

50th Anniversary

This year at Social and Learning Institute we are celebrating a remarkable milestone – **50 years** of serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and empowering them to thrive socially, emotionally, and educationally! For five decades our community has been built by dedicated families, staff, volunteers, and leaders who believed in the power of dignity, opportunity, and belonging. Among those who have helped shape this journey are two extraordinary long time board members whose commitment has left a lasting mark on SLI and those of us that have the privilege to know them. They represent the ideas of the original founders that have sustained SLI for half a century: independence, inclusion, and personal growth. Their selfless dedication continues in this 50th year of Social and Learning Institute!

Joan Ganschow began volunteering at SLI in 2007. She has been a steady and thoughtful voice on the board since day one. Her deep belief in our mission and her unwavering commitment has guided many endeavors that shaped SLI into what it is today. Joan is an astute listener who often sees what others are missing, and she brings a warm human touch to the leadership. She is a staunch advocate for each and every individual student, always demanding that they are respected and that others at SLI uphold their dignity. Always giving her best, Joan is willing to lend an ear and eagerly share her knowledge and talents.

In 2007, Tabb Gesse also began his journey with SLI. He has served as board Treasurer for many years and is known for his strategic perspective and willingness to come forward and say what needs to be said for the good of the school. Tabb has helped guide SLI through much growth, change, and opportunity. His commitment to responsible stewardship and long-term vision has helped to position SLI for continued success. Tabb's consistent oversight and support of the daily operations at SLI has been invaluable, and

he has always been a reliable and trustworthy custodian of the precious cargo that SLI holds. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we reflect with gratitude on the people, like Joan and Tabb, who have made a lasting impact through leadership that is rooted in Christian principles. Love and compassion run wild at SLI, and it has started every day of these 50 years with the staff and volunteers that have offered their time and talents in service of our beloved students and families.

Through the spirit of generosity, the faithful givers to SLI have helped sustain our programs, provide a bright and appropriate space, expand opportunities, and ensure that the individuals we serve continue to experience growth, purpose, and community. Without thoughtful and consistent contributions, the important work that happens at SLI would not be possible. Our donors and grantors are mighty in their collective strength, and we are deeply grateful for the partnership of those who invest in SLI and make our mission possible!

As I reflect on all that has been accomplished over the past 50 years, I am deeply honored to have served as part of this remarkable organization for its most recent 10 years. It is a privilege to experience this community and all that goes into bringing the mission of SLI to life each and every day. This incredible place began in a garage by a small group of parents that knew how important it was for their children to have a place to socialize and learn. It began with love, as it continues to this day. Ultimately, SLI belongs to its students. This is their place, where they learn and experience and grow and spend time with their peers. They put the *ZING* in amazing! SLI has been a home away from home for many individuals since its inception. While we proudly celebrate this milestone anniversary, we also look ahead with hope and purpose to continue providing meaningful support.

Thank you all for being part of our story at Social and Learning Institute!

In Service,

Mari Chapala, Executive Director



SOCIAL AND LEARNING GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY!

My mom always taught me that when you are blessed with more than you need, you build a bigger table, not a higher wall. Starting in December I decided to bring that to SLI. In the months of December and January we asked students to bring in items for local blessing boxes. I told families that I would do a match for each item donated. Between student donations and the match I ended up driving around putting 106 items in blessing boxes! In the month of February we asked students to bring in items to donate to the Michiana Humane Society. Students and staff went above and beyond bringing in dog and cat food, kitty litter, puppy pads and more! I can not thank our families enough. We prove everyday that in uncertain times, there is still good in the world. I could not be more proud of the giving spirit of our SLI family!

-Director Abby Hinsch

During the months of December, January, and February, students donated a total of 106 items to support the Blessing Boxes throughout LaPorte County. Director Abby generously matched every item collected, doubling the impact of their generosity.



Board member
Kat Hinsch
helps put donations
in a local
Blessing Box



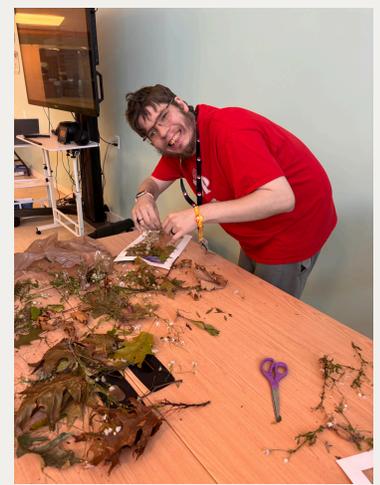
Director Abby demonstrates the lasting effects of science in the classroom. If you are wondering, the dye from our “Elephant Toothpaste” science project lasted over a week.



