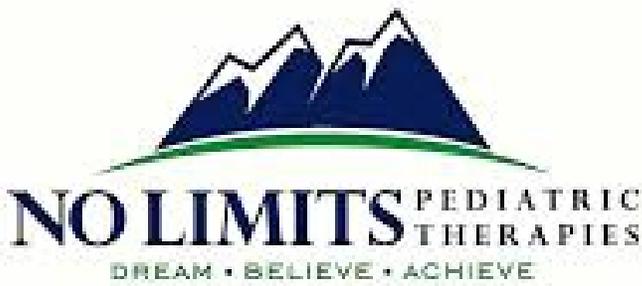




Autism Awareness Month



April 2020



Featured

No Limits Pediatric Therapies offers comprehensive therapeutic care for children with disabilities and their families. The staff of No Limits is accustomed to treating a variety of diagnoses. Our mission is to offer families a warm and supportive environment where they can learn about their child's developmental needs and how to nurture their child's capacity to succeed. Our aim is to help children reach their potential by treating the whole child using techniques learned from experience and directed by evidence-based practices. We honor that each child is a member of a family unit where parents, siblings, and extended family each influence the child's experiences. We encourage close and active participation in therapeutic and home environments. Our philosophy centers on the idea that children learn about their environment and how to exist within their environment by playing and interacting with their surroundings. We believe it is critical to make therapy as fun and motivating as possible.

Terrica Weatherford, MS, OTR/L **Occupational Therapist and President**

Terrica Weatherford graduated with a Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy from the Medical University of South Carolina and a Bachelors of Science in Nutrition from the University of Arkansas. She has a passion that continues to grow for working with children with special needs and their families as she continues her education in Sensory Processing, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Feeding/Oral Motor, and Social/Emotional disorders. She has advanced training in feeding, oral motor, and sensory processing. She is part of No Limits' Augmentative and Alternative Communication Evaluation team with Sarah Milholen, MS, CCC-SLP, and is passionate about addressing access issues for children in their communication journey. She looks forward to working with the clients and families of No Limits as they begin or continue their pediatric therapy journey.



When asked, what lead you to support AIM?

Terrica said, "AIM does great work within our community and our clients frequently access their resources. Their AIM grants have been instrumental in providing my clients with equipment and resources that are not available via private insurance, TEFRA, or Medicaid. Access to this equipment has allowed for increased home programming and great progress toward their therapeutic goals. We love supporting an organization that we see immediately putting resources back into our community".

To learn more about No Limits Pediatric Therapies Please visit them at:

www.nolimitstherapies.com | 479-250-9838
910 NW 7th Street Suite 2 & 4 | Bentonville, AR 72712

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We asked Jason and Jesse, Why did you choose to support AIM?



He

My son, Preston, was diagnosed PDD-NOS at the age of 3. We were fortunate to have a pre-school close to our house that specialized in helping kids in the spectrum. We also helped the school district implement a class for kindergarten kids. Fortunately, Preston is considered high functioning and with a lot of help was able to graduate high school and go on to get a welding certification from the community college.

routine.

has had a fulltime job the last few years and does well when he can keep his

Jesse

Preston will turn 23 this year and even when it's a struggle there is hope. Since

and I both have children on the spectrum it's always been important to us to try and

When my son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3, I was unsure of how to help him and be his advocate. I was unsure of how to help him and be his advocate. We are happy that AIM allows us an opportunity to

- Jason Hill, President

Kaleb soon started attending The Sunshine School and Development Center, through them we were connected with Autism Involves Me, at that time known as the Autism Support Group of NW Arkansas. The group consisted of several families that met once a month and helped each other identify resources and learn how to be a parent to a child with special needs. These families lead us to some amazing resources that have helped Kaleb tremendously over the years. I have watched them as they transitioned from a small group of parents, helping each other navigate unknown territory, into an organization that serves the entire autism community in NW Arkansas. I have seen AIM give support and hope to so many families in NWA over the past 11 years and I love that I am able to be part of that as helping others and giving back to my community, especially those impacted by autism, is a passion of mine.

- Jesse Taylor, Vice President



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Meet Luke Hubbard



As parents, we all want the absolute best the world has to offer our children. We have big dreams and high hopes for them from the moment they are first placed in our arms. When Luke was born, we already had a three-year-old daughter who made us feel like we had parenting all figured out. It didn't take long for us to realize the expectations we had for Luke's life might not be met the way we thought they should be.

From the beginning, he was more difficult to connect with. He didn't reach one single milestone on time. Not one. As he got older, he refused to eat anything but baby food. He had very little speech and was frustrated by his inability to communicate. He injured himself daily and had uncontrollable fits of rage that would last up to an hour. We loved our boy, but we were confused, frustrated and exhausted. We felt like we were failing him and we had no idea what to do.

Finally, when Luke was two and a half, we were referred to Wendy Cassady in Springdale for a speech evaluation to address his feeding issues. As she asked me questions about his violent reaction to unfamiliar foods, she noticed some atypical behaviors and recommended an occupational therapy evaluation. After a series of testing, Luke qualified for speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. He got the official diagnosis of autism when he was four years old.

While we were relieved to finally have some answers, there was a period of grief that came with the official diagnosis. We had to grieve the loss of those expectations of the life we thought our child would have. For me, there was also a sense of panic. How were we going to be able to give him everything he would need to navigate this difficult world? How could we keep him safe and happy? Would he be mistreated for being different? Would he ever be able to hold a job, live on his own or have a family? What will happen to him when my husband and I are gone? The questions kept me up at night and to be honest, still do at times.

The summer before Luke started kindergarten, we made the decision to move several states away to a big city that we believed might have more resources available for people with autism. We had done our research, but when we got there everything fell apart. Our plan for school fell through and we discovered other schools for kids with special needs were hard to get into and more expensive than a college education. Public schools weren't what they are here and there was little to no assistance to help with the cost of private school or his therapies except for a waiver with a two-year-long waiting list.

In this city of a million people, I struggled to find support groups, activities created for families with children with special needs, or other opportunities for Luke that I had taken for granted back home. Arkansas has funding in place for families like ours and we were starting to regret giving all of that up.

Since we couldn't afford private schooling for him, I ended up being forced to homeschool him for a semester while we waited for the public school system to place him. After he was placed, it was clear that it was not the right environment for him. The main reason we had displaced our family was to help our son, but we were repeatedly met with one obstacle after another.