

# Progress!

Parents & Friends Inc.

Spring 2020

Creatively Serving People with Developmental Disabilities Since 1955

## Reaching New Heights

by Kristy Tanguay

**M**meet Jamie. She grew up in San Francisco, and ultimately relocated to Fort Bragg as an adult. Jamie is a very busy person, living a full life. On the day we sat down to talk about her life before Fort Bragg, she received some exciting news. Until that phone call, I interviewed her to learn about how she became who she is today.

**A**fter graduating from a new public charter high school in San Francisco, Jamie attended a 2-year program in Chicago to learn some independent living skills. She explained that many of her peers in the Chicago program had Asperger's syndrome, and she had a whole lot of fun while she was there. She notes that on her first day, however, students thought that she was one of the teachers. Jamie says that due to her appearance her challenges are less obvious, or, more invisible as she described. As a younger child, she received a variety of diagnoses, but not autism. When she was ages 12 and 17, she was assessed only on a basic intelligence test. At age 30, she was once again assessed; her high intelligence and low processing speed noted earlier led to her diagnosis of being on the autism spectrum once they identified a doctor who could provide a test for autism in adults. The Regional Center also provided a test that confirmed her diagnosis. When asked how she felt to have this information, she described feeling relieved, as she and her family were never entirely sure if she was receiving the appropriate support that would allow her to enjoy life as her best self. While Jamie always played sports, she

often struggled to complete her homework on time, and had less of a social life than her highschool peers. She says that her mother helped her so much, searching out private doctors throughout her childhood and never giving up in making sure that Jamie would live a full life of her own design.

**J**amie worked at the Janet Pomeroy Center which is an after school recreation program serving people of all ages and abilities; the program featured nature and arts activities. Jamie also participated in the Treasure Island Job Corps for two years. She has attended classes relating to the environment while participating in the California Conservation Corps, and graduated from coursework as a clinical medical assistant. It was there where she learned that she did not enjoy the administrative side of things.

**J**amie ultimately moved to Fort Bragg to be closer to her mom and nana, so that she could enjoy their support while she started another chapter in her life. Before that point, Jamie had been living in a different town from them for several years. Upon arriving on the coast, Jamie's mom helped her to apply for services at the Redwood Coast Regional Center in Fort Bragg. Since then, Jamie found support through Parents and Friends, and also found a roommate and took up a room in their shared apartment. She continued to blossom in new and exciting ways. If you've met Jamie, you'll understand what a dynamic and successful life she continues to make for herself. When I asked others how they would describe



Jamie, many said that she is creative.

**A**fter all, she is an artist and an actress. Last year, and for the first time, Jamie enjoyed a simple speaking role with Footlighters theatre, and put on weeks of performances along with her roommate, new friends, and support staff who were also cast members. She enjoyed that she also had a singing role that required off-pitch techniques that made her feel good about singing loudly! Jamie also explained that she is less comfortable making eye contact when she is the speaker, and more comfortable when others are speaking to her. Jamie has also participated in screen printing classes and has explored painting and drawing. When I asked another person to describe Jamie, they said that she is intelligent. This is easy to recognize, as she is a student of Mendocino College, focusing on Early Childhood Development courses, and psychology. Jamie is also a member of PFI's board of directors, and she has volunteered at one of Redwood

Elementary's preschool programs, helping children with special needs to assimilate into student life. Her goal is to be hired as a part time paraprofessional aide sometime in the future. There is a formal exam involved, and she let me know that she has some trepidation about the test. Jamie works with her Disability Resource Center counselor at Mendocino College to ensure she receives support for her accommodation requests as a student of the college.

There are so many positive traits that draw people to Jamie; she is sweet, friendly, and helpful as her primary support staff person Peggy Ray described, "She enjoys helping others in any way that she can." Jamie is independent and driven; she lives independently, owns and drives her own car, and will sometimes opt to take the bus when possible in order to save money. Jamie has also established her own CalABLE account! A CalABLE account is a savings and investment account. ABLE-eligible individuals (and their friends, family and employers) may contribute up to a CalABLE account without jeopardizing public benefits. (You can learn more at <https://calable.ca.gov/faq>).

