

H.A.L.O. Reports

Serving Children With Neurological Impairment Since 1993

All Children Deserve To Explore The World Around Them



Pint-sized cars have given kids a sense of freedom and adventure for decades. But those with mobility issues have often been left behind in the parking lot.

GoBabyGo New Hampshire recently changed that for a non-ambulatory child at Cedarcrest Center for Children in Keene.

The volunteer organization, founded at the University of Delaware, provides modified battery-operated toy cars to children with special needs. The local New Hampshire website declares: "We are grounded in a single belief: all children deserve to explore the world around them."

For the past four years St. Paul's School in Concord, NH has partnered with GoBabyGo in its summer Engineering and Design program for rising seniors.

Cedarcrest resident "Miss M,"



Cedarcrest resident "Miss M" drives her customized car donated by GoBabyGo!

accompanied by occupational and physical therapy staff, spent a day at St. Paul's where students installed switches and adapted the car to meet her physical and cognitive needs.

"It's a true engineering experience

from a technical point of view, but we also want our kids to understand that engineers have ability to change people lives," said faculty member Will Renaud.

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How Does Sunday Swim and Sing Respite Really Work?

On the surface, H.A.L.O.'s Sunday Swim and Sing program provides three hours of respite—or 1:1 direct care for individuals with special needs—and three hours "me time" for families.

Small groups of young people with complex physical and cognitive challenges participate in safe, supervised, meaningful activity with experienced staffers who understand their needs.

Deeper down, the monthly sessions are exercises in communication, and collaborations with families to find ways to help each individual build



Participants enjoy a swim session.

his/her own success story, according to Angela Waring, MS, Respite and Recreation Program Manager at Jewish Family & Children's Service, which manages Swim and Sing.

That means constant reflection, outreach and program adjustments.

For example, a recent interaction with a veteran participant triggered a reevaluation of his needs in the context of Swim and Sing.

Although he had been attending for several years, the non-verbal communicator was suddenly having

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Champions Flourish At the World Series And All Around Us

Dear Friends,

Since breaking the Bambino's curse in 2004, the Red Sox have celebrated World Series Championships in 2007, 2013 and, of course, this year. Being Boston-based, we've enjoyed the debate in Red Sox nation on who was the real MVP: Pitcher David Price who won Games 2 and 5 in his best postseason ever? Or the winner, First Baseman Steven Pearce, whose two homers in Game 5 sparked an unbeatable Sox offense?

Oh, how lucky to have so many heroes! Children with neurological impairment should be so fortunate. The kids H.A.L.O. serves need every champion they can enlist. The Foundation contributes to their quality of life, as do a battalion of family members, medical professionals and therapeutic staffers who bring them enriching experiences.

But the children need the larger community — you — to remember their humanity. They breathe, they laugh, they create, they feel. They matter! Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for championing our children.

Sincerely,



Here Are Some Of The “Little Ones” Our Foundation Helps

Children with neurological impairment need special support and devices to help them communicate, socialize, be active, stay motivated, and even just to be comfortable. H.A.L.O. partners with families, social workers and caseworkers to purchase these expensive “extras” not covered by insurance.



Vivian, above, uses her adapted trike to exercise outdoors, and socialize.



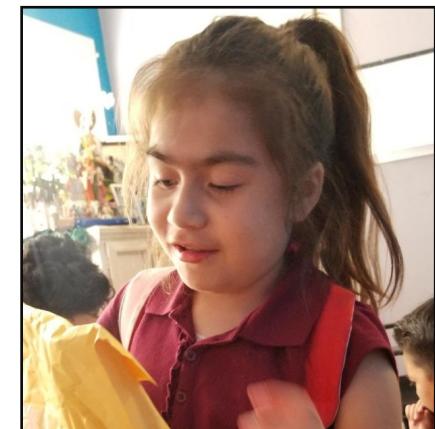
Milli, above, received several small items to improve quality of life.

The **Ivy Street School** in Brookline, MA, which educates children with brain injury and neurological impairment, received eight computers and monitors.

H.A.L.O. also helped send a child to a summer camp for kids with special needs.



Emily, above, is using her Kaye Therapy Bench at home to reinforce skills she learns at her therapy sessions. She is practicing how to stand up on her own, and how to move from the floor to a sitting or standing position.



Valerie, above, received a new backpack equipped to hold her feeding bag and supplies at school. She also received books on g-tubes and a stuffed elephant with a g-tube to help normalize her condition for her.



H.A.L.O. extended music therapy sessions that help **Audrey**, above, improve her communication skills.

Young Artists Prove Creativity Is Not Exclusive To The Able-Bodied

Paintings by young adults associated with Seven Hills Pediatric Center in Groton, MA were featured at the Springhill Suites by Marriott in October.

