



2015 YEAR-END FY15 ACCOMPLISHMENTS A WESOME 15 YEARS OF AWESOME

FY 2015 OCTOBER 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015

Pathfinders for Autism

celebrated our 15th Anniversary this year in 2015. Since PFA's start in 2000, the organization has grown from a group of volunteers to a staff of seven that serves the entire state of Maryland. During this time the prevalence of autism continued to rise, from one in 250 U.S. children in 2000 to the current rate of one in 68. This increase has continued to fuel the demand for PFA's programs and services throughout the years.



"I just wanted to thank you so very much for allowing my son and I to attend your event at the Baltimore National Aquarium. I haven't seen my son smile and that happy in a very long time. He took probably over 200 pictures! And he looks at them each day since. He told me that the aquarium is now his Happy Place! I hope you realize how much of a difference you made in our life. From the heart, we thank you!"

Safety Program

The PFA Safety Program continues to grow. We launched two new components this year – Community Safety events and the Be Safe program. Community Safety events offer the opportunity for local first responders to interact with individuals with autism and their families in an effort to build understanding. The Be Safe program trains individuals with autism how to safely interact with first responders using the Be Safe curriculum developed by self-advocates and a special educator.

Members of the PFA First Responders Training Team – Shelly Allred, Drew Myers and Glenn Myers



PFA interns and their support staff enjoy a morning of team building at Earth Treks Climbing Gym, Timonium.

Oral Health Initiative

PFA launched the Friendly First Visits project in an effort to address the disparity in oral health care for individuals with autism. Friendly First Visits provides the opportunity for individuals with autism to explore a dentist office without the anxiety of receiving any direct medical services. Instead, they have the opportunity to interact with dental care providers and see them wearing protective gear such as aprons, gloves and face masks; become familiar with the sensory environment of a dental office such as lights, sounds, and smells; see and touch the equipment that is used during a visit such as dental instruments, water bowls, and lead vests.



Vocational Training

The PFA office continued to serve as a job training site for interns from Forbush High School and Itineris Baltimore. Interns learn all aspects of office operations and assist with special projects like assembling Safety Kits and preparing materials for conferences and workshops.

What Our Families Say

"Thank you for all of this **wonderful information!** Thank you for all of your time and assistance today, it was so wonderful speaking to you. You were such a huge help and you gave me more information in our 20-minute conversation than anyone has given me over the past year!" – *Heather B.*

"The passion and dedication the instructors display when teaching is truly refreshing. From a law enforcement perspective, I believe the most beneficial part of the training is how the instructors interact with the students and introduce a person with autism into the lesson plan. I would **highly recommend this training** and will continue to work with the Pathfinders for Autism for all our CIT & recruit related training." – *Sgt. Michael Cox, Anne Arundel County Police*



"My oldest loved the [Harford County] safety event before the game! His favorite was sitting in the fire truck and **he wore his fire hat all night long!**" – *Holly M.*

"I can't say enough good things about Pathfinders and the events they organize for those with Autism and their families. From **educational outreach to entertaining outings**, they are a godsend. Pathfinders is the first organization I mention to local parents of newly-diagnosed children on the spectrum." – *Theodore C.*

"This experience was amazing for my son. The staff was patient and interacted well with my son. The **environment was kid-friendly and lowered his anxiety**. Thanks to Dr. Roth and his staff for this service."

18,395 individuals

(across all 23 counties and Baltimore City) were directly reached through Pathfinders for Autism's resource center, training programs, recreational opportunities, safety initiatives and awareness events.

9,972

Individuals reached through resource fairs and awareness events



3,875

Individuals participated in recreational activities



3,000

Safety Kits distributed



2,017

Parents and professionals trained



1,595

Resource Center clients served



656

First responders trained



249

Be Safe participants



31

Water safety scholarships at the Michael Phelps Swim School

