



Through the power of human relationship & pursuit of excellence, we open doors to a fuller life for people with developmental disabilities.

Jacob Tracey

What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. — Helen Keller

In 2001, when Jake was 21, he graduated from the Maryland School for the Blind and began attending Gallagher Services' Medical Day Program in Timonium. Since he has always lived with his family in Hampstead, he began taking the trip from North Baltimore County each day, driven by his mother Wendy or one of his three caregivers: Kim Clark, Jody Dixon, or Michelle Masemore.

Jake's day at Gallagher begins around 9:30, when he is welcomed by Loretta Schackleford and Natasha Thomas. Usually that is a high-energy time, with music playing in the background and greetings of staff rising above the sound of the music, as individuals arrive for the day. If the Country Music CD *Big and Rich* is playing, that is a good start for Jake's day, since it's one of his favorites.



Jake's grandparents, Rita and Steve Gailey, taking him for a Sunday ride in their Mustang Convertible!

Jake has a schedule of activities for each week. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays he is usually in his walker. Tuesdays and Thursdays he might be in his recliner, on a mat for range of motion activities, or in the waterbed in the Sensory Stimulation Room. He makes it pretty clear to Loretta and Natasha if he likes what he is doing. They can readily read his vocalization tones. They also know by his



Jake and Wendy swimming at the MAC

body language when he's done with his walker. They both say that he likes one-on-one attention and hand-over-hand activities. Jake has a good appetite, and you know readily when he's enjoying a snack or his lunch. Jake's day ends around 3:30 when he is ready for the ride back home to Hampstead.

Several times a week, Jake will stop on the way home for a swim at the Maryland Athletic Club in Timonium with Wendy or one of his caregivers. He loves to swim, and has pool at home for swimming in the summer months. He's a great floater and does the crawl and his version of the back stroke. He is particularly good at swimming under water. Watching him, you wonder sometimes how he can hold his breath so long. By all accounts, swimming is one of his favorite things to do. Wendy says that it also improves his appetite, and he sleeps better on the days he takes a swim.

After his laps in the pool, it's time to head home to Gunpowder Farm, where he lives. The farm is bordered by Murphy Run and George's Creek. His family leases 400 acres, where they crop-farm and run a game farm for

Continues on page 2



Jacob Tracey *(Continued from page 1)*

hunting pheasant; quail; and chuckar, a type of quail. The Traceys also have 16 Brittany Spaniels, which they breed. This may seem like a full-time enterprise; however, Jake's dad, David, is also President of Ridge Engineering.

Jake's parents, brother Stephen, and sister Sarah have always seen to it that he is part of it all. Whatever is going on, he's there. He might be in the barn while they are cleaning the birds after a shoot, or he might take a ride around the farm on the John Deere Gator. Family outings have included visits to the State Fair with rides on the Ferris Wheel and hands-on at the petting zoo. Friends who attended a recent Martina McBride Christmas Show could hear Jake singing over the crowd in the sing-a-long; however, his favorite song is "This Kiss" by Faith Hill. Wendy says that Jake is very social and will readily develop a relationship with people who are



David, Wendy, Sarah & Stephen Tracey



Jake and his dog Trigger

attentive to him. She and David have made a life for Jake and his family in Hampstead, and it is clear that between Gunpowder Farm and Gallagher Service it's a full one for Jake!

Natasha Thomas

Service is what life is all about. — Marion Wright Edelman

Natasha's first experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities was while she was in High School. Her father, Anthony Thomas, was an Instructor in The Gallagher Day Program in Timonium. So it was natural that she would be interested in his work, and she ended up volunteering in the Gallagher Day program throughout her high school years. After she graduated she decided to apply for a job with Gallagher Services. Although she liked the Gallagher Day Program, she was always intrigued by the Medical Day Program and was hired as a substitute Instructor in 2005. As a substitute she had the opportunity to work in all areas of the program, including transportation. In 2007, Natasha was hired as a full-time Instructor in the "Med-Day," and was assigned to work with the group of individuals who have the name "Road Runners." Each group has adopted its own distinctive name. Although Natasha had worked with Jacob Tracey previously, that was when she began to know him better.

