



Focus

Little Friends Unlocking Potential...

Fall 2009

Keeping the Little Friends Community Connected

Step Up for Autism Walk Surpasses All Expectations, Raises \$145,000

More than 1,600 walkers and runners descended on downtown Naperville on Sunday, June 28, for Little Friends' inaugural Step Up for Autism walk and fun run. Surpassing all expectations for our first year, 123 teams of walkers and runners raised more than \$145,000 in donations making this year's walk one of the most successful fundraising events in the agency's 44-year history. After expenses, we are very proud to announce that nearly \$115,000 will directly benefit children and adults with autism served by Little Friends, Inc. and the Little Friends Center for Autism.

Blue skies and unseasonably mild temperatures set the stage for a picture perfect event. Talented students from the School of Performing Arts entertained walkers with dance and musical performances, and 95.9 The River was on hand playing music along the Riverwalk. Walk Co-Chairpersons Elizabeth Gretz and Vera Erickson took the stage at 9:15 a.m. to introduce the morning's emcee, CBS 2 Chicago's Mary Kay Kleist. Little Friends CEO and President Jack Ryan addressed the crowd, thanking everyone for embracing the agency's newest fundraising event. Krejci Academy mom and Step Up for Autism planning committee member Nancy O'Brien graciously shared her family's story and introduced her son James to the enthusiastic crowd. Naperville's biggest cheerleader, Mayor George Pradel, took the stage next to thank the community for helping to make the city's first-ever autism awareness walk a huge success.

Following the Mayor's enthusiastic message, all participants moved toward the start/finish line. Mayor Pradel sounded the horn and a group of runners took off along the path, followed just a few minutes later by the walkers. A sea of white Step Up for Autism t-shirts lined the sidewalks surrounding the grassy knoll near the Grand Pavilion. Walkers of all ages, strollers and wagons filled with excited toddlers, and at least 100 four-legged friends headed out along the one-mile and three-mile routes.


A host of family-friendly activities awaited participants returning from their runs and walks. This year's event featured a fun-filled Kids' Area, complete with interactive displays courtesy of the

DuPage Children's Museum, face painting, crafts and moon jumps. Our youngest walkers also enjoyed visiting with members of the Naperville Fire Department, who brought out one of the department's fire engines for the children to see. Participants of all ages also enjoyed sweet ice cream treats, courtesy of Dean Foods, and temporary tattoos sporting the Step Up for Autism logo. Participants also enjoyed visiting the Community Resource Fair. More than a dozen organizations that serve the autism community were on hand to answer questions and highlight resources and services.

A large number of participants also took advantage of complimentary visual picture schedules, which were designed by the Little Friends Center for Autism and printed by Minuteman Press. Participants utilized the colorful number countdown picture systems to take part in a variety of activities throughout the morning.

"The overwhelming generosity of the community, our families, local businesses and our very dedicated volunteers helped to make this day one of the brightest in our agency's history. We hope that you will all join us again in June 2010," said agency President and CEO Jack Ryan.

The 2009 Step Up for Autism walk was co-chaired by Gretz and Erickson. Committee members included: Mary Batterham, Tom Blair, Bill Eagan, Sue Haynes, Robin Hudetz, Mark and Ellen McDonald, Kathy Munson, Nancy O'Brien, Joann Pierce, Kim Reher, Anna Smith, Uriko Stout, Brita Sype and Sarah White.

Premiere sponsors of the 2009 Step Up for Autism walk included 95.9 The River, Minuteman Press, Naperville Magazine, Hard Hat Services, PowerToolz, Inc., Northwestern Mutual Financial Network and the *Daily Herald*. 



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www.littlefriendsinc.org


Save the Date



PHONATHON NOVEMBER 3

Dedicated volunteers from across the agency and the

community will be calling members of the Little Friends family between 5:45-8:30 p.m. from Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Naperville. The agency is currently seeking volunteers to help make phone calls, record information and assist with various administrative duties.

Approximately 60 volunteers are needed to ensure we can successfully contact each member of the Little Friends family. To learn more about this year's Phonathon, contact Special Events and Volunteer Manager Cally Edwards at (630) 281-1882 or via e-mail at credwards@lilfriends.com. 


GIVING TREES NOVEMBER 16 - DECEMBER 11

You can make a difference in the life of a client served by Little Friends this holiday

season by participating in the agency's annual Giving Tree program.

Beginning in mid-November, Giving Trees will be located in nearly 20 businesses throughout the western suburbs.

Each Giving Tree will be decorated for the holiday season with tags bearing gift requests from individuals served by Little Friends. To participate, simply choose a tag from the tree, purchase and wrap the gift and then return it to the tree location. Gifts will be delivered to hundreds of clients across the agency in mid-December.

