

# Stepping Stones

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## Letter from the President

Thanks for a wonderful year.

Thanks to our hard-working board, volunteers and supporters 2019 has been a great success. Our fall "Dueling Pianos" fund raiser attracted a record number of guests resulting in an unprecedented financial success. And, because we are an all-volunteer organization, 100 % of the funds we raise go directly into our community-based programming.

Also this year, in addition to our very popular social events like our Spring Dance, Christmas Party, Bowling Party and Summer Picnic, our new Spring and Fall Pool Parties, SEAS Sailing event and crafting event with J M Kohler Arts Center, provided even more opportunities for our "Young People" to have fun together.

We are also proud to support other organizations in the community that care about people with disabilities. The Shaw Family Playground, RCS Empowers, REINS Therapeutic Riding and the ADRC's Share the Spirit all received financial support from HearthStone.

As we prepare to celebrate our 25th year in 2020 (*Yikes, how did that happen?*) we are thankful for the people who have, are and will dedicate their time and talents to HearthStone and the people we care about!

Thank you all.

Regards,  
 Jon




Please consider a tax deductible donation to HearthStone. We need your support.

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*"HearthStone is a self-help and advocacy organization for people with disabilities and their families."*

## We're Growing

HearthStone recently expanded its Board of Directors from eight to 12 seats in hopes of bringing even more talents to the table. In the past four months, we've welcomed four new faces:



**ALEX CURRY**

...was recently appointed as HearthStone's new Treasurer. His background with individuals with disabilities comes through his wife, Leah Curry (HearthStone's Secretary), and her brothers. She has shown him how to love people in differing situations and life journeys than himself and shown him a whole new world. Alex has a background in accounting, finance, and IT, which helps in his role as Treasurer and serving on the marketing committee for HearthStone.



**KRIS WILLIAMS**

...currently works at RCS Empowers and was a teacher for 34 years. She always looks for ways to help children with disabilities succeed in the classroom, and now with their careers. Kris is the mother of a daughter with a cognitive disability, who is attending RCS and works part-time in the community. She is on HearthStone's education committee.



**PATTI SAUNDERS**

...and her son, Eric Bosch, live in Sheboygan Falls. "Bosch" is an icon in Falls, as he has been a manager for the Sheboygan Falls Falcon boys' football, basketball, baseball and girls' softball teams over the years. Patti and Eric checked out HearthStone and its events to broaden Eric's social circles, "Mom, I want to go out and meet new people!" According to Patti, "I invited myself to a few HearthStone meetings, and the next thing I know, I'm on the Board of Directors." Patti is semi-retired after 34 years of service with Lakeshore Technical College. She has an extensive background in designing and providing career development and educational opportunities and programming for special population students. She represents HearthStone on the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County Steering Committee, and serves on HearthStone's education and social committees.



**ANGIE SHAW**

...was born and raised in Sheboygan. She met her husband Ryan in 2001 and they have three beautiful children together. Mateo and McHale were born in 2006 as conjoined twins, connected at their lower backs, spinal cords and sacral bones. They were successfully separated in a 19.5-hour surgery and have spina bifida and hydrocephalus as their life-long disability. Little brother Maddux was born in 2010. She was inspired to spearhead the Shaw Family Playground - Sheboygan County's first fully inclusive playground, where she connected with HearthStone, a major contributor. She is a member of the Sheboygan Christian School Board and a youth group leader. She is the HearthStone advocacy committee chair.

*"It is truly an honor and a privilege to be joining the Hearthstone Board as the Advocacy Chair. I have a natural ability to advocate for others around me that are being overlooked, unfairly treated and taken advantage of because of their differently born abilities," Shaw said. "I hope to help others see each other's value regardless of our differences."*

Next time you're at a HearthStone event, feel free to welcome our newest additions. We feel very fortunate to have these four new talents working alongside us. We are also still searching for another new director; if you have an interest, please reach out to [info@hearthstonewi.org](mailto:info@hearthstonewi.org).

## HearthStone Vision and Mission Statements Updated

After nearly 25 years as an organization, your Board of Directors thought it prudent to review and refresh our Vision and Mission Statements and By-laws. The revised Vision and Mission statements are as follows:

### VISION

Our vision is a community where individuals with *disabilities* and their families achieve their highest possible level of community integration, independent living, and an enduring quality of life that is safe, secure and fulfilling.

