

# Children's Center News

Summer 2018

## Catching Up With Malcolm

Malcolm Lavallee graduated from Winthrop High School this past spring at the age of nineteen. Although he does not remember much about attending the Children's Center as a child, his grandmother, Cindy Lavallee said that the program laid the foundation for his entire future.

"He would not be where he is now if he did not start there," said Cindy.

Malcolm was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. At that point, he had no language and did not communicate or interact with anyone. "He really only said digga, digga," said his aunt, Amber Stubbs.

Shortly after receiving the diagnosis, Cindy enrolled him at the Children's Center. "The separation was hard at first," said Cindy. However, his love of school, friends, and teachers made the transition easier for her.

Amber said that he was one of the first kids to receive programming based on principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) at the center. His one-on-one staff used discrete trials and data collection to inform his treatment and create programs. They worked with him on communication as well as behavioral, social, and daily living skills.

Cindy said he finally began communicating and interacting with other children and adults. Staff even helped him to become completely to-

let trained in just a few short weeks said Cindy. He was ready for kindergarten and moved into public school at the age of five.



make great progress in the Winthrop School System. He became very involved in extracurricular activities, participating in basketball, swimming, and track and field through the Special Olympics. He even performed in a play his senior year said Cindy.

In his down time, Malcolm said that he likes swimming and going to the movies. He said that he swims well and has lots of friends.

On top of his involvement with school, sports, drama, and friends, Malcolm even found time for a job, washing dishes at Pepper's Restaurant in Winthrop during high school.

His case manager, Stephanie Boynton, has been working with him to find a job now that he has graduated high school. In the meantime, he helps his grandmother with household chores to earn an allowance.

During the graduation ceremony, Amber said that Malcolm tolerated being around many people, avoided any scripting, and helped a fellow student follow the expectations of the event, by tapping his shoulder to cue him to stand or sit.

Cindy said, "I honestly don't know where we would be without the Children's Center. They are there for you through anything and such a big support for both the children and families."

Over the years, Malcolm continued to



## Meet Miss Ariaiah

Ariaiah Goethe is a super sassy, social, and happy four-year-old, though this was not always the case said her mother, Jayne Goethe.



Jayne noticed something was different with her daughter when she was about eighteen months old. Ariaiah was still not talking, crawling, or walking at that point she said.

At her next well child visit, Jayne voiced her concerns with the pediatrician who referred Ariaiah to Child Development Services (CDS) and case management with Sam Thibodeau at the Children's Center.

Jayne said, "Sam is amazing! If it wasn't for her, Ariaiah would not have received the services she needed to succeed."

Ariaiah received an evaluation at the Edmund Ervin Pediatric Center where she received the diagnosis of autism as well as cognitive, language, and motor delays at the age of three.

Sam immediately referred her to the autism program and other needed therapies at the center.

"When she first began services, she had minimal language, kept her head down, and was very cautious," said Hannah Mountain, behav-



ioral health professional in the autism program at the center. She said Ariaiah did not like to try new things, especially foods.

According to Jayne and Hannah, Ariaiah has made incredible progress all around. They both agree that her confidence and communication have been her two biggest accomplishments since beginning services at the center.

Ariaiah has made so much progress that she has transitioned into the inclusive preschool classroom, Bursting Blossoms, at the center.

"I am very proud of her and her progress thus far," said Hannah. She said that Ariaiah independently greets everyone, rides bikes, dresses herself, uses the potty, and plays with peers.

Jayne said that everyone is amazing at the Children's Center and that Ariaiah has done amazing because of them and their support.

## Children's Center

### 4th Annual Dinner & Auction

The Children's Center 4th Annual Dinner & Auction was a huge success! The Children's Center feels so fortunate to be a part of a community that recognizes the importance of early intervention services and generously supports our mission.

A Huge **THANK YOU** to our Sponsors:



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- ♦ Thank you to the many local businesses that donated items and services towards the live auction at the event.
- ♦ Thank you to our amazing guests for joining us and making our fourth dinner and auction such a huge success.
- ♦ Thank you to Governor Hill Mansion for the wonderful accommodations and Liberal Cup for the delicious dinner.
- ♦ A special thank you to our auctioneer, Gary Crocker, Maine humorist, for the many laughs and loads of fun.





## Jesse Fournier

### Occupational Therapy Assistant

Jesse Fournier took her first position as a certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA) at the Children's Center in fall 2007 and has been here ever since.

and variety of programs keeps her coming back day in and day out. "Each hour within my day is different." "She works very hard with children of all abilities," said Amber Stubbs, li-



"I have always had a passion for individuals living with disabilities," Jesse said. Her experiences at a local group home and YMCA led to her to this career path.

"Watching a child begin a new skill, work on it each day, and finally click for that child is the most rewarding aspect of my job," said Jesse.

She said that the supportive staff, different children,

censed clinician at the center. "She has a knack with children who have challenging behavior, always remaining calm and treating them with respect. She is able to vary activities on the fly to meet the child where they are at in each moment," said Amber.

"I am so thankful for the opportunities that the Children's Center has given me throughout the past ten and half years," said Jesse.





## General Updates

The end of summer is graduation season for us at the Children's Center. This year, we graduated thirty-three children from our centers. And this week, they are in public kindergarten classes all over central Maine.

Many of these children have been with us for most of their lives, so saying goodbye and letting them go is bittersweet, but they are ready. And, we have many new children that need us and are already receiving services.



A very big thank you to our dinner and auction committee members, Gary Crocker, and particularly Katelyn Pushard for making our dinner and auction event such a success. We raised about \$25,000, which will help pay for many different services for many different kids. Thank you to all involved!

Jeff Johnson  
Executive Director



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