As you read earlier, Jamie is an environmentalist. She is also a member of the Mendocino Mermaids. The Mermaids conduct fundraising events while dressed as mermaids in the pool, on the beach, and they also clean up the coastline in our area. They draw positive attention for the work that they do and the group continues to grow. Jamie enjoys the diversity of the group and its mission.

At the conclusion of our interview, I asked Jamie if she felt that she is living her best life. She replied, "In some ways, yes. As my life changes, my goals change."

I almost forgot to share the good news: The phone call revealed that Jamie was approved for her own 1-bedroom apartment, and she signed her lease the next day! So, now she has some new goals: to furnish her new home and to learn more cooking skills so that she can enjoy leftovers and save money as part of her new routine. She and Peggy were beginning to make lists so that she could move in soon.

Way to keep on reaching new heights, Jamie. We're honored to be a part of your life's journey. What's next?



## A View from the Moon

by Rick Moon

Spring is coming! Even though it's cold and windy, rainy and bleak, I can feel it in the air. The days are beginning to be longer, with more light both in morning and evening. My favorite time of year!

Leo Tolstoy in Anna Karenina said that "Spring is the time for plans and projects." Boy howdy, is that true for Parents and Friends this year. We have a major project which should finally come to fruition this Spring/Summer. With the benefit of a CDBG grant through the City of Fort Bragg and State of California we have begun the process of building three Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE). These will be State Licensed facilities and have four residents per home, joining our current RCFE home on Azalea Circle in Fort Bragg, in serving developmentally disabled seniors.

This is the first generation of developmentally disabled who, thanks to medical advancements, are outliving their parents, their traditional main source of support. Unfortunately the needed support system for them has not been adequately anticipated and efforts are only now beginning to prepare for the inevitable demand on specialized services for this unique population. Two years ago PFI saw the need in our aging clients and purchased a home in Fort Bragg, which has been fully renovated for ADA, granted State Licensing and is now home for four residents in a community setting. One of our current residents used to be a resident in our Harrison St. house in the early 2000's.

PFI began in 1955 to serve mainly children whose Parents and Friends refused to send

them to institutions. PFI started a school (the Paul Bunyan School) when the school system refused to enroll them because they were deemed unable to learn. Paul Bunyan School proved that theory wrong, and was eventually chartered in California as a certified school and was invited to join the local School District and facilities on campus were made available for supporting the education of the Paul Bunyan students.

PFI then looked to the older students who were passing school age and began focusing on developing jobs and independent housing for them in the Community, stressing independence, community integration and self-determination. This started our Supported Living and Job Connection services, which continue to this day. Over time we added three day programs, one for more severely disabled individuals of all ages (Community Connections), one completely dedicated to Community Integration (Life on the Coast) and one dedicated to community integration on weekends, holidays and evenings (Places to Go).

With the addition of the RCFE PFI now employs over 165 community members who support clients from 18 years of age, beginning their careers, to 86 year old retirees.

So what is it that enthuses me so about Spring? It's hard to find the words, but perhaps Mark Twain was right when he said. *"It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want—oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!"*



## Parents & Friends Inc.

*Creatively Serving People  
With Developmental Disabilities Since 1955*

Post Office Box 656  
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707-964-4940  
[www.parentsandfriends.org](http://www.parentsandfriends.org)

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- *Places to Go Program Manager, Leann Pill*
- *The Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop & Furniture Annex  
Retail Manager, Alaina Zimmerman*

### OUR MISSION

The mission of Parents & Friends, Inc. is to provide opportunities for persons with developmental challenges and similar needs to participate fully in our community.

