

Progress!

Parents & Friends Inc.

Fall 2021

Creatively Serving People with Developmental Disabilities Since 1955

Moving With Purpose

by Kristy Tanguay

When I first met Antony, I was new to the block and we quickly became friendly neighbors. He used to stop by on his walks to admire our pet bird, Marty McFly, out on the front porch. He also enjoyed sharing words of wisdom with my then 5 year old daughter about being careful and safe, and listening to her mother. One day when my daughter and I were shopping at The Paul Bunyan Thrift Store, I heard a familiar voice excitedly saying, "Hi, I know you, I know you! How is your bird?" Then Antony came over to ask my daughter if she was being good.

Today Antony took time out of his busy day to share about his experience as a person who lives an independent and full life, and cares deeply about the people around him.

Antony is committed to trying new things, whether they are places, foods, people or employment ideas. It's a good thing, because like so many of us he has endured many changes this year. Covid being the first, as we were all figuring out how we could remain safe as we were learning as a society how to define our individual and collective risks in an ever-changing 'new normal.'

When Antony and his mother Judy moved to Fort Bragg 16 years ago, it was so she could engage her son in the 24-hour care services that Parents and Friends provides. It was her hope that Antony, and many others who live and work here, would be able to receive this type of around the clock support that would allow them to remain in



our community as they age. Earlier this year, Antony's dear mother passed away. Until that time she worked tirelessly to help Antony to design a life of caring and enriching friendships, and to have supports in place for her

son to live his best life in a safe and beautiful place.

When I asked Antony what the most important thing in his life is, he said, "exercise." You see, Antony loves to swim at CV Starr, walk along the coastal waters (Noyo Harbor is his favorite), and also walk out on Summers Lane, near the Humane Society. He enjoys watching and learning about the tides, the birds, the trees, and the different types of tents and campers that appear in each spot. However, he revealed to me the real reason why he likes those spots the best. "It's not about the animals at the humane society; I don't go there. What I do is go and pick up all of the trash that people leave along the beach and in the forest." He does not understand why people don't pick up their trash, especially when they are surrounded by so much natural beauty. Antony's deep concern for others and our surroundings makes a difference in all of our lives, including his own. Being outdoors, and doing results-oriented work while staying fit also provides time to reflect and learn, and brings rejuvenation and purpose to his life.

As his longtime friend and support staff Meadow shared, “Antony stays enthusiastic and is always interested. Everyday he is up for a new adventure, he is very adaptable and has a great sense of humor. On the rare occasion that he may be feeling down, he doesn’t stay there for long. He is mature and accepting of all of life’s changes and how it sometimes goes.”

Meadow recalls meeting Antony at a Halloween party when he was a grade schooler, when he first arrived on the coast. They became good friends while bonding over music (ABBA, anyone?) Together they take care of life’s necessities at home and in the community, and are looking forward to once again collecting medals while traveling and competing in Special Olympics basketball and baseball.

Support staff member Chucky explained that, “Antony is a great vocal harmonizer, air drummer, and knows some American Sign Language that he likes to incorporate into our musical enjoyment.” Chucky and Antony have their own current playlist on heavy rotation together featuring “YMCA” by The Village People, and “Save Your Tears” by The Weeknd. Chucky reflected on how he is inspired by Antony’s ability to always grasp happiness, while moving naturally through what life offers with bravery, acceptance, and kindness.

When I asked Antony what he was looking forward to, his response came easily. “Hanging out with friends around the campfire and talking online, playing video games, visiting horses, cooking food from his home garden (he just enjoyed the final tomato harvest), drawing on his new iPad, and Thanksgiving dinner. “I’m alive!” he said.



A View from the Moon

by Rick Moon

As I’m sitting at my desk at Redwood Ave. contemplating what to write for ‘A View’. I’m struck by the fact that so much has happened to write about in the last eighteen months. It’s difficult to pick and choose specifics in a situation which has been so universal and life altering in its impact, but I’ll give it a try.

