

A Newsletter for Friends of Oak Hill

REACH

Response
Empower
Awareness
Connect
Help

INDEPENDENCE THROUGH INNOVATION & INTEGRATION



"I want to share our story so other parents will know about Oak Hill's training program. It has meant complete emancipation for my daughter, Alexi," explained Bo Page, her Mom. After receiving minimal help in mainstream education, the Page family found the Blind Vocational Services Program at Oak Hill. The adaptive technology evaluation conducted by Nicole Feeney and Steve Famiglietti, along with their subsequent recommendations and training, helped Alexi learn valuable technology skills to prepare for college, connect with friends and boost her confidence.

"If someone told me a year ago that she would be navigating the Internet to do research, complete forms and take classes online I would never have believed it, and within a year's time!" exclaimed Bo. "Alexi accomplished this with the added challenge of having cerebral palsy. Now she is empowered."

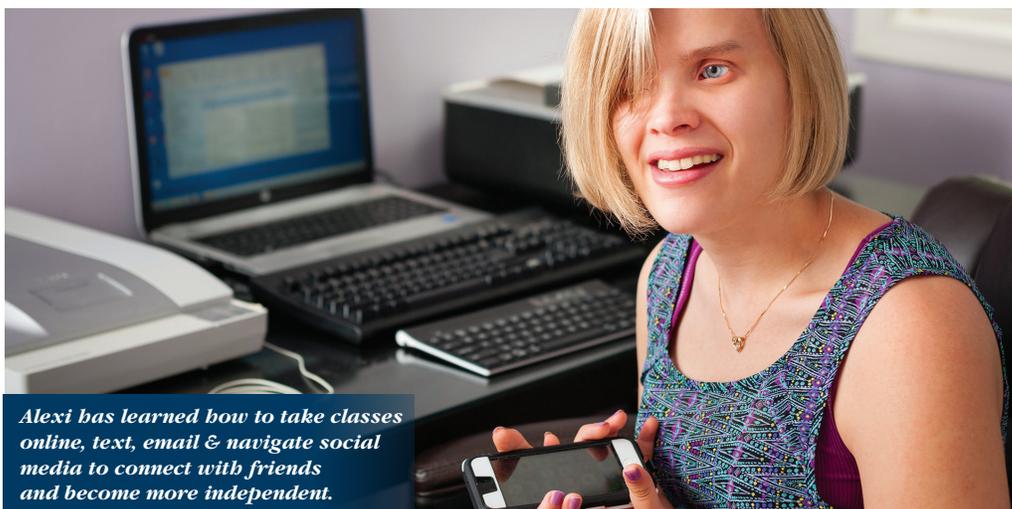
independence

"Can't say enough about the impact Oak Hill has had on my daughter and her ability to function alongside her sighted peers. Without it, she would not be prepared for college."

- Bo Page, Alexi's Mom

The Oak Hill staff had a deep understanding of her needs. Her trainer, Steve Famiglietti, immediately pinpointed Alexi's abilities and focused on her can-do attitude and strong desire to learn. "This saved her," Bo said. "Until then, we were only told what Alexi could not do."

Steve explained, "No one knew what she could do, so no one gave her a chance. This can lead to hopelessness. Alexi was like a sponge, willing to do all the work and try new things. (Continued on page 2)



Alexi has learned how to take classes online, text, email & navigate social media to connect with friends and become more independent.

**Chapter 126
Opens this
Fall. Join us!**

**Open Houses &
Sports Clinics:**
October 25 &
November 1, 2014
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Coming Attractions

Alexi's Story

(Continued from cover)

That's half the battle. She could read Braille and had good listening skills. So we said, she should be using a Braille display and listening to audio books. That's what we do: We match the abilities a person already has to the right technology to move them forward."

"It's been a game changer for Alexi," Bo said. "As parents, it means everything to know that your kids are going to go out into this world and do well. She is so much happier now."