## Thanks to our donors!

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## CARF Was Here

PFI is proud to have earned its fourth consecutive 3-year accreditation from The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF is an international, non-profit organization founded in 1966 that signals a service provider's commitment to continually improving services, encouraging feedback, and serving the community. You can learn more at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org).





# Changes at The Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop and Furniture Annex

After working for 18 years with Parents and Friends, Inc., Retail Sales Director Amanda Venett retired from her position at The Paul Bunyan Thrift Store and Furniture Annex. Parents and Friends thank her for the many years of service that she has given to the organization while serving in various roles. From fundraising to job development, The Harrison Street House to retail management, and, the oversight of several construction projects in between, including our very first Residential Care Facility for the Elderly, Azalea House; Amanda shared her institutional knowledge, her desire to teach others, and her background in gardening, construction, and building materials to further the organization. With the same level of care, Amanda

helped to select and train the new manager of the Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop, Alaina Zimmerman. Alaina has more than 10 years of retail management experience and has hit



Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop and Furniture Annex pickups with Buddy and Tyler

the ground running! Recently, the store implemented credit/debit card readers at each of its registers, making shopping that much easier. The feedback has been positive! The Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop provides jobs to more than 33 staff, while raising important funds for Parents and Friends, thanks to the generous donations of quality goods from community members. We invite you to Come Shop With Us 7 days a week at 350 S. Main Street in Fort Bragg. If you would like to donate your gently used goods, simply drive up to the south side of the shop at Hazel Street; a donation receipt will be provided upon request. If you have a large furniture donation, you can contact the store at 964-4471 to arrange for a pickup of your donation.

## Smile! Help PFI While You Shop



Amazon makes it so easy to support your favorite charity while shopping online. Each time you shop, Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to Parents and Friends, Inc. To establish your SMILE account, login at smile.amazon.com. Then type "Parents and Friends, Fort Bragg, CA" to designate your charity. That's it! Amazon will remember your charity each time you log in to smile.amazon.com. Thank you!

## Life After School

Stay tuned for "Family Night," a showcase of programs benefiting students and their families as they learn about "life after school." The event will

"the last day of  
student services  
looks like the first day  
of adult services."

take place on October 2nd in Fort Bragg, and is brought to you by the Inter-Agency Transition Team (ITT). The ITT is comprised of representatives from Parents and Friends, The Redwood Coast Regional Center, The State Council on Developmental Disabilities, The Mendocino County Office of Education, Fort Bragg High School, Mendocino Coast High School, Point Arena High school, Anderson Valley High School, and more, whose mission is to ensure that "the last day of student services looks like the first day of adult services."

## Amazing People Work at PFI!

PFI recognizes that our dedicated trained staff who deliver direct services help drive the progress for the individuals we serve by providing them opportunities to work on their individual goals. Each quarter, we recognize employees whose contributions during that period have stood out as noteworthy.

Congratulations, team PFI!

### Employees of the Quarters:

#### Ande Brown-Cooley

*Supported Living Services, 4th Quarter 2018*

#### Jodie Schmid

*Coastal Support Services, 1st Quarter 2019*

#### Olivia Wojciechowska

*The Community Connection, 2nd Quarter 2019*

#### Chantrelle Andrews

*The Community Connection, 3rd Quarter 2019*

#### Frankie Avila

*The Community Connection, 4th Quarter 2019*

# Azalea House

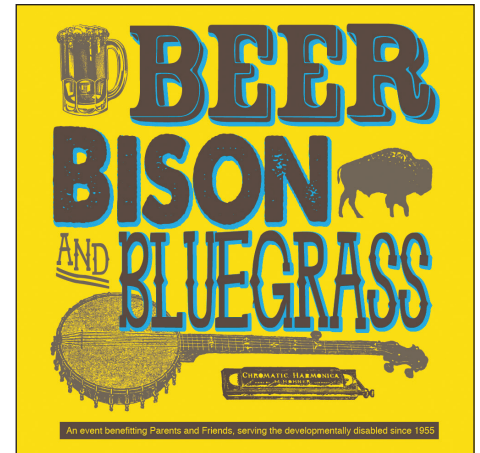
Parents and Friends is proud to have opened its first Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE), Azalea House, in Fort Bragg last year. The RCFE is a state-licensed facility that provides around the clock support to 4 residents, and employs 15 community members. The Redwood Coast Regional Center has been instrumental in assisting PFI to provide this specialized supportive service in order to meet the needs of people



