



an update for *friends* of Meeting Street

FALL/WINTER 2011

# HANDS ON!



Meeting Street

## Anything is possible!

*By Travis' Mom*

When Travis was 18-months-old he was diagnosed with a rare disorder known as caudal regression syndrome. With this syndrome came many obstacles that both Travis and our family had to overcome. His ability to crawl was nonexistent, Travis was being seen by many doctors and therapists. Many believed that Travis would never be able to walk with or without assistance, and none of these experts were able to give Travis the care or kind of services he needed.

It was at this time that our pediatrician suggested Meeting Street. After listening to our pediatrician and doing some research, I knew that Meeting Street would be a place that could really help Travis. We enrolled Travis in the Early Intervention program at Meeting Street which meant that the team would come to our home and give us and Travis the tools we all needed.

### Meeting Street Services:

PT, Speech, Education, Group

### Time at Meeting Street:

1 ½ years

### Challenges:

Caudal regression syndrome type 1, Sacral/Coccyx hypoplasia, Cleft palate and lip

### Milestones:

Travis can now walk on his own, a major accomplishment for him because other professionals weren't sure if he would ever be able to walk

### Travis' Personality:

Determined, patient, independent, outgoing, loving

### What he enjoys most:

Reading, being outdoors, going to the beach, he loves sharks (though not swimming with them)

At first we made some realistic/minimal goals for Travis, not knowing if he would be able to meet or exceed them based on his condition; but we all continued to move forward with high hopes. There were programs put in place for Travis' needs. Now, being here for almost 2 years, we have found that Meeting Street makes possibilities a reality! Travis has far exceeded his goals and expectations. Travis is now walking, jumping, and moving quite gracefully. His legs have grown to be much stronger than we ever thought they could be, and his balance is much steadier than it was.

Meeting Street has helped our family immensely. Meeting Street has helped us learn different ways to cope with Travis' condition because they work with us as a family, not just on Travis alone. We are given different strategies to work on throughout the week to help Travis progress even when his therapists are not here. Meeting Street has taught our family that anything is possible!

## Travis

Age: 2 ½, Early Intervention



Travis takes a break from therapy to smile big for the camera

In order to stay green and save some green, Meeting Street will now be publishing two newsletters per year instead of three...To stay up to date on news and events throughout the year please visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org) and become a fan of Meeting Street on Facebook.



## Lily's Triumph

Watching sixteen-year-old Lily walk around Meeting Street, it is hard to believe just a short time ago that she was facing the biggest challenge of her life. Lily came to Meeting Street right after birth and was enrolled in our Early Intervention program that works with families and their children under the age of 3 in their home. As a baby, she had extra fluid in her brain, which caused some developmental delays. Since then, Lily has made tremendous strides at Meeting Street, but her newest challenge came two years ago when a shunt in her brain gave way and she lost most of her vision.

Despite such a tremendous setback, Lily persevered. As a student in The Carter School, she still did all of her homework and continued to keep up in class. Lily's favorite activity in the classroom is reading, and when she could no longer read her favorite books, a special television was donated to Meeting Street so Lily could magnify the pages. Now, Lily loves to read and write stories of her own.

Outside of the classroom, there is one thing she looks forward to all week: her trip to the local Dunkin' Donuts. Lily expertly navigates the route by using her cane, only needing assistance from her guide and low vision specialist, Brendan Foley, while crossing streets. When she arrives at Dunkin' Donuts, she walks in and orders her apple pie all on her own, smiling the whole time. The staff at Dunkin' Donuts always look forward to Lily's visits and welcomes her by name.

Lily's warm, loving personality and her charming sense of humor have made her many friends at Meeting Street, and everyone is so excited to see what is in store for her next. Her independence and determination are truly inspiring and ensure her a very, very bright future.

### Lily

Age: 16, 11th Grade in The Carter School



Lily works on her independence each week as she walks with her cane.

**Meeting Street Services:**  
Special Education – The Carter School

**Time at Meeting Street:**  
16 Years

**Challenges:**  
Developmental delays, visually impaired

**Milestones:**  
Navigating her surroundings and becoming more independent following her loss of vision

**Lily's Personality:**  
Warm, fun-loving, polite, curious, headstrong, a great friend

**What she enjoys most:**  
Reading any book or short story she can get her hands on

## WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Meeting Street kicked off another school year with an exciting Back to School Celebration. The event was filled with fun as students and staff cheered for the new year! Meeting Street friends, Mike Montecalvo and Susan Roberts of WPRI -12, were on hand hosting the celebration and welcoming all of our students back to school. John Carter was in attendance on behalf of himself and his wife, Letitia for the successful conclusion of the Carter Challenge.



