

Progress!

Parents & Friends Inc.

Spring 2018

Creatively Serving People with Developmental Disabilities Since 1955

Achieving Life Satisfaction Through Employment Success



Kristin Hock

About seven years ago, my afternoon routine was to pick up my daughter from her afterschool program at Redwood Elementary. Each day I would see a busy, quiet, and notably fashionable young woman leading the kindergarteners down the sidewalk into the cafeteria to meet their grownups at the end of the day. Sometimes she was sweeping, sometimes wiping little noses, other times she

was directing parents as to where their children were. I always gave her a smile to let her know much I appreciated her tender care of these tiny kiddos, including mine. She would smile or chuckle quietly in return, and continue to attend to her work. I also learned that the beautiful and intricately cut 3-D paper stars that adorned some of the classrooms at the school were made by this mysterious-

to-me young woman. Through observing her fashion choices and star creations, my hunch was confirmed; this young woman had strong artistic and creative skills! A question had mildly lingered in my mind during that time: why doesn't this person, who is leading my child, engage in eye contact with me?

Fast forward to 2012, when I began my employment with Parents & Friends as the program manager for the L.I.F.E. on the Coast community integration program. A referral had come from the Redwood Coast Regional Center to support a young woman who had goals to complete some local college courses; her one caveat was that her schedule had to work around her day job. When we had our first meeting, I recognized immediately it was Kristin, the young woman who had so expertly cared for my daughter at the KUDOS afterschool program!

As Kristin and members of her circle of support team worked together to help her prepare for college, we determined that her lack of self-confidence should be addressed in order for her to be comfortable in a classroom of her college peers. Tutoring support from Kristin's day program was arranged for her while she obtained her driver's license, purchased a car, and started her college courses --- all while maintaining her afternoon job. Upon recommendation of support staff, Pamela Hunter, we encouraged Kristin to check out Art Explorer's, an art therapy program located just across the street from PFI. After all, Kristin clearly had an aptitude for and an interest in art; she comes from an artistic family and shares her personal flair with the community. Before long she began to truly

Continued on Page 2

blossom through exploration of various media and inspirations. This was a real confidence booster for Kristin. It opened her eyes to the possibilities that lay before her.

After completing her selected college courses, Kristin expressed interest in other employment opportunities. However, she still maintained the caveat that any activity or job schedule had to work around her day job, working with children. After referral by the Regional Center to the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), Kristin became a job candidate in The Job Connection program of Parents and Friends. Very soon, she was hired at the Mendocino Sports Club as a morning custodian. Even though the work itself has not really been challenging for Kristin, the environment is a very good one in which she could develop customer service skills (including eye contact) and workplace relationships with other adults. Since then, Kristin and The Job Connection have continued in Discovery mode to explore her skills, motivations, and employment interests in retail or office work. She spent some time learning about Microsoft Word, Excel and its basic functions and formulas, Google Calendar, and file management and was surprised to learn that she has a natural aptitude for organizing information. She explored cash handling and retail transactions and discovered she could be accurate and conduct pleasant customer service. She accomplished all this while maintaining two jobs and her participation in Art Explorers!

Through this exploration, Kristin learned that continuing to work with children is still very important to her. Thus, with support from The Job Connection, she studied for the paraprofessional exam with Fort Bragg Unified School District and passed! As a result, she is now working as a Teacher's Assistant in Redwood Elementary School KUDOS after school program and is responsible for leading the Art Class there.

What a wonderful journey to witness! The sky is the limit for Kristin! Keep up the good work!



A View from the Moon by Rick Moon

As I've said before, winter is not my favorite time of year. It's now March. The wind still has a chill in it and it rained hard last night, but Spring is on the way. This column, then, was to be about being on the brink of Spring, should be easy to write, but it's not. I've tried three times and had to throw out each one. I can't get my mind into Spring, or much of anything else right now. Over the past few months we've lost three people near and dear to PFI.

Dave always volunteered to pour beer at the Beer, Bison, Bluegrass fundraiser, even though he was a wine aficionado. He loved the Beatles and had all their albums in remixed vinyl format and most importantly, at least to me, provided much needed psychic and libation support during a tough time for PFI and, as a consequence, me as the new Executive Director. Dave passed away in December, much loved, and much missed by everyone at PFI, and most especially his high school sweetheart. Too soon.