First of all, I’m at my desk wearing a mask and it doesn’t feel weird or out of place. In fact, when I don’t have it on I feel out of place and vulnerable. I’ve learned that ZOOM is more than an exclamation in a comic book text bubble, and I use it every day. I’ve also learned that people are resilient, caring and ready to sacrifice for the good of their friends, associates and community.

We have had positive tests for Covid among staff and clients and many cases of exposure. Luckily, none of these resulted in serious disease or death or sparked a widespread infection in the organization. Following health department protocols strictly has worked in lessening the impact to PFI clients and staff. Most staff and clients are now vaccinated and boosters are in progress (I just got mine). We have and use full PPE where appropriate and administer rapid tests within PFI for staff and clients. All of these efforts and more have so far kept everyone safe.

That being said, the biggest impact on client safety and health has been PFI staff. Besides Covid, clients still need support living in their own homes, working, health issues, etc. Add to this staff being out due to family Covid issues, school

closings, no baby-sitting, aging parents needing support during the pandemic and exposure forcing up to fourteen days quarantine and you end up with staff shortages. So what have PFI staff done to respond? They step up! Voluntarily. People are pulling double shifts, two weeks without a day off, delayed vacations and no notice call ins. Sure, they make overtime and double-time, but that’s not why they do it. They do it because the clients need it, and in the end, their priorities are, and always have been, with the client. All critical support is being covered as are most services overall.

Hopefully we’ll be coming out of this soon, but so far, when I begin to feel that way, we go back into it. It’s been almost eighteen months now. It feels like a new normal, but hopefully it’s not.

After the battle of Britton Winston Churchill said of the Royal Air Force, “Never before have so many owed so much to so few.” That certainly is true of the staff at PFI.

If you, or someone you know, want to work in a rewarding job making a difference in people’s lives and contributing to the good of the community, please have them get in touch with us. We and our clients certainly can use their help.

In the end I’m reminded of a line from a Steve Miller song called “Space Cowboy” which says “I keep my eyes on the prize and the long fallen skies and I don’t let my friends get hurt.” We’re not Space Cowboys, we’re Parents and we’re Friends, but that’s what we do too.



Parents & Friends Inc.
*Creatively Serving People
 With Developmental Disabilities*

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- *The Community Connection*
- *Places To Go*
- *L.I.F.E on the Coast*
- *Coastal Support Services*
- *The Job Connection*
- *Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop and Furniture Annex*
- *Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE)*
- *Person-Centered Services*

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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Alternative Services

As the pandemic continued beyond our expectations, we looked for new ways to help people meet their goals while staying safe. Thanks to the California Department of Developmental Services and the Redwood Coast Regional Center, PFI was able to develop and provide responsive Alternative Services to meet the needs of more than 57 people while being mindful of the importance of safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. That's more than half of the people we serve!

Trying new things proved to be only a small part of what Alternative Services can be as it is dependent on the needs and choices of each person choosing to engage in Alternative Service. Through person-centered planning, some folks revised their goals, while others modified the way they would engage on current goals.

From phone and video calls to check in, providing training on the use of personal protective equipment, learning how to use the Amazon Fire tablets that were donated by the Redwood Coast Regional

Center to participate in new ways including creative, fitness, employment, and educational pursuits were the beginning of what PFI's Alternative Services program Terilynn Epperson has been providing with our Community Integration programs. Below is a sampling of some of the dynamic online programs that are happening today, most of which are participant driven. If you see something you'd like to join in on, contact Terilynn at 707-357-6761 to learn more.



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.

