

Annual Report to the Pathfinder Membership

For the year ending March 31, 2003:

Pathfinders for Autism (Pathfinders, Inc.) was incorporated on February 15, 2000. In our third year of existence, we realized a dream that many of us had shared for a number of years: the creation of an Autism Resource Center for Maryland.

A NEW SERVICE. With the invaluable help of the employee benefits firm, Work & Family Benefits, Inc., we developed a searchable database that allows internet users to explore for medical and dental care, therapeutic opportunities, educational choices, recreational services, and more. We asked for input on the structure of the database from panels of parents and professionals from all across the state of Maryland. We hired a person to do research into the various resources available in the state. And on March 1, we hired our first employee, Linda Pearl, as the Coordinator of the Autism Resource Center. Pathfinders has been completely volunteer driven until this point, and we felt it important that our first employee be one who directly served the autism population in Maryland. And we opened an office at Trinity Episcopal Church in Towson to house the Resource Center. The Pathfinders Autism Resource Center is a privately funded operation which has no connections to any other institution, and can therefore be completely objective in its presentation of resource offerings. We have endeavored to change what has often been a frustrating, difficult process for families of discovering what resources were actually available into a readily accessible menu of choices.

In its first three months of existence, the Resource Center has had more than 10,000 visitors to its website at www.pathfindersforautism.org, with the database accessed over 700 times. In addition, Linda Pearl has directly aided nearly 100 families that have called for assistance.

CONTINUED SUPPORT. Pathfinders also continued its support for two programs at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. We continued to fund the sibling infant study on the early detection of autism conducted by Dr. Rebecca Landa. This research study, for which Pathfinders had supplied more than \$150,000 in

FUNDING. In 2003 Pathfinders received its first foundation support in the form of a multi-year grant from the Bearman Foundation which directly supported the creation of the Resource Center. We continued to receive generous support from individual contributors and again had a very successful golf fundraising event.

IN TOTAL. Fiscal 2003, ending in March, was a truly exciting year: an important new service, our first paid employee, continued support for ongoing programs and important fundraising success. With the successful launch of the Pathfinders Autism Resource Center, we are now actively planning for an expansion of service offerings in order to further our basic mission--

“To find a path for our children.”

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Pathfinders, Inc.,

Brian R. Mund
President
August, 2003