

## Meet Jonny\*

Jonny\* was referred for special education two days per week at the Children's Center when he was three-years-old. A few months later, he was placed in the Behavioral Support Program. He began in the Hummingbirds Classroom, focused on improving communication and social skills but quickly moved to the Busy Bees Classroom because his behaviors were so severe says Supervisor, Amber Stubbs. Busy Bees concentrates more on children learning to manage behaviors and emotions.

"When he came to us, he had very little language, was extremely difficult to understand, and was almost always angry," said Amber. "When around other children, he was very territorial of his toys. He spent

many hours of his day in an escalation, which often included physical aggression. He rarely showed affection toward other people or a smile. He was sad and angry most of the time." says the Classroom Supervisor.



Amber says Jonny has already changed and grown so much during his time here at the Children's Center.

"This child has blossomed in every way imaginable. He is able to have simple conversations with four to five words and is much more easily understood," she says. "He often comes to school with a smile on his face and greets teachers independently."

Amber says he loves to play with his friends at school, has learned to take turns with more ease and willingness, and learned to play with new things. She says he also overreacts less, usually with less intensity and for shorter periods of time.

"He is much happier and smiles all the time. He even spends 15 to 20 minutes per day playing with friends in one of the childcare rooms and encourages other kids to play with friends," said Amber. "I am hopeful that he will continue to improve his emotional regulation and increase his coping skills. I see a bright future for him."

## Catching Up With Gallagher

Gallagher Downs recently graduated from the Busy Bees Classroom and is doing well, though this was not always the case.

When Gallagher was four-years-old he was referred to the Children's Center because he was struggling.



"He came to us with a variety of anxious behaviors. He would hide his face or himself if someone talked to him. He would whine when he spoke and avoid eye contact," says Amber.

But with support, acceptance, and attention, he was able to form trusting relationships with teachers and children over time, says Amber. He was able to be trusted to get the meal cart from the kitchen by himself and even spoke to children and staff independently in the hallway.

Gallagher, now five-years-old, is still at the Children's Center but in two other programs. He spends his morning in Hummingbirds to focus on his communication and social skills. Although the program still concentrates on behavior support, the focus is different. He spends his afternoons in Bursting Blossoms,

which is a classroom for children with and without special needs, so he will be able to practice what he has learned from the smaller classroom, says Amber.

"Busy Bees was the perfect classroom for him to start in because it is small and structured. For someone who displays anxious behaviors, it's necessary to ease them into school. Expectations still exist from day one, but there aren't as many at first," says Amber. "He was able to get to know the teachers and the children at a slower pace. His behaviors were addressed individually and in a way that fit his particular needs. Had he entered a regular education preschool classroom, he would not have made the progress he made in Busy Bees."

Gallagher's grandmother, Lanette says she wishes they would have found the Children's Center much sooner.

"He is doing so wonderful," she says. "I love the Children's Center, because I love the personnel. They are kind and compassionate. And they keep me informed and are always willing to have meetings. They aren't sending home these reports that are six pages long for me to figure out. That's so important for me to have face to face. I want to know who is working with Gallagher."

Lanette says Gallagher has already gone through such a tough life at five years old, including trauma and severe abuse. She feels so thankful and comfortable sending Gallagher to the Children's Center.

Lanette says the Children's Center has already helped him improve in such a short time.

"That's how caring and loving these people are. And they meet the child's needs on the level that they are at."

## Behavioral Support Program

The Children's Center offers a Behavioral Support Program consisting of two classrooms in Augusta, a classroom in Gardiner, and a classroom in Skowhegan.

The Behavioral Support Program at the Children's Center serves children ages three- through five-years-old with a mental health diagnosis. The classrooms are very structured and staff work directly with only one or two children at the most.

Licensed Clinical Social Workers oversee the classrooms, program staff, and treatment for children. The clinicians and program staff participate in extensive training and supervisions focused on providing

quality services to children with a history of trauma.

The various classrooms focus on specific skills related to managing behaviors, regulating emotions, and/or developing social skills in order to provide children with the



has four classrooms and provides services to over twenty children.

