Dorfman and Anju Usman, M.D.  
April 23 - 24, 2009

**Advanced Pediatric Aquatics**  
Jane Styer-Acevedo, P.T.  
May 3 - 4, 2009

**Vision, Movement, Play: Getting it All Together (Assessing and Treating the 0-3 Year Old Child With Neurological and Visual Challenges)**  
Linda Baker Nobles, MS, OTR/L  
Diane Fritts Ryan, OTR/L  
May 15 - 16, 2009

**\*Now Available Through Easter Seals! The P.A.L.S.S. Club (Practice and Learn Social Skills) Curriculum Guide & 3 Hour Phone Consultation**

For updated course listings and registration materials please visit [www.eastersealsdvr.org/continuingeducation](http://www.eastersealsdvr.org/continuingeducation)

Email: [ce@eastersealsdvr.org](mailto:ce@eastersealsdvr.org) or call 630.282.2021 to be put on our Continuing Education mailing list.

## Easter Seals Thanks Martha Waltemade for 50 Years of Service

For Martha Waltemade, volunteering for and supporting Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region has been a labor of love for nearly 50 years. In March of 1959, Waltemade began volunteering as the wife of a board member at the "little red school house" building on Park Avenue in Villa Park.

"I fondly remember sweeping water out of the entry way before the open house event that year in my high-heels and gloves!" said Waltemade.

Fortunately, Waltemade was not discouraged by that experience. She has participated in two capital campaigns as a volunteer and donor to improve and expand Easter Seals services into the Madison Middle School building and the current Rosalie Dold Center for Children in Villa Park. Throughout the years she has organized Tag Days, served as a member of the Gala committee and has attended as many as 40 Annual Meetings, 25 Galas, and 29 Fashion Show events. Her most recent role was to conceive and organize the Easter Seals Flowers from Friends Project to beautify the landscaping at the Villa Park location. From May through October, Easter Seals clients,



staff, volunteers and our neighbors enjoyed beautiful gardens resplendent of color throughout the Easter Seals parking areas.

"During my almost-50 years of association with Easter Seals I have witnessed with amazement and great respect both how clients and their families deal with their disabilities, and what wonderful services they receive there from a dedicated and supportive staff," said Waltemade. "I've loved watching Easter Seals grow in size and stature. Being a part of that growth in many diverse ways has made me feel like a member of a very special "family" and has enriched my life. The benefits of giving are reflex: as you give so will you receive. Join me in making this great cause your priority too."

For information on Easter Seals volunteer opportunities call 630.261.6240.

## Kiwanis Club of Villa Park

Over the last five years, the Kiwanis Club of Villa Park has donated nearly \$9,000 to Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region. Their generosity has provided funding for needed equipment for the SuitABILITY program and the Physical and Occupational Therapy Departments.

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time. The Kiwanis Club of Villa Park is a shining example of this. Each year, this group of dedicated Kiwanians raise

money and give scholarships to Willowbrook High School students, respond to Villa Park residents who need assistance throughout the year, and support various local organizations. Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region is honored to be among one of the many groups that receives financial support from the Kiwanis Club of Villa Park.



## grants

From September 2007 - July 2008

**Jeanine Jasica Foundation**  
Assistive technology equipment

**Grace Bersted Foundation**  
Comprehensive communication system for all of our Centers

**George M. Eisenberg Foundation**  
General Operating

**Kolschowsky Foundation**  
General Operating

**Sherman Health Foundation**  
Fee assistance for children who receive therapy at our Elgin Center

**McWethy Foundation**  
General Operating

**Knippen Charitable Foundation**  
General Operating

**Amicus Foundation**  
Social service support: A part-time Parent Liaison, a new parent orientation program, a summer sibling support group, and updates for the parent/sibling family room

**Hoffer Foundation**  
Fee assistance for children who receive therapy at our Elgin Center

**Quality Counts Child Care**  
Classroom furniture; kitchen counters, sink and shelving for The Lily Garden childcare center

**EFS Foundation**  
Fee assistance for children who receive therapy at our Elgin Center

**Seigle Family Foundation**  
Fee assistance for children who receive therapy at our Elgin Center

**David and Roberta Olsen Family Foundation**  
Parent's Night Out, opportunities for parents to share feelings, gain strength and support from other parents with similar experiences

**DuPage Community Foundation**  
Part-time Social Worker

**Colonel Stanley R. McNeil Foundation**  
Motivational/information seminars for families and children with disabilities

## Summer Fun for Easter Seals Siblings

This summer, over 646 Easter Seals siblings were once again able to enjoy the Summer Sibling Support Group, thanks to a generous grant provided by the AMICUS Foundation. This support group provided brothers and sisters of children with special needs with an opportunity to share their feelings and common experiences with others who understand their situation. Activities such as art projects, storytelling, and role-playing took place along with sharing experiences, exploring feelings, and solving problems.

