



## The "Why" Issue...

Yesterday at Imagine Possibilities, a young man asked me about obtaining noise canceling headphones. These are specially designed headphones that filter out background noise and allow the wearers to focus on their conversations. They allow people who experience life from the autism spectrum to experience less stress and be more fully present in their own lives. Asking me about this was a small breakthrough moment for this young man. He is taking the first steps to learning to manage his own stress, the stress that comes from his own nervous system which finds crowded noisy environments overwhelming.

Helping our participants take the steps they need to more fully realize their lives, to express themselves and live their lives on their own terms, is the "why" of Imagine Possibilities. This can mean learning to dig out some hard-as-rock soil

with a trowel, to help install the bricks that line the gravel paths which let friends using wheelchairs explore our Sensory Garden. It can mean learning to not feel shy and ashamed for being a bit clumsy at times. It can mean mastering the social skills needed to take steps out into the world to find a career.

A lot is happening at Imagine Possibilities. While we tell you about it, we'd like you to remember our "why".

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W. Kevin Burke, Executive Director



## Welcome Avery Cranor!

Avery Cranor is the newest member of our Board of Directors. She is excited to help with the Board's crucial work of strategic direction, advocacy and fundraising. Avery has been part of the IP community for a while. Until this August she participated in our HERE program, a volunteer work and recreation program that helps participants acquire social and vocational skills.

When Avery was accepted into the SEARCH program, a six month internship at Kaiser Permanente that helps her explore various career options, we were happy for her success and just a bit sad to see her leave. We talked about her excitement at her new adventure and her desire to succeed in a fascinating new place. We were super excited when she agreed to serve on our Board of Directors, to help us move forward and continue with our mission.

## Employment

Last year Imagine Possibilities was awarded a \$35,000 grant to build capacity to help our participants search for community jobs. As we navigate the government systems set up to support this community based employment we are not losing sight of our main mission, to be a secure, safe and exciting place to explore and enliven each participants world. We have always been committed to helping our participants participate in their communities. This pilot program will be one more way our participants can explore and experience the world.

To succeed we will need **partners**. If you or any of your friends, neighbors etc. need stable reliable employees who can perform a wide variety of tasks please contact IP's Executive Director Kevin Burke at 503-649-6110. We can talk about how we can solve problems while changing lives.

## Sensory Garden

Our Sensory Garden is growing at a tremendous pace – we have pumpkins, corn, tomatoes, and other food crops to harvest this fall, plus lots of flowers and other plants grown and cared for by participants. We are continuously adding to the garden, with handmade stepping stones, new beds and plants, and soon a garden shed to store supplies. We've also hosted weekend gardening parties for members of our community to come volunteer and help us get our hands dirty (literally!) and keep improving the sensory garden.



## Abili-Ski

On August 11 we went on our annual trip to Willamette Park in West Linn for Abili-Ski. Abili-Ski provides adaptive aquatic activities designed to be safe and

comfortable for people with disabilities. Participants took turns on boat rides, inner tubing, and picnicking at the park. Everyone had a blast; thank you to Abili-Ski for all their hard work every year, and to the families and friends who volunteer and make this event a favorite for so many of our participants.



## "Because of You" 2017 Charity Auction

Imagine Possibilities' 2017 charity auction is fast approaching! Join us on October 14th for a night of delicious food, good company, and a chance to win all kinds of prizes and gifts to benefit Imagine Possibilities and help us in our mission to provide high-quality care and community engagement for people with disabilities in the Aloha-Beaverton area. Follow the link below to register or donate items. We're excited to see you there!

[Click here for auction registration and information!](#)



## Welcome Karissa Justice!

We would like our community to welcome Karissa Justice, who took over as Program Director this summer. Karissa has been ably continuing the work of Miranda Talkington and keeps our programs lively and exciting. We could say a lot of wonderful things about how she is nurturing IP's evolution but we are going to let her speak for herself:

At a young age, I knew I wanted to help others in any way I could. I would read books on people with disabilities and volunteer at the Rescue

Mission in Great Falls, MT and in the Special Education classes at my high school. My life experiences instilled in me a deep passion for helping others and helped me decide to earn my Bachelor's degree in Psychology. I started at Imagine Possibilities as a Direct Support Professional about two years ago and fell in love. Being at IP has helped me decide to earn a Master's degree in Social Work in the future.

In the last month, I have added a new group every day and have played off the strengths and diversity of our DSP team. Staff share their skills and hobbies with participants while teaching participants life skills. Some of our new groups include knitting group, gardening, painting, Best Buddies (an online pen pal group), and sports group.

“Let your smile change the world, but don't let the world change your smile.” This quote sums up my philosophy on life and my work. I always try and make learning new things fun and exciting for staff and participants and be genuinely happy and positive.

Imagine Possibilities

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