### MISSION

HearthStone is a self-help organization providing information, referral, guidance and support to all individuals with disabilities, their parents, families, guardians and advocates in support of community opportunities.

**The organization will focus on three key areas:**

#### Advocacy

- Monitor and actively engage in advocacy issues affecting individuals with disabilities and the disabilities community at large on a local, state and national level.
- Actively engage in advocacy efforts in support of vocational opportunities of all kinds for individuals with disabilities.
- Initiate and maintain cooperative relationships with legislative officials and other advocacy organizations.

#### Education

- Provide free and open-to-the-public educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, families and caregivers to keep them informed on current issues, programs and opportunities.
- HearthStone Opportunity Scholarships - provide funding for deserving individuals with disabilities to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities.

#### Social/Recreational

- Provide individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers with safe, accessible, inclusive and FUN social opportunities, such as dances, bowling, parties, picnics and other community activities.

**Advocate. Educate. Celebrate!**

(New themeline!)

## It's a pirate's life for us!

HearthStone friends tested out their sea legs aboard the beautiful Elkhart Queen pontoon boat in July.

The free ride was part of the HearthStone Annual Picnic & Boat Ride, which saw record attendance of both new and familiar faces.

HearthStone friends and their families gathered at a reserved space at Fireman's Park in Elkhart Lake and shared in plenty of complimentary sandwiches, cookies, coleslaw, and sparkling flavored water. But it was perhaps the shared conversation, laughter, and friendship that made for the biggest smiles.

The picnic took place beachside of the glimmering Elkhart Lake on a sunny summer day.

After eating their fill, HearthStone friends and their families were treated to a tour of Elkhart Lake on the Elkhart Queen, a massive pontoon boat that fit every single HearthStone young person for a party on the lake.

Thanks to Dr. Jon Moulton, an extra standard pontoon boat was on hand to pick up any remaining family and friends and accommodate every single person who wished to spend the afternoon on the water. Often the riders on one boat would wave and holler as the other boat went by, making for all the more fun and games.

The annual picnic is often the highlight of HearthStone's summer, and we hope this rings true for all of our friends who come out each year to celebrate friendship and warm weather. Thanks for joining us, and we look forward to warmer days on the beach again soon!

To reminisce about the day, check out this short video by copying the following link into your computer's internet browser:

<https://youtu.be/1OF-DUGBfgQ>



## HearthStone/SEAS Sailing Event was fun...and smooth sailing.

After our first event was cancelled due to bad weather, we had a picture-perfect evening on Lake Michigan for our SEAS (Sailing Education Association of Sheboygan) hands-on sailing event. Thanks to sponsorship by the Greater Sheboygan Kiwanis Club, an enthusiastic group of HearthStone Young People got a chance to take the helm of one of SEAS instructional sailboats. Special thanks to SEAS Certified Sailing Instructor Juju Senfft for organizing and instructing our group. It was a delightful sail followed by a sub-sandwich picnic on shore. No one got wet or seasick!

Eric B. at the helm, while SEAS's instructor Juju Senfft points the way.



It was smooth sailing for HearthStone/SEAS Lake Michigan sailing adventure in August.

## Record breaking FUN and FUNdraising – good time for a great cause!

As Thanksgiving nears, everyone at HearthStone is feeling humbled and grateful for a record year at our Dueling Pianos FUNdraiser. The annual event saw attendance nearly doubled and funds donated nearly tripled from the previous year.

The sold-out event went off without a hitch at the Lakeshore Culinary Institute in Sheboygan and saw nearly 200 attendees.

Volunteers from HearthStone and our sponsor Homes for Independent Living (HIL) were out in full force to ensure a smooth and fun-filled night for all.

Tables were elegantly decorated with classic red, black and white colors and plenty of references to piano keys, a nod to the night's entertainment.

Everyone partook in a scrumptious, gourmet meal and received top-notch service from everyone at the Lakeshore Culinary Institute.

Following the buffet, the guests were treated to a performance by Wisconsin's own fabulous dueling pianos act, N.E.W. Piano Guys, who generously donated all of their tips for the night to the FUNdraiser as well. The crowd crooned along to new and old favorites alike, from hits such as "This is Me" from the movie "The Greatest Showman" to Billy Joel's tried-and-true classic, "Piano Man."

