The Victory Voice

The Victory Academy Newsletter





Oregon's only year-round, accredited school for children, teens, and young adults affected by Autism and related learning differences

Edition IX
Summer 2024

Dear Victory Academy Supporters—

It is hard to believe, but Victory hit exciting new milestones again this year, beginning with a record-breaking MILLION-DOLLAR fundraiser in October 2023. The event truly was an astonishing display of generosity, made possible by Victory's giving, loyal, and loving community. This momentum continued forward with the Week of Victory (over $130,000 raised for financial aid) and the Subaru Share the Love Event ($44,000 dedicated to therapeutic programs). Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

In addition, we express our deepest gratitude to all the people involved in bringing the new Compass building to life. Even with a tight 98-day construction timeline and a healthy 1.6-million-dollar price tag, this community has rallied together and pushed this project forward. In September 2024, Victory is proud to fling open the doors of Compass, a robust day program for young adults with Autism and related learning differences. The Compass building will also be home to classes, gatherings, and evening events—extending services to local young adults seeking fun, companionship, and opportunity.

Fifteen years ago, Victory started in one room with eight students. Going into its sixteenth school year, we have filled every nook and cranny of Victory with students, staff, parents, volunteers, family members, dogs, chickens, birds, gardens, and more! As corny as it sounds, Victory truly is a delightfully messy, authentic, wacky place, with hope and love around every corner.

What a joy-filled adventure Victory has been so far! Year Sixteen, here we come!

With Heartfelt Gratitude,

Tricia Hasbrook + Thea Schreiber
Co-Founders and Directors









Graduation Profiles 2024



ALEX SCHMIDT

Alex has been a member of the Victory community since his kindergarten year in 2010. Over the past fourteen years, Alex has developed an interest in astronomy, largely thanks to one of his favorite teachers, Johnny Holliday, Math and Science Specialist. Alex has held many different Work Experience positions during his high school years. His first job was at the Wilsonville Library, and he currently works at both Graham & Tooze Farm (collecting and packaging eggs) and Wilsonville Parks & Recreation (landscaping). After graduation, Alex plans to attend Clackamas Community College, where he hopes to **"learn some more science-type stuff."** While he's excited about his future, Alex says he'll miss his friends at Victory, especially his fellow graduate, Jack.



AIDAN FLORES

Aidan started at Victory when he was 12 years old. Over the last nine years, Aidan says he has most enjoyed exploring various art mediums, singing in the choir, and participating in his high school class, Hickory. In addition, Aidan also especially likes **"learning economy stuff."** Aidan's enthusiasm and joy truly extend into everything he does. He says there isn't a single recreation activity that he didn't enjoy, including dancing, swimming, hiking, and playing baseball! Aidan is excited about the graduation ceremony and looks forward to everything at this milestone event—the food, photos with his family and friends, and receiving his diploma. After graduation, Aidan will join Victory's post-graduate program, Compass, where he will continue to shine bright.



BAILEY SANDERS

Bailey began her journey at Victory in 2014. She cherishes her weekly Recreation activities and Community-Based Instruction outings. Bailey is also a proud member of the Victory choir, led by one of her favorite teachers, Magen Dignan. Out of all her Work Experience positions through the years, Bailey says Killer Burger is the most fun. In thinking about graduation, Bailey hopes to make Andrea Hackett, Speech Language Pathologist, shed a tear when she walks across the stage to receive her diploma. Bailey is still exploring her plans for after graduation, but one thing is certain: She's going to miss all her friends at Victory, **"especially Kyle!"**



JACK BRODY

Jack joined Victory in September 2016 at the age of 11. Jack says he's had a wonderful time during his nine Victory years, with a huge emphasis on **"doing science with Johnny Holliday, music with Magen Dignan, recreation/swimming with Shannon Miller Drake, and time with Melissa Winter (his teacher) and Casey Rockmore (Speech Language Pathologist)."** As graduation approaches, Jack is excited to wear his cap and gown. After he receives his diploma, Jack plans to take some time off and then hopes to pursue his dream job at Disney World as a ride operator. Although he'll miss his friends and teachers at Victory, Jack eagerly anticipates living in the warm, humid, Florida air.



TYLA PARSONS

In September of 2016, Tyla joined Victory; she was just 13 years old. Tyla emphatically says Recreation is her favorite class, taught by Shannon Miller Drake. Tyla also loves watching the Victory chickens in their coop, working at Graham & Tooze Farm Store, putting together puzzles, and spending time with her friends. Tyla will miss the entire Victory community and staff, most especially her teachers, Katie Staton and Jude Venti, along with Speech Language Pathologist, Andrea Hackett. Tyla is **"excited to wear her cap and gown"** during the graduation ceremony and is ready to meet new people when her time at Victory is complete.