Special thanks to each of our Giving Tree hosts and to the dedicated BP Volunteers, without whose help this project would not be possible. For a complete list of this year's Giving Tree sites, visit www.littlefriendsinc.org. 

Of Note...

Membership Giving Campaign Underway

FROM THE DESK OF JACK RYAN

Since 1965, Little Friends, Inc. has provided much-needed services for children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities in our community. Through the years, our top priority has remained the welfare of the individuals and families we serve within our 13 programs each and every day.

Like many social services providers across the State of Illinois, our agency has endured difficult times over the past year. As a result of cuts in state funding, we were forced to trim more than \$1 million from our budget. These cuts were significant, and each of our 13 programs was affected. Our Board of Directors worked tirelessly to formulate a fiscally responsible plan to face these cuts head on, which resulted in layoffs, pay freezes and the elimination of contributions to the retirement plan. Although these times have been difficult, we are very proud to say that not one of our clients lost services during this period.


As we embark on our 45th year in Naperville, we are cautiously optimistic about what 2010 will bring. With your support, students attending our three schools will continue to benefit from individualized therapies, small class sizes and high staff-student ratios. Families that turn to our Little Friends Center for Autism will continue to receive comprehensive diagnostic and evaluation services and groundbreaking training opportunities from the Center's knowledgeable professionals. In addition, adults seeking employment or the independence that comes from living within their communities will receive the vocational training and individualized supports they need to reach their fullest potential.

With the support of individuals like you, we continue to work each day to fulfill our mission of empowering individuals with special needs to live, learn, work and actively participate in our communities. As we optimistically look forward to the promise a new year can bring, we hope that you will continue to support Little Friends, Inc. by participating in our annual membership campaign. With your support, we pledge to continue to place the welfare of our clients and their families as our highest priority.

From our family to yours, thank you.

U.S. Representative Judy Biggert Tours LFCA

Little Friends, Inc. was honored to welcome U.S. Representative Judy Biggert to the Little Friends Center for Autism this summer. Joined by Mayor George Pradel and representatives from the agency, the Congresswoman toured the Center's new Chicago Avenue location and discussed ways to improve evaluation and treatment services for families living with an autism diagnosis.

While on hand, Biggert announced the passage of legislation that will help to make autism treatment and evaluation services at Little Friends more affordable for local families. The bill, which calls for \$200,000 in federal funding, passed the House on July 24, 2009 and now awaits Senate approval. Thank you, Congresswoman Biggert. 



Congressional Visit: U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert (L), pictured here with LFCFA Executive Vice President Patti Boheme, discussed ways to improve treatment services for individuals with autism while touring the Center's new Chicago Avenue location this summer.

Ring in the Holiday Season by Attending the Friends of Little Friends Parade

Plans are in full swing for the 2009 Friends of Little Friends Electric Parade, generously sponsored by McKeown Classic Homes. Mark your calendars and plan to join us on Friday, November 27, as we celebrate the magic of the holiday season.

This much-anticipated holiday event features a spectacular collaboration of lighted and musical floats and Santa's arrival in preparation for the busy holiday season. Following the parade, Mr. Claus will flip the switch and light more than 300,000 holiday lights, transforming downtown Naperville into a winter wonderland.

Each year, thousands of people attend this festive holiday event, which helps to kick off the Hometown Holidays celebration in downtown Naperville. This year's parade will step off at 4:30 p.m. from Centennial Beach on Jackson Avenue. The route continues east on Jackson Avenue, north on Webster Street and west on Van Buren Avenue to Eagle Street.

2009 HOMETOWN HOLIDAYS BEAR

As part of the Hometown Holidays celebration, Little Friends will once again be selling a limited edition Hometown



Ike-2009 Hometown Holidays Bear

Bears will be available at several Naperville locations, including Anderson's Bookshop, The Canterbury Shoppe, Roseland Draperies & Interiors and the Serendipity Resale Shop. For a complete list of bear locations, please visit www.littlefriendsinc.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help kick off the holiday season in downtown Naperville by volunteering at the 2009 Friends of Little Friends Electric Parade. Volunteers are needed to serve as parade helpers, reindeer helpers, bear sellers and photographers. To volunteer, please contact Cally Edwards at (630) 281-1882 or via e-mail at credwards@lilfriends.com.



Holidays Bear. "Ike" Bears will be sold at a number of locations beginning on Wednesday, November 18. Bears will be available for \$10 each, with proceeds benefiting the agency. The perfect stocking stuffer, cuddly "Ike"

Hundreds Attend Family Council Picnic

Hundreds of clients from across Little Friends and their families attended this year's Family Picnic, which was held on Saturday, June 20, on the lawn at the Little Friends administrative building. Clients of all ages and their guests enjoyed a cookout prepared by volunteers and staff from across the agency.

