



YOU LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR **WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIPS**



Marda and Rachele

A love of fashion and formal events brought Kiara and Marda together and your support provided them with an evening of beautiful dresses, tiaras and the chance to make some amazing memories. FM Café, also funded by your generosity, and their love of music and lights, helped solidify a connection between Rachele and Marda.

These events, made possible by your donation, became the foundation for friendships that are carrying these women through the isolation of the pandemic.



Kiara, Rachele and Marda enjoying mimosas

In late 2019, St. Amant support staff Michelle recognized some shared interests between two women supported in the Community Residential Program. Initially, Marda and Kiara were introduced to each other over FaceTime and they quickly found common ground. Marda told Kiara about the Princess Ball she was going to and extended an invitation to her.

This was the beginning of a friendship that has blossomed over the past year.

Marda and Kiara had a wonderful time at the ball! It not only brought them joy that evening, but it was a beautiful start to a new friendship. They sometimes reminisce about the night they were princesses.

In the last year, these women have shared birthday celebrations, visits to the beach, mimosas and much more. As COVID



Kiara and Marda at Princess Ball

restrictions increased, gatherings shifted online. They have shared Thanksgiving dinner, Galentine's Day brunch and celebrated Kiara's birthday, all over Zoom.

Unfortunately, while FM Café is on hold due to gathering size restrictions and the 2021 fundraising ball has been cancelled, these women are looking forward to getting together again when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, their friendship continues to grow and their connections have provided important virtual touchpoints during the pandemic lockdowns.

Thank you!

YOU MADE A WONDERFUL DIFFERENCE IN 2020!

YOU BROUGHT JOY TO JENNA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Jenna adores books. Wherever you see Jenna, whether at home or out and about, she has a book in her hands. Her favourites are Little Critter books or the Berenstain Bears.

She uses these books to communicate with family and friends by pointing at certain pictures from the books. Her dad, Doug says "Jenna's books are a conversation starter everywhere she goes."

Thanks to your support, Jenna now has a little free library in her yard and can share her love of reading with her neighbours.

Combining her love of reading and appreciation for her neighbourhood means Jenna gets to meet more people and share the books she loves.

In addition to sharing her own books, Jenna loves to see what others have left behind. Her little library brings joy to her block and the area around it. It is also a conversation starter for passersby, and encourages interaction and connection with neighbours. This helps her feel more connected to her community and brings a smile to her face.



Jenna and her little free library

YOU HELPED ARIC GAIN INDEPENDENCE



Aric signing for his first bank account

Preparing to leave your childhood home is an amazing milestone that both young adults and their parents approach with mixed emotions.

It is an event filled with excitement, nervousness, happiness, nostalgia and sometimes overwhelm.

Aric is 22 years old and has lived with his father and grandmother his entire life. Until recently, that is.

Last summer, he made the decision to embrace some additional independence and move into his own home.

With the support of his team in the St. Amant Community Residential Program, Aric began preparing for the new responsibilities that lay ahead. He needed to update his summer wardrobe, purchase his own toiletries and decorate his new room. These expenses added up quickly and they also highlighted one more significant need.

Aric needed to open his own bank account. This step called attention to another necessity and an additional unforeseen expense... the lack of appropriate identification. These tiny pieces of paper that many take for granted actually come at a significant cost and Aric needed some help.

Thanks to your generous donation, Aric was able to acquire the ID he needed to open his bank account and make the purchases he wanted as he settled into his new home.

Aric is starting a new chapter in his life! He's learning about budgeting and his household responsibilities. He makes his own decisions about how he wants to spend his money. Terri, a member of his support team says: "He's become more independent in navigating his new home and he decides how he spends his time."

Aric happily says: "I get to make my own decisions and be my own person." What a wonderful gift. Thank you for making this possible!

YOU INSPIRED COLBY TO KEEP LEARNING

Disruptions in routine are difficult for Colby and his mother Natalie, and the COVID-19 shut down of the St. Amant School was especially hard given the journey they had getting there.

St. Amant School was Colby's fifth school and Natalie says "it was life changing for us all". Colby struggled with safety concerns and anxiety and his attendance suffered at previous schools. **At St. Amant School, things seemed to click into place for him.**

The school operates year round and provides individualized learning opportunities for children (0–22 years) with developmental disabilities. When last spring's shutdown occurred, it was tough. **"He'd come so far and was making such amazing progress. His confidence was soaring."**

It took a while but eventually Colby started participating in some virtual learning but both mother and son longed for the school to reopen.

