

The Victory Voice

The Victory Academy Newsletter



Oregon's only year-round, accredited school for children affected by Autism

Edition 1 · Spring 2016

Dear Victory Academy Supporters—



We are proud to announce the closing of our Dream, Build, Thrive Capital Campaign!

Because of your generosity, we reached our goal of raising over \$6 million and opened the new, larger Victory Academy campus in September 2015.

Our beautiful new building is facilitating an increased level of learning for all of our students. The campus allows us to more completely fulfill our mission of helping every Victory student reach their fullest academic, social, and life potential.

We thank you so much for your support and for giving the gift of a Victory education to so many more families affected by Autism here in Oregon.



This year, with the opening of the new building, we:

- Added 25 new families – including some who moved from as far away as California, New York, and Nebraska to allow their children to attend
- Expanded our preschool program and added a high school curriculum to fully serve our youngest and oldest students
- Launched our first After School Program, offering a variety of activities and therapies including soccer and basketball teams, rock climbing, art, and social groups. For many of our students, this is their first chance to be on a team or pursue extra-curricular interests!
- Continued our innovative programs that focus on academics, language, social and life skills to ensure our students are as independent as possible in adulthood
- Will grow to serve 100 students in the next two years as we reach full capacity!

*Something
I've learned
about myself
this year is...
I can read.*

— Aidan, 12

In addition to recognizing our many donors, included in these pages is our inaugural newsletter — *The Victory Voice* — bringing you stories and highlights of our amazing first school year at the new Victory Campus.

Your generosity in supporting our Capital Campaign is changing the lives of our students, their families, and other families affected by Autism throughout the Northwest and beyond. On behalf of everyone at Victory, thank you very much!

Tricia Hasbrook
Director of School &
Capital Campaign Co-Chair

JB Handley
Capital Campaign
Co-Chair

Transition Program in Full “Bloom”

What adulthood will look like is a huge concern for parents of a child with Autism.

One of Victory Academy’s primary goals is to give our students the skills for a fulfilling and productive adult life. We begin this preparation early, starting at age 13, by working with each family to create a transition plan individualized to each student’s unique strengths and interests.

This year, we added two exciting components to our Transition Program: the student-run Bloom Coffee Shop at Victory and the Work Experience (WE) Program that partners with local businesses to give our students real job experience.

Bloom Coffee Shop, open each Wednesday morning at Victory, is run by 15 students who do everything from budgeting and inventory to purchasing supplies, baking, marketing, customer service, and clean-up. By providing an intermediate step between school and the real world, Bloom has introduced our students to new concepts and responsibilities and increased their confidence and sense of what they might want to achieve in the future. It has also delighted our customers – Victory parents, teachers, and visitors!

Also new this year, 17 of our students work once a week at local businesses to gain valuable job skills.

Our community partners include Ace Hardware, Columbia River Knife & Tool (CRKT), Critter Cabana, McDonald’s, Our Table, and Oregon Dog Rescue. Student work duties range from copying and assembling boxes to walking dogs and restocking shelves. Students remain at the same job site for 12 weeks and then rotate based on preferences and strengths. The excitement and pride our students feel in these challenging roles has been evident from the first week!

Molly Smith, Victory teacher and director of our Transition Program, says “It’s amazing to watch the students’ faces light up when they walk into their job sites. You can tell they are proud of their role in the business and the community. In addition to teaching the students how to perform the job, they are able to make informed decisions about whether the job is for them or not. Understanding preferences and strengths is a crucial part of advocating for oneself, and we hope to build both our students’ skills and self-knowledge. ”



From left, Transition Specialist **Molly Smith**, **Nathan (age 16)**, **Davis (age 16)**, **Lily (age 14)**, and Transition Support Teacher **Kiely Corti** are ready to take your order at the student-run Bloom Coffee Shop



Jamie (age 13) assembles boxes that will hold new pocketknives at Columbia River Knife & Tool.



Joe (age 14) learns administrative responsibilities like photocopying, organization, and filing at Columbia River Knife & Tool.

Victory's Work Experience program has been valuable for our partners, too. Mark Schreiber of CRKT says, "We are honored to partner with Victory. Our employees look forward to seeing the students every week, and it has been amazing to see the progress and the growth in confidence in the students. The work performed by these students benefits CRKT, so it's a win-win for everyone involved. It has been everything we thought it would be and more!"

*Something
I've learned
about myself
this year is...
I have autism.*

—Nathan, 16

Randi Ray of Wilsonville McDonald's put it this way, "One of our core tenants is providing young workers the opportunity to enter the workforce and succeed. Additionally, we feel strongly about giving back to the communities we serve. Victory Academy is part of our community, and this is a fantastic opportunity for our family to help these students transition into confident, independent adults. Partnering with the Victory has been an amazing journey. It's opened our eyes and reminded

us just how nervous and scary a first job can be. The students are fearless! They are good listeners, eager to learn, and our McDonald's Team has enjoyed teaching them. Best of all, the students have given their best effort to make every customer happy."

As one of our students said after learning to take orders at the McDonald's drive-thru, "I LOVE THIS JOB! I could do this forever!"

At Victory, we want each student to feel the sense of accomplishment that comes from working with others toward a common goal. We are always considering their futures, and want every student to acquire the skills and self-advocacy that will increase their independence and joy in life after Victory.



Prashant (age 13) and Teaching Assistant **Jordan Weinstein** restocking shelves at Wilsonville Ace Hardware.



