



January Newsletter

PSL/STRIVE
28 Foden Road
South Portland, ME
04106

Mission Statement:

PSL Services/STRIVE provides a community of support and assistance to people with cognitive disabilities or mental health diagnoses who experience challenges seeking greater independence by respecting the value of each individual, initiating mutually beneficial, sustainable partnerships with business and community leaders, and by creating innovative opportunities responsive to the evolving needs of individuals and families.

January 1, 2018

Happy New Year!

2017 was an amazing year here at STRIVE! We added a brand new program, STRIVE 25, had some hugely successful fundraisers, celebrated our 18th anniversary, met hundreds of new clients, and more. We are extremely grateful to all of those who helped make our 2017 as exciting and successful as it was.

Looking ahead to 2018, we are excited to be embarking on some new adventures! We were generously chosen as the recipients of a \$25,000 grant from UPS, and with that we've bought tons of new equipment,

from new snow-shoes and snow tubes, to new PC and Mac computers to keep our building up to date with the newest technology. We even bought some recording equipment to start our newest adventure...a STRIVE Podcast! Stay tuned for news on that.

We wish you a happy and healthy new year, and hope to see you in 2018!



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Success at STRIVE Auction



We had such an amazing turnout at our Auction this year, where we were able to raise over \$83,000 for our programs! We are very grateful to all those who attended, and all those who donated items to make our selection diverse and exciting. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to our volunteer Auction committee! Thank you all for your dedication to making this event our best yet.

STRIVE U

The STRIVE U students have been making a lot of effort to keep warm as we enter the cold winter season! They recently experienced their first snow day of the season when morning Kaplan classes were cancelled due to inclement weather. This gave them an opportunity to practice winter safety skills while in the community in the afternoon and allowed a reminder of how to dress appropriately for winter weather. They were encouraged to bundle up in scarves, gloves, hats and

heavy jackets! The students have also taken advantage of the snowy weather by gathering inside to watch their favorite holiday movies in the cozy student lounge during snowy evenings. Some of the students stated that their favorite holiday movies included Polar Express, The Grinch and Elf! The students enjoyed socializing with peers and snacking on pizza, chocolate and candy canes while viewing the movies.

Many students are excited to be starting new job positions with the support of



Two STRIVE U students at work, serving samples at BJ's

STRIVE U's Employment Coordinator, Carley Williams. Carley has been working very hard with many students to obtain new job positions in exciting places where they will gain valuable work experience. Some of the jobs include BJ's, Stenhouse Publishing and Senator King's Office. Keep up the good work, STRIVE U students!

There's still time to apply for next year's incoming class!! The deadline for applying for admission for June 2018 is February 1, 2018. STRIVE U is a comprehensive two-year residential, post-secondary educational opportunity. To learn more about the program, contact Bill Hughes, STRIVE U Admissions Coordinator at bhughes@pslservices.org.

TOPS Program

This month in TOPS, the students have worked on the importance of self-care and began to try out different modes. Students have tried different forms of exercise including swimming, circuit workouts, yoga, Zumba and walking. Along with exercise, the group has tried many forms of meditation and other relaxing strategies like art and baking.

Other helpful areas that TOPS focuses on include discussion around sleep and eating habits, preparedness, and time management skills. Each Friday, the TOPS Newsletter is sent out to students, families and school teachers. The newsletter is primarily used to share the schedule for the next week which is intended to help

students come to program aware of the plan for the day and allows them to be fully prepared. Our students are encouraged to try many forms of self-care techniques in order to find what fits them best and what they will implement in their lives outside of TOPS.

TOPS (Transition Outcomes Program for Students) is a one-of-its-kind transitional program for high school students in their 13th and 14th year of school. Partnering with school districts in York, Cumberland and Androscoggin Counties, TOPS is a leader in transition preparation for students as they work toward independence. Placement is made through the IEP process.

For more information, please contact Betsy Morrison at bmorrison@pslstrive.org or 207-774-6278.



TOPS student Cam, working on his baking skills by making spritz cookies

STRIVE Night

We've had a whirlwind of a few months at STRIVE Night, with a festive Thanksgiving theme night in November, to our big holiday party AND New Year's celebration! We had a surprise visit again this year from Santa Claus, and had a big meal catered by Anthony's Italian Kitchen— THANK YOU Anthony's for all of your generosity to STRIVE!

This month, we'll be looking forward to a surprise theme night, put on for us by local organization Take Action Portland! We'll announce that on our facebook page in the coming few days, so keep your eyes peeled for that! You can find us on facebook at www.facebook.com/STRIVEnation. We post all of our theme night announcements there!

Friday Nights at STRIVE, fondly referred to as "STRIVE Night," is a relaxed but fun evening of socialization for 15-24 year olds. New members welcome, and your first night is free! STRIVE Night is every Friday from 6-9pm. For more info, contact Olivia at ofraioli@pslstrive.org.



Tweens

Tweens has had a very fun month of December. We loved making ice cream, having Magda here to make gingerbread houses, and having Zak from the South Portland PD K9 unit show us what he can do! We are looking forward to another fun month making friends, sharing laughs, and of course dancing to Uptown Funk!

Tweens is a safe and fun environment to build new skills and friendships for 11-14 year olds with developmental disabilities. For more information, contact Alex at abroyles@pslstrive.org.

January
Tweens

Jan. 5 - New Years Resolution
Dance

Jan. 12 - Magda

Jan. 19 - Chef Tweens Trail Mix

Jan. 26 - Movie day

For more information contact Alex at
abroyles@pslstrive.org or 207-774-6278



Next STEP

In December, Next STEP started going back to the South Portland Community Center to swim after the pool had been closed for several months. The Next STEPers are learning different ways to swim, such as the butterfly, freestyle, breast stroke, and back stroke. We are getting better with each week. We are enjoying learning new swimming techniques and getting some good

exercise in at the same time!

