

# PATHWAYS

Spring 2011

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## AbilityPath.org Launches National Campaign to Disable Bullying

Parents, teachers, policy makers and celebrities have joined AbilityPath.org, Community Gatepath's online resource hub and special needs community, to Disable Bullying. The campaign's launch, which is receiving national media coverage, coincides with the release of AbilityPath.org's report, *Walk a Mile in Their Shoes*, unveiling that kids with special needs are two to three times more likely to be bullied in school than their peers without disabilities. Lauren Potter, who portrays Becky Jackson on *Glee*, and her mother, Robin Sinkhorn, joined the campaign as its celebrity spokespersons recording an online public service announcement to bring attention to this issue.

The responses from the campaign's launch are tremendous. People from around the country are joining AbilityPath.org and its Facebook page, sharing their personal stories and connecting with one another for support. Elizabeth, a parent from Texas, sums up the impact the campaign is having on families, "For the first time, I felt like our family was not alone. I am using the Individual Educational Plan material from the AbilityPath report for my meeting tomorrow with the school district," notes Elizabeth. Since going public with her son's story, two more families in her school district have also come forward. Connecting families to valuable resources, and more importantly to each other, was the inspiration behind AbilityPath.org.



*Lauren Potter with her mom, Robin Sinkhorn.*

Sheryl Young and Lauren Potter appeared on ABC News Now, Entertainment Tonight, Good Morning America, CNN and KTLA Morning News to discuss details of the campaign. Sheryl and Lauren were joined by Congresswoman Speier, Timothy and Anthony Shriver, and CA State Superintendent Tom Torlakson who all voiced their commitment to Disable Bullying. To read the full report, share Lauren's video, or view the coverage received, visit [www.AbilityPath.org](http://www.AbilityPath.org).

Bullying a child with special needs is horrific and all too common in schools across our country. Bullying is devastating for any child, but especially for a child with disabilities who might not understand he or she is being targeted; like the story of a mother who received a call from school alerting her that her son had been rushed to the hospital. Upon arrival, she was told her son was recovering from alcohol poisoning after a group of kids spiked juice with vodka and kept encouraging him to drink. Her son was unaware that his drink was making him sick as he trusted this group of kids who portrayed themselves as his friends. Our campaign brings this issue, and many other stories of abuse, to the national stage to ensure students with special needs are included in discussions to prevent bullying.

AbilityPath.org is free to join and provides access to content relevant to raising children and youth with special needs, including an online network of families, groups, forum discussions and blogs.

**To learn how you can support future special reports and other featured content on AbilityPath.org, please contact Gabrielle Karampelas at (650) 259-8532.**



[www.gatepath.com](http://www.gatepath.com)



## CEO Corner



We've quickly moved into the New Year and our adult participants have settled into their new Learning & Resource Campuses across the County and are reporting new achievements every day. Despite this progress, the state of our State leaves a dark cloud looming overhead. We have faced cuts and challenging times before, but this is the worst we've experienced. Fortunately, with the support of community leaders, business partners and individuals, we are able to weather each storm. But, it's the impact these trying times have directly on the lives of those we serve which has us concerned. Recently a participant approached me very concerned about her future; her words shook me to my core. She said, "Sheryl, these are our lives they are messing with. It may just be dollars and cents to someone else, but it is our lifeline." And she was right. She got me thinking about what our community would be like without Gatepath.

Without Gatepath, over 200 adults with developmental disabilities working in our community would likely be unemployed and relying on local and state benefits. Most of the children receiving early intervention services at Gatepath would find themselves on waitlists for vital therapies, some never receiving them before entering elementary school. Without Gatepath, 950 children would not receive developmental screenings, early intervention therapy or participate in preschool which will almost certainly increase school districts costs given the lapse in services. Unfortunately, human services costs don't disappear once cut, they merely shift to another line item or department, which doesn't solve any budget issues. We can save dollars in the Department of Developmental Services but millions, if not billions, will be absorbed by the Department of Education and other arms of government.

Fortunately, Gatepath IS here. Thanks to your loyal support, thousands of individuals, families and professionals will continue to receive Gatepath services. Your continued allegiance to our mission is greatly appreciated and needed, especially now when our participants are most vulnerable. We understand that change needs to happen. In fact, for five years we have been preparing our Agency for this challenge. It has forced us to change how we do business, and it will require us to remain agile and flexible to respond to a new age of services. But we are only one part of the puzzle for those we serve, and so our role as their advocates is heightened during these uncertain times.



Steve Williams

It is perfect timing that with this new set of challenges we have a new slate of officers for our Board of Directors who bring with them personal experiences as parents of those we serve as well as impressive professional credentials to guide us. Steve Williams is the 2011 board chair and partner at Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy. Steve joined the board in 2007 and quickly took an interest in ensuring new services were developed to meet the growing demand of children and youth with special needs. The Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy law firm has a long history of providing pro bono legal counsel to adults and seniors with disabilities, and advocating

for their safety and wellness. Joining Steve as the 2011 executive committee officers are Jeff Fallick, Bryan Neider, Alberta Aldinger and Brad Solso who will help keep Gatepath services current, strong, and in step with what our families and participants need.

I encourage you to visit [www.AbilityPath.org](http://www.AbilityPath.org) our newest initiative that allows us to share our knowledge and services nationally. The Disable Bullying campaign on AbilityPath demonstrates how we are staying relevant and continue to grow as an agency. We are a stronger organization because of your support, and together we will continue "Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities!"

Respectfully,

Sheryl Young

### Hillsborough Auxiliary to Community Gatepath 2011 Board of Directors

For over 60 years, the Hillsborough Auxiliary has been a vital partner to Community Gatepath. We are grateful for their dedication to "Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities." We are pleased to introduce their Board of Directors for 2011:

President - Elaine Cohen, Ed.D.