"I had several parents tell me they couldn't be more grateful to have this program," said Mary Alice D'Arcy,



president and CEO, Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region. "They feel that their children, who are the sibs who use the program, felt so important to have THEIR OWN Easter Seals program. The program also gave parents the opportunity to learn more from the therapy sessions which their disabled child was having because there were fewer distractions. This is clearly a highly valued program. We are extremely grateful for all of the support and funding the AMICUS Foundation has provided our Social Service Department to make it possible to provide the support our families need."

## Grace Bersted Gives Gift of Communication

Over the past eight months Easter Seals has been transitioning into a new comprehensive communications system provided through a grant from the Grace Bersted Foundation. The new communication system provides Easter Seals with an opportunity to bring all therapists and administrative staff throughout the Easter Seals Centers (Villa Park, Elgin, and Naperville) under one communication system.

Prior to receiving the Grace Bersted grant, staff struggled working with an old and outdated communications system. The previous system did not have the adequate qualities to allow staff to receive voicemails in a timely fashion, clinical staff did not have their own phone numbers and many did not have their own phones. On heavy call days, calls were dropped or lost and the system was not able to be repaired

if it were to crash, which was inevitable due to the age and quality of the system.

As a result of the grant: All therapists now have a telephone number, telephone calls can be forwarded to any Center, if a therapist has a voicemail they are notified via email. The new comprehensive communication system will last over 15 years providing Easter Seals with the technology to grow with the needs of the organization and communities it serves.



## Students Learn the Meaning of Disability

Throughout this past spring, the 5th and 6th grade classes at St. Petronille Catholic School in Glen Ellyn made a special commitment to support Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region and encourage Disability Awareness within their school.

The students organized penny wars, a free-throw contest, a craft show and many participated in the Easter Seals Run for the Kids to raise funds to provide an Easter Seals client with a scholarship for the SuitABILITY Therapy Program. The students raised nearly \$3,000 in their efforts.

"We wanted this to be a learning experience for our students," said John Nevins, 6th grade science and religion teacher, St. Petronille Catholic School. "We did not just want them to go home and ask their parents for money. We wanted them to be creative and learn how to use their skills to raise the money needed to provide this service."

At the time, a full scholarship for the SuitABILITY program cost \$6,000. To help the students reach their goal, Heather and Bob Bartell graciously

donated \$3,000 to match the students' efforts. The Bartell's are parishioners of St. Petronille Catholic Church and Bob Bartell is a member of the Easter Seals Board of Directors.

"Bob and I are thrilled to be a part of such a wonderful project with two organizations that mean so much to our family," said Heather Bartell.

Thanks to the students at St. Petronille Catholic School and the Bartell Family, Easter Seals provided SuitABILITY to a child who could not otherwise afford this life-changing service. The Easter Seals SuitABILITY program provides intense physical and occupational therapy services as well as nutrition therapy consultation. Children with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, developmental delays, traumatic brain injury, post-stroke, ataxia, athetosis, hypertonia and hypotonia have made significant gains as a result of this intense therapy program and Easter Seals is grateful to the donations of the community to provide this service to children in need.



Above: John Nevins and Amy Liss with St. Petronille students at the Easter Seals Run for the Kids.

Below: Amy Liss with St. Petronille students at the Ice Cream Celebration of their efforts



## And Then I Met Amy

Amy Liss, an Easter Seals client and employee, visited the St. Petronille classes and shared her story of growing up with cerebral palsy and being a spastic quadriplegic. This visit gave the students inspiration to write their very own books on Disability Awareness. Each class wrote their book on how they perceived people with disabilities and what they feel now, after meeting Amy.

Excerpt from the 6th grade book, And Then I Met Amy:

"Before Amy came in I thought that disabled kids had little hope and that they would always be disabled and grow up and become pretty much nothing. I always care about them though. I try to make them feel like a normal person and cheer them up when they feel bad. I also thought that they might be mad at God for creating them different. I didn't think they would have a happy life. Now that Amy came in I have complete hope in them. I didn't even know Easter Seals could do what they did to Amy and many other kids. I really liked how Amy seemed so joyful and happy. I also like how she was happy with how God created her. Easter Seals is very helpful. They buy very helpful toys and things, such as wheelchairs that can lean back and keyboards where the letters that are used the most are easy to find and much more. If I was disabled I would feel like I was in good hands with Easter Seals."

- Andrew, St. Petronille 6th grader



Amy Liss with St. Petronille 6th Graders receiving the And Then I Met Amy books.

