

A 25-YEAR JOURNEY WITH GATEPATH



Carolyn and her daughter, Audra

Carolyn Locke didn't know that the birth of her daughter, Audra, in 1982 would also be the beginning of a 25-year meaningful personal and professional journey with Gatepath.

Audra was nine months old when she was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy, which is a

type of cerebral palsy that affects all four limbs. Like many other first time parents, Carolyn says it was hard to tell, even by her doctors, if her child was experiencing developmental delays or early signs of something more serious.

"Since birth, her legs were stiff and scissored. After a few months, her hands became fisted, she couldn't lift her arms, feed herself and wasn't eating," Carolyn said. After seeing a few doctors and a developmental specialist, Carolyn and her husband, a young couple in their early twenties at the time, received the devastating news of Audra's diagnosis and were told that she would never function normally.

"I held her tightly and cried all the way home," Carolyn said. "It took us a couple of weeks to accept the diagnosis and to figure out what therapy treatment plan would best support her development."

Carolyn and her husband learned about Gatepath's Early Intervention program through a family member. At the time it was the only center in the county that allowed parent participation, which she thought was extremely important. "My daughter was just a baby. I wasn't going to leave her alone with someone else. I wanted to be involved and learn," she said.

During their very first therapy session at Gatepath, Carolyn learned how to properly carry Audra to support her legs. "The therapists gave me hope. They taught me how to help my

daughter at home and taught her how to communicate with us using gestures and sounds," Carolyn said. "I felt loved, supported and accepted there. We also felt like we belonged because we were with other parents going through the same experience."

This was the beginning of a long and rewarding connection to Gatepath.

Audra unexpectedly passed away just two weeks before her 12th birthday. Carolyn said her daughter left her with a gift -- the gift of being able to help other parents on a similar journey. Shortly after Audra's passing in 1994, Carolyn joined Gatepath as a parent mentor for the Family Resource Center and established the Cerebral Palsy Parent Support Group.

For the past 22 years, Carolyn has been raising her middle and youngest children while working at Gatepath in various positions. This year, Carolyn is earning her early childhood education credentials and is now working as an instructor at Gatepath's Learning Links Preschool, which is one of the only inclusive preschools in San Mateo County where children with and without special needs learn together.

"Gatepath has been a lifesaver for me and my family," Carolyn said. "I am doing what I love: helping children thrive."



Carolyn working with a child at Gatepath's Learning Links Preschool

CEO CORNER: MY FIRST HUNDRED DAYS AT GATEPATH



Bryan Neider, CEO

Since joining Gatepath last fall, I have been amazed to see first-hand the incredibly positive impact our organization has on the daily lives of so many children and adults with special needs and disabilities. I have been impressed by the passion the *entire* Gatepath community has for building a world where people of all abilities are fully included, respected and valued.

I have had the opportunity to spend time listening to and learning from the people we serve, staff, families, volunteers, donors, board members, Hillsborough Auxiliary members, government officials and many community partners. This has led me to focus on three key areas: our mission, our staff and ensuring we have the resources to deliver the highest quality programs to those we serve and their families.

Our Mission

Gatepath exists for one purpose: to empower people with special needs to achieve their full potential through innovative, inclusive programs and community partnerships. Our mission drives how we develop and refine our programs, from early intervention to our inclusive preschools to our adult education and employment programs. Our staff is committed to delivering on this mission. We are constantly evaluating ways to improve and innovate programs so they increase the potential and opportunities for every individual we serve.

Our Staff

Our passionate and dedicated team is the key ingredient in fulfilling our mission. Retaining highly skilled staff members can be difficult, especially in the Bay Area where the high cost of living can discourage talented individuals from pursuing a career in social services. However, it is my top priority to ensure that Gatepath is able to continue attracting and retaining energetic and caring team members. Together, we are transforming our community to fully embrace inclusion.

Resources

Our network is strong and capable, providing a resolute pillar of support for our mission. The unquestionable commitment of our donors has inspired the loyalty of corporate sponsors and the ever allegiant Hillsborough Auxiliary to Gatepath. This community of partnership has created a unique family that is devoted to creating new possibilities for children and adults with special needs.

Yet, the generosity of this network alone is not capable of closing the funding gap created by two decades of declining support from our state capitol. Our organization will continue taking a leadership role in expanding and extending collaboration with other service providers supporting people with special needs. As you may know, I have been actively engaged in statewide efforts to advocate on behalf of those we serve for a restoration of critically needed funding to California's developmental services system.