She says that she likes to "support people who can't do for themselves, and help make their day go by better." She has lots of means at her disposal to do this with the wide



variety of activities in the program. Music therapy is a regular activity where individuals are given instruments to play along and move with the music. Personal care sessions give attention to hair, nails and skin. Range-of-motion activities exercise muscles and help maintain flexibility. Story time is a favorite where Instructors read to the individuals, some of whom can follow along with the illustrations. Arts and crafts are a regular part of the week, along with visits to the Game Room, Sensory Stimulation Room, Aroma Therapy, community parties, cookouts and Movies. The Roadrunners also go on outings: movies at the Hunt Valley Mall, shopping at Wal-Mart, visits to the Fire Museum, and Plays at Goucher College.

All of these activities with Jake and the other individuals make Natasha's day. She says that "it brightens her day when

she feels that she has helped at least one person." She finds "Jake fun to be around." She likes it that she always knows where he stands. You can tell when he is in a bad mood; however, most of the time he is in a good mood and is fun to be around! Jake is one of Natasha's favorites!

Jim Hillmann

Adam Conner

Life is “trying things to see if they work.” — Ray Bradbury



Adam Conner

came to talk with us about doing his project on the Gallagher Campus. As it happened, we had been discussing the idea of developing a raised garden for individuals in our day program who wanted to become involved in our gardening program but were prevented from tending a traditional garden, since they used wheelchairs. Adam’s project was born. Eagle projects have several criteria. Among them are that the candidate must demonstrate leadership in supervising the project, and it has to be something that benefits the community. Adam’s project filled the bill on both counts. He completed his project on New Year’s Day and was invested as an Eagle Scout in a Court of Honor in March.

Adam had worked on Joe Stefanski’s Eagle Scout Project at Gallagher Services in Timonium in the spring of 2008. So when it came time to select a project for his “Eagle,” he

McDonald, who told him about the Sunday Worship Service and Summer Special Friends Program. In June he began participating in both. Over the summer, Sunday has been a family affair. His mother, Patricia; father, Larry; and sister, Maria have joined him, helping with setting up the chapel and participating in the service with readings.

There are just a few other activities that engage Adam at this point in his life. He is a senior at Loyola Blakefield, where he has taken advanced classes all four years. In athletics, he has competed in Cross Country, Track and Field, and Diving. Diving has become his main focus in recent years. He competes in meets with other Maryland Schools and in the Eastern Diving Championships. He also competes for the Padonia Swim Club during the summer. His most difficult dive is a Forward Two-and-One-Half Somersault, and his favorite is the Forward One-and-One-Half Somersault.

“ *I don’t know how to explain it. The individuals take such pleasure in the little things.* ”

His other extracurricular activities include Dramatics— Acting and Musical Theater; Speech; Debate; and Oratorical Declamation, in which he has placed second in the Nationals. He has also won Oratorical Contests sponsored by the Optimist Club. Adam is planning to audition for *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *The Miser* at Loyola this year. His previous credits include Javert in *Les Miserables* and The Governor in *Man of La Mancha*.

With all that he has going on, Adam is taken by his experience with Special Friends and the Sunday Worship Service. “I don’t know how to explain it. The individuals take such pleasure in the little things. Seeing their faces light up when the music starts, and when I go to Rudy’s apartment to bring him to the service—how he folds his hands and smiles—I’ve never seen anything like it. They make me want to come to church. I love it.”

Jim Hillmann



Renee Knox, Richard Green, Adam Conner & Jeanne Hannon

On several occasions Adam came back to see the nine raised garden beds in use, and on one visit met Stevie

Gallagher Services

2520 Pot Spring Road
Baltimore, MD 21093

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Baltimore, MD.
Permit No. 5595



To receive Open Doors electronically — e-mail your name & address to jhillman@cc-md.org



Catholic Charities
Christmas Festival at the Basilica

to benefit Child and Family Services

Concert Artists of Baltimore
Edward Polochick, Artistic Director

Peabody Children's Choir
Doreen Falby, Choir Director

Thursday, December 10, 2009
7:30 p.m.

The child and Family Services Division of Catholic Charities provides hope by offering effective services to vulnerable children and families in need throughout Maryland. Services include adoptions, specialized foster care, early childhood and special education, as well as mental health programs. This year's proceeds will help ensure that our students will have the best tools available to achieve their educational dreams.

Open Seating & Reception \$125

For reservations call 410-252-4700 x133 • cshear@cc-md.org