Bryan Page, Alexi's Dad, added, "It's been a big relief for us. We were quite worried. We weren't sure what was going to happen."

Steve said, "As a society, we need to stop thinking that people who are blind or visually impaired can't do anything. We need to challenge and believe in them. I am happy Alexi finally got what she deserved."

Alexi shared, "This program made me feel more comfortable and helps me believe that I can be independent. I plan to go to college to study Sociology and live in a dorm with my friends. I want to thank Oak Hill for teaching me these skills. I hope they can help other blind people to help make their lives easier."

400,000
Close to 400,000 people in CT have some kind of disability.

Letter from President

There are so many wonderful things happening at Oak Hill. I am excited that the dream of building a sports and fitness center designed specifically for people with physical disabilities has come true – the first of its kind in New England. You can read more about it in the accompanying story, and we look forward to the grand opening in October. Oak Hill School also recently opened a new classroom, increasing enrollment. Our staff have been presenting at conferences to share our expertise in assistive technology. Progress is everywhere here and it just keeps growing.

Since becoming CEO, I've talked to as many people as possible about my vision for the future of Oak Hill: to expand and transform our programs and services to meet the changing needs of the communities and those we serve. Our first step was embracing the Mentoring Project and looking at specific ways to provide better person-centered care.

As we move forward, we will continually need to reshape the way we do business overall. While we are proud of the quality of our services, by staying focused on our mission and values, our record of success, and the diverse talent and energy of everyone connected to Oak Hill, we can enhance our traditional service delivery models and become even more efficient and effective.

In that spirit of continuous improvement, I'm pleased to announce that Oak Hill has launched an initiative to identify opportunities that will enable us to chart the path forward. We will develop new ways to build the winning environment that will support innovation, integration, independence, and our future growth and success. This effort will allow us to operate more efficiently and further our mission.

To this end, we have created a new awareness campaign. It includes a redesigned Oak Hill logo, making it something distinct, uplifting and recognizable. Our new tag line, Empowering People with Disabilities, speaks to our person-centered approach, to make people stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their lives and claiming their rights.

We have also given the newsletter a facelift and new name: **REACH**. Respond, Empower, Awareness, Connect, and Help. These words speak to the importance of your giving and overall support, and how we can work together to empower people with disabilities.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Barry M. Simon, MA, MPH



innovation Using NASA-patented, un-weighted technology, our state-of-the-art AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill helps people rehab by enabling more intense therapy with less stress to affected joints and tissues. This puts our members on a path to faster, optimal ability.



CHAPTER 126 ADAPTIVE SPORTS & REC FACILITY OPENS THIS FALL!

The dream has become a reality. Oak Hill's Chapter 126 Sports & Fitness, An Oak Hill Center will open next month thanks to supporters and believers like you.

Our 25,000 square foot center will empower people with physical disabilities by offering state-of-the-art equipment and certified staff. This will lead to healthier lifestyles by engaging them in adaptive and supportive exercise and health education.

Chapter 126 will offer a sliding-scale membership to help everyone afford to lead a healthier life.

The facility will house a gymnasium with a high school regulation basketball court. We will offer **Sports Programs** to veterans, youth and adults with physical disabilities (and their families and friends!) such as sit volleyball, goal ball, wheelchair basketball and handball.

The **Fitness Center** is designed with accessibility in mind and will feature specialized strength training pieces, treadmills, cycles, body steppers and more. Locker rooms are fully accessible.

The **Community Center** will make everyone that comes to Chapter 126 feel like they are part of the Oak Hill family. Members will have access to computers and literature, socialize in our canteen, and attend health clinics & seminars.

