



FOCUS Matters

FALL 2017

The Fresh Start School

BECAUSE OF YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT,
OUR DREAM OF THE FRESH START SCHOOL
IS NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR!



Students were excited to be back on the first day of school, to see friends and to get ready to have another great year!

FOCUS Open House

Save the Date

Have you ever been interested in learning what FOCUS is and what we do?

Ever drive by our location and wonder, "What happens in that green building?" Here's your chance to find out!

Stop by and learn about the Fresh Start School and our Autism Services Program!

Meet the teachers and talk with our experienced clinical staff.

Come get to know us!



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17
6:00 - 7:30 PM

126 DOWD AVENUE
CANTON, CT 06019

Light refreshments will be served



Summer Program

The 2017 FOCUS Summer Social Skills Immersion Program was a success! Many of the activities encouraged the children to push themselves outside of their comfort zones while having fun at the same time! Our days also included mindfulness practice and social learning activities which are always very powerful.

Summer highlights included, canoe trips with the Wilderness School, a day at Quassy Amusement Park, a visit to the Hill-Stead Museum, trips to the FOCUS directors' house for fun on the farm, a visit from Heart International from Japan, trips to the Connecticut Science Center and Roaring Brook Nature Center, and the Annual Summer Talent Show.

Summer themes included tolerance, teamwork, and forgiveness. Children learned how to believe in themselves and make lasting friendships. Summer is the perfect time to practice social skills and build character.



A Memorial Donation

FOCUS received a beautiful Buddy Bench in remembrance of Julio Loureiro, grandfather of a student from The Fresh Start School. It is a great addition to our playground and we look forward to all the friendships that will be strengthened by sharing this seat.



Supportive Housing Program



The young adults of the FOCUS Supportive Housing program had a fun filled summer with lots of activities and plenty of learning! Western Mental Health of Torrington invited FOCUS young adults to both a Memorial Day and 4th of July cookout. The guys enjoyed the food and company, swam at Burr Pond and played some friendly but competitive Volleyball and Basketball.

Residents also had the opportunity to earn some bonus fun filled adventures by keeping their rooms clean and working on important life skills. They enjoyed going back in time to the Renaissance Faire and had a blast on the rides at Lake Compounce.

Not only did we play hard, but we worked and learned hard as well! The Monday cooking and table top game group is thriving and participants are learning to cook more independently. Our Friday night social club is growing as well and we now have young adults from Newington, Bristol, Torrington, Watertown, and Canton.

Our young adults are looking forward to this autumn as a time for new beginnings and new adventures!

Volunteers in Action

A big shout out to Maeghen Harris (FOCUS Director of Autism Services) and her family members; Sarah and Walter Tiffany, and Gretchen and Randy Miner, for graciously giving their time to plant new flowers along the front of the FOCUS building!

Thank you to Robert Swanson for helping keep the garden free of weeds. **Because of volunteers like you,** we now have a beautiful garden. We welcome ongoing donations including plants and volunteers to help maintain the gardens.



The Friends of FOCUS

Are you interested in volunteering for events, helping to fundraise or just becoming a part of FOCUS?

The Friends of FOCUS is made up of parents, staff, and alumni volunteering their time to support FOCUS and The Fresh Start School.

The group meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month 6-7:30 at 126 Dowd Avenue, Canton, CT.



President Don Bonner and Community Services Co-Chair Gary Roman presenting the check

Thanks to Our Friends! The Rotary of Avon-Canton Grant

Many thanks to the Avon-Canton Rotary for their generous donation of \$3,000. Their donation will allow the Fresh Start School to purchase 8 iPads for our students. We are grateful for this wonderful opportunity to integrate technology in the classroom.

Spotlight on Success

“FOCUS helped give me the tools I needed to start a new school, my first job, and they are tools I will always use, for college, and future jobs,” says Hope Wilmot.



Hope Wilmot began attending FOCUS in 2011 at the age of 10.

Over the next six years, Hope worked hard to develop the skills and tools needed to overcome her challenges. She completed her stay at The Fresh Start School in June 2017, and began her transition to a charter school.

Over the summer, Hope started her first job as a cashier at a local grocery store. Using her social skills and coping tools she was able to navigate working with customers and is happy to report a successful summer working behind the register.

Hope credits FOCUS for helping her to learn self-confidence. She was recently able to complete a ropes course that included a jump off a ledge. Hope said, “I would have never done that before! FOCUS helped me get out of my comfort zone and do things I thought I would never do.”

Hope has many friends at FOCUS and we all support her as she successfully transitions to her new school. We will continue to see Hope in our Afterschool Program.

Congratulations Hope, we are so proud of you!



Because of YOU, Hope and many other individuals with autism have been able to belong, learn and succeed!

YOU can make a difference!

Your support is needed for FOCUS Center for Autism to continue providing the care and services the autism community deserves. **Every gift counts!**

www.focuscenterforautism.org
860-693-8809

Facebook @FocusAutism
Twitter @FocusCtr4Autism

