

Innisfree

VILLAGE VOICE
ANNUAL APPEAL 2013

Unexpected Empty Nest

by Ann Darby

Since Kevin came into our life my husband, Mike, and I have faced some very real challenges and times of emotional upheaval. Medical and educational professionals would describe Kevin as a young man with severe cerebral palsy and a severe communication disorder who functions with a moderate intellectual disability. His father and I would describe our thirty-two year old son as a determined and motivated young man who has surpassed every prediction made about his future!

Following his graduation from high school in the School-to-Work program, we were content with our comfortable routine until we began to think very seriously about Kevin's future without us. We felt it was crucial we be involved in helping him on the path to a successful future. We knew his needs, likes, dislikes, and hopes better than anyone. We made a list of what we believed Kevin wanted in life and what we felt was important for him. Then we held a family meeting and shared this list with close relatives. Our family was very receptive



Mom, Ann with Kevin at
Innisfree's 40th anniversary celebration



The Harmony Group explores Virginia Beach.

and immediately began to offer support.

When we visited Innisfree Village in Crozet, Virginia, we soon realized we had discovered a wonderful setting for Kevin's future. Innisfree Village is a life-sharing community with people with intellectual disabilities. Located on a 550-acre farm in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, members of the community participate in an active lifestyle. And coworkers—

those individuals with intellectual disabilities—live in family-style homes with volunteers from all over the world. Together, they work and live side by side.

During the tour, we felt sure we had found what could be a second home for Kevin in the distant future—but not any time soon. However, toward the end of that initial tour, Carolyn Ohle, Executive Director of Innisfree, pointedly asked, “Why not now?” She went on to explain that Innisfree seeks to be a community of individuals of varying ages and abilities. Moreover, experience has shown that new residents are better able to make the adjustment when they are younger and there is no family crisis necessitating the

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Kevin and his dad, Mike with the farm truck

move to Innisfree. Having family members actively involved and supporting the resident through all the changes is crucial to the transition. Carolyn's statements made sense, and intellectually, we could accept them. But begin a transition now? We weren't sure we were ready for that!

After discussing this new concept with family and close friends, we decided to begin the transition. This past March, at the conclusion of his six month trial, Kevin was welcomed as a member of the community. Kevin seems content with going "back and forth" between our home in Beckley, West Virginia and his home at Innisfree. He works on the farm, in the vegetable garden and helping to prepare lunch in the community center. He participates in physical training in a fully equipped gym and receives physical therapy. He takes regular rides on his adapted tricycle around the village. Kevin shares meals in other houses, attends church regularly, and enjoys movies, athletic events, storytelling competitions, and concerts in Crozet and nearby

Charlottesville. His life is rich and full.

Kevin calls us most nights and lets us have a peek into his new adult life. One night, he kept saying the same two words over and over, getting louder and louder. Finally we understood—he was saying "raw

fish." He had been out to dinner and had sushi for the first time!

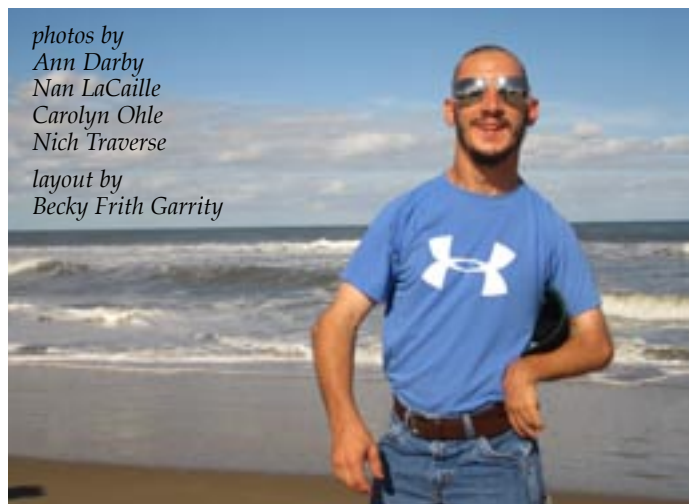
There continue to be many firsts at Innisfree; and he will continue to have them as he lives, works, and plays in this wonderful community. We are grateful to the group of parents who envisioned a beautiful community in which each individual is valued and respected. They courageously pursued their dream until it became a reality in 1971 when Innisfree was established. We are so pleased and thankful that our son's future is now entwined with this dynamic village.