The Children's Center anticipates further growth in the Behavioral Support Programs, especially classrooms focused on children with trauma histories involving abuse and neglect. These children often have severe behavioral concerns, including physical violence, hypervigilance, inability to connect, lack of coping skills, and sexualized behaviors.

The organization attributes some of the growth to the unfortunate truth that no other providers in the area offer these types of services to young children three through five.



opportunity to transition out of treatment and ultimately prepare them for life.

The agency has seen an increase in the number of children in the Behavioral Support Program. The program originally began with one classroom and four students three years ago. Today, the organization



## Children's Center Playground

The Augusta facility currently has a large outdoor play space with a somewhat limited variety of equipment and areas for growth and development. Over the years, the play area has transformed as we continuously work towards providing the most accessible playground to children of all abilities.

The organization has recently reached a decision that the play space can no longer be sustainable, safe and effective

as a play area for children both with and without disabilities.

Therefore, the agency would like to create a new playground that removes any barriers and allows children of all abilities a chance to grow and learn.

Children in the Behavioral Support Program benefit from releasing energy in a positive way through gross motor or large body movement activities.

Equipment that involves climbing, jumping, running, and pedaling allows children to work on gross motor development and spatial awareness by understanding how to use their bodies in safe and functional ways. Equipment that meets these needs includes: net climbers, monkey bars, tire tunnels, and tricycles.

Collaborative equipment, like see-saws and tire swings, engage children in co-operative play, a large focus of the Behavioral Support Program.

The program also teaches children skills to calm their bodies when they are being unsafe or moving too fast. Many children enjoy swinging, which can be one of these coping strategies, so more swings would give more opportunities for children to use the skills they are learning in the program.

A fully accessible playground gives children with and without disabilities the opportunity to learn from each other and play together despite individual challenges.





Your are cordially invited to the:

# Children's Center Dinner & Auction

Please join us for the 2nd Annual Children's Center Dinner & Auction!

The evening will consist of dinner catered by the delicious **LIBERAL CUP** and a live auction with Maine Humorist, **GARY CROCKER**.



Saturday, August 27, 2016

5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Doors Open 5:00 p.m.

Buffet 6:00 p.m.

Live Auction After Dinner

**Governor Hill Mansion**

136 State Street Augusta, ME 04330

**Cost of Admission:**

\$40 per person

\$300 per table of eight.

Please **RSVP** by August 12th

Katelyn Pushard

(207) 626-3497 Ext: 125



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# Congratulations to the Winners of the



## 15th Annual Children's Center Chili Chowder Challenge

- Best Chili:** The Liberal Cup, "Smokin' Pig Chili"
- Best Chowder:** Red Barn, "Laura's Famous Seafood Stew"
- Most Original Chili:** Aunt Gin's Restaurant, "Uncle Art's Venison, Fruit, and Nut Chili with Tap House Beer"
- Most Original Chowder:** Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center, "What's Hop-pening—Easter Dinner Chowder"
- Hottest Chili:** The Liberal Cup, "Fukushima Chili"
- Most Creative Display:** The Liberal Cup
- Most Creative Name:** The Liberal Cup, "Fukushima Chili"

Please let our sponsors and participating restaurants know how much you appreciate their support of the Children's Center!

Special thanks to our Musical Entertainment: Sam Shain and the Scolded Dogs.

### Participating Restaurants:

- Cohen on the Meadow/Spectrum Generation
- Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center
- Ground Round Sports Grille
- Lisa's Restaurant & Lounge
- Augusta House of Pancakes
- Aunt Gin's Restaurant
- Le Club Calumet
- Brews 'N' Views
- The Liberal Cup
- Red Robin
- Red Barn
- Damon's

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Children's Center Early Intervention & Family Support  
1 Alden Avenue Augusta, ME 04330 (207)-626-3497  
www.childrensctr.org & www.chilichowder.com

## General Updates

- Plans to remove the house on the adjacent property to minimize risk and costs associated with maintaining a vacant building.
- Scheduled to replace the roof to maintain the integrity, quality, and safety of the environment at the main location in Augusta.
- Established a Playground Committee to develop formal plans for creating an inclusive play space for children of all abilities at the main location in Augusta.
- Created a Specialized Child Care Scholarship Program to be able to provide child care to children with special needs outside of their programs at the Children's Center.



www.childrensctr.org

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