Seven artists from the Adult Services Collaborative Arts Program and the Academy Free Expressions Program at the pediatric center produced the original works using switches, eye blinks and vocalization to indicate their choice of color, size, tools and techniques.

Instructors provide hand-over-hand support, but only as directed. They also use a laser pointer to present choices and mark start and end points.

"The show at the hotel at Devens Commons is just one part of our efforts to integrate residents into the local communities," said Monica Kleeman, Activities Manager and Community Coordinator at the center. "Their visibility at the 'meet the artist' event reinforced for the public that creativity is not exclusive to the able bodied."

The art workshops have produced some high quality pieces, according to instructor Shannon McLaren, but their real value is providing an outlet for self expression.

"These individuals have little control over most aspects of lives. Their art is how they communicate."

Early works by one artist were dark, sweeping strokes which could have been interpreted as frustration. Later, her paintings became lighter and brighter. It seemed she was finding her 'voice.'

"We try very hard to keep a poker face, to not steer the artist toward a particular color or pattern," said occupational therapy assistant Brian Heath. He, too, lauds the art programs for stimulating the senses and freeing individuals from their body's limitations.

Contact smclaren@sevenhills.org or vcampbell@sevenhills.org to learn more about art programs at Seven Hills Pediatric Center.



Artists accompanied their work at the Seven Hills/Springhill Suites Art Show.

Individual Success Stories Are Written At Swim & Sing

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difficulty staying safe during the program, according to Angela.

He was scratching at the staff and appeared frustrated.

"Each session we are asking these individuals to step out of their comfort zone, to change into a bathing suit, put a toe into the water literally and figuratively. As a program, we believe every behavior is a form of communication," Angela said.

Wellness, family changes, medications, temperature, and many other factors can affect behavior, she explained. At the staff meeting following the individual's most severe behaviors, the team discussed ways to help him. They reached out to his family to learn what worked well at home and school; they created an informal

behavior plan, utilizing a "First-Then" schedule and PEC (Picture Exchange Communication) system. This helped staff understand his wants and needs. The young man also brought in his personal iPad for communication and responded well to earning music rewards for positive interactions.

Thanks to the staff and the individual's family, his next session was a success story. He was able to participate calmly, and the family enjoyed the respite they needed.

"The staff's collaboration outside the program to engage and encourage this individual took extra time and effort, but we hope it will bring benefits to other parts of his life, also," Angela said.

Contact awaring@jfcsboston.org for information about Sunday Swim and Sing.

Miniature Horse 'Brings The Farm' to NEPC

When medically fragile children cannot venture out into the world, New England Pediatric Care brings the outside in.

Tonka, a Chestnut Gelding miniature therapy horse, recently spent time nuzzling delighted students at NEPC's Day School in Billerica, MA.

"Every student had a time to interact with the horse," said Amy Gagnon, M.Ed., Director of Education. "Some smiled, some cuddled his face - we saw positive, happy responses everywhere, a true example of fearless kids."

Many students at NEPC have dual sensory loss, so all



Vera and Tonka share a laugh at NEPC.

classrooms utilize a multi-modal approach to learning. Tonka responded to individuals different awareness levels with sensitivity, allowing each to explore in their own way.

"Apple picking and hayrides are typical activities for school aged children," explained Amy. "We try to expose all the individuals at NEPC to typical seasonal activities, but most are not medically stable enough to visit a farm."

Lifting Spirits Miniature Therapy Horses in Andover, MA, offers a good

alternative. Tonka, one of three trained horses, was selected for NEPC for his gentle personality and 36-inch height—perfect for individuals in wheelchairs.

"We feel horses have the ability to connect with children and adults in a very special way," according to the Lifting Spirits website. The teachers and staff at NEPC agree and hope to visit with Tonka regularly to broaden students' experiences.

*For more information visit:
www.nepc.org or
www.facebook.com/liftingspiritsminitherapyhorses*



GoBabyGo Helps Kids Experience Movement

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Building a product that helps someone in real time makes a lasting impression, even if the kids don't go into engineering, he explained.

"It's very emotional for all of us watching the kids' faces when they experience that freedom."

Lisa Henry, PT, DPT, and Director of Rehabilitation Services at Cedarcrest Center said the GoBabyGo experience was very positive all around. "In one day, everyone worked so hard to make the car safe and

functional for "Miss M's" skill level. The team respected her need for breaks and did whatever she needed to be comfortable."

Driving the car is a mood enhancer and motivator, Lisa said; it also exercises cognitive and fine motor skills and teaches cause and effect. Once "Miss M" outgrows the car it will be available to other children at Cedarcrest, according to Lisa.

*For information about GoBabyGo visit:
<https://sites.udel.edu/gobabygo/>*



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for Children
with Neurological
Impairment**

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