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Dear Friends of Envision...

As the times have changed, so have we. From our early beginnings as a community-based residential school for children to the comprehensive services we provide today, Envision is committed to the growth of the people we serve and the programs we provide.

As we continue our 60th year of empowering people with developmental disabilities, we encourage you to renew your partnership with Envision by pledging to give \$60 for our 60th Anniversary. Your gift helps to create a future where every person feels valued and appreciated.

Your gift of \$60 supports programming costs not covered by federal Medicaid dollars, such as sign language classes, cooking projects, and community outings. Your generosity helps to create the meaningful experiences that enrich the lives of those we serve.

Take the pledge today. \$60 for our 60th year of supporting people with developmental disabilities as they journey towards a future filled with promise and hope. Together, we can make our 60th year our best year yet.

Sincerely,

James Steffey

James Steffey
President, and CEO



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3030 West Fork Rd.
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CITE: Where Learning New Skills is a Family Affair



Montel and mom Precious give CITE a thumbs up!

"I feel like it's [CITE] brought us closer together. It has helped me learn Montell when he opens up to Katie."

– Precious (Montell's mom)

Montell eagerly awaits at the door for his CITE coach Katie Juenger to arrive. When he sees her, he greets her with a bright and friendly smile. Katie says hello as he opens the door for her and Montell rushes off while Katie chats with Precious, Montell's Mom.

When Montell returns, he is wearing a Sonic the Hedgehog costume. Montell loves to dress up as his favorite characters and especially loves Spiderman. As he zips around the room, Katie suggests they get to work and Montell quickly settles in. Precious is nearby, listening in and encouraging Montell as he and Katie become "social detectives," exploring the ins and outs of "expected behaviors."

"A lightbulb!" is the answer Montell gives when Katie asks him "what kind of smarts do you have in your brain?" Montell tells Katie he feels proud when he can do what is expected. And mom does too. This is clear from the loving look she gives Montell when Katie suggests that mom feels happy when he does what is expected. Says Katie, "the three of us work together as a team. Precious always makes sure to reinforce the skills Montell is learning, especially between visits."

Precious recalls realizing that Montell was experiencing developmental delays when his preschool teacher noticed he displayed some of the signs of autism, including delayed speech and "spinning" of objects, a behavior that can help a person with autism self-regulate. Although hard to accept at first, Precious was quick to connect Montell to the right resources. "I wanted to know; how can I help him learn? I take it serious [because]



Montell practices new skills with CITE coach Katie Juenger

I want him to be successful. I don't want him to think that just because he learns different that he's not smart."

One of the resources that has benefitted Montell and Precious on their journey is the CITE program at Envision. CITE, an acronym for Community Integrated Training and Education, provides in-home consultation and coaching for children and young adults ages 3-22 diagnosed with a developmental disability. Through modeling and one-on-one coaching, children and families learn new skills and practice developmentally appropriate behaviors, such as the social skills Montell and Katie are currently working on.

Since partnering with Katie through the CITE program, Precious reports Montell has learned new coping mechanisms and how to recognize his feelings. He now can "voice" how he feels, minimizing his frustration and strengthening his relationships, the positive impact of which has not gone unnoticed by Precious. "I feel like it's [CITE] brought us closer together. It has helped me learn Montell when he opens up to Katie." And Katie agrees. "He's really come out of his shell. He's more confident in himself now." "I like to play games with her [Katie]," says Montell.

As Montell and Katie finish up their visit, Precious reflects on her relationships with both Katie and Montell. "I definitely appreciate her [Katie] and Montell loves working with her. Montell is so many things to me. He's very loving, he's caring. Nobody knows how much he does for me to keep me going." Adds Katie, "Precious is fully committed. She wants nothing but the best for her child. He [Montell] is very well loved and he knows that."

"He's really come out of his shell. He's more confident in himself now."

– Katie Juenger



Montell loves to dress up as his favorite characters

Mason hanging out in his room



Mason and Tyler share a laugh

A Friend in "We"

For Mason and Tyler, Friendship is a Two-Way Street

Mason greets me when I arrive for our visit by asking me if I have a dog. When I share with him that I do, he immediately wants to know more. "What kind of dog do you have? What is your dog's name? Do you have a picture of your dog?" Mason's mom Page suggests that he look up the breed in his guidebook, which he has handy next to his bed. With the help of his best friend Tyler, they quickly find the page they are looking for, confirming they have the right breed by showing me a picture. It doesn't take long to figure out dogs are Mason's favorite animal. Says Tyler, "Mason's really interested in dogs. When we go out, we try to go any place where I know there will be dogs."

