

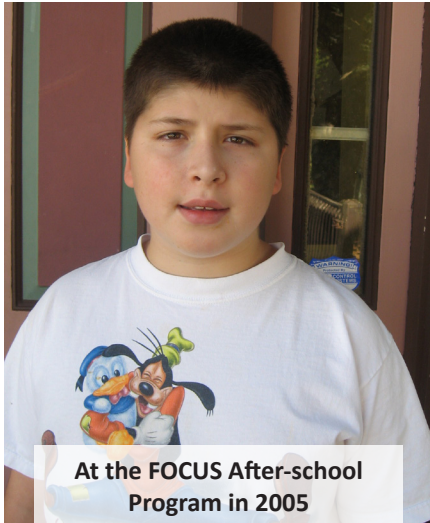


FOCUS Matters

FALL 2021



Remembering our Good Friend



At the FOCUS After-school Program in 2005

Colin McFadden
7/25/95-8/12/21

On August 12 this year, our dear friend Colin McFadden collapsed at the scene of a building fire alongside his fellow Burlington fire fighters and 28 other fire departments. His death was especially tragic for those of us at FOCUS who remember Colin as a 10 year old when he attended our after-school program in 2005. Over the years, Colin made many friends at FOCUS and along with his therapy dog Stitch, will be remembered for his great sense of humor and his keen observation skills.



Proud to be a fire fighter

Colin thrived at FOCUS and after leaving moved on to become an Eagle Scout, an EMT and a volunteer fireman. He had strong community attachments, worked with Habitat for Humanity and was a strong advocate for those with autism. Colin kept his ties with FOCUS as a member of our Autism Spectrum Unplugged Panel, spoke to legislators and was always giving back!

Colin's was a short life well lived!

He will be remembered!



Beautiful smile while using sensory sand



Enjoying a pony ride at the FOCUS Festival for Autism



Spreading autism awareness with the FOCUS Autism Spectrum Unplugged Panel and his dog Stitch



Extended School Year

We were very excited to be able to be in person once again for our Extended School Year/Summer Program! There were lots of fun activities including music, science, arts/crafts and field trips. Students stayed active during our outings going on hikes and swimming. We also had a few special guests this year including the Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation center with Atka the bald eagle and other birds of prey. It was a great summer!



Hike up Talcott Mountain to Heublein Tower

A New School Year

The beginning of the new school year is off to a great start. We have said goodbye to some students and staff and welcomed in some new ones as well. Our transition program is excited to be able to venture out more into the community for job placements. This year we are continuing placements with Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center, Faith & Fire Forge, and Mack & Molly's Pet Parlor. We have also started a new placement at American Flatbread where students will learn skills needed to work in a restaurant setting. Classes for our younger students at the Dowd building are off and running and our students and staff are so happy to be back! We are looking forward to an exciting new year and to learning new things!



Pizza making at American Flatbread



Working hard on academics with Mr. Nick



Helping out at Mack & Molly's



New Board President Jeannette Brodeur

FOCUS Has a New Board President

FOCUS is pleased to welcome Jeannette Brodeur as our new board president. Jeannette in addition to having two children with autism, has an extensive background in journalism and was the registrar of voters in Plymouth, CT. Being board president can be challenging but we know that Jeannette is up to it!

And many thanks to our exiting president Patricia Cables who has gone above and beyond as board president of FOCUS. Her many years of service to the mission of FOCUS is unparalleled. We can never thank her enough and are most grateful she is staying on as a board member!

Adult Services Update

A tag sale will be held on October 22, 23, and 24 to raise money for the Adult Services Programs from 9:00-5:00 at 7 Bidwell Farm Road, Canton, CT. Lots of great items will be for sale. Don't miss out!

The Adult Zoom Pilot Program continues to expand to more in-person groups that includes walks on Tuesdays, lunch on every other Wednesday and gatherings every other Saturday. If interested, contact Sharon Cable at sharon.cable@focuscenterforautism.org.



