



Living Healthy *with* PWS

LathamCenters Quarterly Newsletter



Latham Centers creates opportunities for independence, self-worth, and happiness for children and adults with complex special needs.

Poetry and Publishing: Students' Work Highlighted in 'PWS Mindset' Publication

A poem entitled "The Beach" – created by some of our Latham students – is featured in a new Latham Centers publication written for the Prader-Willi syndrome community. In the poem, students capture the sounds, feels, tastes, smells, and sights of the beach, and how the beach makes them feel: "The beach makes me feel happy.... The beach makes me feel calm."

The publication featuring "The Beach" and other student creations, "Understanding the PWS Mindset and Development of Coping Skills," was written by Patrice Carroll, LCSW (Director of PWS Services) and edited by Katrina Fryklund, MSPC (Director of National Outreach). In the introductory message from the author, Patrice writes, "This book is dedicated to the residents at Latham Centers. Through perseverance and determination, we witness you grow into lifelong learners and caring community members. Throughout the following pages, you will see samples of their poetry, giving you insight into their complex and magnificent mindsets."

Chapters cover the following topics, and each highlights a student author:

- Understanding the PWS Mindset
- What Works
- Coping Skills
- Understanding PWS Behaviors

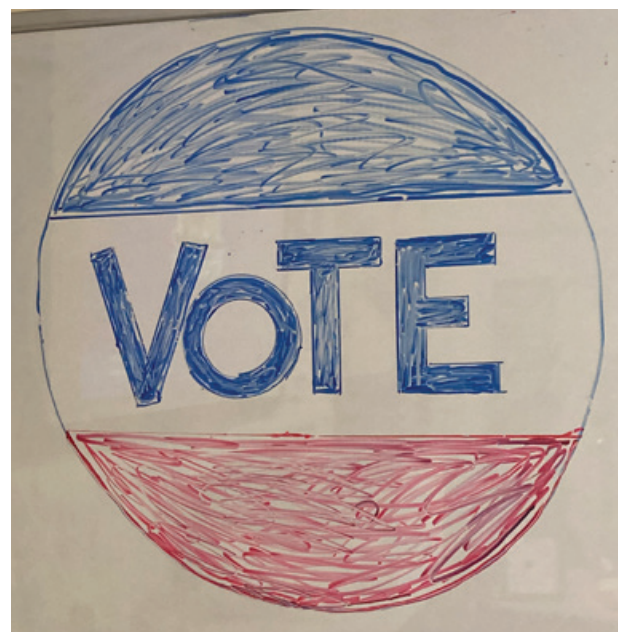
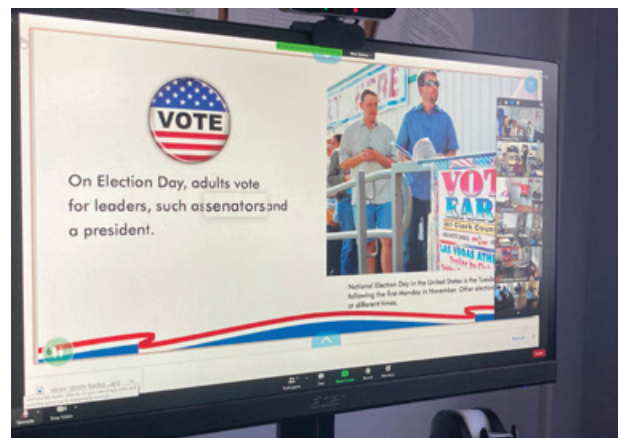
For an electronic copy of the 'PWS Mindset' booklet, please email admissions@lathamcenters.org. (Printed copies are available upon request).



Special thanks to Kristina Casanova Law, Latham's Director of Employee Scheduling, for sharing her photography with Latham Centers (see beach photo at sunset above). Though she says, "It's just a hobby," we're in awe of her talent and can't wait to share more of her work on our website.

Latham Students Participate in Their Own 2020 Election

Latham Centers' Programs are proud of their long history of engaging students on campus and in the community. Students participate in lessons and outings which encourage the exploration and understanding of their local community. This year, on November 3rd, students participated in their own school-wide election, experiencing the excitement of voting and learning about the democratic process. The lesson included an online class featuring Latham students and teacher Jeffrey Lee, voting booths made by the classrooms, opportunities for private voting with receipt of the essential "I VOTED" sticker, and tabulating of the results.



