

# The Victory Voice

The Victory Academy Newsletter

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

Edition III · Spring 2018



## Dear Victory Academy Supporters—

Spring is always a busy time of year at Victory! We just wrapped our third annual musical, students are busily training for Special Olympics track and field competitions, and our older students are beginning new work internships with our many partner businesses in the community. There has been progress in every class and for every student – mastering the alphabet or lab science, or even advanced algebra and geometry for some! Students are busy building robots and circuit boards, thriving in art and music classes, and extending their learning from the classroom to everyday situations in the community like riding the bus and going to the grocery store or gym. From learning to ride a bike at age 15, to counting the day's sales at our student-run Bloom Café, to forming deep friendships with their classmates – accomplishment, progress, and joy abound!

*My favorite things to do at Victory are play, swing and help with cooking.*

— Korbin, 14

Spring is also the time of the year for admissions, and yet again, we have had a record number of applicants. The rate of autism continues to increase and is now 1 in every 36 children. At Victory, we will be able to add 15+ new families this year bringing our total enrollment for the next school year to approximately 80 students.

As I reflect back on this school year, I am filled with immense pride for the progress our students are making and gratitude for you, our incredibly supportive community, that help make the joy and achievement for our students possible. Thank you for celebrating their successes alongside us! Thank you for giving these students the opportunity to thrive!

**Tricia Hasbrook**  
Director of School



*Save the Date for*  
*Saturday, October 20, 2018*  
*The Hilton Portland*  
*6:00 pm*

Please join us for dinner, silent and live auctions, and an inspiring program celebrating a decade of learning, growth and achievement at Victory Academy!



*My favorite thing to do at Victory is learning. I've been to a lot of schools, and no ones makes learning as successful as they do here.*

— Spencer, 17

# Supporting Art and Music Education

## Construction has begun at Victory as we add an additional classroom to the end of our current building.

This new space will bring tremendous benefits for all of our students by allowing us to fully support art and music education and therapy at Victory.

Currently, music and art share a classroom, and with the growing student population, the shared room is straining the school's ability to accommodate all classes. Not only did we underestimate the space required, we underappreciated the transformative value of art and music for our students. We have learned that the more time our students have to learn, explore, and express themselves through art and music, the more they blossom.

For most of our students, communication is a challenge. But **art and music are accessible to all as every student is able to express themselves creatively** through these two mediums. For some of our students, music and art also offer important means to build fine motor skills or to regulate the frustration and anxiety that can often occur for children with autism. Additionally, many of our students are uniquely gifted – as artists, singers, or musicians – and these areas of strength are crucial sources of confidence and identity.

As one Victory mom explained, "I know I am not alone when I tell you that art therapy at Victory has impacted my children in ways I never imagined. When my eldest son, Spencer, first started at Victory 5+ years ago, he would cry at the idea of doing anything art related. Holding a crayon or paintbrush would cause him so much anxiety. It was heartbreaking. In just a few months, thanks to Mary Ellen [Victory art teacher], he thrived in art! As a result, his self-confidence rose as did his fine motor skills."

## Adding one additional classroom to more fully support art and music education will:

- **Increase class time** across all Victory classes for art and music from once to twice a week and increase the amount of 1-to-1 art and music therapy opportunities
- **Expand the number of art and music electives** during school and in after-school programs. Victory currently

offers vocal choir, bell choir, musical theatre, printmaking, and digital art, but would like to add additional electives to support and challenge our students such as music writing, drumming, photography, and sculpture



- **Maximize educational and therapeutic time** by not having to changeover and set up when transitioning between art and music in the same room
- **Increase the range of materials and instruments** for our students to learn and explore with the additional space

**The new classroom will be added to the end of the current building with minimal disruption** to the adjacent classrooms or playground. The project is estimated to cost \$500,000 and represents an additional 1,200 square feet for a new art room. The existing, shared art/music room will be rededicated to music alone.