Wednesday Lunch Group happy to be together

Fore Autism

Friday, August 20, FOCUS held our third annual Fore Autism Charity Golf Tournament benefitting FOCUS Center for Autism and Fresh Start School at Fairview Farm in Harwinton.

Fresh Start student Jack Tanner and his family are the inspiration for Fore Autism. With the Tanner family's gratitude for Jack's growth and achievements at Fresh Start School and the family's passion for golf, Jack's father, Jerry, helped create Fore Autism to benefit the school where his son has learned to belong and experience success.

2021 was our third year of hosting Fore Autism. Despite tropical storms in the forecast, we had a beautiful day with a fantastic turnout of 148 golfers supporting our nonprofit.

The tournament was a complete success, thanks to our amazing volunteers, staff, and supporters!

Save the date for next year's tournament Monday, June 20, 2022 at our new venue - Torrington Country Club! Stay tuned for more details about our new event day and location!

Many thanks to our incredible sponsors:

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 Patty & Bob Cables
 Shop Rite - Joseph Family Markets
 Swanson Tool
 Tanner Family



Fore Autism Chair Lauren Gardner, Jack, and FOCUS Executive Director Donna Swanson



A lovely day of golf!

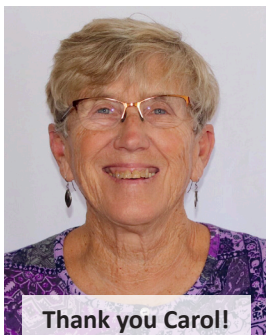
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Photo credit to Don Bonner and Kara Gardner.

Hotel California

Our executive director Donna Swanson always says FOCUS is like the Hotel California, "you can check out...but you can never leave." Two of our best veteran employees Carol Doiron and Kathy Harrison have now retired, but both are staying on as consultants.



Thank you Carol!

Carol was instrumental in creating the Fresh Start School and worked at FOCUS for 10 years after retiring from the public school system. Kathy or "Tink" as she is better known was our Program Nurse and Health and Safety Coordinator for 13 years after a career as an RN.

Both of these seasoned vets deserve a huge shoutout and our many thanks for their dedication and commitment to the mission of FOCUS Center for Autism!



Thank you Tink!

Thank You Advocare and Town Fair Tire!

Many thanks to the ADVOCARE Foundation for their recent grant to FOCUS. We are most grateful for their continued support over the years to FOCUS, the Fresh Start School and our Adult Support Services Program. We are indebted to the ADVOCARE Foundation for their vision and understanding of the mission of FOCUS Center for Autism!

FOCUS Center for Autism recently received a grant from the Town Fair Tire Foundation! This grant was unsolicited as Town Fair Tire was focusing on autism programs and found FOCUS through Guidestar. These funds will help purchase supplies for our teachers and students at the Fresh Start School! Thank you Town Fair Tire and Dean Macchio for supporting our mission and the autism community!

Life on the Spectrum Reminder



New episodes of our TV show, Life on the Spectrum are now available on the Nutmeg TV Youtube page. Hear first hand experiences about growing up with autism from Harley, Aaron, Sierra, Kyle, Eli, and many more.

Scan the QR Code to the right or visit www.youtube.com/user/NutmegTelevision to see all available episodes!



Giving Tuesday

Save the Date: #GivingTuesday is November 30!

GivingTuesday is a global day of generosity that will take place on November 30, 2021. We're proud to be a part of this celebration of giving.

Join us and unleash the power of giving to support children, adults, and families with autism receiving services from FOCUS.

You can support FOCUS Center for Autism on Giving Tuesday by sharing our #GivingTuesday fundraising campaign with friends and family or donating.

Keep an eye on your email and social media for our Giving Tuesday campaign. You can follow us on social media on Instagram @focusautism and Facebook at FOCUS Center for Autism.

Your generosity and support make a difference in the lives of our families!



Join the FOCUS Team!

There are job openings in the Fresh Start School and Residential Program. Email employment@focuscenterforautism.org or call 860-693-6127 for all inquiries.