



Main Street Miracles: Bradley Higgs

Bradley has always been considered our "miracle" baby. After struggling for many years with infertility, we were finally blessed with him. He hit all of his developmental milestones on schedule except for speech. He was extremely delayed and struggled to speak even simple words like Mommy and Daddy. At 2 ½ years old, we began to receive speech therapy and occupational therapy in our home. When it became obvious that these therapies were not helping Brad, he was then tested for Main Street and from that point, our lives were forever changed.

Brad began Main Street in the summer of 2008. At this time, he was receiving speech therapy only until he started in the fall. Once the full school year started, he was in Shannon Knapp's room and he was receiving speech therapy with Donna DiFulvio and occupational therapy with Mary Warren. It was then that Brad was diagnosed with Apraxia and poor motor skills. With his therapies and the love and patience of his teachers and therapists, his speech starting getting better. At the end of his first year at Main Street, we found that Bradley was still delayed and he would go into his second year at Main Street with full day classes. When Brad realized that he would be leaving Shannon's room, he was extremely upset but I knew that he would get an equally wonderful new teacher and therapists to help him continue on his journey.

Brad's second year at Main Street was with Mary Vaughn. He still had Mary Warren for occupational therapy and he began working with Julie Daniel for speech therapy. During this year, Brad really began to bloom into a very talkative little boy. I was clearly over the moon that all of his therapies and hard work were really paying off! Once the end of the year came and his final IEP was done, that is when we learned that Brad would not be receiving any therapies as he entered Kindergarten. He would be going into elementary school as a "regular" student. I have to admit that I was extremely nervous and upset with this. Brad was still delayed somewhat in his speech, but clearly not enough to justify him receiving any more therapies.



Bradley with Mary Vaughn at Moving up Day!

Today Bradley is in the second grade at Roxboro Road Elementary. He has integrated into elementary school with ease. He is liked by his teachers and has made some great friends. Last year in the first grade, he was Star Student of the Week. For me as a mom, to see my son who just three short years ago could barely say Mommy, become the Star Student melted my heart and made me extremely proud.

I am a firm believer that Bradley would not be the kid that he is today without the love and guidance of Shannon, Donna, Mary, Mary and all of the wonderful teachers assistants that were with him during his two years at Main Street. Brad also made some fantastic friends at Main Street and he still sees many of them today. They will always be life long friends. Brad was not the only one who made great connections at Main Street. I also made many friends and will always be connected to them and Main Street. *For the Higgs family, Main Street will always have a wonderfully special place in our hearts. ~ Jennifer Higgs*

Friends meetings take place in the school cafeteria at 6:30- January 17th; February 28th; March 21st; April 18th; May 16th! Please join us! Your ideas and talents are needed and greatly appreciated!

Our Mission

The Friends of the North Syracuse Early Education Program (FNSEEP) is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the North Syracuse Early Education Program. We are a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization.

Save the Date!

5th Annual Therapy Ball
Wednesday, April 10, 2013, 6:00 PM
Barbagallo's Restaurant

Message From Friend's Founding President ~ *Jacquie Owens*

Our first time in Main Street School was the day before Rosie's first day of preschool in 2001. It was a day we will never forget, wondering whether we were doing the right thing in enrolling her at three years old. It turned out to be the best decision of our lives (besides getting married and having kids!). Both our children flourished and so did our family as a whole. We met some wonderful people we now consider friends that we hope to keep for the rest of our lives.

Besides the positive impact on our family, over the past 10 years, I have had the privilege of fundraising for this special preschool. The charity we founded in 2006 has grown from a few dedicated people to many, coming together to organize big events like the Therapy Ball and Walk-a-thon, as well as, writing grants that secured funding for a library, gross motor room and swing set.

In our learning and growing, we realize that things inevitably change. As my kids grew I was able to spend a lot of time on Friends and other projects. Now, for the first time in 14 years, I have a full time job that takes me away from town everyday during the week. I know that I won't have the time and energy that needs to be dedicated to the role of President of the Friends of NSEEP so I am turning it over to people with new energy and skills to take our growing organization to the next level and build greater opportunities for our beloved preschool. Even though I am stepping down as President, I plan to continue being a part of the Friends board and doing what I can to help.

Thank you for all your support over the years. Best wishes to our new officers in 2013!

Sincerely,
Jacquie Owens

Message From the Principal NSEEP at Main Street ~ *Dawn Hussein*



As we begin a new year, I thought I would take this opportunity to give thanks to Friends for all the support they offer the students and staff at the North Syracuse Early Education Program. You may be aware that the members of the Friends organization meet

monthly and you may also be aware that they sponsor fundraisers such as the Therapy Ball and the Walk-a-Thon. But I wonder if you know about some of the recent investments that Friends has made in our school...