Two incredible Victory supporters – The VC Fund and Betsy and Wally Preble – have donated lead gifts of \$100,000 each. Additionally, two families have donated generous in-kind gifts. Kathy and Roy Moore through their company, The MEI Group, are donating all earth and excavation work. Additionally, Michele and Brad Hart through their company, OrePac Building Products, are donating all windows and doors for the project. We are incredibly grateful to these amazingly compassionate donors!

**Their contributions leave Victory with \$250,000 remaining to fundraise.** We are busy writing grants and hosting fundraising events. We respectfully ask you to please consider supporting our campaign! We also invite you to learn more about the project or come for a tour by contacting Director of School, Tricia Hasbrook.

Art and music are subjects more vital to our students and their families than we ever realized. As Spencer's mom continues, "Having the opportunity to help expand the art program is personal to me because I want every family to feel the sense of relief and joy that I did when Spencer came home for the first time with an art project that he completed. He was so proud!"



# Exploring Recreational Education

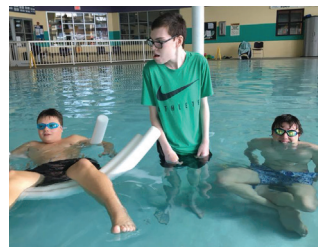
"I never thought he could do that." These are words Cora Templeton hears often in her role as Recreational Education Specialist at Victory.

Cora founded Victory's Rec Ed program this past fall. She knew recreational education was a great way for kids with autism to **build independence, improve their emotional regulation and focus, decrease problem behaviors, and identify interests and hobbies.** Her goal was to design a program that allowed Victory students what she calls "the dignity of risk," the ability to try something they've never done while being safe and having fun.

Thus far, the program has been a smashing success. Victory students have participated in rock climbing, frisbee golf, swimming, hiking, and slack lining. Each class also gets to take two daytrips, one hiking and one climbing. Cora tailors each class to match the abilities of the group. Sometimes this means working on physical fitness or particular motor skills before even leaving the building, but Cora makes sure each child understands why they need to practice something. In her words, **"We don't run just to run. We run so we can climb a mountain."**

The response to Rec Ed has been stellar. When asked what surprised her most about the program, Cora says, "When kids experience something challenging, it is natural to run away or complain, but here, they have all stuck with it."

Ultimately, the goal is that recreational activities become a part of the students' lives outside of school. As Cora points out, "There is so much community with these activities. They could join a group. That's social. **That's independence.**"



*My favorite thing to do at Victory is art.*

— Tyla, 13



## That's A Wrap!

An amazing group of talented Victory students just performed in our third annual musical! The original musical was titled "Prudence Porcupine's Woodland Adventure" and featured eleven students singing and telling the funny, heartwarming story of a former house pet who ends up in the woods and befriends a number of forest creatures. At first, the other animals are wary of the newcomer's sharp quills, making it difficult for them to accept her. The play's themes — accepting others who appear different from ourselves and overcoming fears and misconceptions so that we can behave towards others with dignity and respect — were beautifully conveyed by our students.

Students from five different classes spent hours together rehearsing lines and creating set props. They worked hard, grew in their confidence, and performed brilliantly! The production was supported by a talented and dedicated group of Victory teachers, including writer, director, and speech therapist, Chris Yensan; music teacher, Magen Dignan; set designer and art teacher, Mary Ellen Anderson; and teacher and musician, Michael Allard.

As Chris reflected, "I really enjoy writing the play and trying to give kids lines that reflect their personalities. It is amazing and inspiring to see the process from start to finish. The students really just love being able to 'act' and take on their roles and be funny and emotive up on stage. I am so proud of them!" Bravo and well done everyone!





## First Prom: A Night to Shine!

In the panoply of high school events, few loom larger than prom. Victory students got to experience this exciting event this February when they attended the "Night to Shine" prom sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. **Twenty-two Victory students aged fourteen and older attended the dance**, and like most teenagers, they spent a lot of time getting ready. Two weeks before the big night, the kids had lessons on prom etiquette and what to expect at a dance. They rented tuxedos and purchased dresses. When the big day finally arrived, they stayed after school to get their hair, make-up, and nails done, put on their party clothes, and have their pictures taken.

