



# Adults Independent and Motivated

Making Independence Possible

December 11, 2020

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## Board Members:

- Ashley Sanchez, President
- Hector Sanchez, Vice President
- Julie Buchanan, Secretary
- Kim Eudy, Treasurer
- Barb Lucido
- Ronda Phillips
- Suzanne Shepherd

## Hugely Successful Tutus & Ties Fun Run

Wow! During a difficult year, you have all amazed us with your generosity! We are thrilled to announce that we have raised \$27,000 from our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Tutus and Ties Fun Run! Pre-pandemic, we had set a goal of raising \$22,000, but in light of the slowing economy and the changed fun-run format necessitated by Covid, we lowered that goal. Thus, we are thrilled to have exceeded even our original "normal" times goal. Covid didn't bring a halt to our expenses, and these much-needed funds will allow AIMers to continue to thrive.



This would not have been possible without our sponsors, silent auction donors, and everyone who registered to participate from around the world! It also would not have been possible without the skillful leadership of fun run chair Julie Buchanan who, in addition to coordinating the fun run, puts in countless hours year-round ensuring that AIM runs well. Julie and the other committee members Ronda Phillips, Kim Eudy, and Ashley Sanchez pivoted to a new format to adapt to the pandemic and ensure that a fun time was once again had by all. Ronda created 2 brief videos—one to launch the event and one to wrap it up. Viewing them should brighten your day!



A complete list of sponsors and silent-auction donors is included at the end of this newsletter. We encourage you to patronize these businesses and let them know you appreciate their support of AIM.

[Click for Kick-Off Video](#)

[Click for Wrap-Up Video](#)

# AIM is Unique from Other Models

## 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

## 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 virtual game nights as well as in-person active fun at Hill Country Indoor!

- **Donations Are Essential for the Services AIM Provides.** AIM provides many benefits to AIMers. Those benefits include transportation to work and AIM activities; Special Olympics basketball; community-building activities that allow AIMers to connect, learn, and have fun together; a framework for AIMer families to be involved with each other for the collective benefit of all participants; and sustainability so that this can be AIMers' lifelong home. We don't charge a fee for these services, so AIM relies entirely on fundraising and donations.
- **The Ties That Bind.** Forming connections with fellow AIMers starts long before someone can apply to AIM. Since harmony and cooperation among AIMers and their families are essential, AIM hosts socials that allow Prospective AIMers the opportunity to get to know current AIMers and figure out whether AIM might be the right fit for them. Indeed, AIM requires a minimum of 12 months of participating in these socials before someone can apply to join AIM.
- **We build community, not housing.** AIM is a unique community because we do not provide, nor did we build, housing. Instead AIM's founders surveyed numerous apartment complexes throughout central Texas and selected one in western Travis County that allows AIMers to easily walk to many shops, restaurants, and entertainment. Some AIMers are employed at these places and walk to work. Others, however, need the transportation that AIM provides to get to work since public transportation isn't available in that area.
- **Affording to live independently.** The lifestyle of AIMers is remarkably ordinary given their significant disabilities such as autism, Down syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury, etc. They lease their apartments directly from the apartment complex (AIM is not a party to the lease), buy their own groceries and prepare their own meals, get together with fellow AIMers for fun and learning, and go to work. Several of them receive disability benefits that help them afford these things, but they also rely on the income from their jobs to cover their expenses. Their jobs are both an economic necessity for them as well as an essential part of AIMers' self-worth.

## Jobs Wanted

Before the pandemic, 100% of AIMers held jobs. Throughout the pandemic several remained on the front lines working at HEB, Home Depot, and Randall's. Others were temporarily furloughed but are now back on the job at Panera Bread, Mod Pizza, Dillard's, and ABC Home and Commercial Services. And a few others are still looking for work after being laid off during the pandemic. **Do you know of any job openings that would be a good fit for AIMers in the Lakeway/Bee Cave area?**

The best question a prospective employer can ask is, "What **can** you do?" Although everyone is different, in general AIMers can do jobs that are routine in nature—following a predictable pattern that allows them to work independently at a steady, but often not speedy, pace. This can be in office, retail, food service, pet care, etc. The challenge for some AIMers is that they have scattered skills that include strengths as well as weaknesses. Those weaknesses mean that they aren't always able to perform every duty required in job descriptions. Thus, they benefit from employers who have the flexibility to allow them to contribute what they **can** do rather than disqualifying them because of the limitations resulting from their disabilities.



## Participant Corner

AIMers have been active in a variety of activities during the past several months, including going to work, making items for the Tutus and Ties Silent Auction, listening to live mariachi music by the Duo Sonare, attending Monday Night Group (virtual and in -person, depending on Covid conditions), and in October returning to weekly fitness activities at Hill Country Indoor (wahoo!!!).

In addition, AIMers Cristina and Gracie gave a virtual Cooking demonstration and tour of their apartment to participants in the Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas' annual Buddy Walk.



## AIMers in the News

### Gracie: NDSC Every Day Hero

On Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> Gracie Eudy was recognized in a national ceremony featuring stars including Ludacris and Tim Tebow. The National Down Syndrome Congress recognized Gracie for being an Every Day Hero for her faithful diligence as an essential worker who has remained on the job throughout the pandemic. Gracie has worked at HEB for over 11 years. She always has a smile on her face, and some customers insist on checking out at her lane, even if another lane is available with no wait. In addition, Gracie is an accomplished snow skier, a talented speaker, and very much living life on HER terms!

When asked about winning this national award, Gracie said, "I am so excited to be an everyday hero. I kept working at my job at HEB during Covid even though my parents were worried about me. But my boss and my customers needed me. I love my job and I love my life."

Congratulations, Gracie! [Read the Press Release and See Pics Here](#)

### Cristina: GMA Online Story

October was Down syndrome Awareness month, and AIMer Cristina was featured in an online Good Morning America story about a new online Down syndrome clinic developed by Dr. Brian Skotko. DSC2U uses artificial intelligence to provide health care expertise to people with Down syndrome who wouldn't otherwise have access to that information. Read the full story here: <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/family/story/people-syndrome-best-medical-information-now-automated-73786061>





## Internship Opportunity

AIM has an opportunity for an unpaid internship to develop an online AIMing for Healthy Living resource. AIMers would access that resource from their phones to log their healthy choices such as eating an apple for a snack, going for a walk, or even making progress towards a healthy weight. Please email us at [info@aimtx.org](mailto:info@aimtx.org) if you could help us with this project.

## Fun Run Sponsors

Thank you, Sponsors and Silent Auction donors, who helped make our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Tutus and Ties Fun Run our best one yet!

### Platinum:

		<p>Team Anonymous</p> <p>Team Beau</p> <p>Team Blake</p> <p>Team Cristina</p> <p>DJKK Holdings, LLC</p> <p>Family of Jack Shepherd</p>		
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### Gold:

						<p>Team Cristina<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Team Rebecca</p> <p>The Moore Family</p> <p>Candace Witzig</p>
						

### Silver:

A Summer Smile	Cynthia Gautschy, JGoodwin REALTORS	Barbara Richmond
Talina & Dean Buchanan	Hye Meadow Winery	Rebecca Shahan, Realtor
Daren Evans, DDS	Lakecountry Insurance Agency	Jeff & Jody Sims
Edward Jones, Scott Tracy AAMS	Lakeway Marina	Sonare
Christa McCoy Agency - Farmers Insurance	Land Rover Austin	Ruth Ann & Brodus Spivey
	Mobile Pressure Clean	Anonymous Team Clark
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