

FOCUS Matters

SUMMER 2017



The Fresh Start School

BECAUSE OF YOU, OUR DREAM HAS COME TRUE!

In November 2016, FOCUS Center for Autism's Fresh Start School became a state approved special education program. This program is approved for male and female students between the ages of 11 through 18. The school is an evolution of our former day program where certified special education teachers and licensed clinical social workers help create a supportive learning environment for its students. Additionally, the program helps increase social learning through mindfulness practices and Social Thinking curriculum. Other services such as speech, OT and extended school year programming are available as needed for each student. The Fresh Start School is a gem of a program and we are enrolling now!





ShopRite Fundraiser

ShopRite of Canton graciously allowed FOCUS to set up informational tables in their store and allow customers to donate to our organization at the register over a period of two weeks. The fundraiser was successfully able to sponsor a child to attend a week of our summer program. **Thank YOU to all who participated!**

Thank you Bearded Villains!

On January 29, The Bearded Villains' New England chapter known as The Saints held a fundraiser for the Fresh Start School at Charterley's Banquet Facility in Torrington. The Bearded Villains describe themselves as a group of elite bearded men from around the world whose mission statement reads, "To unite bearded men of all cultures, races, creed and sexuality in a Brotherhood devoted to loyalty, honor and respect toward all people, dedicated to the betterment of mankind through fraternity charity and kindness". The Saints chapter held the event after Saints member Ric McAllister met a FOCUS alumni, inspiring Ric to raise money for our organization. More than 200 people attended the event including other Bearded Villains members from across New England. The Saints catered and organized the event, raising close to \$7,000 in an afternoon.



Paint For A Cause

On April 18th, FOCUS held a fundraiser at Muse Paint bar located in West Hartford. Muse holds charitable events called "Paint for a Cause" where 40% of their profit is donated to the charitable organization. During Paint for a Cause, participants follow step by step instruction to complete a painting while enjoying food and drinks. It's a great way to create art, hang with friends, and support a good cause!



Young Adult Happenings

The FOCUS Young Adult Social Program is pleased to announce an increase in the amount of events we are offering.

Every Monday from 6p – 8p we are excited to add a Table Top Game Night. The night starts with the participants taking on different responsibilities as they work together to make a balanced meal. The young adults then eat dinner together at table while socializing and strengthening friendships. After eating together, they utilize the remainder of time to play different table top games. Participants can try other people's favorite games or play an old favorite. The evening ends with everyone giving their personal appreciations.

Another exciting addition is the start-up of a Walking Group. This is a chance for young adults to walk, make friends and get fit at the same time. To accommodate individual skill levels we will offer a variety of speeds, distances, days, and times.

Continuing with the get fit ways; FOCUS has teamed up with ShopRite of Canton's Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Shana Griffin who will offer "Nutritious Bites with Shana", which offers nutritional counseling, cooking supplies, healthy food options and recipes. In addition, Shana will help us become more familiar with the ShopRite store and learning how to choose healthier food options.

We will continue with the three Young Adult Social Clubs including one social outing every month. Two social clubs are held at our Dowd Avenue building and offer an evening of socializing, pizza, and video and board games! The third trip will be a community outing. Past outings include mini golf and bowling. At the end of the night the group shares dessert and mention their appreciations from the activity.

We are excited for the summer weather and continuing to grow our group! If you know a young adult who may be interested or have any questions, please email Adam Cohen at adam.cohen@focuscenterforautism.org.



Tom Dore

A FOCUS Friend

The FOCUS community was saddened by the passing of Tom Dore in early April. Tom worked at FOCUS as a direct care staff member and was a truly unique, positive presence in our Afterschool Program. We are so grateful to have gotten to know Tom and have him become a part of the FOCUS family, he will be dearly missed.

Music and the Arts at FOCUS!

The Fresh Start School has had some exciting musical visitors in the past year! In October, Marshall Brown of the Nutmeg Symphony visited with three musicians. The group played a variety of beautiful music and demonstrated instruments for our kids and staff. It was a wonderful afternoon.

We also had the pleasure of hosting Indrani, who specializes in chanting. Indrani has now visited FOCUS twice to share her unique talent. In May, we had an acoustic guitar performance from Peter Neagle. All performers expressed how amazed they were with their audience! The Fresh Start School students have also been visiting the Gallery on the Green in Canton to enjoy the local art.



Autism Services

Because of YOUR continued support, FOCUS is still offering daily clinical services during our after-school hours (3:00-6:00) for children between ages 7 through 18. Licensed clinical social workers and an APRN offer diagnostic evaluations and assessments, behavioral intervention plans, groups, social clubs, and parent support groups.

We Need YOUR Help!

We are in dire need of paving and repairs at 126 Dowd Avenue.

- ✦ Front and side parking lot - \$7,000
- ✦ Back parking lot - \$10,000
- ✦ Replace rotting front window - \$1,700

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