

# Pathlight Newsletter

COMPASSION | EXPERTISE | INCLUSION

## Join us at the 2021 Online Autism Connections Conference



Autism Connections believes educational resources, support and a connected community are essential to improving the lives of all affected by autism, so each year we host a one-day conference packed with information, resources and inspiration.

This year our conference goes online on April 29, 2021 for teachers, family members, social workers, professional supports, caregivers, siblings, and people with autism. Registration is \$50 for families and people with autism; \$80 for professionals. Each year, for the past 30 years, hundreds have

attended this successful conference, visited our exhibitor showcase, made connections, and left with bagsful of information.

This year's event will feature 16 diverse breakout sessions, two keynote speakers, an exhibitor's showcase and more. Highlighting the day will be presentations from two amazing women: educator, writer, global advocate and person with autism, Morénike Giwa Onaiwu and Stacey Gordon, an American puppeteer who is best known for portraying Julia, a four-year-old female Muppet with autism on Sesame Street. Stacey also has a son with autism.

To learn more or to register, click the link below or contact Joanne Lucey at [joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org)

[Click to Register](#)

Funding for this significant event comes from sponsors, including the Radcliffe Is the Reason and Arthur Too Fight for Autism foundation, Fontaine Brothers, Inc., and the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, Inc.

We promise you a day of education, inspiration and connection!



Stacey Gordon



Morénike Giwa Onaiwu

## Pathlight Awards \$5,000 Scholarship

Each year for the past three years, **Pathlight has awarded a \$5,000 scholarship to a Pathlight employee pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree related to their work.**

The Donald Fletcher Scholarship (named for our former executive director) is awarded through a competitive application process. This year we had a hard choice of many deserving applicants, but alas, we can only award it to one person.

We are delighted to announce that this year's scholarship was awarded to **Katherine (Kate) Bailey!** Kate is an LPN with our Residential North program, who has worked with us since 2017.

Kate is attending Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts where she is studying for a Bachelors in Sociology with a minor in psychology and social work. Kate had attended MCLA ten years ago, but left school for personal reasons.

"I eventually lost confidence in my ability to again return to school after so many years away, and did not consider it a possibility," she said. Her passion for "being a voice for the voiceless" is driving her newfound determination to return to school and continue working to help others.

"I want to be able to have a strong foundation for advocating for needs with a sociological background, as well as being able to recognize those individual needs through a psychological standpoint."



## Congratulations, Kate!

## Donate Your Car to Pathlight!

Whether you live in Massachusetts or California, you can be an everyday hero when you donate your used car, van, boat or truck to Pathlight. It's easy. Just fill out the simple online donation form at the link below.

[Donate a car](#)

Pathlight has partnered with **Donate for Charity**, a BBB accredited business, who works directly with you to coordinate the entire process from pick-up to selling the vehicle at auction or salvage yard, to sending a check to Pathlight and a final receipt to the donor. You get a minimum \$500 tax deduction or higher (depending on what the car sells for) and Pathlight receives the net proceeds. **Every thoughtful donation is invested in the programs and services Pathlight provides to the people they serve.**

For help or more information call Donate for Charity at 866-392-4483 or email: [info@donateforcharity.com](mailto:info@donateforcharity.com). Visit [www.donateforcharity.com](http://www.donateforcharity.com).



## Our Declaration of Rights

Last year, discussions around the movement for Black lives and nationwide protests sparked questions from students in Milestones classes about inequality, systemic racism and violence.

Following the students' lead, Milestones teachers facilitated discussions of these topics, no matter how difficult some of them were. "Many of the questions were around 'Why are people being treated this way?' and 'What can be done to stop it,'" said teacher Liana Marks. The classes also reflected on how those with disabilities have historically been treated and what has changed for the better, and what work there is still to do.

Out of these conversations came a written Declaration of Rights by the students that is centered around the topics of respect, safety, recognition, identity and equality.

The students and teachers knew it was important to share this declaration with the larger community. Over the summer, the teachers painted the Declaration on the front windows of the Inclusive Community Center in Hadley, where they joined a window stating, "In Solidarity with Black Lives Matter." Throughout the summer, students dropped by to read the lines of their Declaration, and many are featured in the video of the project.

This is a video of the Declaration being read by the students.

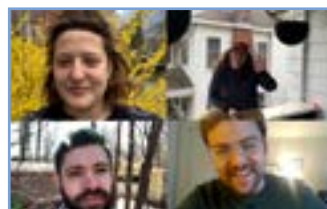
The Milestones Declaration of Rights and their representation on the Milestones and Whole Children building sends a powerful message that in our community we stand against racism, ableism and any other types of discrimination and hate. Please take the time to drive by, appreciate, and stand with us. We are better together.



