



Pathlight

COMPASSION

EXPERTISE

INCLUSION

YES, LET'S DANCE!

Saturday, November 18, 2017

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke

A night of dancing and celebration to support enrichment and recreation programs

Please join us for our premier **Let's Dance!** competition and benefit. Think "Dancing with the Stars," only in this case the stars are people served by Pathlight who are paired with someone from the community. Ten couples are hard at work, with the help of an instructor, perfecting their dance moves.

Do-si-do or Texas Two Step, Foxtrot or Tango, Disco Fever or Breakdancing — the evening will get your toes tapping, put a song in your heart, and a smile on your face as you watch these rising stars shine.

All **Let's Dance!** proceeds help to provide enrichment programs for teens and adults served by Pathlight and Milestones. From theater classes and chorus to paddling on the Connecticut or a membership at their local YMCA, Pathlight's mission is to serve the whole individual, affording each the opportunity to experience the fullness of life. We can't do it without!



Visit pathlightgroup.org to learn more about our ten couples and vote! You can also buy your ticket for the night of the event, pledge your support with a donation, and learn about the sponsors, volunteer instructors, and judges who are helping to make this night possible!



Holyoke Mayor, Alex Morse, and Lucie Pasche.



Chris Drewniak and Oliwia Bragieli, Miss Polonia.



Fortune Rodriguez and Brian Melanson, teacher.



Dan McHugh and Joan Holliday, 93.9 WRSI

Innovating for Independence

Pathlight continues its legacy of innovation with our partnership with Springfield's Valley Venture Mentors (VVM), an organization dedicated to supporting local startup companies through its Accelerator programs.

Last year, with help from a grant from the [Westfield Bank Future Fund](#), Pathlight sponsored two startups from a pool of 35 applicants to VVM's prestigious Accelerator program. The two startups had a goal of supporting people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism to live more independently.

This fall, once again supported by Westfield Bank, we are excited to announce the Pathlight Challenge: Year Two. Applicants are expected to come from all over the country to compete for the two coveted slots in the VVM Accelerator 2018.

"VVM and Pathlight can help make Western Massachusetts a nationally recognized center of innovation not only in the areas of developmental and intellectual disability, but in general," said Paul Silva, co-



founder of VVM.

"We were excited to watch the ongoing progress and thrilled that the work of these entrepreneurs from 2017 will help bring increased independence to individuals with intellectual disabilities," said Ruth Banta, executive director of Pathlight.

One winner of the Pathlight Challenge 2017 is developing

a fire-safety system for people with intellectual disabilities. Leslie Dwight, founder of FireGuide, said that the Accelerator was key to her progress in getting her product to market.

"It made me stop and ask questions like, 'how are you going to bring this product to a market?' 'How are you going to pay for the design of the interface?' 'Who do you want for your team?' They got me thinking in some very important ways," Dwight said.

Pathlight Challenge 2018 winners will be picked at a screening event in November where top applicants will pitch their ideas to a panel of local business and human service leaders.

Community Support Makes a Difference

Partnering with Pathlight provides area businesses the opportunity to show their commitment to one of the region's pioneering organizations dedicated to creating an inclusive community. We host fundraising events such as Let's Dance!, Stepping Out for Autism, and Wild Goose Chase – a 5K run and children's carnival. We also organize events that highlight the talents of the people we serve, including our holiday party, annual dinner, several chorus performances, and an annual inclusive theater production.

All of these are possible with the generous support of the following companies:

Adnet Technologies
Appleton Dental Services
Bacon/Wilson Attorneys at Law
Balise Auto
Community Foundation of Western
Massachusetts
Connecticut Business Systems
Corporation for Independent
Living
DHK Financial Advisors
Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation
Dowd Insurance
Farmington Bank

Fazzi Associates
Fink & Perras Insurance Company
Five College Realty
Florence Bank
Fred C. Church
Greenfield Savings Bank
Health New England
Jon & Patti Lumbr
MassMutual Financial Group
Mercy Medical
PeoplesBank
Pioneer Valley Credit Union
Radcliffe is The Reason,

and Arthur Too!
Shurtleff Children's Services
The Eagle Leasing Company
The Sally Foss & James Scott Hill
Foundation
UBS
UTCA
Westfield Bank
Whittlesey & Hadley
*To find out more about how your
company can get involved, contact
Megan Pete at
megan.pete@pathlightgroup.org*

Take Us Out to the Ball Game!



A bus load of exuberant Pathlight participants, along with friends and family, took a dream trip to watch the Red Sox play at Fenway Park on September 8.

This fun adventure was organized by Dennis LaFleche, Pathlight placement coordinator, and supported by the **Darren FUNd**, which enabled several ball fans to make their dreams come true.

An amazing trip was made even better when the Red Sox won!

Transition Resource Fair

October 18, 5 - 8 pm

Northampton High School

Michael Plansky— founder of You're with us!— discusses how his organization provides inclusion opportunities for young adults with disabilities. The program trains college clubs, groups, and teams to be welcoming and supportive peers to the differently abled. The groups then create a Positive Experience Design (PED)

customized for the young adult to help him or her transition from school to an adult life in the community. Mr. Plansky will speak at 5pm.

The Transition Resource Fair addresses the needs of students with a broad range of abilities and learning differences, aged 14-22. Exhibitors offer highlight opportunities and post-high school options for students. This is a free community event. nsored by Family Empowerment and the Franklin/Hampshire area DDS office.



 **Pathlight**
2018

Look for the 2018 Pathlight Annual Report Calendar, coming in November. It features artwork of those served by Pathlight. It is chock full of important dates and highlights of Pathlight's programs, services, and events.



220 Brookdale Drive, Springfield, MA 01104