The crowd was also treated to a speech from guest speaker Kaitlyn Taubenheim, a previous recipient of the HearthStone education scholarship, about the joys and challenges of student life and what the opportunity meant to her personally.

The end of the night was filled with big wins for many guests. The event featured bucket raffles for baskets featuring goodies and prizes from generous local vendors; a silent auction for big ticket items such as stays at premier resorts and condos at popular vacation destinations; and a raffle for a free stay at a condo in Florida. Thank you to all of the donors who made these prizes possible for our guests.

A reverse auction also took place and saw many generous pledges of monetary support for HearthStone.



*Thanks to our sponsors & volunteers the prize tables were full of goodies*



*Duelling Piano Guys were great!*



*No shortage of FUN at this table!*

Thank you to all of our guests, donors, and sponsors for ensuring a successful year ahead for us with your generous support. Our young people are the direct beneficiaries of our community's heart to give. We're certain their thanks will shine through their smiles and passionate pursuit of their goals in the coming year.

Stay tuned to our newsletter, website, and Facebook to hear all about the lives your support touches in the coming year!

## 2019 RCS EMPOWERS/HEARTHSTONE EMPLOYERS RECOGNITION LUNCHEON

Over 100 Sheboygan County Businesses were recognized for their efforts to hire and provide support for people with disabilities at the 16th Annual Employers Recognition Luncheon held at Lakeland University. The program featured several employers who shared employment success stories and introduced valued employees hired through RCS Employment Services.



*Employers were treated to an excellent buffet lunch at Lakeland University*



*RCS Ambassadors Matt, Kurt, Sam and Katie welcomed guests to the luncheon*



*Sheboygan Goodwill Industries was honored as the 2019 Exemplary Employer*

## JILL SPIELVOGEL NAMED “HEARTHSTONE PERSON OF THE YEAR”



HearthStone board member Jill Spielvogel was named “HearthStone Person of the Year” at our October Board Directors meeting.

Under Jill’s leadership our 2019 “Dueling Pianos” Fund Raiser was our most successful fund-raising event ever. A record number of attendees and a new record financially resulting from the great efforts of the fund-raising committee and Jill’s exceptional efforts.

Jill also has contributed significantly to many of our social event for our “Young People” including creating and leading our Spring and Fall Pool Parties and our record-setting Spring Dance.

Thanks Jill for your enthusiasm, hard work and “can do” leadership.

## What about our brothers and sisters?

When an adult child has a disability, parents and siblings may find themselves uncertain how to begin the conversation about long-term care and planning as a family. However, HearthStone's new education committee didn't shy away from starting that dialogue at its recent workshop, "What Happens When ... ?"

The event saw a strong turnout of about 30 people and took place at Mead Public Library on Nov. 4. The night kicked off with a brief welcome from education committee chair Kathy Manny and was followed by a presentation from guest speaker WisconSibs Executive Director Harriett Redman, who spoke to dynamics of the sibling role.

According to Redman's research, siblings of individuals with a disability are more likely to have attributes such as empathy and maturity, but these are also accompanied by more negative characteristics such as anxiety.



*Our panel of Expert Siblings*



*HearthStone Education Committee members Patti Saunders and Kris Williams*

Redman said that even little kids are worried about what will happen to their sibling with a disability when parents pass away, explaining that even her own daughter approached her with such concerns about who will care for her brother at the age of 7, about 10-20 years before Redman was expecting the question to arise.

Discovering a gap in resources for siblings such as her daughter, Redman decided to start WisconSibs. Based in Appleton, the organization hosts workshops and social events for siblings and their families focused on support and encouraging the needs of siblings to be addressed, including their questions.

Redman said that even if at the moment parents and siblings need to "agree to disagree" about long-term care for the child with a disability, it is a good start to a conversation that families cannot afford to put on the backburner.

The event also featured a panel of local "sibs" that included Leah Curry, Lauren Tschida, Vicky Blahnik, and Hannah Jakus.



*Education Committee Chair, Kathy Manny introduces everyone to the Sibs Workshop*

The four women discussed growing up with siblings with a disability, from the embarrassing moments to the heartwarming unforgettable ones, as well as how the experience shaped them as adults and their own lingering questions about the future.