Staff training at Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE)

ple who have developmental challenges and an aging related condition such as Alzheimer's or dementia. Each resident has their own private and individually decorated bedroom, choices of where and with whom they dine with in their home, nutritionally appropriate home-cooked meals, all while continuing to participate in community life according to their individual goals and decisions. Support staff receive specialized training including Dementia and Alzheimer's care, and are supervised by a state-licensed Administrator or designee. The site is equipped with a ceiling track Hoyer Lift system throughout the private spaces. There is an onsite laundry room, kitchen, sunroom, landscaped yards, and a full service back up generator which operated seamlessly during Mendocino County's recent power outages. Thanks to a Community Development Block Grant through the City of Fort Bragg, PFI is in the process of developing three more RCFE's; these homes are expected to open in 2021!

# Save The Date



Join us for our annual fundraiser Beer, Bison, and Bluegrass on October 3rd in Fort Bragg! This feelgood event features local and regional beers and ciders available for tasting while raising important funds for Parents and Friends, Inc. There will be live music, live raffles, and some pretty sweet live auctions! To become a sponsor or to learn more, contact Sandy at [bbb@parentsandfriends.org](mailto:bbb@parentsandfriends.org). You can also follow the event online @BeerBisonBluegrass. **Yee haw!**

# Buddy Asks

by Buddy Peterson

PFI employee Buddy Peterson interviewed Michael Berry to learn more about him:

## How long have you been with PFI?

I've been with Parents and Friends for 20 years. I work in the Life On The Coast (L.I.F.E.) program. I also work some shifts for SLS, and when I am teaching Pro-Act training, I am working for the Administration department, which serves everyone.

## What are your job responsibilities?

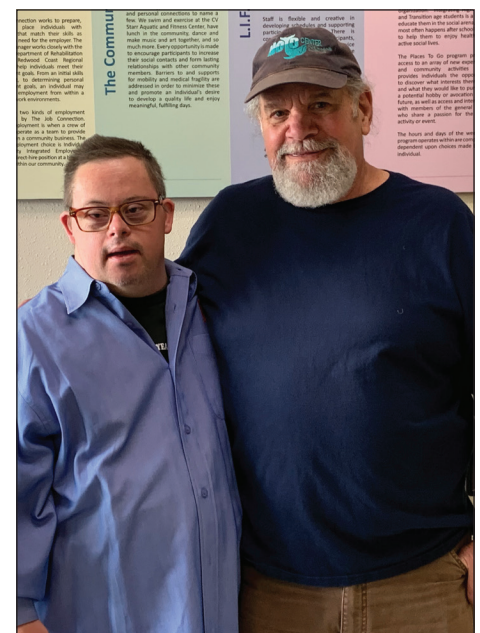
I do what is called Direct Service; I am a DSP. I try to help people identify what is important to them and for them in their life, what they would like to do, and how to achieve the goals they set. I find ways to help people reach their goals, and to be a good friend to others.

## What do you like most about working here?

The people. It's all about the people and how we help each other, and how we are connected to each other and to our community.

## What is something about yourself that others might not know?

I have a huge vinyl record album collection from the 50s, 60s, and 70s. I am a grandpa, and I am a dad to 2 dogs and 2 grown men! I don't watch TV but I love to learn about things on YouTube. The first time I met Buddy, he was running for Mayor of Fort Bragg; he was wearing a vest while campaigning; shaking hands, kissing babies, and going door to door. We go way back together!



Buddy Peterson & Michael Berry



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