

PIN Turns 7 and is Branching Out

By Jill Gromen, Director of Operations



Philadelphia Independence Network (PIN) program will celebrate its 7th birthday in the fall of 2018. In less than a decade, PIN has grown and evolved from just an idea, to a fully operational program that is currently serving 28 young adults living in the Narberth community.

The roots of the program include a strong collaboration between the young adult members and their families, JEVS Human Services staff, and multiple community partners in and around the Narberth area.

With ongoing collaboration among all stakeholders, each member is supported and encouraged to follow his/her own path toward living a rich, fulfilling, and independent life. The PIN Program allows each member to set and explore their own goals toward independent living, by building life skills, providing employment and career advancement opportunities,

and developing social networks to foster independence, friendship, and meaningful connections.

The success of the PIN program in Narberth now serves as a model with the ripple effect of JEVS Human Services replicating the program in Collingswood, NJ. Along with the help and dedication of new young adult members and their families, the New Jersey program is actively taking shape.

Since the beginning of PIN, we have collectively strived to make meaningful program improvements as a community. Together, we have learned how to create a culture of employment and how to embed employment support into everyday life. We are diligently working together to better understand the impact of support and how to capture what is and is not working in the program. Finally, we are continuously seeking additional community

partners who will offer new and diverse opportunities to the members, and who will help us to increase access to anyone who wants or needs what we have to offer.

On a daily basis, we have the distinct privilege of watching the members stretch themselves, grow as individuals, embrace risk, and take the next steps along their journey of independence.

Little shifts and small changes can lead to big breakthroughs and major accomplishments...we are all stronger from knowing one another. This is us...and we would love to include you.

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In their own words, PIN members share just a little bit about their diverse interests, personalities, talents and accomplishments.



"I work at Trader Joe's. I love watching sports and playing video games."

– Adam F.



"I am a Cosplayer and sometimes sew my own costumes."

– Evan R.



"My job is to teach kids with disabilities how to draw anime and I sew weighted blankets."

– Elyse P.



"I know how to ski and spend my winters up the mountains. I have a shore house and spend my summers in Wildwood."

– Chrissy B.



"I just completed a boating safety course, just in time to spend my summer in LBI on my Boston Whaler."

– Jonathan S.



"I help people with disabilities to find jobs, and I can relate to them because I have been in their shoes."

– Josh S.



"I brush fossils at the Academy of Natural Sciences."

– Matt T.



"I am writing a novel. I began writing it on my typewriter, I have now switched to writing it on my computer."

– Kyle M.



"I've gone snorkeling in Puerto Rico."

– Dillon S.



"I am known as the PIN movie expert."

– Jon S.



"I know how to sail and spend my summers up the mountains on the lake."

– Ryan S.



"I am a Certified Peer Specialist, I want to use my experience to help others."

– Ethan C.



"Elyse and I are the only 2 PIN members who share a birthday, September 22nd."

– **Jacob B.**



"I have lived in 3 different states, Pennsylvania, Alabama and Georgia. I have made lots of friends in all 3 states."

– **Dustin R.**



"I love playing video games. My hope for the future is to become an animator for video game design."

– **Sean M.**



"My middle name is Kotossi, which is West African. It means protection."

– **Laura K.**



"I am a long distance runner for Special Olympics. My goal is to compete in the USA games in Seattle."

– **David M.**



"I went cage diving with Great White Sharks in South Africa, and they didn't let me out of the cage."

– **Ari Z.**



"I just completed my Child Development Associate (CDA). I hope to have my own classroom one day."

– **Chrissy A.**



"I cooked for over 50 people at once. I made ribs, brisket, burgers, sausage and chicken."

– **Aaron E.**



"I enjoy staying busy and keeping active. I am currently taking a Zumba Toning class with my roommate."

– **Nicole D.**



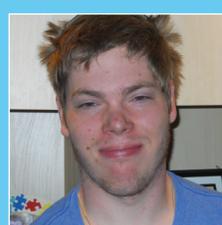
"I was the first PIN member to have a pet. My dog's name is Cinnamon, and she is 13 years old."

– **Jackie U.**



"I own my own Taiko drum and know how to play 4 songs."

– **Jackson D.**



"I love being around water and enjoy kayaking. I also love being quiet in nature."

– **John B.**



"I've traveled the world, I am a painter and I have an eclectic taste in music. I have a dream to bring better awareness to the importance of bike helmet safety."

– **Sam S.**



"I am the newest member at PIN."

– **Connor H.**

Parent's Perspective

By Lois Frischling

Our son, David, is a founding member of Philadelphia Independence Network (PIN). He has now lived in Narberth for seven years, and has continued to thrive. He lives very independently, loves his work, has a busy, healthy social life, shops for himself, makes his own doctor's appointments and handles his own meds.

This seemed like a good time for his parents to treat themselves to a few days in New York. Last fall, we took the long-planned trip. We rode the train in on Thursday, checked into our hotel, and proceeded to enjoy ourselves. It was fun: a walk on the High Line, several interesting museums, good food.

Then, around 8:00 am Saturday morning, the phone rang. It was David, saying he had been up since around 3:00 am with excruciating abdominal pains. He hadn't called earlier, because he didn't want to disturb us on our trip. But, he had called the program director, Jill, and she was at his apartment. We discussed the situation with her, and decided they should go directly to the ER. We decided not to take the train back immediately, just in case it was a false alarm. Instead, we packed, had breakfast and paced a lot, waiting for Jill to call. When the call came, David was being admitted. We rushed to the train station, with a quick detour to try and sell our Hamilton tickets (a happy stranger named John from Cincinnati got the deal of his life!), and went straight to Bryn Mawr Hospital.

Jill had stayed with David in the ER and through the admissions process. She had, of course, asked all the right questions and made sure David knew what was going on. She kept us updated on what was happening, and did not leave him until the afternoon when all tests were completed, he was settled in his room, and David's brother had come to stay with him. He is fine now, though he did spend 3 nights in the hospital.

PIN makes it possible for people to live rich, full lives, to take some risks knowing there is support and back-up, to know that there are people to help when things go wrong. PIN: it's also the Parents' Independence Network.



David volunteering at the Animal Shelter



Award-winning athlete

contact us...

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