**Victory students arrived at the prom in style** thanks to Victory grandparents, Kathy and Roy Moore, who

*My favorite thing to do at Victory is socializing*

— Evan, 15

sponsored a party bus complete with limo-style seating, lights, and music. At the dance, all the kids were feted with a red-carpet arrival, tiaras and crowns, and corsages and boutonnieres. They enjoyed dinner, dancing, and photos. There was karaoke for those who wanted to be loud, and a break room for those who needed quiet.

**Everyone had a fabulous time.** For some, the party bus was the highlight; others danced the night away. Molly Smith, prom organizer extraordinaire and head of Victory's Transition Program commented, "We expected some students to be nervous or overwhelmed, but they were the ones who ended up dancing on the stage... Victory closed the place down!" We will definitely be back next year!

# Working for the Future

Growing by leaps and bounds, **twenty-seven students ages 13-18 now participate in Victory's Work Experience Program (WE)**. Each student works one afternoon a week for four months at one of Victory's 22 community business partners. We continue to add internship partners including new this year, OrePac Building Products, Wilsonville Subaru, Hughes Water Gardens, and New Seasons Market in Tualatin.

Molly Smith, Victory's Transition Specialist, works with each student to develop goals and discover preferences. When students are at a job, she also tries to help them be as independent as possible. She knows **it is important for both the student and the employer to learn how to work with each other**. Support can range from none needed, to headphones with verbal encouragement on a continuous loop, to a Bluetooth speaker in the student's ear to help problem solve. Regardless of the support needed, independence is growing. Additionally, **several students in Victory's current placements now get paid**, and those students know that their paychecks are contingent upon completing the job just like any other worker. Molly notes, "It's amazing what these kids can do."

## Meet Max

Max joined WE for the very first time this year. He selected Wow! Burger for his thirteen-week placement. Max refills condiments, preps baskets for burgers and fries, and runs orders. He helps keep the restaurant sparkling by sweeping the floors, cleaning tables, and washing dishes. Molly says that Max is an incredibly hard worker and self-starter who notices when tasks need to be done and completes them without direction. Wow! Burger staff love to see Max arrive because his favorite job is to run the commercial dishwasher, and they appreciate the help! For his part, Max reports, "This job stuff is the best thing about Victory."



## Meet Prashant

Prashant has loved to build things his entire life. He has excellent spatial skills and is quick to see how items fit together. To leverage these skills, Victory created a special WE assignment with FJ Designs, a company that builds custom electrical panels used by an Intel chip-tester. Prashant gathers 25 different parts for each panel, assembles them, then tests and packages the unit. The job plays to Prashant's strengths so no one was surprised when he reported that this has been his favorite WE assignment. When asked why, he patiently pointed out the obvious by saying, "Because it's building," and went back to work!



| Division    | Class Room | Age Range | Class Size | Using Aug Comm* |
|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Preschool   | Elm        | 5-7       | 9          | 50%             |
| Elementary  | Fir        | 6-11      | 8          | 75%             |
| Elementary  | Spruce     | 6-11      | 8          | 0%              |
| Elementary  | Pine       | 7-10      | 6          | 0%              |
| Middle      | Oak        | 11-13     | 6          | 66%             |
| Middle      | Juniper    | 11-13     | 9          | 20%             |
| Middle/High | Cedar      | 14-17     | 6          | 85%             |
| Middle/High | Cypress    | 13-17     | 11         | 0%              |
| Middle/High | Redwood    | 14-18     | 7          | 0%              |

\*Augmentative Communication: Students use voice output, iPad-like devices to "speak" for them

# Across The Classrooms

There are nine classrooms at Victory ranging from preschool to high school. Each year, Victory students are carefully placed into these classrooms based on age and developmental considerations like communication skills, academic level, social understanding, and behavior support needs. A student may remain in the same class each year or move to a different class to support maximum learning. As Tricia Hasbrook, Director of School, describes, "Every year, we meet each student where they are and try to find the class that provides the right level of support so every student feels confident and can make great strides in learning."

