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OUR GOAL

**Thrive empowers
individuals to focus on
ability and find
opportunities to shine.**



**WANT TO RECEIVE
OUR NEWSLETTER
ONLINE?**

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Stay up-to-date with what's happening at Thrive Support & Advocacy. Sign up today and become a part of the Thrive community where abilities are celebrated, nurtured and shared.



Thrive participants checking out the sights in New Orleans before cruising to Cozumel.

In this Issue

FAMILIES FOCUS

Youth Empowerment
Young Adults in Action
Creating Future LEADers

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Thrive's Travel Adventure

COMMUNITY LIVING CORNER

A Healthy Lifestyle is Sandy's
Way To Shine

Message From Mike



For more than forty years, Greater Marlboro Programs promoted the personal growth, dignity, and acceptance of people with developmental disabilities in MetroWest and beyond. We have stayed true to our mission of empowering individuals to lead rich, active and self-directed lives while supporting their families.

As we continue to grow, add services and expand our reach, we have chosen a new name, Thrive Support & Advocacy, to better define who we are and what we do for our participants and the communities we serve. This name captures our strong spirit and proactive attitude – an attitude that sees individuals for their abilities first, and commits to helping them be the best versions of themselves by providing the support and resources they need and deserve.

Our new name comes with a fresh brand identity and position, logo, messaging, website and newsletter. This is the first version of our newsletter to keep you up-to-date with what's happening at Thrive. Please share with friends and family so they too can see how our participants shine every day.

This change also marks our renewed commitment to advocacy and support seen through new leadership, expanded youth initiatives, and an increased demand for our innovative and personalized services. Our new name is not a label for a notion we hope to achieve, but a definition of who we've always been and a reflection of the spirit in which we Thrive.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael A. Rodrigues, President & CEO

Families Focus

We're here to find answers, advocate for change, offer much-needed respite, reframe challenges, share in disappointments and celebrate accomplishments, big and small. In other words, we're here to support your entire family,

Youth Empowerment

Thrive's youth (ages 6-16) initiatives are aimed at empowering young people to reach their full potential. Whether making brownies for the first time or creating a masterpiece for a special someone, Thrive's Kid's Club and High School After-School programs offer individualized learning and socializing through skill building activities. Plus during the summer and school vacations check out Thrive's bustling day camps.

Our friend Rumei Johnson is someone who has truly learned to shine with what she's accomplished at Thrive's after school and day camp initiatives. Before Rumei joined the Kid's Club after school program she had difficulty finding the right place to meet her needs.

In the two years since Rumei's counselor suggested Thrive Support & Advocacy, Rumei has grown exponentially. Her mother, Christine Johnson raves, "She loves Kid's Club. She is always treated respectfully. It's a place where she can take her attention off of things that she finds difficult and refocus to play a game, do a craft, or simply be friends with the other kids. This kind of social interaction would not happen if not for Thrive. Rumei has found a place where she can gain self-confidence and focus on her abilities." A shout out to our amazing Rumei for showing us that she is capable of anything.



Thrive's Kid's Club participants Rumei Johnson (center) with friends Kevin Babcock(left) and Connor Herman (right).

Young Adults In Action

Taking it to the next level for Thrive's young adults (ages 17-25), there is a multitude of weekly and monthly pursuits to help participants stay active, learn new skills, and make new friends. From monthly men's and women's programs to fitness and nutrition workshops, there is something for everyone. There is a nominal fee for some programs, and all are open to anyone interested, register by calling 508-458-4227 ext. 1009 or email Caitlin at cdfortwengler@icanthrive.org.

Creating Future LEADers



Elizabeth Donahue (bottom left, Alexis Sokoloff (bottom right), Mathew McCarthy (top left), Clara Anderson (top right). Not pictured Leah Toronto.