# Mark Your Calendars! The 2012 Telethon is Coming!

The 36th Annual Meeting Street Telethon, presented by Cardi's Furniture, airs January 28th on WPRI-12 from 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

Once again, talent from WPRI-12 will host this year's Telethon at Meeting Street's campus. Our four-hour show will include an inside look at Meeting Street, with special segments featuring children in Meeting Street's programs and live interviews with Meeting Street families.

## Tune in to meet some of our Meeting Street children!



Meeting Street is grateful to Cardi's Furniture and WPRI-12 for their continued leadership of this signature event. We also want to thank Citizens Bank, the Telethon online auction sponsor, as well as our first corporate sponsor who has signed on to date: The Amica Insurance Company.

The annual Telethon is Meeting Street's most important fundraising event of the year! Help support these amazing kids! To donate during the Telethon, you can call 1-888-289-1299 or donate online by going to [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org).

One of the most exciting aspects of the Meeting Street Telethon is the Citizens Bank online auction. Dozens of items are up for bid. The pre-holiday auction will be open from December 1st through December 16th and the Telethon Online Auction will open January 3rd and close the night of the Telethon.

Go to [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org) and place a bid or watch the bidding throughout the telecast. If you want to donate an item to the auction or are interested in helping out in any other way, please contact Aimee Harvey, Director of Special Events, at 401-533-9119 or email her at [aharvey@meetingstreet.org](mailto:aharvey@meetingstreet.org).



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## A Generous Legacy



Arthur Audette has a longstanding history with Meeting Street – going back to his days as a student in the 1950s. He and his wife, Patricia, were parents to Danielle Rose who passed away in November 2009 at the age of 29. After her untimely death, the Audettes were approached by a number of Danielle's friends and colleagues telling them how kind and generous she was and how she always helped people in need. It was this desire to continue Danielle's good works that led them to create the Danielle Rose Audette Memorial Fund at Meeting Street.

The Danielle Rose Audette Memorial Fund benefits the Meeting Street Library – a place that hundreds of children and families use every year. "Books provided many adventures for Danielle. She experienced faraway places, became anyone or anything she wanted to be, learned about new things, and connected with best sellers and award-winning books without ever leaving her comfort zone. All children should be given the opportunity to reach their own potential, and books can help them get there," states Patricia. The joy on children's faces reading books and using equipment donated by the fund is a true testament to the Audettes' generosity of spirit and love of Meeting Street.

To find out more about legacy gifts and the impact they can have on Meeting Street, contact Sara Masri, Director of Major and Planned Gifts, at 533-9235 or email her at [smasri@meetingstreet.org](mailto:smasri@meetingstreet.org).

## New Faces at Meeting Street!



Margaret Knowlton  
*Head of The Grace School*



Susan Stambler  
*Sr. Director of School Age Services*



Vanessa Samuelson  
*Director of Outcomes*



Andrea Riquetti-Salvatore  
*Director of Olneyville  
Early Childhood Initiative*



### The Grinch

Meeting Street hosted a special guest all the way from Whoville! Welcomed with both screams and cheers, The Grinch took a break from his show at PPAC and traveled to Meeting Street to say hello to all of our students.



### Trick or Treat!

Meeting Street's annual Halloween parade was a howling good time, as one of the students' and staff's favorite event of the year. Everyone dressed in their most creative costumes and paraded through the halls. Thank you to Mike Montecalvo and Susan Roberts, our parade marshalls, as well as all friends and Board members of Meeting Street who came to pass out treats!



### Pumpkin Patch

Kindergarten students in The Grace School took an exciting field trip to Confreda Farm for a hayride and story time. Each student was able to pick their very own pumpkin to bring home. Kids couldn't wait to bring their pumpkins back to decorate!

# Meeting Street Happenings

Join us for these events, help us raise funds, and have a great time doing it. For more information on upcoming events, visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org). Mark your calendar!

## Meeting Street Awarded Early Learning Grant

Research shows that when children have excellent early learning opportunities they are more prepared to succeed in school. That is why we are pleased to be a recipient of an Early Learning Mentor grant from the Office of Head Start. We are working in conjunction with East Bay Community Action Early Program's Early Head Start home visitors and classroom teachers and early childhood mentor-coaches from Ready to Learn Providence.

