



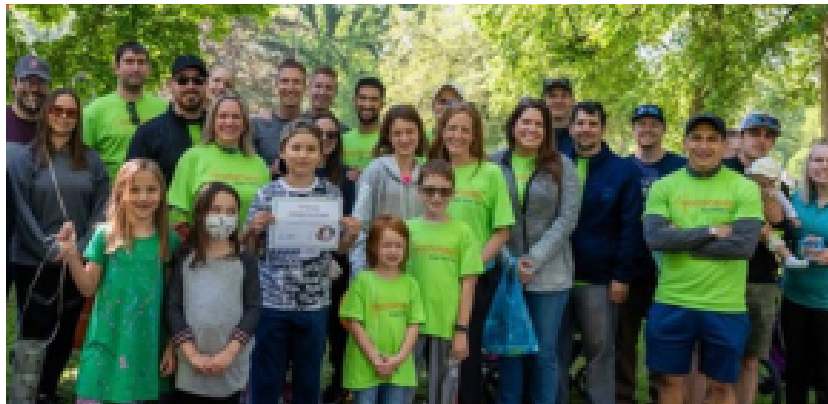
PARTNERS IN ACCESS

Easterseals Western & Central Pennsylvania Newsletter

Spring into Event Season!

When the weather breaks our event team is out and about spreading awareness and raising funds for the vital programs and services that Easterseals Western and Central PA provides. You can make an impact by sponsoring, attending, or telling others about Easterseals' events in Pittsburgh, State College, Johnstown, and York.

Walk With Me, a Signature Easterseals Event



Easterseals affiliates across the country host Walk With Me events, sharing the importance of supporting individuals with disabilities through programming that provides the opportunity to live their best lives. Individual walkers and teams join hundreds of other passionate people in their communities for a day full of entertainment, fun and, of course, our signature walk!

Each participant's motivation to walk is unique; it may be for themselves, the child of a loved one, a neighbor, or a colleague. 20% of the US population lives with a disability today. We walk for them, their future, and the families who love them.

Find a Walk With Me event in your area and details on participating at:
<https://www.easterseals.com/wcpenna/get-involved/walk-with-me/>

Walk With Me Pittsburgh, May 17, 2025, at Kennywood Park
Walk With Me Centre County, June 28, 2025, at Talleyrand Park
Walk With Me York/Harrisburg, September 27, 2025, at Lake Tobias Wildlife Park

www.eastersealswcpenna.org

Giving Days Galore!

Giving Days are happening this May in the Central region. These events provide tremendous awareness and fundraising opportunities. During the 24–36-hour events there are multiple opportunities for Easterseals Western and Central PA to earn prizes, matching hours to help your gift go further AND stretch pools that are given out at the end of the event to all the non-profits.

Give Local York begins at 9:00pm on May 1st and concludes at 9:00pm on May 2nd.

Centre Gives begins at 8:00am on May 14th and concludes at 8:00pm on May 15th.



**Get in on the fun and excitement.
Watch for social media posts and
emails for the links to donate!**



Johnstown Continues Tradition on the Links

June 18th at Windber Country Club, Easterseals Western and Central PA will be hosting the 43rd annual Johnstown golf outing! This long-standing tradition in the Johnstown area sells out early! Get your clubs ready and register here: www.eastersealswcpa.org/johnstown-golf



Meet the Ambassadors

Johnstown

Riley is a thriving kindergartener who loves horseback riding. She was born deaf due to auditory neuropathy, a rare genetic chromosomal disorder. At 18 months she received cochlear implants, an implanted device that helps Riley perceive sounds.



Riley began speech therapy at Easterseals when she was two years old and had trouble saying single words.



Right away, Riley's family saw a huge difference in her speech. Four years later, Riley is six years old and has made leaps and bounds in her speech and communication.

Pittsburgh



Aubrey is a fun-loving kiddo who likes toys that light up and the accessible swing. When Aubrey was 18 months old, she was diagnosed with Kabuki Syndrome, a rare genetic condition that affects 1 out of 32,000 births worldwide. Symptoms from Kabuki Syndrome include global development delay, low muscle tone, feeding difficulties which require her to be fully fed via a gastronomy tube, astigmatism, and seizures during infancy.

Aubrey is nonverbal and was recently diagnosed with autism.

Aubrey began attending Easterseals' Approved Private School for children with disabilities in August 2022. Three years later, Aubrey is six years old, and her development has progressed significantly. She is becoming more independent with everyday tasks and activities, and she's able to communicate her wants and needs. Aubrey's parents are grateful Easterseals can provide Aubrey with the support and resources she needs to succeed both now and as she grows into adulthood.



Welcome New Board of Directors

Easterseals Western and Central PA welcomes two new board of directors, Wendy McCrory Rotz and Carrie Wilburn.

Wendy McCrory Rotz is Senior Account Executive with Seven Mountains Media in State College. She is a graduate of Shippensburg University with 40 years of experience in marketing and fundraising throughout Central Pennsylvania. Wendy and her husband live in State College and are huge Penn State sports fans.



Carrie Wilburn is an owner and real estate agent at CENTURY 21 Core Partners in York. She has over 20 years' experience as a trusted advisor and a dedicated advocate for her clients. Carrie and her family moved to York County, PA in 2005, making this home for both family and business. Throughout the last twenty years, Carrie has laid down significant local roots, being involved in various community activities.

Easterseals Western and Central PA President and CEO Jim Bennett states, "We are pleased to welcome Carrie and Wendy to Easterseals' Board of Directors. Each will bring valuable insight and expertise from the communities they serve."