Join us in celebrating the outstanding contributions of PFI's

'Employees of the Quarter' for 2021

Leopoldo Magana
L.I.F.E. on the Coast, 1st Quarter

Frankie Avila
The Community Connection, 2nd Quarter

Reynaldo Rosado
The Community Connection, 2nd Quarter

Kyle Kalin
The Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop & Furniture Annex,
2nd Quarter

Nia DeAlba
Supported Living Services, 3rd Quarter

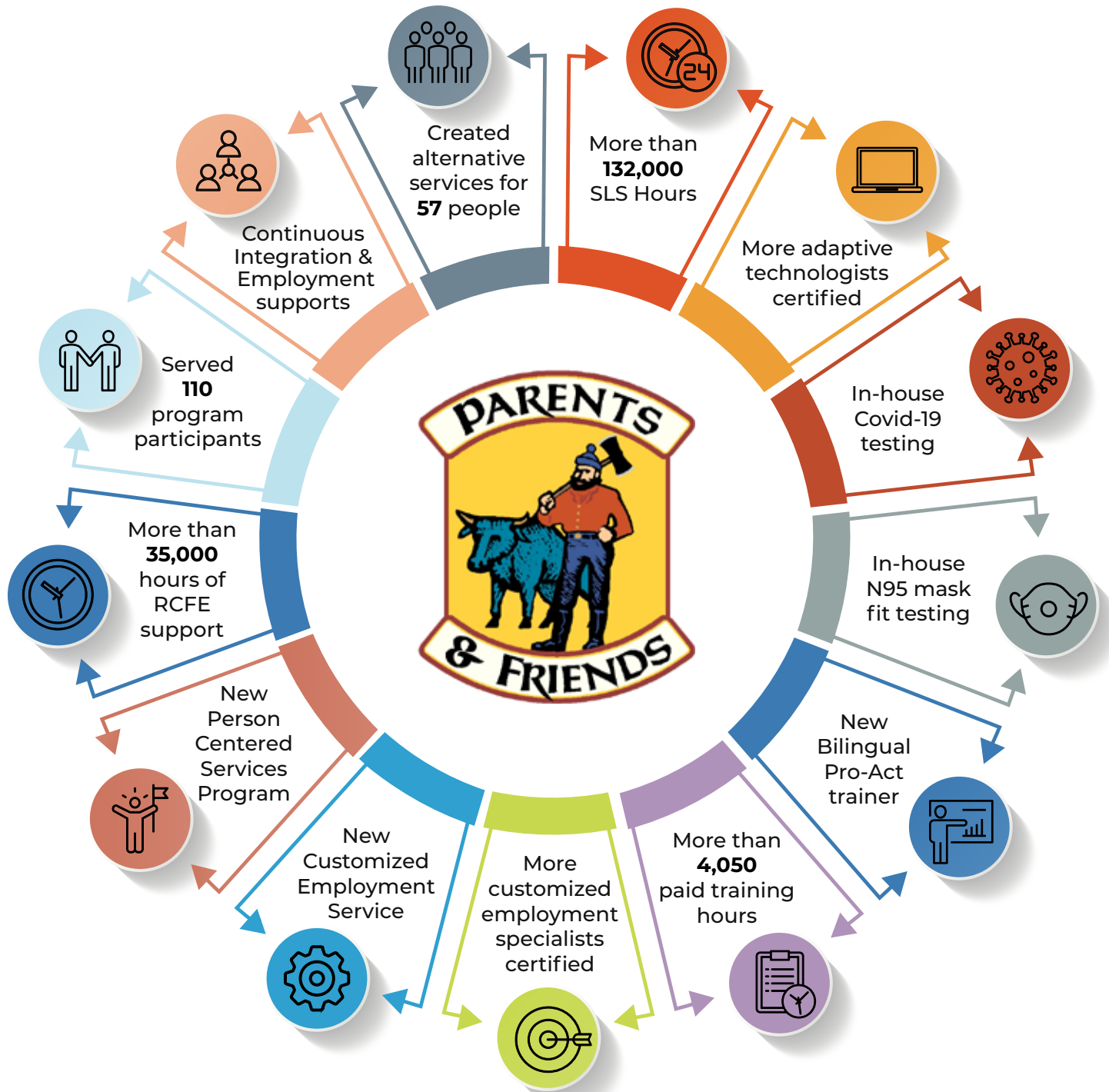
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Team PFI, Stepping Up To Plan For and Meet Needs





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