



FOCUS MATTERS

Because the creatively wired and socially challenged should not have to go it alone...

Spring 2014

Thanks to you, this issue's highlights include:

- Welcome to the New FOCUS Website!
- Get Ready for the Festival for Autism!
- FOCUS Programs
- Music, Sweet Music!
- Our New Friend Shamrock
- Thank You Rotary!
- New Improvements to FOCUS Technology!

Upcoming Events:

Festival for Autism
June 7, 2014, 12-4 PM
Mills Pond Park, Canton

We will see you there!



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Welcome to the New FOCUS Website!

Check it out! Our website was redesigned to make it easier for you to navigate, offer updated information in a timely manner, and clearly state what **FOCUS** is all about. We've organized the information on the website in a simple and structured way. The main function of the website is to convey relevant content to our visitors and help you understand our services and the support we can offer your family. We hope the site will encourage you to dig deeper for more information.

We're hoping our site can build a community. Interaction with the Autism community is essential to the site. The site has built in links to social media like Facebook and Twitter, and also includes a blog. Creating and maintaining a blog is one of the most effective ways to build community and a great way to keep content fresh. Blogs are a good way to maintain a conversation with our visitors and families.

While you're there, look at past episodes of **FOCUS** on Autism TV, get an update on the **FOCUS** Festival for Autism, find out where the next Unplugged Panel will be and, enjoy the photos from our programs.

FOCUS would like to thank Constanza Gowen-Segovia, Melissa Harris, Rich Hollant, and the Co:Lab team for all of their great teamwork and expertise.

We want to hear from you! Leave us a message and let us know what you want to see!



Above: Magical memories can be made at the Festival for Autism, thanks to you!



*Above: **FOCUS** raising funds for the Canton Food Pantry at Shoprite*



Above: Two children performing a song during our Spring Party!

Get Ready for the Festival for Autism!

The 13th annual Festival for Autism is on its way! Our signature Autism and family-friendly event is full of fun for everyone! There are lots of games, a mobile petting zoo, pony rides, and everyone's favorite activity - the Eurobungee! Our teacup raffle will have gizmos, gadgets, and prizes galore. You won't want to miss it!

We also have some fabulous community organizations, such as K21 Kidstrong Foundation, the Lions Club, and Spirit Horse Therapeutic Riding, attending the Festival. Our new friends at Hardcore Sweet Cupcakes will be selling delicious cupcakes too!

Don't miss out! The Festival for Autism is June 7, 2014 from 12-4 PM at Mills Pond Park in Canton. It is held rain or shine! If you have any questions, call (860) 693-8809.

FOCUS on our Programs

Our Extended Day Treatment Programs have been very busy this winter! Our Day Program participated in a Pillars of Character program, and raised over \$100 for the Canton Food Pantry during their study of citizenship! Our artists in **FOCUS** on the Arts have been very busy trying different mediums and having lots of fun. The After School Program keeps on growing!

Keep an eye on your email and the **FOCUS** website for updates on our programming!

Music, Sweet Music!

Our Day Program has been enjoying the awesome power of music therapy! Numerous studies have shown that music therapy improves social behaviors, increases focus and attention, increases communication, reduces anxiety, and improves body awareness and coordination. Music therapy is also fun! Our music therapy program began last year with African drumming, and recently expanded to include singing. Ask your child to sing one of the songs they've learned!



Above: Playing with our new friend Shamrock!



Learning valuable lessons in service and citizenship during the Day Program!



Above: Celebrating the 100th day of our Day program!

Our New Friend Shamrock

Have you heard about Shamrock? He is a large Wells Fargo Plush Pony who was donated to **FOCUS** by Wells Fargo Bank in Prospect, CT. He has a great story to tell! The real Shamrock was a prize stallion who pulled a Wells Fargo wagon in 1913. He was known as one of the biggest, strongest horses to ever pull a Wells Fargo Wagon, helping ensure that Wells Fargo deliveries arrived safely and on time. Every morning, Shamrock and the other horses would wait with their wagons outside the Union Depot in St. Louis, MO for express packages arriving by train from all around the country. Thanks to Carol Doiron, Director of Educational Services at **FOCUS**, Shamrock is now an integral part of the Extended Day Treatment Program. He has been used in group activities and in individual therapy to help with anxiety.

FOCUS would like to thank David Zeoli, President of Wells Fargo Bank in Prospect, CT for generously donating Shamrock to us. He has been a huge hit!

Thank You Rotary!

Two Rotary Clubs have chosen to dedicate funds to **FOCUS** to actualize their goals of responsible leadership and utilizing multidisciplinary perspectives to see new challenges.

- The Rotary Club of Avon-Canton awarded **FOCUS** with a \$1,000 grant to provide funds for the Breakfast and Transportation Programs.
- The Rotary Club of Simsbury-Granby donated the proceeds from their February and March meetings to **FOCUS**'s Breakfast Program.

FOCUS is thankful for their support as we continue to address the critical needs of children on the Autism Spectrum.

New Improvements Coming to FOCUS Technology!

A grant of \$50,000 has been awarded by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to **FOCUS** to implement a strategic technology plan developed to better serve clients. The plan was developed with the support of the Nonprofit Support Program at the Hartford Foundation.

FOCUS has grown to meet an increasing demand for our services over the past five years. In that time our ability to communicate has been stretched to the limit. Over the next few months you will notice changes to our Website and Social Media. Communicating with **FOCUS** will be easier! Our staff is being trained in new software and hardware, which will help improve the delivery of the care and service you have come to expect.

Want to follow our progress? “Like” us on Facebook at facebook.com/FOCUSAUTISM, “Follow” us on Twitter at [@FOCUSCtr4Autism](https://twitter.com/FOCUSCtr4Autism), and watch us on Youtube at **FOCUS** on Autism TV!

Positive Futures Begin with YOU!

FOCUS offers programs that help children learn to grow both socially and emotionally. Your donation today will make a difference for our children and families!

Donating to **FOCUS** has never been easier! Click the “Donate Today” button on our brand new website to make a donation online!

FOCUS Howls with the Hartford Wolfpack

100 **FOCUS** friends braved the elements to attend Autism Awareness Night with the Hartford Wolfpack! Our families enjoyed being together and cheering on our team. A visit from Sonar was the highlight of the night!



*You are a part of our team - support **FOCUS** today!*



Above: A happy bunch at the Wolfpack!