All nine classrooms are named after trees representing the hope that students form strong roots within their class communities and grow on all levels over the course of the school year.



# Victory Is Grateful To Our 2017 Donors

*Your generosity in supporting Victory Academy is changing the lives of our students, their families, and other families affected by Autism throughout the Northwest and beyond. Thank you very much!*

## \$150,000+

Metro Portland New Car Dealers Charitable Foundation

## \$50,000 -

## \$150,000

Betty & Wallace Preble

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## \$20,000 -

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# Wings for Victory

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This winter, Victory Academy learned it had been selected to be a partner in Michael Jordan's Wings Scholars Program. **Being a Wings partner means a generous operating grant to Victory and a full scholarship to a new student who would otherwise not be able to attend Victory.**

The Wings Program is one of the Nike Jordan Brand's community impact platforms. In valuing education as a critical tool to enable young people to achieve greatness, "The Wings mission is to provide access to educational opportunity for underserved youth around the world". The Wings program currently operates in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, and now Portland. In each city, Wings partners with local non-profit organizations to provide educational opportunities to financially disadvantaged and racially diverse youth.

"The Jordan Brand recognizes that some of its core consumers are enmeshed in social, economic, and political structures that disadvantage them... Wings aims to provide opportunities for these young people to overcome their circumstances that hold them back from accessing high quality education."

For the 2018-19 school year, the Wings for Victory Scholarship will provide a child or teen with autism the opportunity to attend Victory full time including tuition, application fees, and all transportation costs with the promise of consecutive year scholarships. The scholarship is funded by the United Negro College Fund through the Wings Program, and **the criteria to be considered for the scholarship include financial need, racial diversity, commitment to regularly attend school, and location in the metro Portland area.**

In addition to the student scholarship, Wings donated \$10,000 to Victory's annual operating budget and will donate up to \$50,000 worth of Jordan Brand merchandise. Victory's first order of merchandise was new Jordan Brand shoes for each and every student attending our first spring prom, A Night to Shine!

Sarah Mensah, longtime Victory parent and Vice President, General Manager of Jordan Brand North America, was instrumental in bringing Victory to the attention of the Wings Scholars Program. Victory is grateful for the opportunity and honored to play a role in providing opportunities to students who might not otherwise have the chance to attend Victory. Thank you Jordan Brand!



P.O. Box 428 · Tualatin, OR 97062

Thank you for supporting  
Victory Academy!

[www.VictoryAcademy.org](http://www.VictoryAcademy.org)

## Important Dates

**JULY 7-8**  
Special Olympics  
State Track Meet

**JULY 24**  
Summer Sing  
& Art Walk  
9:15 a.m.

**SEPTEMBER 4**  
First Day of  
New School Year

**OCTOBER 20**  
Victory Academy  
Auction – 10 Years  
of Victory!

**LATE FALL**  
Colin Meloy of  
The Decemberists  
in Concert

**DECEMBER**  
Victory Winter Program

**JANUARY 23,  
2019**  
Portland Auto Show  
Sneak Peek Charity  
Night



## Sneak Peek Charity Night

For the last four years, Victory Academy has been fortunate to be selected as one of the charity beneficiaries of the Metro Portland New Car Dealers Association's (MPNCDA) Sneak Peek Charity Preview Party. Held every January, the event kicks off the Portland International Auto Show and raises over \$600,000 for local non-profit organizations. Sneak Peek guests are treated to complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a hosted bar while enjoying a crowd-free look at all the new cars, trucks, and technology. **This year, Victory supporters bought 870 tickets to Sneak Peek, and as a result, MPNCDA donated \$173,000 to the school!**

**We are so grateful to those who attended the Sneak Peek Charity Night** on behalf of Victory and made this donation possible. The donation will be used to support the specialized academic programming so vital to our students' success. We are grateful!



*My favorite  
thing to do at  
Victory is read  
and eat lunch  
with my friends.*

*—Hank, 12*