

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE



THE BEACON

issue 4 | 2019



Connor Climbs

Alumni student takes on
Tulsa's climbing gym. *page 5*

Camp Promise

Our 4th annual summer
camp. *page 10*

ALSO INCLUDED:

Student Spotlight *page 6*

Donor Story *page 9*



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CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 7 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 12 **Mini Laps**
- 14 **LLH CLOSED**
- 18 Fall Break **LLH CLOSED**
- 22 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 23 Community Luncheon at 11:45am
- 31 Shining Light Conference

NOVEMBER

- 1 Shining Light Conference
- 13 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 20 Community Luncheon at 11:45am
- 25-29 Thanksgiving Break **NO SCHOOL**

DECEMBER

- 2 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 5 Family Christmas Party 6pm **NO SCHOOL**
- 12-31 Christmas Break **NO SCHOOL**

JANUARY

- 1-6 Christmas Break **NO SCHOOL**
- 8 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 16 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 20 Martin Luther King Day **LLH CLOSED**
- 22 Community Luncheon at 11:45am
- 28 Volunteer Training at 12pm



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Founder

Marcia Mitchell

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to this edition of the Beacon! I look forward to sharing some of the highlights from the last several months with all of you that have supported us with your love, time and financial gifts.

At dinner the other night, my husband Jerry referenced Philippians 4:8 in regards to the Little Light House, and it made me think of not only our incredible students, but also of you, our incredible supporters.

Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brothers, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **admirable**—if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy**—think on these things.”

“**Whatever is true**” The truth is that God highly values and loves these children with special needs (I Cor. 12:22-26).

“**Whatever is honorable**” It is an honor to help our students thrive and an honor to see our Staff, volunteers and community donors all playing such a significant role in this wonderful venture.

“**Whatever is right**” It is right in God’s eyes to invest in these children. He has a **good plan** for them, and for you and me, a plan filled with love, growth and more of Him!

“**Whatever is pure**” These precious children we serve are **pure**. They come with various needs, but their hearts and spirits are **pure**. There is no guile. They know how to love, and they are certainly loved in return.

“**Whatever is lovely**” The Little Light House staff is **lovely**! The **love** is seen so easily on their faces as they help the students in their tasks, and it is beautiful to see their love returned by the children!

“**Whatever is admirable**” You, our contributors, are **admirable**. We so appreciate **YOU**! Whether you are a volunteer or a donor, your gift of time and money is going to an **admirable**, worthy cause, and we strive to always value the gifts you lavish on us.

“**If anything is excellent or praiseworthy**” We strive for **excellence** in our services and the way we continually pursue best practices in all of our departments. Each year we train hundreds of college and university students, travel around the world to provide hand-on training to people working with individuals with special needs, welcome thousands of volunteers to our Tulsa campus, and host international delegates from across the globe all while shifting paradigms toward the inclusion of those with special needs and maintaining organizational transparency and peak financial ratings on Guidestar and Charity Navigator! Now that is **praiseworthy**!

As you read these stories we hope you know what a huge role you play in what is **true, honorable, right, lovely, admirable, excellence, and praiseworthy** at LLH. These stories happen because of you and we are so excited to share them with **you**!

Thank you,

Little Light House Executive Director



MEET LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE STUDENT LONDON



This year at Little Light House, London came out of her shell! Currently, London is learning the letters in her name, matching colors, and working on improving her balance. She is the sweetest friend and always makes sure her classmates are included and engaged. Thank you to everyone who gives London and the other Little Light House students the opportunity to reach milestones and unlock their unlimited potential.

To learn how you can make a difference in the lives of children with special needs visit www.littlelighthouse.org

CONNOR CLIMBS

BY LLH STAFF



At the beginning of July, Little Light House Occupational Therapist, Jodi Howe and Little Light House alumni student, Connor spent an afternoon climbing at Climb Tulsa. Little Light House has been partnering with Climb Tulsa to pilot a program that explores new ways to make climbing more accessible and for individuals with special needs and physical differences.

Climbing is an ideal form of physical therapy for children and adults with special needs, with many neurodevelopmental benefits as well. For Connor, climbing helps strengthen his muscles and improve his overall coordination and dexterity. He did an amazing job coordinating his hands and feet to reach the rocks and move his way up the wall. Plus, it is a great way to burn off some energy and challenge himself while having fun with his dad and Mrs. Jodi.

Little Light House loves seeing our students, both current and alumni, reach new heights. We also love partnering with local organization to make Tulsa more accessible for people with different abilities.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Sawyer Pittsley.