At the close of the discussion, the women encouraged parents to start with small discussions and steps in acquainting their children with everything they should know about a sibling's care, prioritizing medical information, financials, and the gestures most important to the person's quality of life.

For more information about WisconSibs, visit [wisconsibs.org](http://wisconsibs.org). Stay tuned for HearthStone's next educational workshop, which is currently being planned for the spring.

Have an idea for a community workshop? Let us know your suggestions by emailing [info@hearthstonewi.org](mailto:info@hearthstonewi.org).

Attention: All HearthStone Young People



# Bowling Party



**FREE Bowling, Pizza & Soda**

Join your friends and family at our annual bowling event. We welcome our friends from the Sheboygan County Board of Supervisors, Sheboygan City Council as well as representatives from our state and federal government, who need to meet us and better understand our efforts to live and work as independently as possible in our home communities.

Saturday, February 15, 2020  
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

••• NEW LOCATION •••

**Odyssey Fun Center**

100 Hamann Drive (Hwy 32)  
Sheboygan Falls



Please RSVP by 2/8/20  
to Mrs. Sterzen at 467-6801  
Or by email: [terri.sterzen52@gmail.com](mailto:terri.sterzen52@gmail.com)



**Thanks to the following companies, organizations and individuals who made our FUNdraising efforts successful this year:**

Homes for Independent Living (HIL) - Entertainment Sponsors  
 Dennis Fiedler – Condo giveaway  
 Dan Rafferty & Peter Hernet – N.E.W. Dueling Pianos – “tip” donation  
 Nathan Meinert & Chef Bill Gottsacker – LTC Culinary Institute

**GIFT BASKETS**

Gina’s Framing, Gifts,  
 Elkhart Lake Outfitters  
 Lake Street Café  
 Off the Rail  
 Two Fish Gallery  
 Siebkens Resort  
 Vintage Wines  
 Stefano’s/ Il Ritrovo  
 Jim & Jan Sartori  
 Timber Rattlers  
 Bread & Bean  
 Town & Country  
 Bistro 712  
 Road America  
 Magic Car Wash  
 Kwik Trip  
 Farm Wisconsin  
 Johnson Bank  
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**FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

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 Larry Samet  
 Deidre Martinez  
 Michael Darnieder &  
 JoAnne Galvin

**TABLE SPONSORS**

REINS Therapeutic Riding  
 Thorne Foundation  
 RCS Empowers  
 Sheboygan County Chamber  
 Randy & Rita Romanoski  
 Rick & Julie Leonard



## FREE MEMBERSHIP REQUEST

### WHAT IS HEARTHSTONE

HearthStone is a self-help and advocacy organization for people with disabilities and their families. Our mission is to make our communities a welcoming place for people of disabilities and to support and encourage positive life experiences.

### BENEFITS OF JOINING HEARTHSTONE

- Free Quarterly Newsletter with news & information you can use
- Free Quarterly Social Events for Young Adults
- Advance notice for Free Community Meetings & Educational Programs
- Free P.A.T.H. Planning resources to help move your dreams forward
- Help, family mentoring, referrals, resources
- Add your “voice” to the hundred plus Lakeshore area families to help us advocate for funding for programs for people with disabilities and service providers - Help us end “The WAITING LIST” game here and throughout Wisconsin and adequately compensate our caring service providers.

Yes, please add me to your list of Members. I understand there is NO CHARGE to become a HearthStone member.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) you are advocating for \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_



### HearthStone’s Board of Directors - 2019

- Alex Curry, *Treasurer*
- Leah Curry, *Secretary*
- Kathy Manny, *Education*
- Craig McFadden, *Outreach*
- Karen Post, *Social*
- Jon Rost, *President*
- Larry Samet, *Vice President*
- Patti Saunders, *Education*
- Jill Spielvogel, *Development*
- Kris Williams, *Education*
- Angie Shaw, *Advocacy*
- Christopher Post, *Advocate*

### HearthStone Advisory Board - 2019

- Carol Rost – Parent/Advocate
- Frank Sterzen - DSPN
- Cyndi Sook- ADRC
- Jody Merenick – RCS Empowers
- Dana Traas - DVR
- Michele Martin - HIL
- Denise Drews – HIL
- Mark Ellis – Camp Evergreen

*“Our mission is to make our communities a welcoming place for people with disabilities and to support and encourage positive life experiences.”*