



The Support Report



A COMMUNITY OF KINDNESS POWERED BY YOU



Summer Series Ends with a Carnival

“People with developmental disabilities should have the same chance to have fun experiences like anyone else!” said Jimmy Sherman, brother of Ellen Labes who has been a longtime supporter of JARC for over 30 years.

Fun, unique opportunities are exactly what the Ellen Labes Festival Series, which started in the summer of 2022 and expanded this year, strives to provide for the people JARC serves. This summer, the Series included a private concert by members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra which included an instrument “petting zoo,” outdoor movie night, a picnic featuring upbeat music and a learn to drum opportunity, and a live, interactive concert featuring Motown music by entertainer Raw Silk, who is beloved by the people JARC serves.

The Festival Series ended with JARC’s first-ever, large-scale community carnival. The event was created to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities and sensory sensitivities were comfortable and accommodated at an event that would normally be overcrowded and overstimulating. An indoor sensory friendly space was available, where attendees could utilize a quiet

space away from the outside fun to take a break and regulate their emotions by using Playdoh, fidgets, coloring books, and even visit with therapy dogs. The calm atmosphere of the room was a nice get away from the stimulation of the event, which included rides, a 40-foot Ferris wheel, inflatables, games, airbrush tattoos, music, food trucks, and complimentary snacks.

With nearly 600 attendees including people served by JARC, caregivers, individuals from a variety of other local group homes, children and adults with and without disabilities and their families, the event was highly successful and memorable for all who attended.

“I was just so thrilled with the way the JARC folks and the rest of the community were having such a good time. You could tell that they truly enjoyed themselves and I am honored that my name was attached to the event,” shared Ellen Labes, whose family sponsored the carnival event. “JARC is one of my favorite nonprofits and I’m proud of how much they have done for the community of people with disabilities.”

To learn more about JARC, visit us at jarc.org.

Adapting to Meet Needs: Integrative Neighborhoods

For Laurie Baskin and her adult son Nick, finding an option for independent living that met all of Nick's needs was not a simple process. Hesitant to move out of his home, Nick has since found his happy place in JARC's new Integrative Neighborhoods program.

Integrative Neighborhoods, which was inherited by JARC in 2022 from Integrative Neighborhoods of Oakland County, was designed for adults with developmental disabilities who have the desire and ability to live more independently than in a group home setting. The program provides this opportunity in apartments within walking distance to shops, restaurants, public transportation, and entertainment. Each Neighborhood has a JARC staff member, called a Community Builder, to help organize social events and be available in case of an emergency.

Laurie Baskin says, "Nick's confidence and independence have grown as a result of living in Integrative Neighborhoods. He now enjoys living on his own, has started a new job and volunteers at an animal shelter. And one of his goals is to start hosting movie nights at his apartment."

Tonja, the Community Builder located at the Neighborhood where Nick lives, encourages participants to come up with ideas that will help them interact and further develop their independence. In addition to Community Builders, each person JARC serves is provided one-on-one assistance from direct caregivers as allotted by Oakland County, to encourage skill building and work toward their individual goals.

The program has already been an effective solution for several people JARC serves including Jared who was very eager to move into his own space. Since moving into an Integrative Neighborhood in June, Jared Lonnerstater has continued to grow friendships with his roommates, work with them daily to make sure chores are done and meals are made, and has



Nick Baskin

Jared Lonnerstater

enjoyed hosting game nights at the apartment with them.

Jared's mom, Diane Lonnerstater, said, "Jared is the last of our kids to leave home and we never knew if we would get to this point, but he was so ready. The hardest part was finding roommates that were a good match. Stanley, someone Jared had built a friendship with prior to moving into Integrative Neighborhoods, told him someone was moving out of his apartment and asked if he wanted to move in. It has worked out great."

Community Builder Tonja adds, "The level of independence in the people I work with is amazing and they continue to surprise me every day. They trust that they can live independently and do things without their parents' constant help."

While group homes were innovative when JARC was established and remain needed and beloved for many, for certain individuals preferred models of care have changed. Some parents find a more independent setting to be more suitable for their child's needs, where their child can still receive the support they need while having more responsibility and independence.

Meeting Needs and Fulfilling Desires

It has been almost a decade since Keneisha Hardrick joined the JARC team as a Direct Support Professional (DSP), and she hasn't looked back. Keneisha has had the pleasure of working in a number of JARC homes over the years, and has recently enjoyed working at the Nusbaum Home.

As a Direct Support Professional, Keneisha embraces the vital job of assisting with personal care and ensuring that the basic needs of those we serve are met. Additionally, she helps prepare for outings, events, and activities, and other engagement opportunities to ensure that they can enjoy all that life has to offer.

"The people we serve are amazing, and many are so full of life! There's always something going on at the homes, whether it's a visitor, an activity, or they're heading out somewhere," she said.

After ensuring that the people under her care have their needs met, Keneisha's favorite part about working for JARC is getting them out and into the community and helping them do things they enjoy. She loves accompanying them out to dinner, shows at the theater, sporting events, JARC events, and much more.

An important part of Keneisha's job is her relationship with her coworkers. They spend so much time together and everyone works hard to take care of the people in JARC homes. When a fellow staff member isn't feeling well or forgets to do something, everyone steps in to help.

One aspect of her job that sets JARC apart from other providers is how JARC provides care.

"I like how JARC takes care of persons served. Everyone goes above and beyond their job descriptions, which makes me proud to be part of the team. Most facilities don't really take heed to what those they serve enjoy, and JARC pays a lot of attention to that. They always put the people they serve first," Keneisha reflected.



Keneisha Hardrick and Nicole, a person served by JARC

If you know someone who would benefit from living in JARC's Integrative Neighborhoods, please contact Matthew Peters at 248-940-2613 or matthewpeters@jarc.org.

If you are looking for a meaningful career opportunity, please contact Jennifer at jennifergoldstein@jarc.org or 248.940.2612.

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