I am pleased to report that our voices were finally heard in Sacramento. On Tuesday, March 1, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a bill the state legislature unanimously passed, reinstating at least \$300 million of state funding for developmental disability services. You played a critical role in helping to reverse decades of neglect. It's important to note that our local legislators, State Assembly Member Kevin Mullin and State Senator Jerry Hill, understood the serious need of funding for our community and they were important champions of our cause. Together, we were able to raise awareness of the great need we face. And while this is a step in the right direction, more funding is still needed in the coming years to truly restore the billions of dollars taken from our system for more than a decade. Standing together, united to make a difference, we can once again make the "Lanterman Promise" a reality.

Continuing Our Legacy

For more than 95 years, Gatepath has been "*Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities.*" After my first hundred days, I'm more energized and inspired than ever to be part of an organization that's dedicated to delivering life-changing programs for children and adults, and to continuing that legacy into our 100-year anniversary in 2020. Thank you for being part of our community.

BON APPÉTIT – CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the adults in Gatepath's vocational programs strive to secure gainful employment in an inclusive setting where they can earn an income and add value to the workplace. This can be challenging when hiring managers often focus on a person's "disability" rather than seeing his or her "ability." Gatepath's job developers are persistently creating opportunities through new employment partnerships. However, Gatepath is occasionally contacted directly by a potential employer.

Last fall, Bon Appétit, which offers full food-service management to corporations throughout the Bay Area, approached Gatepath with a proposal for its café at Electronic Arts (EA). Gatepath has had a long-term partnership with EA, and the opportunity to work with one of their on-site partners is a true testament to the culture of inclusion being promoted throughout the company.

Bon Appétit was seeking a full-time employee to work in the café washing dishes, keeping the work space clean and tracking inventory. Gatepath took the opportunity presented and designed a way for more participants to benefit. What was initially a full-time job for one person blossomed into part-time jobs for eight people – all making minimum wage! One participant has even become the chef's go-to taste tester. The part-time work allows participants to spend the rest of their day developing skills through our Community Access program, where they learn how to manage money, navigate transportation, and promote self-advocacy.



Gatepath participants and their job coaches going to work at Bon Appétit

"The crew from Gatepath is a pleasure to work with. They listen to instructions carefully and do a great job. They are proud of the work they do. It has been a wonderful experience for the Bon Appétit team at EA to work with them. The Gatepath crew fits right in, and their smiles and friendly attitudes brighten up the kitchen every day," said Jon Hall, executive chef, Bon Appétit.

Employment partners like Bon Appétit and EA are critical to helping Gatepath build a world where people of all abilities are fully included, respected and valued. If you're interested in hiring a Gatepath participant at your business, please contact Patty Holm at 650-259-8528 or pholm@gatepath.org.

GIVING THANKS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Adults in Gatepath's Community Access program learning to make healthy sandwiches and salads

Gatepath extends a special THANK YOU to the following organizations for their recent generous support that will ensure the success and sustainability of the programs and special projects that help children, youth and adults with special needs and disabilities reach their full potential:

- Genentech
- Hillsborough Auxiliary to Gatepath
- The O'Donnell Foundation
- Peninsula Health Care District
- Sutter Health Mills-Peninsula Health Services

The gifts provided critical unrestricted support, as well as equipment for youth with autism to learn social and technical skills through filmmaking classes and an improved health education curriculum for adults. These programs and services would not be possible without their contributions and partnerships. Thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Sobrato Center for Nonprofits
350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 123
Redwood City, CA 94065
650-259-8500 | Gatepath.org

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Burlingame, CA
Permit No.19

March

- 13 **Caring Bunny**
- 14 Cerebral Palsy Support Group
- 16 Group de Apoyo Para Padres
- 18 Autism Social Connection's Hang Outs
- 19 Workshop: Use Your Imagination!

April Autism Social Awareness Month

- 5 Autism Support Group
- 11 Cerebral Palsy Support Group
- 15 Autism Social Connection's Hang Outs
- 20 Grupo de Apoyo Para Padres

May

- 3 Silicon Valley Gives
- 3 Autism Support Group
- 9 Cerebral Palsy Support Group

For more information visit: Gatepath.org/calendar

Stay Connected:     

SAVE THE DATE!

silicon valley
gives

May 3, 2016



On Tuesday, May 3, during Silicon Valley Gives, Gatepath will join hundreds of local nonprofits to unite the community in the act of giving. With your support, Gatepath can continue to empower children and adults with special needs to achieve their full potential through programs like those you will read about inside this newsletter.

Please join us in celebrating this day of giving when **contributions to Gatepath will be matched by a donor, up to \$20,000!** If you prefer to donate by mail, we invite you to use the enclosed envelope.

For more information or to schedule your donation, visit GiveToGatepath.org

