



Adults Independent and Motivated

Making Independence Possible

July 26, 2021

Participant Corner – Meet our Newest AIMer, Zach



Since his diagnosis with Williams Syndrome in Anchorage, Alaska at the age of three months old, Zachary has spent his life achieving goals that many had thought were unachievable. Williams Syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by a random deletion of a small number of genes on Chromosome number 7. All individuals with Williams Syndrome face some degree of physical and mental challenges, and parents are quickly confronted by a long list of things their children will likely never do. But Zach was always encouraged by family and friends to dream big, and he never shied away from a challenge.

In fact, from the time he could hold drumsticks, Zach found the rhythm in everything around him, and he first joined his keyboard-playing father on stage at the age of ten. After graduating from high school a year early, Zach relocated to the Austin area with his family whose roots were in Texas.

Zach adjusted quickly to his new life in Pflugerville and eagerly participated in various educational and employment preparation programs, including Pflugerville's PACE program, Project SEARCH, the Goodwill summer program, and various courses offered through the University of Texas.

The relocation to Texas also inspired the birth of an entirely new father-son band, and The Jones Boys have fine-tuned their set list to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. But despite Zach's numerous successes in life, it was actually the pandemic that showed our family that Zach was ready to make a final step towards independence. Thankfully, we had been investigating options, and the AIM community was equal parts welcoming and inspiring. The AIMers had faced all the typical challenges of the pandemic and had adapted, endured, and thrived. Zach had the opportunity to participate in AIM socials held virtually and then eventually back in person, and the community welcomed him and encouraged him to imagine a more independent future.

Zach has embraced this next chapter in life and is thriving since moving into his first apartment with his new roommate, Blake. He now works at Target and has adapted to his new life much more quickly than we could have ever anticipated. While he takes pride in the fact that he's managing most daily tasks on his own, his new friendships have had the most impact on his life. He is frequently too busy swimming, watching a game, or heading to the movies with his new friends to have much time to talk to us, and for this, we could not be more grateful.

~ By Darla Jones

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- Ronda Phillips, Vice President
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Tutus and Ties Planning is Underway

Save the date for AIM's 5th annual Tutus and Ties Fun Run. The event will be in person this year at Lakeway Park on Sunday, Oct. 3 at 9am.



AIM Core Principles

1. Safety
2. Employment or Meaningful Regular Activity Away from Home
3. Lifelong Learning
4. Healthy Living
5. Social Activities
6. Family Engagement and Family Commitment
7. Increasing Independence
8. Continuity

Sponsorship opportunities are available at all giving levels, and we are also in need of items for the Silent Auction. Please visit our website www.aimtx.org/events.html to get additional information. **The deadline for Sponsors' names to be included on both the flyer and t-shirt is Aug. 15th.**

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we need your help so that AIMers can continue to thrive.

The World is Spinning and AIMers are Swimming

When the world stopped spinning because of Covid, AIM quickly adapted to the new reality. Early in the pandemic, we briefly suspended our transportation program while we developed Covid protocols from scratch. The AIMers who were relying on us to get them to their front-line jobs were quite relieved that we were so quick to develop our own policies and procedures rather than waiting to see what other organizations would do. We are proud that the protocols we developed early on included the same guidelines that Uber and Lyft announced weeks later.

Many of the other changes within the AIM community were similar to those implemented throughout the country (masks, social distancing, and moving activities online rather than in-person), with a gradual easing of those requirements based on improving conditions and increased rates of vaccination. Suffice it to say, AIMers have joyfully embraced reuniting in person for so many activities.

One of their favorites thus far is to meet each other at the apartment swimming pool to hang out, cool off, and spend time with their friends. The first weekend in May saw their families joining them poolside for the first in-person gathering of everyone in over a year.

We are delighted that families maintained connections and that the AIM community remained a reassuring source of comfort and HOME from the pandemic's earliest days.

AIM Socials

AIM has socials for people who are taking the next step in exploring whether AIM is the right fit.

Recent socials have included pool parties as well as in-person active fun at Hill Country Indoor!

July 4th is Independence Day, but at AIM we are celebrating Independence Month



In honor of "Independence Month", we have spotlighted on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) a few of the wonderful businesses who employ our AIMers and help make independence possible for them. Be sure to follow us to see these and other updates.



Spreading Hope about the Living Options for People with Disabilities

We would like to thank KOOP in Touch for spotlighting AIM during their July 15th radio program. We would also like to thank Texas Parent to Parent for inviting us to be part of the session spotlighting housing options during their annual Statewide Conference. We appreciate those opportunities to spread hope by sharing how AIMers have defied the expectations they faced as youngsters by achieving an astonishingly independent and “normal” adult life.

Internship and Volunteer Opportunities

AIM is seeking a volunteer to develop a short video showing AIMers thriving.

AIM is seeking a Social Media Intern to help us post community updates at regular intervals on Facebook and Instagram.

Please contact us at info@aimtx.org if you would like to learn more.

Amplify Austin Success

THANK YOU to everyone who donated to AIM during the 2021 citywide-day-of-giving known as Amplify Austin. We raised over \$20,000, surpassing our goal of \$17,500.

Because AIMers incur the typical costs of adult life such as rent, utilities, and groceries, AIM provides our services without charging them a fee. Thus, AIM is funded entirely by donations and fundraising, and we could not make independence possible without your generosity. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

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