Opening the school in the midst of a pandemic took a tremendous amount of reorganization. The health and safety of the students are of the utmost importance and it quickly became clear that more space would be needed to meet public health regulations. In response, walls were erected and new classrooms created. **Your generosity helped outfit these new classrooms with the technology they needed!**



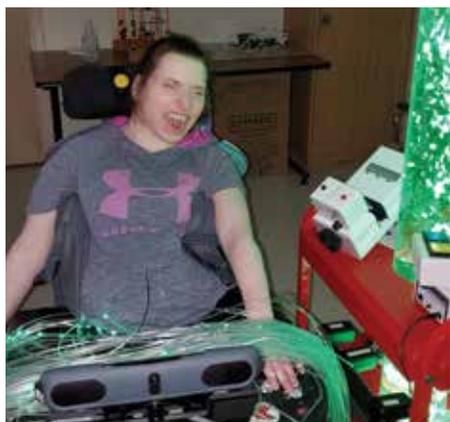
Colby enjoying being back at school

Thanks to donors, students have access to a mobile smart board and portable computer "Colby calls it a giant iPad" laughs Natalie.

This large smart board is used for morning routine, physical education, Friday dance parties and a wide variety of virtual learning activities. It also provides clinicians virtual access for things like music therapy, even when physical access is limited.

While change is hard and things aren't exactly how they used to be, Colby is settling in back at school. Natalie is so grateful for the support her family has received and to see Colby shine again. **"It truly does take a village to raise a child and I am thrilled St. Amant is part of my village."**

YOUR GIFT PROVIDED RELAXATION AND DELIGHT



Amanda delighted with the bubble tube

The mobile sensory Snoezelen cart is a wonder of color changing bubble tubes and fibre optics. These engaging tools delight and entertain, stimulate reactions and encourage communication. It can turn any room into a calm, relaxing space and reduces agitation and anxiety. It's so popular that a schedule has been

created to be sure everyone who wants a chance gets a turn.

Because it's mobile, it makes its way around Health & Transition Services and the smiles it brings are priceless. **Thank you for making this possible!** Amanda and so many others love this unique tool!

YOU FUNDED IMPORTANT RESEARCH STUDYING QUALITY OF LIFE

The St. Amant Research Centre improves the quality of life of people with developmental disabilities through research and education.

Your donation helps to fund this innovative research! Research that has been presented on international stages!

Historically, people with developmental disabilities lived in congregate care settings. Over the past few decades, as the trends and rights for people with disabilities evolved, community living was identified as a more holistic and inclusive way to support people.

St. Amant has been supporting people to move into homes in the community for decades, but the focus has increased recently. Over 55 people are enjoying a greater quality of life after making the move over the past few years.

Surprisingly, little research existed about the best way to support this transition to community living and there was no data about the quality

of life outcomes as a result of the move. The research done by the St. Amant Research Centre provides the most comprehensive look at these transitions that has ever been done and measures the effects they've had on the people involved.

The research team followed individuals from 2016-2020, both before and after their moves to community homes, to assess how this transition affected their health, access to health care and overall quality of life. **The results have been overwhelmingly positive!**

Study participants shared their thoughts about the change. Mother Colleen shared that her son Carl "was doing things and going places that I never... in a million years thought he would be capable of. It's been absolutely wonderful," and "he's happy, so I'm happy." Other feedback from families includes: he is much more independent; she seems like a different, happier



Loralee enjoying the sensory room in her community home

person; we have been amazed at the difference it has made for our family; **we are so happy with her new home!**

This important research, funded by your donation, not only affirms that St. Amant is on the right path, but also provides valuable data about the impact of community living and the process of transition not available anywhere else. These results have the potential to serve as a model for administrators and policy makers in Manitoba and beyond.

This research would not have happened if it wasn't for you! Thank you!

In 2020/2021,
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Raise Nearly
\$2 MILLION
to:



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OF VIRTUAL
EVENTS THAT
300+
PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED
IN



PURCHASE
MORE THAN
30
COMMUNICATION
DEVICES



PROVIDE
MORE THAN
40
PIECES OF
RECREATIONAL
EQUIPMENT



PURCHASE
MORE THAN
30
PIECES OF
MOBILITY
EQUIPMENT AND
PERSONAL ITEMS

If you feel inspired by these stories and would like to make a difference, please donate at:

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