



“Welcome”

“PASSAGES” IS A PUBLICATION OF
PIKE AUTISM SUPPORT SERVICES

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OUR MISSION

PIKE AUTISM SUPPORT SERVICES (PASS) IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT WITH A MISSION TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND RELATED INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IDD) WITH SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

OUR VISION

WE ENVISION A DAY WHEN INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND IDD ENJOY FULFILLING AND INDEPENDENT LIVES, EMBRACING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL INCLUSION, PERSONAL GROWTH, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.

**WHAT MAKES
YOU DIFFERENT
IS WHAT MAKES YOU
BEAUTIFUL**



Dear PASS Families & Friends,

Here we are approaching our third decade (yes.. almost 30 years) of supporting the Autism and IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) Community of Pike County. I want to acknowledge how far we have come and where we are heading.

We first began with a few Moms looking for support and information. We gave ourselves a name and a home base and began the journey of learning how to advocate, and educate ourselves on current best practices, wraparound services, waivers, ESY, and transition, from Early Intervention to Adult Services. We have made every effort to share what we have learned along the way with families in and outside our county while continuing to fight the good fight for our own loved ones on the autism journey.

We are proud of the work we have done over the years beginning with support groups and trainings and educating our community with Autism Awareness & Acceptance Campaigns. We have added community events, like our dances and holiday parties. Scholarships for activities and iPads. Programs like board game groups, for middle school students, teens, and adults. We are introducing our Lego Group for the little ones. Other programs include art classes and coming up is our first Cooking Class and the Birthday Club. Our Bowling Group meets weekly and Spring registration has begun for our Challenger Baseball Teams. Some of you may have participated in our Bike Camp which we hosted for two consecutive summers.

As we continue to grow as an organization, so do our loved ones. Some are now in their 30's with aging parents in their 60's. We need to plan for their future. Members of the Autism & D/IDD community have few residential options. They may continue to live in the family home with aging caregivers, reside in a waiver-funded group home, or take advantage of the Life-Sharing Program.

While these options meet the needs of some, they do not address the greater need for socialization. The lack of social opportunities and inclusion can lead to isolation. PASS's vision is to offer the opportunity for our loved ones to be as independent as possible by providing a community where people of all abilities may lead an active life in a safe, inclusive community where friendships and social engagement will replace isolation and loneliness. Independence Village is that community.



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Passages

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Independence Village will be an Intentional community. It will be a mix of those with and without disabilities. PASS is dedicated to making that happen. We have been working with a consultant who has created communities like this across the country. We know that with his guidance and the continued support of our community, we can and will make this happen.

The first step is securing land for this project. Our goal is to purchase land (unless an amazing benefactor wants to donate it) within the next few months and begin with the plans to build our Enrichment Center, which will be a community center for our expanding programs for inclusive and skill-building opportunities. Once established we will begin construction of our residences. Job opportunities will eventually follow. If you know of any land that would fit our needs or would like to see our land acquisition requirements, please reach out to me at jmpassaro@passnepa.org

As you can imagine, this is a huge undertaking and we need the help of our community in purchasing the land and moving the dream one step closer. We are looking for some generous donors to get this project moving with pledges of \$10,000 or more. While we know this is not something everyone can do, every gift of any size is incredibly important and deeply appreciated.

Thank you in advance for sharing our plans and needs with your friends and family and for considering INDEPENDENCE VILLAGE in your giving plans. You can make donations on our website at <https://www.passnepa.org/ways-to-help/>

Programs & Events

Social Skills Groups

TTRPG, is the acronym for Tabletop Role Playing Through Gaming, which is delivered by a trained facilitator to work on building social skills. PASS has 3 groups all currently running in their second 6-week series. There is a VIRTUAL Gaming Group that meets on Wednesday evenings, and two Board Game Groups. The Elementary Age group meets on Monday afternoons and the adult Board Game Group Meets on Friday evenings. We just began our Lego Group for the little ones.

Adult Services

We are wrapping up an 8-week Art Class on famous artists with Joe Ryan which meets on Mondays at 5. We will host an Art Show so students can present their amazing work! It is scheduled for Monday, March 4th. Our next series is a Cooking Class which will begin on Monday, March 18th at 5:30 pm at St. Patrick's Hall in Milford.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends, family and co-workers.

Warmest Regards,

Jeannemarie Passaro
Executive Director