Vice President - Mary Chigos

Treasurer - Vicky King

Recording Secretary - Susan Bloom

Corresponding Secretary - Betsy Grotte



Pictured left to right: Susan Bloom, Mary Chigos, Elaine Cohen, Vicky King, Betsy Grotte.



## Electronic Arts - An Abundance of Outreach

It was a cool morning in early December when the McCarthy Center for Children & Families was transformed into a winter wonderland for our Early Intervention Holiday Party. Sponsored by Electronic Arts (EA) for the past 13 years, this annual event is a favorite of families and staff because it provides children with special needs an opportunity to enjoy time with family, friends and Santa in a special setting.

"To see the excitement in a child's eyes and to realize you were a part of making their holiday special is why we come back year after year, and why it's important to me," says Julie Wynn, Community Relations Manager at EA. Thanks to the generosity of EA employees, 150 gifts were purchased and wrapped for this special day, and their donations were matched dollar for dollar by EA Outreach, a program that encourages employees to be involved in their communities and supports the causes for which their employees advocate.

Babies, toddlers, siblings and parents eagerly waited in line for their special time with Santa — time they may not necessarily get at the local mall. "I play Santa for the party...I think everyone should try and see the world through Santa's view point at least once. It's a neat event that touches me...I get emotional just thinking about it," says Mike Sallander, Director of Online Revenue. After pictures and presents, families gather to share food, friendship and smiles—smiles that warm the halls of the McCarthy Center all year long.



*The EA Team delivers holiday cheer to hundreds of kids.*

Ken Barker, Chief Accounting Officer at EA, has been the executive sponsor of the event for the past eight years. Ken and his daughter Cindy look forward to the party each year but this past year was especially meaningful. Ken shared a special story with us. "After watching *The Miracle on 34th Street*, his daughter said, 'that is how I feel when I'm giving presents at the Community Gatepath holiday party.' As a parent, it was a wonderful feeling...seeing how our relationship with Gatepath has touched my family. I told Cindy to never forget that feeling; to take it with her for the rest of her life. Giving to our community is something we should always do - and it brings joy to many."

The annual holiday party is just one facet of Gatepath's partnership with EA. Their support is all encompassing - from hiring trainees in our Employment Services program and matching employee donations, to providing top-level executives for our Board of Directors - their dedication to our partnership is remarkable. Thank you EA for your abundant support.

**For information on how to get your company involved with Gatepath, contact Jeanne Berube at (650)259-0160 or [jberube@gatepath.com](mailto:jberube@gatepath.com).**

## Learning the Route to Independence

Wimm Bicua wanted a job. This determination inspired Wimm to learn English (he came to Gatepath only speaking Tagalog), and he soon landed a part-time landscaping position at Applied Biosystems. But, to succeed in the workplace he needed to be able to get to work each day. Through travel training, Wimm quickly learned how to take public transportation to get to his job each day. Travel training teaches adults with developmental disabilities how to use public transportation—Caltrain, Sam Trans and BART—to get between their home and workplace. As an added benefit, participants learn responsibility, timeliness, independence, social interaction, and problem solving skills.



*Wimm Bicua on the job at Electronic Arts.*

Wimm's determination continues to pay off — Wimm was hired to a full-time position at Electronic Arts in Redwood City, where he gets to work all on his own. Wimm worked hard to learn the life skills he needed to obtain employment and live a more independent life. He is an inspiring example of "Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities!"

## 2011 Event Sponsorships Now Available!

**Touch-a-Truck**  
June 4, 2011

**Hillsborough Auxiliary Special Event  
at Runnymede Sculpture Farm**  
August 14, 2011

**Golf Classic**  
August 29, 2011

**The Power of Possibilities Breakfast**  
October 20, 2011

Join us as a sponsor today!  
visit [www.gatepath.com/sponsorships](http://www.gatepath.com/sponsorships)





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Burlingame, CA 94010

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Hillsborough Auxiliary  
to Community Gatepath

## Inside & Out Sale at the Resale Shop

Saturday, April 16, 2011

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

1606 Rollins Road, Burlingame  
(650) 259-8523

### *Families Support Preschool Sandbox*

Learning Links Preschool is raising money to expand the sandbox area on the playground. And, thanks to our generous community of supporters, we've already raised \$3,325 of the \$10,000 needed to reach this goal!

With your help, we can break ground on the construction of this project this spring!

To see our progress and help us  
build a BIGGER sandbox,  
visit [www.learninglinkspreschool.org](http://www.learninglinkspreschool.org).



*Thank you for helping expand learning  
and fun on the playground now and  
for future generations!*

### Resale Shop

**New Location!**



The Hillsborough Auxiliary to  
Community Gatepath Resale Shop  
has moved.

1606 Rollins Road | Burlingame  
(650) 259-8523

**Regular Shop Hours:**  
Tuesday & Thursday  
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The Resale Shop is always filled  
with great buys including linens,  
fine china, silver, furniture,  
designer clothes and much more!  
All proceeds benefit Community  
Gatepath.

### *Access to Independence NEW SITES!*

Our Learning & Resource Campuses  
are located throughout San Mateo  
County, close to where our  
participants live and work.

#### **Learning & Resource Campus North County**

60 Christopher Court  
Daly City, CA 94015  
Tel: (650) 652-0650

#### **Learning & Employment Campus Mid County**

1606 Rollins Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
Tel: (650) 259-8508

#### **Learning & Resource Campus South County**

951 Industrial Road, Suite E  
San Carlos, CA 94070  
Tel: (650) 259-8524

#### **Community Integration Program (CIP)**

147 Southwood Center  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
Tel: (650) 871-5139