Thrive's Leadership Experience And Development (LEAD) initiative is a ground-breaking program that prepares and empowers young adults who want to learn what it takes to become a leader and change the world. In the inaugural year of this innovative program, five young adults are leading the charge; Clara Anderson, Elizabeth Donahue, Mathew McCarthy, Alexis Sokoloff, and Leah Toronto. The initiative offers weekly group meetings with a variety of mentors from the community where participants learn about what it takes to be a leader and see leaders in action. The culmination of their work is a Community Service Project where they demonstrate their newly learned skills.

This year's future LEADers put into action what they have learned by visiting the Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center in Northborough, on Sunday, June 4. The Center's Recreation Director and LEAD mentor Cindy Pellegrini shared her job responsibilities. The future LEADers "spent their day with residents, visiting, participating in morning coffee talk, and assisting with daily activities for residents," according to LEAD Director Caitlin Devaney-Fortwengler. It's the participant's opportunity to shine and demonstrate to this community what being a leader means to them.

Interested in becoming a LEADer contact Caitlin Devaney-Fortwengler at 508-485-4227 ext. 1009 or email her at cdfortwengler@icanthrive.org.

Social Connections

Thrive provides real opportunities for our participants to become a part of the community around them, whether it's traveling to a new destination or heading down the street for a night of karaoke. Becoming ingrained in the community fosters feelings of belonging, accomplishment, and connection for our participants.

Thrive's Travel Adventure

Have you ever been on a cruise vacation? On April 6-10 our group of sixteen set sail on a cruise out of New Orleans heading to Cozumel, Mexico. And what a cruise it was! After journeying through 24-hours of weather-related setbacks, the crew finally boarded the ship and began their adventure. The diversity of onboard activities gave participants a chance to experience it all. "Without a doubt dancing was by far the most popular activity. Other vacationers on the ship loved our participants and enjoyed dancing and conversing with them," according to Jim Karami, trip organizer and Director of Social and Recreation for Thrive. After four days of cruising the adventure was capped off with an overnight in the historic southern city of New Orleans.

Coming home with lasting memories and captivating experiences, everyone is looking forward to what's in store for next year. It'll be thrilling to see where the next adventure will take us..



Our Thrivers on a shopping spree in Cozumel.

The yearly trip is open to anyone interested. Keep an eye out in upcoming newsletters for information on next year's trip. Questions? Contact Jim Karami at jkarami@icanthrive.org or 508-485-4227 ext. 1006.

Community Living Corner

A home is where we find the space, comfort, and safety to be ourselves and nurture our personal needs. From 24-hour supervised homes to independent living situations, Thrive finds the home environment that works for each of our residents. In our residences and beyond, Thrive empowers individuals to focus on ability and find opportunities

A Healthy Life Style is Sandy's Way To Shine



Sandy Semenuk finding her way to shine by showing us how a healthy lifestyle can change your life.

Sandra Semenuk, Thrive resident, is shining bright with her new active lifestyle. Faced with health issues and a desire to be more fit, Sandy decided to make a change. With help from her sister, the Thrive staff at her residential home, and the staff at her day program, Sandy began attending Weight Watchers®. A little nervous at her first meeting, she overcame her nerves and has been working diligently to keep a daily log of her "points", which in the Weight Watchers® system is the key to dropping pounds. And the hard work has paid off, over the last eight months Sandy is down almost 30 pounds. She loves the program so much, exclaiming, "I am very happy I started Weight Watchers. It's part of my life now. It has made me really think about what I eat and make better choices."

But we all know that losing weight and getting healthy is not just about the food you eat. Exercise also plays a key role. Sandy exercises most days by walking, doing workout DVDs or riding her bike. "Exercise helps keep me going," Sandy professes. The hardest part for her is the cravings, goodies and special treats, especially at the holidays. With just three pounds to go to reach her goal weight, Sandy is confident that she will maintain what she has worked so hard to accomplish. "Losing weight changed my life. I am now so much more

active and healthy. I feel good and like the way I look." Congratulations to Sandy Semenuk for setting and achieving her goal. She is truly an inspiration and a shining light for us all!