"Our Brewster campus was buzzing with students and staff talking about the United States election – and our Student Election. Almost 80% of our students voted, with close to 75% voting for Biden/Harris. I was so impressed by the entire process, including students telling one another facts about the candidates, a virtual all-student lesson about the voting process (including the Electoral College), and considerations about why our voting process is unique to the United States. This lesson exemplified the Latham Centers culture as it engaged students in the nation-wide process while encouraging educational growth, entertainment, and student accountability."

*– Katrina Fryklund,
Director of National Outreach*

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Meet Mikey in our 13th PWS University Podcast

Mikey has been a student at Latham Centers for just over a year and a half and has excelled. Over that time, he has matured into a contemplative and sincere teenager, which is exemplified in our 13th PWS University Podcast. Mikey's interview in the audio podcast is uplifting:

Q: Why are you a good friend?

A: I care for my friends a lot, if they're angry or upset I help them with everything.

Q: What are your favorite subjects?

A: I love Math and English. I'm really good at fractions and decimals. I could also write for hours!

Q: What do you like about school?

A: I like learning new things and being with friends.

Q: What is the best part of being on campus?

A: I get to hang out with lots of friends!

Q: What is it like to be on a campus where so many students and staff know about PWS?

A: I was pretty happy to come here because I wanted to be in a school with others who have my disability.

Q: How has COVID affected your life on campus?

A: We're really safe here, and at first I was sad because I wasn't able to go home, but I learned a lot about it. I feel safe at Latham!



"I feel safe at Latham... You're never alone! People always want to help you, and they always have your back." ~ Mikey

Q: How do you feel supported at Latham Centers?

A: You're never alone! People always want to help you, and they always have your back.

Q: Would you like to tell us anything else about the person with PWS?

A: People with PWS have so many abilities!

<https://pwsuniversity.podbean.com/e/pws-university-13-mikey-says-latham-is-the-best-school-for-kids-with-pws/>

A SEASON OF THANKS

COVID-19 and the Holiday Season for Your Family

By Patrice Carroll

As with everything else this year, the holidays will certainly be different from any other holiday season. You have an opportunity this year to celebrate without the traditional expectations during the holiday time.

Stay-at-home orders will definitely change the landscape of your Christmas Day or Hanukkah celebrations, but that doesn't mean they can't be fun. Sometimes large family gatherings can bring added stresses to the families of people with PWS; this year, you may not have to face many of those stressors.

Plan for a quiet family day doing what you want to do and not what your extended family expects you to do. As always, having a plan written down that includes a menu and activities for the day will help to keep your child feeling safe and happy. Our Thanksgiving Day example is below.



| Thanksgiving Student Schedule November 26, 2020 | |
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| 9am-11am: | Thanksgiving Scavenger Hunt Across Campus, (Suite by Suite) |
| 11am-1pm | Video Call Time in each suite Madlibs, Coloring Sheets, Decoration cont'd |
| 1:1-3:00pm: | Thanksgiving Dinner Football goes on for Afternoon Games |
| 1:30-1:45: | Transitional, Independent Time |
| 1:45-2:30: | Community Meeting with After Dinner Bingo |
| 2:30-3:30: | Latham Turkey Delivers Gifts and Snack Suite by Suite Suite Decorations Contest, Judged by Turkey Family call times, etc. |
| 4:30: | Dinner/Lunch |
| 5:00: | Exercise time – Chicken Dance contest |

Caregiver Appreciation: PWSA USA Highlights Latham Centers

In honor of Caregiver Appreciation Day on Friday, November 13th, PWSA | USA recognized residential counselors / direct support professionals, home health aides, nursing home attendants, and many other caregivers.

"The individuals who provide care services to the PWS community are especially worthy of this small annual celebration, considering the personal, high-stakes labor invested by these compassionate professionals," PWSA | USA wrote in their blog post Caregiver Appreciation Day Spotlight: <https://www.pwsausa.org/caregiver-appreciation-day-spotlight-pwho-and-latham-centers/>. They quoted Latham's own Patrice Carroll in their article: "Caregiver Appreciation Day is such a meaningful way to recognize the selfless and challenging work that our staff do every day," said Patrice Carroll, LCSW, Director of PWS Services at Latham Centers.

