



Pathlight Newsletter

COMPASSION | EXPERTISE | INCLUSION



Tara Brewster & Sari Hasan

I Danced for Pathlight

But, really, I'm the one who benefited

By Tara Brewster, Greenfield Savings Bank

I get out a lot. I have been called a social entrepreneur, a connector, a builder. And as Vice President of Business Development for Greenfield Savings Bank it is my work-life's mission to be an Ambassador of Good. This allows me to make deeper connections with the community and to make friendships with people I may never encounter in my otherwise regularly scheduled programming.

One of my new friends is Sari Hasan. Sari was my dance partner for Pathlight's Let's Dance! fundraiser. Sari chose our team name, Thunderhawks, and on the night of the show we decked ourselves in vibrant green and shined bright like a diamond (or emerald) on the stage in front of some 400 audience members. It was a moment in time that we will never forget what we accomplished together.

Now, I just told you that I am a builder and involved in many community events, but I have to tell you that this life moment with Sari brought me to my knees. I was not prepared for the deep connection and bonding that would take place not only between Sari and myself but also with his mother, Laila, and his sister, Nural. During the months of

practice, the stories and laughs bubbled up, but so did the tired and stressful life moments. We were standing united doing something that we believed in. Making the commitment to practice, to plan, to remember, to participate, and finally to fundraise. Now people, I am a self-proclaimed fundraiser but Sari, Laila, and Nural are shout it from the mountain top AMAZING FUNDRAISERS!!!

They turned on the rocket blasters and just took off. Working together they pushed harder, asked more people, and wanted to support this program so intensely because it means so much to their family's daily life. And while in the end we were not the event's top fundraiser it really doesn't matter because we reached our goal and, most importantly, Sari saw his once impossible dream as a possible reality.

At the event the year prior, Sari said he could never participate because this was a dancing event and dancing happened standing on two feet. But then a dancer came out on stage

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John Dowd, Peggy Armstrong, Jennifer McGrath



Julian Bazalar, Jerrilis Capo, Faruma Williams

Let's Dance!

A Night of Dancing and Celebration

The third annual Let's Dance! in November raised over \$116,000 in critical enrichment funds for people with disabilities and autism who are served by Pathlight.

"All of us at Pathlight want to thank the community for the success of this event," said Ruth Banta, Pathlight's executive director. "Enrichment means different things to different age groups. For children in our Whole Children program, it could be singing, art, or theater performances. For teens it could be drumming classes, a rock 'n roll band, or even cooking classes. For adults, Red Sox games are very popular along with community recreational activities like bowling, and social gatherings such as karaoke nights and potluck dinners. At Pathlight, our goal is to help everyone we serve – across their life cycle - pursue a full life of their choosing. We are so grateful for the difference that private support plays in making our good work possible."

Mark your calendar for **Let's Dance 2020**, coming to the Sheraton Springfield on November 14. Check pathlightgroup.org for more photos and videos.

Notable News



Annual Holiday Party

The 20th annual Holiday Party for people served by Pathlight was held at the Log Cabin in December. Caregivers, family members and friends shared a holiday meal together and danced the afternoon away.



Joyful Chorus



Friendship Band

Holiday Performances

Whole Children's Joyful Chorus and The Friendship Band made multiple public appearances over the winter holidays and shined the light on the talents of people with disabilities. Their performances are truly Pathlight's mission in action.



Groundbreaking Curriculum

Michael Moriarty, president of Pathlight's Board of Directors, reports that a major priority of Pathlight's 2020-2023 strategic plan is to launch Whole Selves as a self-sustaining social enterprise. Whole Selves is an in-depth curriculum about relationships and sex education created specifically for people with disabilities, but is also beneficial to all students.

Whole Selves' groundbreaking material was presented at the February 2020 Council for Exceptional Children Convention & Expo in Portland, OR by Maggie Rice, director of Pathlight's Whole Children & Whole Selves programs and Carrie McGee, Pathlight's vice president of Family Services and Family Based Living.

The curriculum will be sold nationally. More information at wholeselves.org.



Portraits of Pathlight

A selection of the Portraits of Pathlight are on display at the Greenfield Savings Bank, 400 Main St., Greenfield, MA until mid-March. Viewing is during normal banking hours. The portraits will also be on display at the Autism Connections conference on April 2.





I Danced for Pathlight (cont.)

using a wheelchair and changed the entire realm of what was possible for Sari.

This is Pathlight. Pathlight changes the realm of what is possible for people with disabilities. They shed light on those places that have previously been dark for many people.

They change *cant's* into *can's* and lift up a community by showing that there is so much talent and treasure if you just open up the pathway.

But for me, this event made my heart grow ten sizes bigger. I see more clearly, feel more deeply, and want to engage more together with our community. I encourage all of you reading this to get involved in something that scares you a little bit or that is new to you. The return on your openness and willingness to connect will be so much greater than you had ever thought possible. I want to thank everyone at Pathlight for all that you do for our community throughout the year. It takes all of us to do what we must and help where we can. But most importantly I want to thank Sari, Laila, and Nural for welcoming me into their family. I can't wait to see you all again in 20/20, the year of clarity.



Philanthropy Partner in the Spotlight

Pathlight was awarded a generous gift of \$3,000 from Big Y's Paul & Gerald D'Amour Memorial Charity Golf Outing, which was held in July of 2019. Ryan Peterson, Big Y Ludlow store manager (right) and Mark Germain, Pathlight board member, met to celebrate the difference corporate philanthropy makes for the people served by Pathlight.



Paul Kelliher - Pathlight Volunteer

Paul Kelliher, a retired partner with PriceWaterhouseCoopers and retired accounting lecturer at the Isenberg School of Management, UMass Amherst, retired yet again last fall. After more than ten years of volunteer service, he stepped down from Pathlight's Board of Directors. Kelliher thoroughly enjoyed his time as a board member, serving as the board's treasurer and providing oversight and strategic perspective as a member of the Investment, Finance and Executive committees. "Paul left behind a lasting and meaningful legacy that will support Pathlight's future," said Ruth Banta, Executive Director. "His leadership is deeply appreciated."

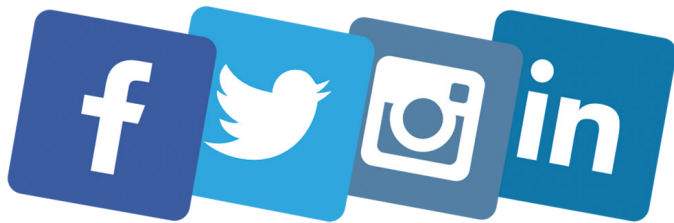
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Mark Your Calendar - Upcoming Community Happenings

MARCH



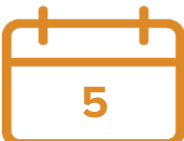
Oh What a Feeling! Whole Children & Milestones Theater Performance, Smith College. Visit <https://wholechildren.org> for tickets and information.

APRIL



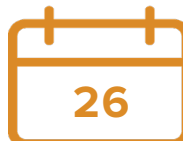
Autism Connections Conference, Springfield Sheraton. Visit autismconnectionsma.org for tickets and information.

APRIL



Whole Children Film Festival, Northampton Center for the Arts, 33 Hawley St., 4 – 6 p.m., Wholechildren.org for tickets and information.

APRIL



Pathlight's Annual Awards Luncheon, Log Cabin from 12 – 3 p.m. For more details, visit www.pathlightgroup.org.