Jason Fuller. A much appreciated addition to the PFI team. As an RN he brought a level of expertise to the team which improved SLS and 24-7 services for clients. Both the clients he supported directly and the staff he worked with benefited from an ethic and willingness to share his expertise and experience with staff through both training and example. Jason was loved by his clients and respected by all his co-workers and management. Jason passed away in January, too quickly to say goodbye, and too soon to be fair.

Mindy (Amanda) Peterson was an artist. Her paintings amaze everyone who sees them and are hanging far and wide, in-

cluding in a vacation home in Toulouse, France. Mindy's painting, however, is only an expression of her artistry. Mindy had the soul of an artist, and it showed in everything she did. She dressed differently every day, according to her muse at the time. Mindy would show up wearing a flowing cape and cowboy hat and, guess what, on Mindy it worked. She looked and obviously felt so comfortable in it. Somehow, I don't think it would work for me. We lost Mindy in February. Everyone at PFI, Art Explorers, her family and the Community at large miss her dearly.

So I haven't been able to wrap my head around Spring yet. It seems it will never come again. When I think about a client who needs a little special support I think immediately about Jason, then go cold, remembering. I can't listen to the Beatles anymore, especially "Blackbird" without thinking about Dave and feeling loss. I can't look at paintings, especially one of Mindy's, and not feel sorrow and remember her incredible artistic flair.

I know intellectually that a time will come when I can encounter these things and, while they'll still remind me of Dave, Jason or Mindy, they will then make me smile, remembering the good things they made me feel when they were here with us, but that time has not come yet. Maybe by July, or September, or hopefully next Spring, because Dave, Jason and Mindy deserve a smile, and would want us to smile too.

I usually end these columns with a quote, so here goes, in the vernacular. Quote: "Shit! Shit! Shit!" Waiting for next Spring.

PFI Alumni Moves Up In The World

Congratulations and best wishes to Sheba Brown, who recently left PFI to begin working as the Field Representative for Congressman Jared Huffman. Way to go, Sheba!

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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.

Employees of the Quarter

Parents and Friends seeks to recognize employees who stand out in their effort to provide excellent service, innovative solutions, and an exemplary work ethic and attitude. In this issue, we are pleased to recognize two stellar members of the PFI team.



Tyler Allen

Congratulations to Tyler Allen, who earned PFI's Employee of the Quarter award, and is a valued employee at The Paul Bunyan Thrift Store and Furniture Annex, and beyond! By taking the extra steps to make sure business needs are met, Tyler earned this award of a placard with his name on it, and check for \$250.00! Tyler is willing to do what it takes to get the job done, be it moving a client's belongings to their new home, pitching in for another department to provide client services, taking on the role of safety representative, or training a coworker. Keep up the good work, Tyler. You are appreciated!



Barbara Howard

Barbara been with PFI for almost 3 and a half years. She works with L.I.F.E. on the Coast as her main job, but also helps out with the Places to Go program and sometimes provides some fill-in work with PFI's Supported Living Services. Barbara has been an outstanding, take charge employee and delivers her services with a smile, respect, and great dollop of encouragement. Barbara explained, "I assist clients in having positive learning experiences out in our community. I like working with all of my clients; we are all connected. I enjoy helping them to reach their goals and seeing all of their accomplishments." Thank you, Barbara!

Buddy Asks...

PFI employee Buddy Peterson interviewed Rick Moon to learn more about him:

How long have you been with PFI?
I have been with PFI for 12 years; I work in the Administration department.

What do you like most about working here? **I like being with people I like to work with.**

What is something about yourself that others might not know? **I used to play the bass guitar in a Rock and Blues band. When I was in school, I won a journalism award from the San Francisco Press Club. In my spare time, I like to cook from the Julia Childs cookbook.**



Let's Talk About Sex

Parents and Friends is pleased to be offering a sexual health course here in Fort Bragg. We will be following the F.L.A.S.H. Curriculum.

The purpose of these courses is to encourage safe and healthy communication about each topic. It's a chance to discuss each individual's cultural and religious beliefs, participants' personal feelings about sexual health issues as well as staying safe while out in the community or on the internet. Conversations play an important part in helping prevent unplanned pregnancy, STDs, HIV, and in promoting healthy relationships. The F.L.A.S.H. program includes activities to make these discussions easier and more frequent.

If you would like to look over the lessons, we invite you to look at them online: www.kingcounty.gov/health/flash. You can also contact Xaviera Hall, Director, PFI Community Integration Services to preview the printed lesson plans. Xaviera can be reached by phone at 707-357-4786 or by email at xhall@parentsandfriends.org.