Also, in Next STEP we are continuing with our cooking groups. In Next STEP we practice our cooking skills twice a week, one time for a snack lab and one to prepare a group lunch. We have been cooking all kinds of different styles of recipes including Mexican and Asian fare. We are having fun finding healthy recipes that they can cook while in Next STEP and then take the recipe home and cook it there, too!

Next STEP is a great option offering quality curriculum for those who are on a waiting list for other services, in combination with other services or for those who may not qualify for other services. Please contact Betsy Morrison at bmorrison@pslservices.org or 207-774-6278 if you would like more information regarding Next STEP or would like to schedule a tour. Part-time and full-time options are available.



After School

After School has been having lots of fun the past few months—really coming together as a solid group of friends who really understand and care for one another. Having just four participants helps to create closer bonds and get to know each other a bit more personally! Lately, we've been working on

trying some new things— we played floor hockey for the first time, as well as tried going to the Cape Elizabeth Public Library as a new place in town to see.

STRIVE's After School Program runs Monday through Friday from 2pm-5pm during each student's respective school district schedule. For more information on After School, contact Olivia at ofraioli@pslstrive.org.



Wednesday Night Educational Series

Camp STRIVE

We had a great time in the Wednesday Night Educational Series learning about Career Exploration. Our speakers were all amazing and we definitely all learned a thing or two about resume building and looking for jobs!

Now we are looking forward to exploring different stress relief strategies after a long holiday season. Our January series will be dedicated to all the different ways we can learn to cope with stress! We hope you'll join us.



Camp STRIVE has been having a great two months, with our Thanksgiving Camp day in November, and Winter Camp just the other week! We explored a ton of fun places, like Eartha, the giant rotating globe in Yarmouth, and the USM Planetarium! Our next round of Camp will be during the February school vacation. For any Camp inquiries, contact Olivia at ofraioli@pslstrive.org.



Bayside

This month was a busy month! We continued working hard on our goals and traveled to new places in the community, including the Winter Wonderland exhibit at the Maine Mall. Our learning group was dedicated to learning about tolerance and acceptance. We talked about differences and the importance of accepting everyone for who they are. We decided that differences make the world a more exciting place to live. We then learned about different holidays that are celebrated in winter around the world. Each student chose a different country and presented a little bit about that country's holiday traditions to the group. Graeme taught us that a French Canadian tradition is to have a big feast that starts at midnight on Christmas Eve and party all night long! We had a lot of fun learning about different cultures. We also planned a Christmas party, cooked a feast for the party and did a Secret Santa gift exchange.

It was really fun to think about what our peers might like as presents! To top it all off we made gifts for our family and friends.

For info on STRIVE Bayside, contact Caroline at ccole@pslstrive.org.



STRIVE U Application Season!

Applications for the STRIVE U class of 2018-20 are now being accepted through February 1, 2018. If you are interested in learning more about the program, would like a tour, or request an application please contact Bill Hughes at 774-6278 or email at bhughes@pslstrive.org.

STRIVE U is inclusive, comprehensive, groundbreaking and fun! This two year program is aimed at teaching its students necessary skills to live independently in the community. The application process is similar to a college application with written materials, interviews, and an overnight experience. STRIVE U is looking for motivated individuals between the ages of 18-25 whose goals are to learn the necessary skills to live, work and participate in their community.



AKTION CLUB NEWS:

Aktion Club was proud to help sponsor a family for the holidays this December.! We had a blast shopping all around to help a family meet their needs.

Now we are looking forward to helping with a winter clothing drive this month. Be sure to drop off any winter gear you don't need here at STRIVE!

Member Spotlight

Meet Erik!

Erik has been coming to STRIVE for NINE years, starting when he was just a tween! Erik now comes to our Friday Night socials and is a member of our PSL Day Program. Erik says his favorite part of coming to STRIVE is seeing his friends, playing pool and basketball, and visiting with some of his favorite staff members. We love having Erik here— say hello next time you see him around!



January Birthdays at STRIVE!

Happy Birthday To:

Kayla Haggett
Alexander Kane
Cole Shiers
Emily Murray
Birttany Bean
Owen Wolterbeek
Jordan Young
Sumner Ellis
Nicholas Cataldo
Nathaniel Rines

Peter Tarling
Marshall Noyes
Leeann Brionez
Jacob Benvie
Kelly Mberaba
Patrick Kellett
Lindsay Roberge
Thomas Harnott
Samantha Mueller
Billy Petroska
Lindsay Foster

Destiny Lemire
Ryan O'Donovan
Cera Ann Lane



Staff Spotlight

Meet Ryan! Ryan has been working at PSL/STRIVE for three years. He oversees our PSL Day Program and does Quality Assurance for our agency. Ryan previously worked in our Career Planning program, where he helped participants work on gaining employment in the community.

Ryan says his favorite part of working PSL/STRIVE is getting to work with our amazing participants and watching them grow. Ryan is STRIVE's resident 5K champion— two years running!

Thank you for all you do, Ryan!



Thank you to our Donors

- Timothy Prisby
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- David Sherman, Jr. & Martha Buchenal
- Rachel Morin in Honor of Emma Campbell
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SAVE THE DATE!

**STRIVE Rocks
2018
March 24th-25th**



We hope you'll join us!

Be sure to check our
facebook page and
website,
www.striverocks.org,
for updates!

STRIVE Staff Contacts

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