

PIN POINTS

a newsletter from

Philadelphia Independence Network

JEVS Human Services'
Community-Based Program,
Where Young Adults with Disabilities
Live in Their Own Apartments,
with Supports

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PIN Postings!

Members Minutes From PIN Activities



PIN represented at the 2014 Special Olympics Pennsylvania's Fall Festival

David, a founding PIN member, participated in the Special Olympics. He won two silver medals and was joined by Police Commissioner Ramsey carrying the Olympic torch down the iconic Philadelphia Art Museum steps. The PIN community turned out to cheer for David.



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What Independence Means for Chrissy

Chrissy was not sure she'd be able to live on her own. "I just didn't have confidence", says Chrissy, an attractive, outgoing 24 year old. Chrissy had just graduated from NYIT's VIP Program, but said living in the dorm didn't prepare her to tackle living independently. When Chrissy learned about Philadelphia Independence Network from her parents, she still felt hesitant. But when she learned that her sister Katie, two years older, would live with her during her transition, she decided to give it a try and joined PIN about one year ago.



Chrissy (right) with her sister Katie

Her family found a Narberth apartment and the adventure began. Chrissy's family and the PIN team helped Chrissy learn the skills she needed. After about six months, Katie moved out and Chrissy was able to live on her own with PIN's continuing support. Chrissy now shops, cooks, cleans and has friends to her home. She says her biggest challenge is paying her bills, but that she's really working on it.

A year ago, Chrissy also began a job as a teacher's assistant at the Ancona Montessori school. She always liked working with young children and says, "I'm just good with them". But she still had much to learn, and the PIN team worked in partnership with her and her employer so she could be fair and in control in a kind, calm manner. She loves her job and looks forward to going to work.

Chrissy recently moved to a new apartment with PIN member Matt with whom she says she gets along very well. She's excited because the new apartment, while still near the PIN Clubhouse, is closer to her job so she'll be able to walk to and from work and because it's a really nice apartment.

Chrissy said she has more friends and the opportunity to see them more than if she lived at home with her parents. She loves game night at the Clubhouse and just everyone hanging out together.



Chrissy and Matt

She feels so much better about herself since she has been a part of PIN and can't believe she's done all this. She said her parents are so proud of her saying, "My mom tells me over and over how proud she is of me every single time she visits me." Her delight in her accomplishments is evident and inspiring.

Congratulations!

Sean and Jake, PIN members for about one year, each started new jobs last month. They are being supported by JEVS Employment Services. All in the PIN community wish them the best of luck.



PIN is a program of JEVS Human Services



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Learning + Earning = Money Club

What is the difference between need and want? How can you design a budget and keep track of your expenses? Is a debit card the same as a credit card? To help PIN members answer these questions, we're participating with the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) to offer Money Club, a pilot financial literacy program designed to teach people with disabilities about money management.

Money Club members meet once a month with PATF Executive Director Susan Tachau and well qualified mentors to discuss a chapter in the workbook *Cents & Sensibility*, developed specially for the program. The mentors then work individually with PIN members in the weeks between the monthly meetings, offering instruction personalized to each member's needs and understanding of personal finance. The following is a comment indicative of how members are using what they've learned, "I used to think a debit and a credit

card were pretty much the same thing. Now I understand the difference between the two and I've been using my debit card to help me better manage to my budget."

As an extra benefit, PIN members are contributing \$20 a month to Individual Development Accounts with double, \$40, contributions from PATF. The accounts are configured to have no impact on SSI or waiver eligibility. At the end of the 15-month program, members will each have \$600 in savings to buy (with guidance) a new iPad or other assistive technology to help them be more independent.

PIN is purchasing copies of *Cents & Sensibility* so this financial literacy program will be available to all future PIN members. A PDF of the booklet is available online at: <http://tinyurl.com/moneyclubhandbook>



Matt



Matt and Chrissy

Independence Day, July 2013

by Richard

In July, our 25 year old son, Matthew, became a member of PIN and moved from our house to his own apartment. Matt attended the NY Institute of Technology Vocational Independence Program (VIP) for three years, graduating in May 2010. Many VIP graduates move to POINT, a community for supported independent living in White Plains, New York, but it was at this time that PIN was founded in Narberth, much closer to our home. My wife Sheryl and I felt that Matt was not yet ready to join PIN so he moved back home with us.

As time went by, Sheryl and I felt we were holding Matthew back from growing into the caring, independent adult we knew he could become. We wanted to be sure that Matt had supports in place that would give Sheryl and me peace of mind. While the PIN team provides some supports and are available 24/7, we didn't feel Matthew was ready to live in an apartment on his own. We struggled with what to do, but decided to have Matthew share an apartment in Narberth with a highly trained individual who works with special needs adults and has worked with Matthew and his younger brother, Lane, for many years. This unique arrangement was possible because PIN is flexible enough to make special accommodations. The decision to have Matt join PIN became much easier on Sheryl and me. Matt's mentor still works with his regular clients Monday to Friday, while Matt has his own chores,

such as working at the Narberth Library, food shopping, cooking, cleaning and meeting friends at the PIN clubhouse. On weekends, Matt either has his own PIN activities (movies, etc.) or he and his mentor go shopping (clothes, etc.) or just hang out on Sundays and watch football.

After his first six months in PIN, Matt learned to take control over his own meds, pay bills, keep an apartment clean, shop for food, and cook lasagna, salmon, pasta, and chili among other dishes. This past year, Matt and his mentor moved into a spacious three bedroom, two bath apartment with Chrissy, his friend and fellow PIN member. For the first time in his life, Matthew has his independence and leads the life he chooses. He and his mentor do things like attend basketball games and have even gone job hunting. Matt now has friends and a social life that is not dependent on what mom or dad is doing.

Sheryl and I are happy for Matt and proud of what he has accomplished, but also a little sad as we deal with our own transition. Twenty-five years doesn't seem so fast to me.



Using an ATM



Paying bills



PIN members at a Money Club meeting