Sneak Peek Charity Night

Supporters of Victory Academy together purchased more than 790 tickets to attend the Portland Auto Show's Sneak Peek Charity Night, a fun-filled evening of friends, food, and cars. In exchange for bringing so many Victory supporters to the show, the Metro Portland New Car Dealers Association presented Victory with a donation of \$190,000!

Thank you to those who attended Sneak Peek on behalf of Victory and made this possible! Each and every ticket purchase counted, and we are grateful. The funds will go towards supporting Victory's innovative programs. We know that in the right educational environment students with Autism not only learn, but thrive. We thank you so much for helping our students thrive!



A Big Head Start

Victory Prep is home to Victory's youngest students. Based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), it is designed for children age three to six. Working one-on-one or in pairs with trained staff and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Victory Prep students work to build language and school readiness skills that will allow them to move onto Victory Academy.

Each child in Victory Prep has individualized goals. The students work on communication, play skills, following directions, gross and fine motor skills – and even toileting and feeding if necessary. Depending on their skill level and age, children stay in the program for one to three years. By the end of this year, four students will have 'graduated', ready for Victory Academy!

Victory's founders first conceived of Victory Prep knowing how critical early therapeutic intervention is after a diagnosis of Autism. As a parent of an older Victory student shared, "When I

see those little ones in the building, I am comforted knowing they have a higher chance of rapid improvement because they are getting to Victory so young."

*Something
I've learned
about myself
this year is...
I'm really good
at crossing the
street safely.*

– Cadel, 7

Headed by Kristina Montgomery, BCBA, the Prep program was piloted last year with three students. The response in terms of applications was overwhelming, and as a result, Victory Prep expanded to nine this year. Over the next few years, we will expand again to serve up to 15 students.

Victory Prep parents also are working alongside their children to maximize the benefits of Victory Prep. This Spring, six families are participating in a pilot Parent Training program. Parents spend time at school, and staff do bi-weekly home visits to model ABA principles. Every family has individualized homework so parents can practice the skills they learn with their child. Together, Victory staff and parents are ensuring that Victory's smallest students make giant progress!

It's Fun to Stay After School!

Victory families are cheering our new After School Program!

Students can sign up for sports, take an art, gardening or cooking class, or join the homework club. After school therapies include physical, occupational, and speech therapies along with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Before and after care is also offered and provides families much needed flexibility.



After school programs are run by Victory teachers, many of whom have started classes at the request of students and families. The classes have been a smashing success with approximately 75% of Victory students participating. "This has been a powerful community builder," reports Thea Schreiber, head of after school programs. Students mix across classrooms; parents bond at pick up; and teachers get to know students from different classrooms. With these special offerings, students continue to build critical life, social, and importantly, leisure skills. Many students are getting to play sports or participate in extracurricular activities for the first time!

This program is just one of many ways in which the new building has enhanced the educational experience of all of our students. Next year, Victory plans to open its After School Program to the wider community. No doubt, children and families will continue to cheer!



The Joy of Music!

My goal is success for all, in whatever way that is for each student," says Magen Dignan, Board Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC), who along with Emily Ross (MT-BC), continues to expand music therapy at Victory.

Each Victory class has two periods of music a week and several students have one on one sessions where they explore a variety of instruments including guitar, piano, drums, tone bars, and boomwhackers. The more instruments, the more learning and self-expression open up, and improv, movement, and dance are encouraged!

While making music, students work on communication as well as social and cognitive goals that can range from increasing eye contact and practicing turn-taking to learning 1/8 vs 1/4 notes. Everything is secondary, however, to opening the world of music up to each student and building self-confidence.

As Magen reminds us, "Music can heal. It is a safe place for self-expression. There is no fail, just joy."

In addition to music classes, Victory offers Choir, Bell Choir, and newly introduced musical drama. On April 27th, twelve students performed in Victory's first musical – "The Very Musical Caterpillar" – to a packed and proud audience! Written by Victory speech pathologist Chris Yensan and woven around the music of Cat Stevens, the musical explored the ideas of adapting to change and accepting differences in others. With characters that included Katie Pillar, Bookworm, and Stinky T. Stinkman, students were introduced to acting, injecting personality into performances, costume and prop design. They embraced every part of these new challenges!

Future music program plans include adding a songwriting class and a drumming circle, especially targeted to our students with communication challenges. Finding a way for all of our students to fully participate in the joy of music is Victory's goal.



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With special gratitude to J. Clayton Hering for his tireless advocacy during our campaign.

If we have made an error, please let us know.



P.O. Box 428 · Tualatin, OR 97062

Thank you for supporting
Victory Academy!

www.VictoryAcademy.org
503-570-0147

Important Dates

JUNE 4
Special Olympics
Track Meet

SEPTEMBER 6
First Day of New
School Year

OCTOBER 8
Victory Academy
Auction

DECEMBER TBD
Victory Winter Program

**JANUARY 25,
2017**
Portland Auto Show
Sneak Peek Charity
Night

*Something
I've learned
about myself
this year is...
I can take
a break if I
feel upset.*

— Ace, 15



Victory Art on public display!

The work of Victory Academy artists is currently on display at Our Table, a cooperative specialty grocery store featuring organically grown and locally sourced produce, meats, dairy, and dry goods. Our Table is also one of our partners in the Work Experience program, providing Victory students valuable job experience. Thank you Our Table! Please visit Our Table in Sherwood or at www.OurTable.us.

Student Views

My favorite place in the new school is...

Community Room	3
Gym	8
Art & Music Room	9
Playground	14
My Classroom	16

*Something
I've learned
about myself
this year is...
I am really good
at basketball.*

— Luke K., 9