With your help, we are making this unique adaptive center possible. For naming opportunities and other ways to contribute, please call Ruth Hayes, Chief Development and Communications Officer at 860.769.3834 or email at Ruth.Hayes@OakHillCT.org.

integration Oak Hill will purchase 20 All Sports Chairs at \$1050 each. This will allow both able-bodied and people with disabilities to play sports, like wheelchair hand ball, alongside each other. If you are interested in assisting with the purchase of a chair, please contact the Development Office at 860.769.3834.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following companies for their contribution of \$2,500 or more in support of Oak Hill's programs and services:

Major Corporate Partners

Advanced Wheels of Technology
Avon Auto Wholesalers, Inc.
B.T. Lindsay & Co., Inc.
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Connecticare, Inc.
Hancock's Pharmacy & Surgical, Inc.
Manafort Brothers, Inc.
Monaco Ford
Wentworth, DeAngelis & Kaufman
Willis of Connecticut, LLC

Corporate Partners

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Connecticut Home Interiors
Connecticut Natural Gas
Connecticut Pharmacy
CompuMail Corporation of CT, Inc.
Eddie's Bradley Auto Body & Sales, Inc.
Fusion Cable Systems
Gaffney, Bennett and Associates
R.A. Georgetti & Co.
The Hanover Insurance Group
May, Bonce & Walsh, Inc.
Medline Industries, Inc.
Reid & Riege, PC
Webster Capital Finance

Grants Awarded to Oak Hill

Thank you to the following foundations for their support:

Bank of America, U.S.Trust
Harry F and Carol H. Barnes Family Foundation
Anthony F Bauer Trust
CT Council of Family Service Agencies
The Ensworth Charitable Foundation
The Fisher Foundation
The Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust
George & Grace Long Foundation
The Main Street Community Foundation
Katherine L. McDonald Family Trust
NewAlliance Bank Foundation
The Lily Palmer Fry Memorial Trust
Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
Clinton S. Roberts Foundation, Inc.
Charles Nelson Robinson Fund
The TJX Foundation, Inc.
The Solomon & Katie Wohl Foundation
Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation, Inc.



Summer at Oak Hill Camp

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 10, 2014 (5pm-9pm)

BEER TASTING FUNDRAISER

Oak Hill and Thomas Hooker Brewery team up again for a beer tasting fundraiser.

Place: Thomas Hooker Brewery, Bloomfield CT

October 30, 2014 (9am-3pm)

TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

The Threading of Accessibility Across Technology Platforms

Learn how to easily integrate a plethora of diverse devices into your learning environment.

Place: NEAT Center at Oak Hill

For more event information: http://neatmarketplace.org/news_events/event_calendar.asp

To donate today, visit OakHillCT.org or contact Ruth Hayes at 860.769.3834 Ruth.Hayes@OakHillCT.org

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Hancock Pharmacy: *Greg Hancock*

independence

"I would tell donors that Oak Hill provides an exceptional home environment, which helps their residents thrive. If you want your donations to do real work to improve lives, you could not make a better choice."

"I will donate to any program, as long as it benefits the clients," Greg explains. "Our relationship is mutually beneficial. On a personal level, having worked with Oak Hill for years has allowed me to build close relationships with their staff and nurses at the group homes, which helps me better understand their needs. As Oak Hill has grown, we have grown with them, I see our relationship continuing to expand in the future."



Greg Hancock donates from the heart. Recently he shared his views with us on giving, "I think the summer camp is a wonderful program." As much as money is

needed to make sure the medical needs of residents are met, we have to remember that these are people, not patients. The camp allows them to have a real vacation. Simple things like ice cream on a hot summer day can be enough to bring a smile to a face and create a lasting memory."

"I became a Corporate Partner because I want to give back to Oak Hill. We see their residents often and know the staff well. That makes me confident that my donation is going to a place that is providing exceptional care to those who need it most."

ABOUT HANCOCK PHARMACY

Length of relationship with Oak Hill: 20+ years

Business type: Family- owned and operated pharmacy since 1959

Locations: Meriden & New Haven

Services to Oak Hill: Provides pharmacy, consultancy & delivery services to group homes across Connecticut

Good to know: Open 365 days a year, regardless of weather