Grant Award Provides Technical Assistance

Parents & Friends has continued to meet the individual needs of our clients since 1955. The recent integration of technology has been rapid among administration

and direct service providers alike. Thank you to The Community Foundation of Mendocino County for the technical assistance grant we received in December 2017. We are always looking for ways to improve our efficiency, and the grant we received from The Community Foundation of Mendocino County will help to do just that. We are grateful! You can learn more about this amazing local organization at www.communityfound.org/



We Love Tootsie Rolls, thanks to The Knight of Columbus local councils #8187 and #4025.

Each year, the Knights of Columbus organization raises important funds to help individuals with developmental disabilities during their annual Tootsie Roll Drive. The Mendocino council donated \$1,109.86, and the Fort Bragg council donated \$3,403.73 to PFI. Thank you Salvador Vera, Council # 8187; Dave Swenson, Council #4025; and all of the Knights (and community members) for your support of our mission. We are grateful!

The Great Reveal!



pictured: Rodrigo Perez, Assistant Manager, The Community Connection &

James Specie, who uncovered the main dish for the monthly feast.

Save The Date!

Our 6th annual Beer, Bison, & Bluegrass BBQ & Concert fundraiser will be back this fall on

**Saturday
September 1st**
from 12 noon-4pm
in Fort Bragg!

6TH ANNUAL BEER BISON AND BLUEGRASS

FEATURING THE MENDOCINO QUARTET AND THE GREENFIELDS

Saturday, September 1 12 Noon to 4pm

**Our Lady of Good Counsel Hall
605 Maple Street, Fort Bragg**

Sample local brews and ciders! Enjoy live Bluegrass music!
Silent Auction, Live Raffle, and Games!

Admission: \$45 for Music with Beer & Cider tastings. Just music \$25. \$5 more at the door. Bison Burger Meals, Hot dog plates, Dessert, Snack, Soft Drinks and Wine will be available for sale \$1 - \$10 each.

Tickets available at the Paul Bunyan Thrift Shop, Harvest Market, Out of this World, and Brownpapertickets.com

An event benefitting Parents and Friends, serving the developmentally disabled since 1955

Thank you, Betty!

Parents & Friends would like to express our thanks to Betty Gross, who served for many years on the board of directors of Parents and Friends. Prior to retiring, Betty was a school teacher in Mendocino and is a mother of 2. That didn't stop her from standing up to fight for what was right and best for the individuals we serve. Once her children were grown, she continued to serve on the board, as board Secretary, and contributed to many positive events and changes at PFI: The Adirondack Woodshop, The Hoity Toity Tea and Fashion Show, Spaghetti Feeds; Beer, Bison, and Bluegrass; and, the Progress! Newsletter. We will miss your presence in-house, but look forward to seeing you around town, enjoying the life to the fullest. Thank you for helping to steer us where we need to be in order to best serve the needs of the individuals we support.

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AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

Thank you!



Thanks to our recent donors!

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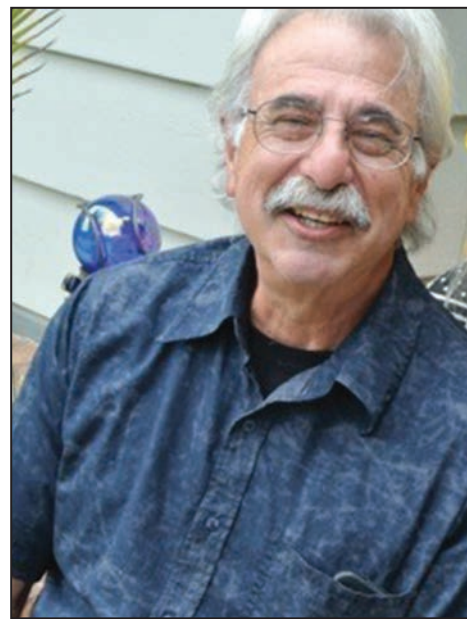
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Amanda "Mindy"
Peterson



Jason Fuller



Dave Venett

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With Developmental Disabilities since 1955*
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Post Office Box 656 Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Would you prefer to receive our newsletter via email?
Please contact Kristy at
ktanguay@parentsandfriends.org to update your preferences.

Gone, but not forgotten. Your memory lives in our hearts.