For the Love of Art!





Victory's art room and adjacent outdoor patio form a collective hub of color, creativity, and energy—spaces that support the diverse interests and talents of Victory's student body. Specifically, Victory's art program welcomes and encourages all student artists to make a mess, try and try again, and embrace the process!

Sarah Slegers, Victory's Art Specialist, shares her love of art with every Victory class; they visit Sarah and the art spaces twice weekly. In addition to these designated classroom times, Sarah also works with students one-to-one, using varied art forms (for instance, painting, sketching, manipulating clay, and more) as both therapeutic and sensory tools. Moreover, Sarah provides concrete instruction to those artists in her Studio Class; these individuals are keen to advance their crafts and hone their talents. For example, one young man is a gifted drawer, who uses The Statue of Liberty as his central figure. Sarah works with him to develop his ideas further and to expand color and detail.

Sarah claims that one highlight of the art curriculum (during the 2023–2024 school year) has been adventuring out of our own comfort zone and trying new mediums with her students, including constructing handmade paper. Sarah comments, **"It's so cool to see all of the students—across the different classrooms and with diverse skill levels—participate in the same project."**

Victory's art program also finds itself intertwined with nature itself. The school's newest garden, located behind the art patio, inspires students to incorporate dried flowers, leaves, and even dirt into their artwork--leading to some stunning, unique drawings and crafts. This connection to the outside environment has added a whole new dimension to art at Victory.

Overall, Victory's art program is thriving, as Sarah offers students a space to unleash their creativity and authentically express themselves!





Victory's Trifecta of Therapeutic Animals

For students with Autism and related learning differences, navigating day-to-day life can oftentimes feel daunting and overwhelming. Over the years, the Victory Team has witnessed the profound effects of integrating animals into everyday routines. Currently, Victory's therapeutic animal community includes three service dogs, twelve chickens, and several horses (through our partnership with Forward Stride). This eclectic group of animals provides endless amounts of love, emotional support, comfort, and joy—along with other bonus benefits.





DOGS

Since Victory opened its doors in 2009, the school has "employed" multiple dogs as honorary staff members, and this year is no exception. **Sam, Tillie, and Theo**, all Golden Retrievers, currently make up Victory's beloved, hard-working canine trio.

Sam is the newest team member, joining Victory in July 2023. Sam spends much of his day with Victory's **Music Therapist and Teacher, Magen Dignan**. During music class, Sam can be found wandering around the circle of students, offering a reassuring paw or an encouraging, wet kiss. Sam's interactions are organic, and his intuition is remarkable: He senses the students who need him the most and stays with them until they feel better. When Sam is "off duty", he can be found on his bed in the main office—close to his "mom", **Tricia Hasbrook**—where staff, students, and visitors frequently stop by for some Sam-love and snuggles.

Tillie is Victory's other full-time canine staffer; she spends most of her time in Hazel, one of Victory's high school classrooms. These students love having Tillie as part of their crew. **Coleman, (age 15)**, shares that he likes to pet Tillie because she's comforting, and another student, **Wil (age 17)**, reveals that Tillie brings laughter to their PE class when she helps to "fetch" balls. The entire Hazel class also finds comic relief in Tillie's intense interest in squirrels and moles, as well her "borrowing" of shoes and carrying them around the classroom. The students all agree that caring for Tillie is an honor and delight!

Finally, **Theo** rounds out this service-oriented dog trio. Theo arrived at Victory in July 2019, quickly showing his innate ability to facilitate communication and social interactions between students. Theo is a true social "magnet", and his very presence brings kids of all ages together. In fact, many Victory students like to take Theo on walk-abouts, and several students have overcome their intense fear of dogs by spending time with this sweet, gentle, golden guy. Theo is a love.





CHICKENS

In spring 2023, after many years of dreaming about adding some feathered friends to the campus, Victory's Chicken Project + Club officially launched—with endless benefits. **Animal lover and teacher, Drew LeMar**, teaches all Victory students how to handle and care for chickens (from the incubation stage through maturity), including feeding, bathing, nurturing, and exercising them. In addition, Victory students learn responsibility and build their chicken skills by gathering, packaging, and selling eggs. Over the past year, two Victory high schoolers and chicken interns, **Heath and Jack**, have stepped up and willingly assumed additional responsibilities. With Drew's guidance, Heath now provides weekly instruction to elementary students during **Chicken Club**, and his confidence has soared! Jack, on the other hand, enjoys feeding and watering Victory's chicken friends, even volunteering his time before school starts to complete these important tasks.