In addition to visiting local dog parks, Mason also loves to go out to eat, use his iPad and hang out with his friends, including Tyler and girlfriend Ava. Mason and Ava attended homecoming together in 2022 and most recently enjoyed the Night to Shine dance, an event sponsored by The Tim Tebow Foundation. Dances are right up Mason's alley, as music is a big part of his life. In fact, he can often be found hanging out in his room listening to music with Tyler and Jenny, his housemate at Village Green, an Envision-run group home for people with developmental disabilities. When I ask Mason which artists he likes to listen to, he is quick to respond, "Justin Bieber."

Mason also loves all things technology, especially Apple products. He even has a large black flag featuring a white apple hanging on the wall beside his bed. He is a frequent visitor at his local Apple store, where many of the staff know him by name. Mason dreams of one day working there himself. Says mom Page, "I think Mason would do well as a greeter. He would be good at showing people where different products are located in the store."

“One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood.”

– Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Although he isn't employed by Apple yet, Mason gets plenty of practice helping people through the work study program he attends at Sycamore High School. Every Friday, Mason volunteers his time at The Seasons, an assisted-living community for seniors in Kenwood, Ohio. There, Mason hands out newsletters and engages with the residents, which he enjoys. Based on Mason's comments, it appears the residents enjoy his company as well. Says Mason, “the ladies [there] like me.”

Mason is naturally funny, a bit of a jokester really, which is evident in the easy banter between him and Tyler. When I ask him what he likes about Tyler, he says, “I like him because I like hanging out with him.” Tyler begins to respond by saying “somedays,” when Mason quickly interjects with “you don't brush your teeth?”

Mason and Tyler met in 2018 when Mason was attending a summer camp where Tyler was a counselor. What started out with an invitation to Mason's birthday party quickly evolved into a formidable friendship. Says Tyler, “we have a mutually beneficial relationship. I get just as much out of it as he does. Before him, I didn't really have anybody to hang out with.”

Mason and Tyler have grown together in their relationship, evolving into what Tyler considers to be a not far from familial relationship. “I almost see him as a little brother. I worry about if he has visitors [when I can't be here].” To make sure that Mason has a strong community, Tyler and Mason have expanded their circle of friends by inviting others to visit and hangout, as well as by going out into the community as often as possible. “I've tried to make him as many connections as possible,” says Tyler.



Mason and Tyler have a strong bond

Talk of going out into the community reminds Mason that he is ready to get out of the house. He asks Tyler if they can go to Home Depot, one of Mason's favorite stores. Tyler is always willing to accompany Mason on outings and encourages him to talk to people when they are out and about. “I think it's good practice for him to engage with people in the community,” says Tyler.

Mason quickly follows up his request to visit Home Depot with another request: visiting a restaurant. “These boys love to go out to eat,” says Mason's mom Page. Tyler adds that he likes going out to dinner with his friend, particularly for the great conversation. “[Mason] is a great listener. He's not a judgmental person at all.”

Mason also enjoys meals out with Tyler, especially when it comes time to tip. Tyler recounts a time when he asked Mason how much he should leave for the server and Mason jokingly responded “\$100.” After all, what's \$100 (of Tyler's money) to a meal between friends?

At Envision Day, There Can Never be Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen!

The new kitchen in our on-site day program, Envision Day, has been put to good use since renovations were completed in August of 2022. Since then, program participants have been busy whipping up meals and treats with the new equipment, including making smoothies loaded with fruits and vegetables in the blender and baking delicious cakes in the oven!

Thanks to the generous grant from the Good Shepherd Foundation of Ohio, day program participants now have a safe and modernized space to cook and create. In addition, funds received from a charitable donation by the GE Employee Services Fund, have allowed program staff to purchase adaptive cooking equipment, like measuring cups marked in braille. This equipment allows everyone to participate in a place where everyone belongs.

The new kitchen provides a space where the people who attend the program can gather to chat, socialize, and genuinely enjoy each other's company. It is also a space where they can work to achieve a common goal, rooting each other on along the way. This is a kitchen says Melissa Paton, Envision Day Program Director, where "teamwork makes the dream work."



Recently renovated kitchen which includes new appliances and solid wood cabinets



Sampling the food



Making smoothies



The cooks measuring and mixing the batter



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UPCOMING EVENTS AT ENVISION:

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| April 13, 2023 | Westside Ladies Paddle Party |
| July 2, 2023 | Abilities at Bat |
| July 22, 2023 | Envision at the Cincinnati Polo Club |
| Sept 30, 2023 | Envision's Go the Extra Mile Walk – presented by USI |
| Nov 7, 2023 | Sonder Brewing "Living on a Prayer" Pub Night |



Questions?

Please contact Krista Heidenreich at
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