Participants are working on creating positive educational and learning climates in homes and in classrooms, and improve their knowledge of early literacy, language development, and cognitive and social-emotional development. The grant supports regular mentor-coaching sessions, professional development, college level coursework, and the creation of a supportive community of early childhood educators. Each home visitor and teacher develops a Learning Plan that details their personal professional development goals and tracks the application of what they learn to classrooms and homes.

Meeting Street is committed to employing highly skilled professionals and providing opportunities for ongoing growth and development for all of its employees; development that will benefit all the Early Head Start children and families we work with.

### MEETING STREET IS HIRING!

As Meeting Street continues to grow and thrive, we continue to have great job opportunities! There are rewarding positions available for Mental Health Clinicians, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists and many other professionals.

People who work at Meeting Street love it because they know their work changes the lives of children and families every day. Employees also receive incredible benefits, generous paid time-off, and the chance to work with other high quality professionals. Every day is a learning experience! For more information on our current job openings, please go to [meetingstreet.org](http://meetingstreet.org)

### Compassion for a Meeting Street child like



**aaron**

is practiced every day in his inclusive 2nd grade class

## Many Ways to Help Meeting Street

Autumn is the Kickoff time for workplace campaigns. Does your office have a workplace giving campaign? Designate your gift to Meeting Street! You can give through the Combined Federal Campaign (**Code 96362**), the State Employees Charitable Appeal (**Code 4160**) or through the United Way. In addition many companies will match your donation to Meeting Street – ask your HR Department!

### UPCOMING MEETING STREET EVENTS

#### OCTOBER – DECEMBER

#### Meeting Street Holiday Cards Available

#### NOVEMBER

12 **Providence Roller Derby at the RI Convention Center @ 7 pm**

Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com)

Portion of the proceeds will be donated to Meeting Street.

13 **Citizens Bank Newport Pell Bridge Run**

#### DECEMBER

1 - 16 **Meeting Street Pre-Holiday Online Auction**

#### JANUARY

3 - 28 **Meeting Street Telethon Online Auction**

28 **The 36th Annual Meeting Street Telethon & Auction**

7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

#### APRIL

**Week of the Young Child**

#### MAY

**Science Fair**

**Meeting Street Family Fair**

#### JUNE

**The Carter School Prom**

**Meeting Street Graduation**



## Meeting Street

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Providence, RI 02905

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Melting your heart is easy for a Meeting Street child like



danica

who is learning how to walk in Early Intervention.

# WHERE EVERY CHILD THRIVES.

## Help! Every Donation Counts

Every donation makes a difference in supporting Meeting Street and our students. Especially with major state budget cuts and hard economic times, every dollar matters. Meeting Street is proud that close to 90 cents of every dollar goes directly to support children and families. Please consider a donation today. Below are some examples of what your generosity means to Meeting Street.

- \$25** – Adaptive art supplies for a classroom project
- \$50** – Books on CD for our library collection
- \$100** – Alterations to a bike that lets a child with special needs ride with his friends
- \$250** – Sends 8 students for one week of Hippotherapy (therapeutic horseback riding)
- \$500** – Purchases a communication instrument to help a non-verbal child express his or her emotions, thoughts, or just talk with his/her friends.

To make a donation, please visit [www.meetingstreet.org](http://www.meetingstreet.org)  
*Thank you for your support!*

## Meeting Street is on Facebook!



and we want you to become one of our fans! Join us today!

## Sign Up for Meeting Street's Online Community!

- Sign up for e-news
- Make a gift
- View your donation history
- View upcoming events

## Email Connections

Meeting Street wants to share our news with you via email. It makes it easier to send you quick updates. It saves the agency money, and it saves trees! Please send your email to: [jcanole@meetingstreet.org](mailto:jcanole@meetingstreet.org).

*Don't worry....we won't bombard you with information – just news you can use.*

# HANDS ON!

Hands On! is published to keep in touch with friends of Meeting Street. Each issue highlights our services, support and activities, and celebrates the accomplishments of the children, young adults and families we serve. Forward your comments and suggestions to: John Canole, editor, at 401-533-9238 or email him at [jcanole@meetingstreet.org](mailto:jcanole@meetingstreet.org).