HORSES

The horses at Forward Stride round out Victory's therapeutic animal community. Over the past three years, Victory has partnered with **Forward Stride** to offer access to these large, gentle animals. This year, two of our elementary classes head offsite every Thursday to the Forward Stride stables for a variety of hands-on opportunities. For instance, students practice caring for the horses, including petting, grooming, feeding, and cleaning stalls. Furthermore, students learn how to safely interact with their horse friends and joyfully play fun memory games, such as "name this part of the horse". Finally, Victory students also practice a variety of gross motor planning skills, as it takes many steps to successfully mount and ride a horse. Talk about a true "hooves on" experience!







Navigating A Full Life

The "Services Cliff" is something special needs families hear about almost as soon as their child is diagnosed. Most do not understand what this "Cliff" means—until their child turns eighteen. **Then, everything changes.** Families scramble to find new doctors to manage their children's health needs. They dive into the confusing world of Social Security and begin long-term financial planning (special needs trusts). They try to make sense of guardianships and powers of attorney to ensure overall safety. Finally, they apply for support via county services (if they don't have them already) and look for a "personal support worker", a mythical caregiver no one knows how to find. In the end, families navigate through all these varied and complicated pieces and are still left with endless time and open days. Specifically, most young adults with autism do not go directly to college or work a full-time job. **There is no next step after traditional school ends. There is just the Cliff.**

In response to this Cliff, Victory launched **Compass** in September 2023, a program where young adults with Autism can come every day to continue building their skill sets, under the guidance of trained teachers and coaches. Compass participants meal plan, shop, and cook together. They continue practicing social skills, building relationships, and managing themselves in the community. They also engage in group games, Book Club, and discussions about current events. Participants have gym memberships, where they learn about work-out etiquette and fitness. In addition, they learn valuable lessons on personal finance, first aid, and how to stay home alone (when appropriate).

Furthermore, Compass participants spend a great deal of time "job training". **Nationwide, individuals with autism have an 85% unemployment rate—a staggering waste**





of human potential. Victory's Compass Program emphatically wants to impact change in this area. This year, Compass participants started two of their own businesses: **Compass Greens** and **Compass Dash.** Compass Greens involves a partnership with Victory's long-time supporter, Caruso Produce. Compass participants run a successful produce box delivery service; they market, take orders, assemble produce boxes, and deliver to customers in surrounding neighborhoods. At the end of each week, participants make a trip to the local food bank to donate any leftovers. Compass Dash is a popular lunch order and delivery business for Victory staff, who no longer need to leave campus to find a meal. Compass participants coordinate staff orders, pick them up from area restaurants, and deliver, learning life skills in the community along the way.

It is critical to note that all six members of the inaugural Compass crew hold jobs outside of Victory. They have both paid positions and internships at McDonald's, Killer Burger, Subaru, and Countryside Nursery. Compass job coaches help with training at each site, supporting Compass participants and helping them understand all elements of their job tasks. In addition, the job coaches provide training to employers and co-workers, ensuring positive experiences for all. Once both parties feel confident and prepared, job coaches gradually fade to the background, offering the least amount of support possible. And now, some Compass participants go to work entirely by themselves!

While Compass focuses primarily on the program's young adults, staff know that families also need education, guidance, and support. To that end, Compass staff hold monthly parent meetings to discuss personal goals and

how to achieve them. The Compass team also help families access county services, including hiring and training personal support workers. **Most importantly, they provide families a place to come with questions that no one else can answer—a place to celebrate victories that other people may not even recognize.**

Compass' first year has been remarkable, but its second will be even bigger! In September 2024, Compass will move from a portable building into its own, beautiful building on the Victory campus. **Thanks to the generous support of its donor community, Victory successfully raised 1.6 million dollars, enabling the school to break ground on the Compass building this past April.** Due to the creative talents and dedication of James Meyer, Opsis Architecture, and Precision Construction, the new Compass building will boast over 2,000 square feet of light-filled, purposeful workspaces and rooms—a true testament to Victory's commitment to serving adults with autism and related learning differences. The Compass building will allow the program to grow in enrollment and to act as a local community center, a hub for afternoon classes and evening events.

To be clear, disability does not end at eighteen or twenty-one, but services almost always do. There is no roadmap for building a life for a young adult with autism. The process is confusing; the resources are inadequate; and the stakes are high. There is no one to ask for help, and parents feel isolated and uncertain. With the right support, these incredible individuals have a great deal to offer, and they deserve to live as full a life as anyone else. **That is why Compass exists: To help every family and their cherished child find their way down the Cliff to a life of purpose, dignity, and meaning.**





Compass Capital Campaign

We are Grateful for our Lead Compass Donors

Anonymous (Victory Grandparents)	$500,000.00
Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation	$400,000.00
Anonymous	$176,000.00
Erin & David Drinkward	$110,000.00
jtmf Foundation	$100,000.00
HEDCO Foundation	$72,500.00

We Thank all of our Compass Donors

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The Marble Center

Staff Profiles



SHARON GAVRILOVIC

Sharon Gavrilovic came to Victory in 2022 as the school's full-time Occupational Therapist. Sharon says she could not resist the opportunity to join the Victory Team! At Victory, Sharon has been able to call upon her work experiences at a pediatric clinic (specializing in sensory processing disorders) to enhance her understanding of students in a school environment. She says, "Discovering a school where daily life skills are incorporated into the structure and as part of the curriculum was too good to pass up."