During this past summer, Friends supported the purchase of a pre-screening assessment tool to be used for all students. The initial test was given at the end of the summer and served several purposes. The teachers had some preliminary information on disabled/nondisabled students at the start of the school year and we started the data collection process to support our efforts in defending 4410 programs to policymakers in Albany. The results from the testing would also support our Building Improve-

ment Plan in relationship to the District's Strategic Plan. Benchmark testing will take place mid-winter on 3 focus areas and end-of-the-year testing will determine overall growth. A dedicated group of staff members volunteered their time in August to conduct the testing. The cost of the Speed DIAL test kits and protocols was about \$4,000. Thank you to Friends and the many staff members that made this happen!

If you were able to attend Open House in October of this year, you may have spent some time in our cafeteria and noticed the new mesh shades that were hanging. Friends agreed to a request by the building to replace the old blinds in both the copy room/ toy library and cafeteria, for a total of 14 shades. In addition to being more pleasing to the eye, these window treatments are light filtering and enhance our building's energy efficiency. Many thanks to Draperies Etc. for a job well done and again, many thanks to our Friends organization for supporting this \$4,000 venture!

Thank you to Friends for all you have done and will continue to do in the coming years!

~Dawn Hussein

Welcome To Our New Officers!

Jennifer Higgs - FNSEEP Secretary



Jennifer and Bradley Higgs

I am a graduate of Bryant and Stratton College with a degree in Word Processing/Secretarial. Shortly after graduation, I was hired by Countryside Federal Credit Union where I am still employed today.

I came to Main Street School in July 2008 with my then 3 year old son. He started school with very limited speech and poor motor skills. It was then, that I realized I would do whatever I could to help this wonderful school that was doing so much to help my little

boy. I served as PTO Secretary during the 2009-2010 school year. I also helped with the inaugural Therapy Ball with gathering donations. After my son "graduated" from Main Street, I was asked back to the secretary position in 2011 to fill the position that could not be filled.

I have always said that I would do whatever I was capable of to help Main Street. Without them, my son would not have developed into the wonderful 7 year old that he is today. When the opportunity to become Secretary for Friends of NSEEP came up, I knew that I had to step up and do what I could. It is just *one small way that I am giving back to a school that gave my family so much.*

Catherine Podolak - FNSEEP Treasurer

Hello Main Street community! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Catherine Podolak and I will be taking over as treasurer for the FNSEEP. I have been a life-long resident of the Cicero area. I graduated from Syracuse University with my Master's in Social Work specializing in child welfare. My husband, Michael, and I have two children. My six-year-old son, Hunter, attended Main Street from summer 2009 - summer 2011. During that time, I was actively involved with his classrooms and the PTO. Since his graduation, I volunteered with Friends at events such as the Therapy Ball and Walk-a-thon.

Our December baby, Griffin, will be ready for pre-school in 2015 and I want him to attend the NSEEP at

Main Street. Therefore, I am highly invested in making sure Main Street overcomes its budget difficulties and is around for many more

generations of kids. One of my primary goals as an officeholder of FNSEEP is to increase Main Street's visibility in the community. *There is no school quite like Main Street - let's make sure EVERYONE knows it!*



Catherine Podolak with sons Hunter and Griffin

5th Annual Therapy Ball

The 5th Annual Therapy Ball will take place **Wednesday, April 10th, 6:00 PM at Barbagallo's Restaurant** on East Malloy Rd. Our Therapy Ball chairperson, Jill Coleman, is working diligently to ensure that the event is a success! If you would like to donate an item or service to the event, or volunteer to help plan or work at the ball, **please contact Jill at 458-0924.** We hope to see you there!



FRIENDS OF THE NORTH SYRACUSE
EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM, INC

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North Syracuse Early Education Program at Main Street

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Friends of NSEEP Board of Directors

Hal Breon, Kathi Esposito, Jacquie Owens, Al Stirpe

Jay Mankita "Eat Like A Rainbow" ~ Amy Assante

Last summer the NSEEP PTO brought Jay Mankita to the school for a special healthy eating concert. Mr. Mankita played the guitar and sang songs about making healthy food choices. He had students and staff singing and dancing along. His entire collection of songs is featured as part of the **USDA's Healthy Meals Resource System - "Team Nutrition"**. The snacks for the day were all colors of the rainbow including red strawberries, orange melons, and blue blueberries—to name a few! The snacks were purchased using the Boenheim Foundation Snack Grant! It was a super fun day!