Hosted by the Little Friends Family Council, this annual get-together provides families with the opportunity to meet and visit with each other. Picnic-goers enjoyed great food and musical entertainment provided by Troy B. Representatives from the Naperville Fire Department were also on hand to visit with guests and to showcase one of the city's fire engines. On behalf of the Little Friends Family



Picnic Fun: NFD Captain Paul Bumba poses for a photo with Joe, a client in the agency's Community Living program.

Council, thank you to all of the clients, families and volunteers who helped to make this year's picnic a huge success.



Serendipity Shop Seeking Donations of Winter Clothing

The Serendipity Resale Shop, which is located at 12 W. Jefferson Avenue in downtown Naperville, is currently seeking donations of winter clothing. Proceeds from the volunteer-run shop benefit programs and services provided by Little Friends, Inc.

Donations of men's, women's and children's clothing of all sizes are welcome. Donated clothing should be in excellent condition. Donors are asked not to include items that are stained or torn. The resale shop is also seeking donations of linens and home decorating items, such as lamps, dishes and clocks. Other household items, jewelry and collectibles are always welcome.

Donations may be brought to the Shop anytime during the store's regular hours. To learn more about the shop, please call Serendipity at (630) 357-3610 or visit www.littlefriendsinc.org.



WISHES GRANTED...




Thank you to the following organizations for their generous support:

- ◆ *Naperville Rotary Club*- \$3,000 for renovations at the Little Friends Center for Autism's new location
- ◆ *DuPage Community Foundation* - \$10,000 for renovations at the Little Friends Center for Autism's new location
- ◆ *Coleman Foundation*- \$80,000 to develop and implement a core training program for staff working with adults with autism and other developmental disabilities
- ◆ *Levi Strauss* - \$2,000 to support the Step Up for Autism walk

Holiday Showcase to Benefit Little Friends

The Hilton Lisle-Naperville will host a Wine, Cheese and Chocolate Holiday Showcase from 5-8 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, at its Lisle location, 3003 Corporate West Drive. A portion of the proceeds from this festive holiday event will benefit Little Friends, Inc.

This unique showcase will feature a variety of elegant food and wine tastings and delightful holiday gift ideas. Whole Foods Market Wheaton will provide patrons with the opportunity to taste fine holiday cheeses. Chocolates, courtesy of Naper Nuts and Sweets, will be paired with selected wines from Lynfred Winery. In addition, vendors from throughout the western suburbs will be on hand showcasing unique holiday gifts, including sterling silver jewelry, home décor, specialty food baskets, candles and much more - perfect for any holiday shopper.

Tickets are available for \$20, which includes a \$5 donation to Little Friends. Each admission ticket may also be redeemed for a sandwich or dessert selection at the Hilton Holiday Café. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact the Hilton at (630) 505-0900, ext. 3100. 

Little Friends, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PRESIDENT & CEO - Jack Ryan

Focus is published every two months. It is designed to keep our families, volunteers and donors informed about Little Friends programs and events.

Editor - Carolyn Hamilton
Address All Correspondence To:
Newsletter Editor, Little Friends
140 N. Wright Street
Naperville, Illinois 60540
chamilton@lilfriends.com

Seventh Annual Golf Classic Raises Nearly \$40,000

More than 120 golfers hit the links and helped Little Friends, Inc. raise nearly \$40,000 at its annual Golf Classic on Monday, September 21, at the historic Naperville Country Club.

After a gloomy and rainy morning, the clouds cleared and the sun peaked through the sky, setting the stage for a wonderful day out on the course. Golfers enjoyed 18 holes, lunch and dinner during the seventh annual outing. Congratulations to the 2009 Golf Classic Champions - Bill Cordes, Matt Perrigo, Lou Leonardi and Chris Earl. The foursome shot a combined score of 59 to capture the title.


Following a full day on the course, golfers had the opportunity to bid on a host of exciting items during the live and silent auctions. This year's live auction netted \$11,000, as golfers bid on sports memorabilia, fine dining experiences, golf packages and a number of electronics items, courtesy of Presenting Sponsor - Grants Appliances, Electronics and More.

The Seventh Annual Little Friends Golf Classic was co-chaired by Tom



Time to Tee Off: More than 120 golfers attended this year's Golf Classic, including Jean and Bob Ptacek and Pat and Bill Minihan.

Falcone and Mike Krol. Committee members included Dan Casey, John Colucci, Bill Cordes, Steve Monteith, Mary Morrissey and Nicki Scott.

The 2009 Golf Classic was generously presented by Grants Appliances, Electronics and More. Other premiere sponsors included Discover Network, Harris Bank, Matsock Insurance & Financial Services and Park National Bank. 

Save the Date

34TH ANNUAL BIDS FOR KIDS BENEFIT AUCTION
Saturday, March 6, 2010
Hilton Lisle-Naperville



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Little Friends, Inc.
140 N. Wright Street
Naperville, Illinois 60540
(630) 355-6533