Sharon has been impressed with the amount of support Victory provides for students and their families. She shares, "I knew helping kids and parents was important to the Victory staff and a part of Victory's core values, but to see all these supports in action is truly amazing. I don't know any other school that works so hard to help their learners and families succeed."

Sharon utilizes a sensory-based approach when teaching life skills—while strategically weaving imaginative play and creative fun into her sessions. She also encourages students to be involved in their own learning, and Sharon takes their lead whenever possible. Her primary goal is to guide students in their personal journey to functional independence, recognizing that no two learners are the same and each student's success will be their own story. Sharon is innovative with her sessions, teaching (with joy) skills such as brushing teeth, tying shoes, visualizing, and core strengthening. She comments, "My hope is that through the creative process, Victory's kids will be motivated to implement strategies outside of our sessions."

She is looking forward to continuing to learn from Victory staff and students, who continue to teach her about flexibility and spontaneity. "At Victory, I've learned that when a team of skilled, dedicated, and compassionate people work together, life-changing things happen."

In her free time, Sharon loves hanging out with her large family, attending church, and traveling to visit friends and loved ones in other states. She also enjoys arts and crafts, including wood burning, painting, arranging flowers, and making handmade gifts.



JADE REY

Jade Rey joined Victory in August of 2017 and immediately felt like he had found his work "home". For the past eight years, Jade has worked in a variety of roles, including Teaching Assistant, Support Teacher, Lead teacher, and Facilities Manager. He currently acts as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and is a Co-Lead teacher of an elementary classroom. Jade especially appreciates the feeling of family amongst the team. He notes, "It is such a collaborative staff, all who deeply care about the students in this school. I find it so amazing to walk down the hallway and see all the teaching and learning that is going on. From gardening out on the playground, to woodshed and classroom projects, each room is working on meaningful, important things."

One of Jade's main goals is to provide a solid foundation of skills (academic, emotional, and social) for each one of his students. Jade approaches skill-building and learning through a mix of traditional instruction and project-based learning. He finds that his students especially love engaging with projects: Digging in the garden beds, setting up and filling bird feeders, constructing and running a barista cart—and more!

Jade is also enthusiastic about helping his students cultivate lasting friendships. He says, "I love providing fun opportunities for the students to practice talking and sharing with their friends through game play, physical activity, and academic lessons." Jade looks forward to spending each day with his students. Jade shares, "The students come in with a smile on their faces, ready to learn and to take on the world. Seeing the constant progress and growth is the best feeling ever."

When Jade is not at Victory, he can be found with his wife and two young children exploring the Portland area. They are frequent flyers at the Lake Oswego Farmer's Market and local area garden stores.



Victory's Community Partners

Victory Academy is thankful for our incredible 2023–2024 Community Partners!



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Graham & Tooze Farm

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(Wilsonville + West Linn)

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(Wilsonville + Scholls Ferry)

New Seasons (Tualatin)

OrePac Building Products

Ride the West

Wilsonville Library

Wilsonville Parks &
Recreation Department

Wilsonville Subaru





Boogie Down!









Our middle and high school students boogied the night away at this year's **Spring Formal** on Friday, May 3. The event featured carnival activities, dancing, dinner, and more! A fun time was had by all!









Victory Is Grateful To Our 2023 Donors

Your generous support makes a lasting difference!

*Donation timeframe is January 1–December 31, 2023

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Important Dates

JULY 8
Victory Summer Session Begins

JULY 22, 24, 26
Middle + High School Day Camp, Camp Collins

JULY 25, 29
Elementary Day Camp, Frog Pond Farm

AUGUST 7
High School Graduation

AUGUST 8
Last Day of 2023–2024 School Year

SEPTEMBER 3
First Day of 2024–2025 School Year

OCTOBER 19
Victory's Annual Auction + Fundraiser: Sweet Sixteen

NOVEMBER 2024–JANUARY 2025
Share the Love Event
(Wilsonville Subaru)

DECEMBER 18
Winter Program

APRIL 21–25, 2025
A Week of Victory!

JUNE 8, 2025
Food Truck Party