By Amber Pittsley, Sawyer's Mom

Sawyer's journey to Little Light House began on November 1, 2013, the day he was born. Our sweet, stubborn boy was a week late, and due to fears related to ingestion of meconium I was induced. After 32 hours of labor the doctors said they had to take Sawyer out via Cesarean Section. Into the world he came, and as far as my husband and I knew, he was perfectly healthy.

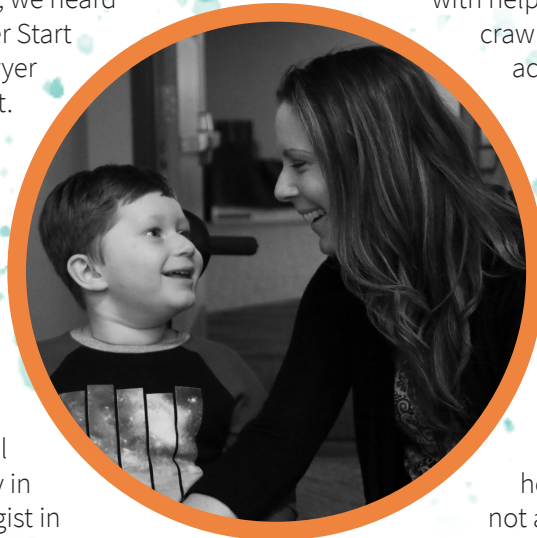
Around 6 months after Sawyer's birth, we began to notice that he was not meeting normal developmental milestones. We enrolled him in Sooner Start where he began Physical, Occupational and Speech therapy at home. His progress was slow, and we had no explanation as to why this was. Eventually, we heard about Little Light House from our Sooner Start therapists and at the age of 2 years old Sawyer was added to the waiting list.

In the meantime, we were still searching for a diagnosis and trying to figure out what was causing him to be so far behind developmentally. At 2 years old Sawyer wasn't crawling. He wasn't pulling himself up, talking or doing most of the things children at his age typically do. We were referred to numerous specialists throughout Oklahoma, as well as Kansas, Arkansas and Texas. Finally in 2014 an MRI was ordered by a neurologist in Oklahoma which showed Sawyer had a hypoplastic cerebellum on the right hemisphere of his brain. This means that his cerebellum is slightly smaller on the right side compared to his left. He was also born without a posterior pituitary gland. Even though this did not give us an overarching diagnosis, it was enough to help us begin to treat each condition as individually needed.

In August of 2017, we got the call that Sawyer's name had finally reached the top of the waiting list at Little

Light House, and he was invited to start school that October. Sawyer is now in his third, and final, year. We are so grateful that he had the experience he did attending this amazing school. Since he began in 2017, we have seen so much growth and progress in his development. He has developed socially, interacting with others more. He made his first friend which is most likely the highlight of his time at Little Light House for his dad and I. As most parents of kids with special needs know, having a kid that is considered "different" can be very isolating. Learning Sawyer had a friend meant the world to us. He has also progressed physically and is now able to stand with support, take steps with help, sit independently, "army crawl" and feed himself. He achieved milestones that he may never have achieved without attending Little Light House.

To those of you who volunteer, donate or support this wonderful organization in any way, we can't thank you enough. To the teachers, therapists and all the staff I hope you realize that most, if not all, of these kids would never achieve some of the things they do this soon without the interventions that Little Light House provides. You are changing lives. Period. The head start that they receive from attending Little Light House is invaluable. As we all know, these kids are starting out life with the deck stacked against them. They deserve any help and support they can get, and the Little Light House gives them that leg up they need. THANK YOU!





why we give through

OPPORTUNITY

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

DANIEL BROOKSHIRE Alumni Spotlight

JOURNEY TO LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE

Alumni student, Daniel was born in June of 1996 to the Brookshire family and came into the world a perfectly healthy baby. However, when Daniel was two and a half years old his family caught a horrible case of E. coli.

“Even after the E. coli passed I continued to have headaches.” Daniel shared, “The doctors just thought I was having continued symptoms from the bacteria, but later discovered I had a brain tumor that smashed the connection between my brain and eyes.” Daniel received two surgeries to remove the tumor, but ultimately, was left blind.

When Daniel was 4 years old he began his journey at the Little Light House. He attended LLH for 2 years, learning braille and working hard on hand strengthening exercises and sensitivity training for his fingers. Daniel stated, “I definitely feel like Little Light House helped equip me for the life experiences I’ve had so far. I didn’t realize it then, but the impact of being around so many other kids with different abilities helps me do what I do now. It could have been the start of what I do now.”

TO SERVE THE LEAST OF THESE

Today, Daniel works as a professional para in the school system. He assists specific students as they go throughout their day, accompanying them to class and working alongside classroom teachers to adapt the lesson for the specific student he accompanies. Being a para is something that Daniel has had a vision for since high school, a vision that came about while he was volunteering with students with multiple disabilities. “While I was doing that,” Daniel says, “the Lord gave me

a verse: Matthew 25:40. ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these my children, you did it for me.’ A lot of people look down on people with special needs. A lot, not everyone. But a lot would call them the least. I believe with God giving me that verse, he was giving me my mission and my purpose to be a para to those with special needs.”