"Latham staff members work tirelessly to provide a second home to over 100 children and adults with PWS, and they do it with love, humor, and skill. The work that we do is challenging but endlessly rewarding. Seeing children and adults with PWS achieve their goals and live full, happy lives brings great joy to me and the staff working with them. Caregiver Appreciation Day is a wonderful way to highlight the amazing people who work to bring out the best in people living with PWS." We join with PWSA | USA in expressing our sincere thanks to all caregivers – especially our dedicated staff here at Latham. You make the world a better place!

Home » PWSA Blog » Blog » Caregiver Appreciation Day Spotlight: PWHO and Latham Centers



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November 13, 2020 | PWSA | USA

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Thanksgiving Reflections in Latham's Adult Program

"I am thankful for you." In this *SEASON OF THANKS* section of our PWS Newsletter, we share the timely and powerful words of Gina Sheehan, Director of Adult Services:

Thanksgiving Day at Latham: There is so much to say. Thanksgiving day was an example of true altruism, teamwork, and bravery – and every Adult Services manager and direct support staff member in some way or another played an important role. They say a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. On this day, you changed our Latham world for the better. Prepping, menu planning, cooking, serving, setting up, staffing, helping our individuals through all of this, mitigating risk and long discussions about decisions and details has paid off. Anyone can be positive when things are going well. Anyone can be positive when there is no pandemic, when the sun is shining, when everything is "normal" and status quo. Anyone can do 'good' work then.

This team has done great work. To do great work, you are challenged mentally and emotionally. Great work comes from circumstances that seem insurmountable. Great work comes from adversities that make us better, together. Great work is work that asks us to step forward when many others are stepping back. Last Thursday – the past 8 months – you've all stepped forward. You should be so proud of yourselves. The program and the individuals are all healthier and more hopeful because of you. I am thankful for you. ~ Gina



Latham's Fall Appeal Celebrates 50 Years of Service

The Development Team at Latham Centers extends sincere thanks to our extensive community of support, from Cape Cod to Puerto Rico to California to Alaska. The fall appeal (available on our website at LathamCenters.org/annual-appeal) closes our 50th Anniversary Year with gratitude for helping us create family, friendship, and home...and asks for help writing the next chapter. Welcome, 2021, and the ushering in of a new decade for our Latham Family!



Celebrating 50 years of building brighter futures for children and adults with complex special needs!

Please visit LathamCenters.org/annual-appeal for the publication and link to donate – gifts of any size are helpful and greatly appreciated!

Highlights from Latham's 2020 Staff Awards Ceremony

The Annual Staff Awards at Latham Centers were presented virtually this year, with more than 100 staff members “Zooming” together for an hour of camaraderie, laughter, and a few tearful moments. Sharing the joyful emotions of the surprised award recipients was priceless.

For many years, the awards ceremony has been incorporated into the Children's Program's Year-End Celebration on campus. But in 2020, we had to rethink how and when to honor dozens of staff members nominated by their peers and of those, six chosen to receive these esteemed awards. Presenters individually recorded their piece of the ceremony. With good humor, each spoke to a socially-distant “vlogging kit” tripod contraption – competing with the sounds of lawnmowers, crickets, helicopters, and beeping trucks. It was a zero-budget staff-made production, filled with heart and soul. It was a delight to celebrate with colleagues from all departments at Latham, as well as our Board of Directors, safely through technology. It was also a wonderful opportunity to remember the Latham friends these special awards memorialize.

We'll be blogging (and vlogging) about each of the awards soon, proudly recognizing our exceptional staff and our culture of belonging and mastery here at Latham Centers.



Director of Education Meghan Foley records one of the staff award presentations.



***The Dr. Russell S. Boles, Jr. Rookie of the Year Award:**
Presented to Jeffrey Lee (Children's Services);
and Vincent Durant (Adult Services)*

***The Roy T. Morgan Award:**
Presented to Joey Mallon (Children's Services);
and Bethany Franklin (Adult Services)*

***The William McClennan Award:**
Presented to Anne Gilmore (Administration/Children's
Services); and Brendon Eldridge (Information Technologies)*



Pictured: An especially moving moment in the Staff Awards Ceremony in which Joey (bottom left) is presented with his award over Zoom. Also pictured around Joey are Children's Program team members Lauren Green, Jose Martinez, Meghan Foley, Gerry Pouliot, Matthew O'Sullivan.