



July 2024

threads of friendship

Dear Friend,

A child's earliest interactions have a lasting impact on their physical, social, and emotional health. *In the first few years of life, they form more than one million new neural connections every second.* **Together, we can make every second count.** Your support of Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley builds connections that help children with developmental delays and disabilities thrive.

Remy, Sawyer, and Lucas met in an Easterseals therapy group fittingly named, *First Friendships*. Each week, an occupational therapist and social worker guided them in imaginative and interactive play. While they built social skills through obstacle courses and show-and-tell, their moms connected in a caregiver support group. Christine, Brittany, and Andrea formed a fast friendship and watched their children gain confidence and play skills that empowered them to do the same.

I loved having a safe space to connect with other parents of children with neurodiverse needs and gaining resources to help support my child. While he is currently non-speaking, each week he shared more smiles, eye contact, high fives, fist bumps and hugs with the other children in the group.

– Andrea, Remy's Mom



We have continued to get together for our kids to develop their friendships. It has been wonderful to watch their friendships grow.

– Brittany, Sawyer's Mom

The First Friendships group focuses on sharing kindness and generosity. It's powerful to see these fundamentals of friendship shine through in donors like you. **Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley is the only local provider that accepts all insurance plans and Medicaid. Your donation makes it possible to provide essential services to children with disabilities and their families, including those who are uninsured.**

Please make a gift today.

Every day, we help children develop skills to communicate with friends, play alongside their peers, and participate fully in their community. Your support contributes to childhood experiences that shape their foundation for their future.

Thank you for your friendship,

Theresa

Theresa Forthofer
President & CEO

P.S. Help more children form friendships this summer.

Please make a gift by August 31 to support pediatric therapies at Easterseals.



The common qualities of meaningful friendship are threaded through our organization.

Trustworthiness

2,901 families trust us to provide the physical, occupational, speech-language, and mental health therapies they need to achieve their goals.

Compassion

Our expert clinicians provide thoughtful care to support each child's needs.

Empathy

We offer family support groups for caregivers to share their experiences.

Having friends who can relate to the unique challenges and joys of our life has been invaluable and incredibly helpful.

– Christine, Lucas' Mom

Honesty

100% of donations to our summer campaign will directly support therapy services for children who are uninsured or underinsured.

Loyalty

Continued support from donors like you helps ensure children with disabilities and their families are empowered.

Acceptance

Thank you for sharing our belief that every child deserves to thrive in an inclusive community.



eastersealsdvr.org/donate



easterseals
DuPage & Fox Valley
830 S. Addison Ave.
Villa Park, IL 60181
phone: 630.620.4433



Friends of Easterseals! Donate \$25 or more and receive a one-of-a-kind beaded bracelet made by our Easterseals community.

Designs and colors will vary. Please collect your bracelet at our centers in Villa Park, Naperville, or Elgin.

Please accept my gift of:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$125 = 1 hour of therapy
- \$250
- \$500
- Other \$ _____
- Make this a monthly gift

I want to support friendship-forming programs and services for children with disabilities and their families.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Payment:

- Check: made payable to Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley
- Credit Card (one time charge) Credit Card (split into 12 monthly payments)

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVV code: _____

Forming inclusive friendships

Congratulations to the 2024 class of Pre-K graduates! Our Lily Garden Child Care Center provides an inclusive environment to learn, grow, and form lasting friendships. These six classmates will apply the lessons they learned in this unique program when they start kindergarten this fall.



Beginning at 3-5 years of age, children start building on their foundational relationships with caregivers and learn how to play cooperatively.

Supporting parallel play in toddlers and giving opportunities to explore and grow in relationships with others sets children up for success. Children are then more prepared for complex friendships when they go to kindergarten.

- Vickie Robinson,
Developmental Therapist,
Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley



Molly Gardner and Allie Wyler were some of the Lily Garden's first graduates. They are still part of a close-knit group whose friendship spans more than 35 years – and so does their involvement with Easterseals. Molly volunteers her photography and videography skills and contributes to our annual Photo Exhibit. Allie is president of a Chicagoland hospital and offers her leadership on the Easterseals Board of Directors. They both continue to support the inclusive environment that was such an important part of their childhood.

Gather your friends!

This season brings opportunities to further support children at Easterseals. Team up to participate or volunteer at **Bike for the Kids on August 25** and the **Superhero Hustle on October 5**. See therapy outcomes in action as children walk, run, roll, cycle and cheer at these community events this fall.



BIKE FOR THE KIDS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 25 | ELGIN

SUPERHERO HUSTLE: Run for the Kids
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 | VILLA PARK

learn more at eastersealsdvr.org/EVENTS

    Friend us @[eastersealsdvr](https://www.instagram.com/eastersealsdvr) and follow along to stay connected to the latest at Easterseals.

Tag a friend at Easterseals

At Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley, bonds are forged and connections are made. *What friendship started at Easterseals for you?* Submit your Easterseals connection here or at eastersealsdvr.org/friend to be shared with our network of friends and followers this summer.