MEETING KIAN

Little did Daniel know at the time that vision would lead him to work with another Little Light House student with a very similar story. “Last summer, Lynda Crouch, an Assistive Technology Practitioner at LLH and dear friend, said that she had a young boy she wanted me to meet named Kian.” Kian also suffered from a brain tumor that left him blind. Lynda met Daniel at Kian’s home and introduced the two.

“I began going over every Friday morning to work with him on braille and finger strengthening.” Daniel said, “His mom would always make me a cup of hot tea. She was so grateful, and I became really close with his family.” When it came time to decide where Kian was going to go to school after Little Light House, his family asked Daniel for his opinion. “It was really cool that they involved me and my mom in that process. To make things even cooler, once they got Kian’s individualized plan written it was noted that he would need a para. I talked to his family about the possibility of me pursuing this. They thought it was a great idea.”

This fall Daniel was approved to be Kian’s para, bringing his journey with Little Light House full circle and allowing him to continue the mission he received from God to serve “the least of these”.



The Opportunity Scholarship Fund is a scholarship granting organization that provides scholarships for students to attend an accredited private school in Oklahoma. Although, we do not charge tuition, the original bill was modified allowing the OSF to support costs associated with educational expenses, which makes the LLH eligible! Lisa Sifuentes gives to Little Light House through OSF and here is why:

Why do I give through OSF?

By designating the LLH as beneficiary of my OSF contribution, I receive a tax credit on my Oklahoma tax return. A tax credit is better than a charitable deduction. This is the most financially advantageous method of contributing, and makes my contribution twice as beneficial - benefiting the LLH and our annual tax return.

Why do I give to the LLH?

Andrew Saas, my nephew, was born with severe heart defects, one kidney and a 60% hearing loss, all which changed the lives of my family forever. Heart surgeries, feeding tubes, a hearing aid and countless prayers could not sustain this little guy’s earthly life. My fund raising for the LLH is my memorial to my dear nephew. In addition, I admire the LLH multi-faceted ministry, and their private funding without burdensome government intervention. My heart is convinced of the authenticity of this organization.

For more information on how you can make a contribution to Little Light House through OSF contact Molly Smith at msmith@littlighthouse.org or visit www.littlighthouse.org.



This past summer the Little Light House Therapy team hosted our 4th annual summer camp, Camp Promise. The gym was transformed into a beautiful wonderland of rainbow colors and ocean waters to reflect the story of Noah's Ark. The Therapy team spent the week teaching our students all about Noah and working hard on different therapy skills. Here are some of the highlights!



Occupational Therapy: The kids had a blast making rainbow rice sensory bottles. This is a great activity to work on following instructions and sequencing. It also works on fine motor and visual motor skills. The students practiced using both hands together-one to hold the bottle and one to pour in the rice. They practiced isolating their index fingers in order to poke the "clouds." They used their scissor skills to snip rainbow straws and then of course had so much fun shaking up the bottles. It's also great practice for vision to have them look for and count all the rainbows in their bottle.



Physical Therapy: At Camp Anchor, our gross motor activity got all of our students moving like different animals! We used a cube and attached different animal actions to each side and then let our students take turns rolling the dice. It was fun to watch everyone hop like frogs, stand like flamingos and swim like fish.



Speech Therapy: A camp favorite that worked with speech therapy was the snack! Our campers got to "eat the rainbow", matching a food to its designated color. Red = strawberry slices, orange = mandarin orange slices, yellow = pineapple slices, green = green bell pepper slices, blue = blueberries, purple = raisins, clouds = whipped cream and marshmallows. They talked all about colors and foods and practiced their fine motor skills by scooping the fruits and veggies and placing them on their rainbow place mat.



Assistive Technology: Camp Promise was punctuated with squeals of laughter as the kids reenacted the Noah story. Our students activated switches to turn on the roaring winds (switch adapted fan), the crashing waves (a switch with a water pick) and ocean bubbles (an adapted bubble blower) while rocking on Noah's ark with their animal friends. We love giving every child the chance to participate in fun activities. Assistive technology makes this possible!