Maggie and Emma, who love our village pottery, have been day coworkers at Innisfree for six years. In November, they too will be leaving their home nest and coming to live in our newly renovated home, Halcyon.

*photos by
Ann Darby
Nan LaCaille
Carolyn Ohle
Nich Traverse*

*layout by
Becky Frith Garrity*



Noah Clay— Summer Farmhand

by Nich Traverse

Alright man... let's rock and roll!" Then with a hop and a swing, Noah Clay, age 11, would be sitting beside me in the utility vehicle, ready to go to work. For someone who had no idea what he was getting into, he always launched into it with a smile on his face. From digging ditches, to fixing fences, to sifting soil samples—Noah was ready to give it a go. He tried many new things this summer and came away with the battle scars to prove it. Near the end of the summer, I smiled to hear Noah say, "I really like farming... you get to do something new every day!"
Nich: "Yeah man, just wait till tomorrow!"
Noah: "Really? What are we doing tomorrow?"
Nich: "I have no idea... but I bet it'll be cool."



Then, through a small fit of giggles, we'd set out to move cows, or build H-braces, or something else 'real cool'.

Thanks for an awesome summer Noah!



Summer Volunteer, Mary Fried was a delight. She helped us maintain the pool, even leading a water aerobic class one week. She rotated through many work stations but the best, according to Uncle Jon was having Mary join us each day for lunch in our Community Center.

WISHLIST 2013

Innisfree is looking for a healthy, low mileage 6-8 person van with lots of fun left in it!

Please contact

VILLAGEDIRECTOR@innisfreevillage.org

if we can help you

reduce the congestion in your driveway.



"I'm happy and proud to be working with my son, Nich on the farm. Our multi-generational farm-family legacy is important to us and we enjoy sharing it with everyone at Innisfree."

—Peter Traverse

New Gardener, Old Friend

by Trisha Costello

Every summer the vegetable garden crew has a new face. While there are a good number of us who have been around for many a bean pickin' and many a wheelbarrow full of compost, many faces are new, whether they be our summer interns or new house volunteers. This summer, we had a new gardener, but hardly a new face. In fact we have enjoyed Leah Marshall at Innisfree since she

was born in 1997. Her first few years were spent every day in the weavery with Miriam. She went off to school in 2001 and since then she and her sister Talia have been part of the summer kids scene at Innisfree, with their central hub in the weavery. But this summer Leah was ready for a change. She said she wanted to

work in the vegetable gardens.

And work she did. Anything from pea picking in the rain to running the salad mix washing station, from hilling corn to trellising tomatoes for hours on end, Leah was on board. All done at the same time she was sharing hugs with Stephen or talking to Angelica about what was for dinner. Leah was an eager learner who worked always with her eyes and heart open, her hands busy but never too hard at work to



marvel at the beauties on any given day in the gardens.

Leah came in as an unseasoned gardener perhaps, but hardly unseasoned to the "Innisfree way." She did not come to Innisfree having to learn community life or community skills

like most other new volunteers. She has lived and breathed them every day of her life. We are so grateful for all her work, her smiles, and willingness to do almost anything (even if it involved being near slugs!).



**COME TO THE INNISFREE VILLAGE
Holiday Open House**

**DECEMBER 7TH
10AM—5PM**

**Wreath-making workshop • Refreshments
Tours of Innisfree Village
Children's activities
Crafts for sale from our weavery, woodshop,
pottery, bakery, and gardens**

**Advance registration and fee required for workshop.
For more information or to register call 434-823-5646.**