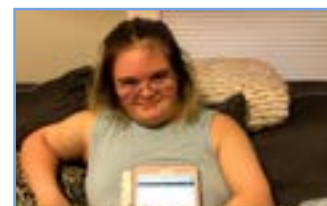
Click to Watch "Behind the Scenes: The Declaration of Rights Project"



Episode 1: The Conversations



Episode 2: Writing the Declaration



Episode 3: Sharing it with the World

## Meet Pathlight's Artists in Residence

At Pathlight, we celebrate the work anniversary of our staff with a greeting card featuring the art of someone served by the organization. This year when we put out the call for submissions, the art was so wonderful, we couldn't choose just one! So, in 2021 we are featuring the work of two talented Pathlight artists, Hilda Garcia and Joanne Gregoire.

### Hilda Garcia

Hilda, 30, was born in Springfield and has been with Pathlight's Family Based Living program since 2017. Among her many accomplishments, she is most proud of her artwork. She learned some of her art skills while attending Riverside Industries day program and she taught herself the rest by watching videos. Hilda considers her best job one that she had while living at home, where she helped others in her neighborhood by shoveling snow, picking up litter, raking leaves and cleaning up yards.



In an interview with Hilda about her art, she explained that she works in many different media, but loves painting because she "loves the different textures I can put on a paper."

Hilda's advice to other people who may be interested in creating art of their own is to "just try it out, you might like it!"

### Joanne Gregoire



Joanne, 43, lives in Granville. She attends the day program at Riverside and works in the kitchen at Amherst College during the busy seasons. During Joanne's downtime she enjoys crafts, puzzles, sea creatures, and painting.

You will notice her love for sea creatures is also incorporated into her paintings. Joanne's artwork has previously been displayed at the DDS (Department of Developmental Services) art show in Holyoke.



## Want to Create Your Own Legacy?



If there was a way you could make a generous gift to Pathlight while creating your own personal legacy at the same time, would you be interested in hearing about it?

It is not only possible, it's easy, and it can be done by anyone at any time. You do not need to be wealthy.

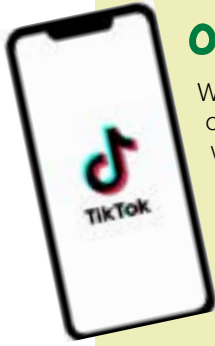
By naming Pathlight as a beneficiary in your will, charitable trust, life insurance policy or IRA, you can help sustain Pathlight's vital programs and services long into the future. This type of gift is called a charitable bequest or planned gift and it guarantees you special recognition in Pathlight's Legacy Society.

The founders of the Legacy Society were passionate donors who believed it was important to ensure that high quality programs and services continue to be there for children, teens and adults with developmental disabilities for generations to come. Their amazing bequests enhance Pathlight's vital work by providing financial assistance to families in need; enrichment programs, like theater and arts, and opportunities for needs and activities not covered by state funds.

Like the original Legacy Society donors, anyone who makes a charitable bequest to Pathlight is asked to fill out and return a Statement of Intent for a Future (Estate Gift) Form. The confidential information you provide is not legally binding and Pathlight understands donors may wish to change their gift in the future.

If you would like to receive a Statement of Intent Form or to learn more about planned gifts, contact: Valle Dwight, Director of Development at 413-585-9010 or [development@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:development@pathlightgroup.org).





## Whole Children on TikTok

Whole Children is joining the cool kids over on TikTok, where we are covering a wide range of topics, from outdoor adventures to house tours and at-home musical performances. But we've also touched on some more serious subjects, including disability awareness and the Black Lives Matter movement—all directly from our talented and insightful students. **Click below to check out our TikTok page and be sure to give us a follow!**

[Click here to view our TikTok!](#)

## Story Corner

Whole Children's Creative Writing class has been hard at work since September and are pleased to share their group story. In the fall, the authors brainstormed the plot, characters and setting. Over the winter session, they got to writing. The resulting story is a mash-up of different ideas and genres. In the first chapter alone there are two weddings, a robot limo driver, and a brown horse named Orange.

Our student authors are Matt Boynton, Peter Sealy, Molly Ciszewski, Emily Burque and Brittini Kergaravat.

[Click to read the story!](#)

*Enjoy!*



**Don't Hesitate,  
Vaccinate!**

**Stopping COVID  
Starts With You**

## Why Get Vaccinated?

- It's safe, simple and free of charge.
- Clinical trials showed the vaccines are highly effective in preventing COVID-19.
- You can do your part to stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.
- It helps protect you, your loved ones and our community.
- It's the first step in returning to normal.

Scan the code to view a COVID-19 vaccine location near you and how to sign up.



For more information, check with your manager.



## Everybody Dance Now!

While this past year (and counting) has been tough for all of us at Pathlight, we have been getting through it the best way we know how – with lots of dancing! We've documented those dances and the highlights of 2020 (believe it or not, there were many) in music videos.

These videos feature a wide range of Pathlight staff, care providers, individuals and families we serve, and have brought us closer together as a community in a time when we've had to be apart. Click below to watch some of our videos!



[Watch our winter "Let it Snow" music video](#)



[Watch "Don't Stop Believin" music video](#)



[Watch our Year in Review](#)



[Watch our "Home" music video](#)