HONORARIUMS

Will Blankenship
Christ Church Episcopal
Keith Boyd
Carol Holt
Matthew Buller
Andrew Buller
Brooklyn Chandler
Dallas and Brittany Chandler
Geoffrey Decker
The Stephen, Mary, Mitchell, Emily Ross Family Charitable Fund
Liam Epperson
Charles Baker
Corbin Fugate
Anonymous
Layton Haley
Josh, Michelle, Gunner and Colton Jacobs
Abigail Horne
Cathe Kehe
Staff Of Little Light House
Mark and Margaret Shelton
Luke Knapp
Debbie and Phil Pinnell
Jeremy and Laura Knapp
Nick Lucito
Mike and Gayle Castaldi

Charlotte and Denny Luerssen
Accent Realtors
Roman Marshall
Paula Torrence
Cooper Miils
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Marcia Mitchell
Keith and Jean Winfrey
Michelle Montoya
Anonymous
Lindsay Nozak
Keith and Jean Winfrey
Andrea Nunn
Monte & Bob Prater
Mark and Susan Amstutz
Jesse Paul
Angie Dick
Lane Peterson
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Charlotte Robson
Grayson Daniels
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Diane Brown

Dianna Kassouf
Patricia Calderon
Ophelia Senters
Barbara Vice
Belinda and Brad Karp
David and Diane Gorcyca
Diane Brown
Diane Wells
Erna Bradbury
Patricia Calderon
Sara Framel
Solomon Siegel
Pam Bell
Morgan Smejkal
Crissy Causey
Dru Buckley and Topher Swain
Anonymous
Emma Tims
Linda Rucker
Brant and Melissa Gamble
Jean Winfrey
Roy and Dana Kerns
James and Sharon Jones
Mike and Janet Burnside
Janis Sevenoaks
Jocelyn and Berkley Nozak

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Roy and Dana Kerns
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Diana Barnes
Danny and Isaac Bartlett
Bonni Bunting
Jonathan and Christa Bartlett
Bart Betow
Kathleen McKeown
Mary Lou Black
Carolyn Welch
Ruth Helen Blazer
Brenda & Curtis Turner
Brian and Debbie Goss
Carl and Sue Richards
Conner Mahan
David and Suzan Wadley
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Jan Edwards
John Hamill
Lisbeth Noble
Lori McMillan
Sharon King Davis
Alice Bollinger
Gary and Sandra Tatum
Ginny Brewington
Ruth Lovin
PeeWee Brookshire
Kamela Brookshire
Steve Bunn
Barb and David Mullins
Reca and Gordon Trammel

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Janis Sevenoaks
Beth Camille
William Camille
Cheyenne Collins
Kenneth and Debbie Collins
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Lynda Connor
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Travers and Laurie Mahan
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Lisa Arthur
Doris Feken
Anonymous
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Miltech Lab Services Inc
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Ashley Coffman
Michael Garrison
Bridget Hynes
Elizabeth Milan

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Judy Waters
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Jerry and Anne McCoy
Dr. and Mrs. Jerry Hopkins
Stephen Hopkins
Papa Jim
Ruthie Bilderback
Marilyn Jones
Anonymous
Ben Latham
Marlene Waychoff
Travers and Laurie Mahan
Elizabeth, Jerry and James Ledbetter
Jeff and Jerrie Barham
Reed James Ledbetter
Cynthia Monaghan
Shelly Ledbetter
Louise Leslie
Beverly Strong
Vikki Martinus
Sasha Martinus
Jerry McCoy Sr
Jerry and Anne McCoy
Lois McVay
Anonymous

MEMORIALS CONTINUED...

Donald Merritt

Jerry and Jan Hauser
Karen Teague

Zachary Monaghan

Jon and Judy Eshelman
Kelly Monaghan

Kase Evan Omstead

Pamela Milleson

Nancy Poole

Anonymous

Annabelle Posenuk

Rob and Cathryn Whitlatch

Gene Reeves

Dick and Linda Boyd

Makayla Roller

Ted and Lori Brubaker

Nathan Russell

Jennifer Russell

Nicole Ann Rust

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Caden Saunders

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Marilyn Fail Stark

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Cullen Wesley Taylor

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Mark Tomer

Stuart and Brenda Honeybone

Suzanne Wiese

Suzanne Y Wiese Irrevocable

Trust

Sam Wood

Donna Wood

Joan and Karl Zeisler

Virgie Lou Boyd

A CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



"TRULY I
TELL YOU,
WHATEVER
YOU DID
FOR THE
LEAST OF
THESE MY
CHILDREN,
YOU DID IT
FOR ME"

Non-discriminatory Policy

The Little Light House, Inc is a non-profit Christian Developmental Center for children with disabilities, age birth to six years of age. The Little Light House does not discriminate on the basis of religion, sex, color, race, national or ethnic origin, or medical diagnosis (unless the diagnosis affects the child's ability to attend school on a regular basis) in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school administered programs. Some behavioral conditions may be evaluated on individual basis. The Little Light House assures that all children's records will be maintained as confidential.