Welcome Wendy and Carrie!

Bridging the Gap for Easterseals

Board member and Johnstown Advisory Council member Dan Honkus is celebrating his retirement with a fundraiser for Easterseals Western and Central PA.

Dan will celebrate his 40+ career by biking the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) bike trail (www.gaptrail.org) from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD with an old college friend beginning May 1. Dan explains, "the 150-mile, multi-day trek through the heart of the Laurel Highlands will be both a challenging and exhilarating way to kick off my retirement voyage! I feel truly blessed to have the good health to undertake this adventure."

Dan's fundraiser called "Bridging the GAP for Easterseals" seeks flat contributions or a per-mile pledge (i.e.: 10 cents per mile X 150 miles = \$15.00 donation) tied to his successful completion of the Pittsburgh to Cumberland bike ride.



You can donate to Dan's fundraiser at <https://www.eastersealswcpa.org/PedaltheGAP2025>, and help support programming for children and adults with disabilities at Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania.

Highlighting Easterseals' Residential Community Homes in Northwestern PA



Easterseals Western and Central PA's Zintka Fox, Tiffany Morrow, and Sandy Roush (not pictured) showcased Residential Housing and In-Home Community Support Services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the Franklin Chamber of Commerce Small Business After Hours Event in March at Franklin Elks Lodge.



Weston Graduated



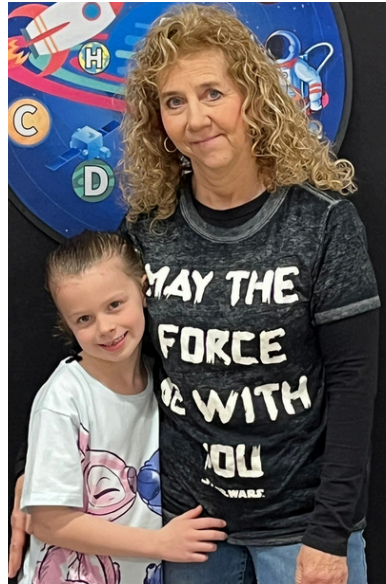
Weston recently graduated from speech therapy in Johnstown! He was diagnosed with Childhood Apraxia of Speech, a neurological disorder that effects his ability to plan and coordinate the movements necessary to produce speech.

Weston's speech was difficult to understand and even unintelligible. After five years and a LOT of hard work, Weston's speech is understandable, and he can easily communicate with others.

Weston's success is one more way Easterseals Western and Central PA is leading the way to 100% equity, inclusion, and access for children with disabilities!

Way to Go Weston!

Office Olympix is a Fun Way to Support Easterseals



On March 14th, Easterseals Western and Central PA held the 37th annual Office Olympix in Johnstown. Thirty teams from 15 different companies participated in the "far out" space-themed event. Delicious food was provided by Panera Bread Catering and The Bistro. Skills were tested, teamwork required, and much laughter was had.

East Hills Engineering came out on top. More importantly, awareness and funding were raised to support the vital services provided to the disability community, including speech therapy and hearing services in Johnstown.

We are proud to be leading the way to 100% equity, inclusion and access for people with disabilities, families and communities.



Central Region Partners with Dazzle Sports Marketing

The Central region of Easterseals Western and Central PA has developed a strong partnership with Dazzle Sports Marketing and their team, Justin Coble and Greg Fennell. Justin currently hosts a weekly podcast, Beyond the Game, which includes guests from around the sports world. Each week his guests answer the hot minute questions and \$100 dollars is donated to one of four non-profits. ESWCPA is grateful to have received many of these donations!



In February, Sue DuMars, Major Gifts/Community Engagement Manager, was a guest on the podcast along with representatives of the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Capital Area Special Olympics and the State YMCA Youth and Government. Take a listen to the podcast here: <https://youtu.be/8WoHPqCi4Y4?si=vNI5rVvni8bkLtHV>

“Who do you think you are? I am!” ~Pete Weber Jr.



In March, Dazzle Sports hosted a signing event with former Pro Bowler Pete Weber Jr. Easterseals Western and Central PA received tickets to the VIP meet and greet. One of our York staff members, Tammy, was able to take her brother Ricky to the event. He loved it!

**“Pete is my favorite bowler!”
~ Ricky**

If you are in the area and want to check out Dazzle Sports Media’s extensive collection of sports memorabilia you can find them at 829 State St. Ste 2006, LeMoyne PA 17043.

www.Dazzle-Sports.com

www.eastersealswcpenna.org

Welcome baby Lennyn!

The State College Child Development Center's Director Carly Pingly and her husband welcomed a girl Lennyn Lane on February 7th. Lennyn was quite prompt arriving on her due date and she and mom are doing well.

We can't wait to meet her when Carly is back in May!



On March 21st the Child Development Center in State College celebrated World Down Syndrome Day with a sock hop in the sensory room. Kids and staff had a great time!

Miss Bethany and Elwood are featured in the photos.



Project Beacon Kicks Off First Camp of 2025

The first Project Beacon weekend retreat of 2025 was held April 4-6 at Camp Victory. The theme for the weekend was "When I Grow Up." Participants enjoyed learning about life skills and career skills through crafts and games. Project Beacon hosts kids from military families, active, veteran, and reserved to gather for a fun weekend with their peers.



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“ My kids love going to Project Beacon because they meet new friends whose parents are also in the military. These friends are important because being military kids they understand each other and what they go through.” – Mary Ellen, parent

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