Chris D. was the lucky student to throw the first pitch at our SLI giveback outing at the South Bend Cubs Game!



Kitty R. is the Beam Queen while students work out at Platinum Gymnastics in Michigan City! Students love showing off their gymnastics skills.



James K. uses nature items that were picked up by students on a walk to make a beautiful tree project.

You can always count on the students and staff at The Social and Learning Institute to be doing fun things! From gymnastics at Platinum, dancing, and zumba, to health lessons in the classroom. Crafts, fun projects, walks outside, field trips, and special celebrations, we always have things happening! We are forever thankful to our generous donors who help make SLI our happy place. We couldn't do what we do without you!

Why Monthly Giving Matters at SLI

At the Social & Learning Institute, life-changing moments don't happen just once a year.

They happen every single day.

They happen when a student masters a new life skill.

When someone confidently signs their name for the first time.

When a class bursts into laughter during a science experiment.

When independence grows quietly, steadily, and beautifully.

Monthly giving helps make that growth possible.

When you give each month, you provide stability. Predictable support allows SLI to plan ahead, strengthen programs, and ensure students have consistent access to programs, life-skills training, fitness activities, and activities that foster independence.

Together, monthly supporters create a reliable foundation that keeps learning moving forward without interruption. Opportunity at SLI is unlocked step by step, day by day. Monthly giving ensures those steps never have to stop.

Consider becoming a monthly supporter and help us continue unlocking opportunity, one gift at a time.

To become a monthly donor please visit: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/27YD1Fh-8CJMjOc4WX2q1g

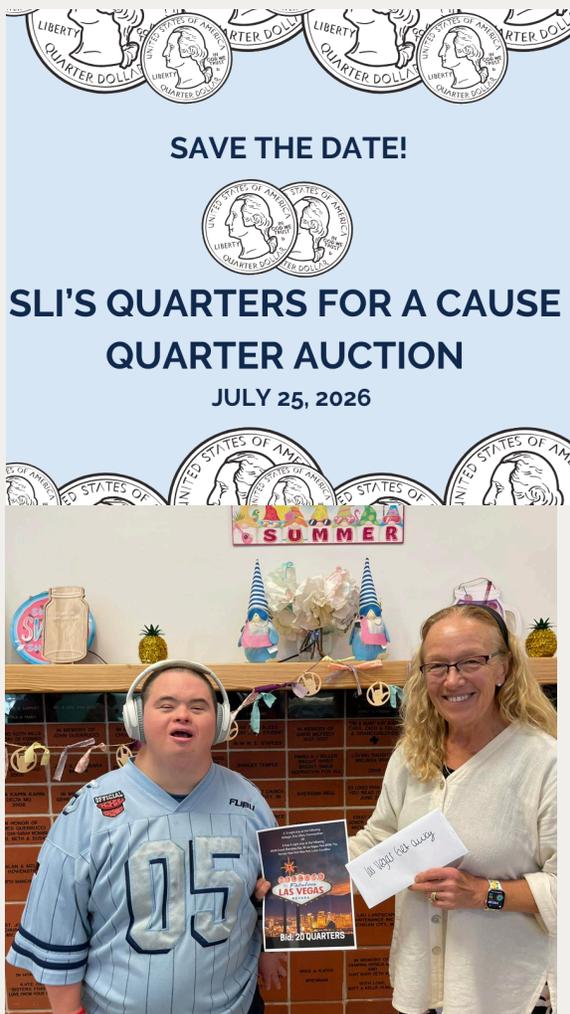
In addition to our wonderful donors,
We would like to give special thanks for funding our
Health & Wellness program to



And thank you for funding our
Science program to



We couldn't do what we do without you!



Last year's event was filled with excitement, friendly competition, and incredible prizes. From themed gift baskets and local favorites to unique experiences, the bidding kept going all night long. If you joined us before, you already know how much fun a few quarters can create. If you didn't, consider this your official invitation to start saving your change now. You never know what you might take home this year.

We're looking forward to another memorable evening of community, connection, and impact, all in support of SLI's programs. More details and sneak peeks coming soon!

WANT TO STAY IN TOUCH?

Please visit
www.SocialandLearning.org
and sign up for our mailing list at
the bottom of the home page.

Want to help SLI?

Visit socialandlearning.org/giving
to explore secure online giving options

